BURNS' COMPLETE WORKS.

ILLUSTRATED.
THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS:
CONTAINING HIS
POEMS, SONGS, AND CORRESPONDENCE.
WITH
A NEW LIFE OF THE POET,
AND
NOTICES, CRITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL,
BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.
ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED.
BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON, AND COMPANY.
1857.
To

ARCHIBALD HASTIE, ESQ.,
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR PAISLEY,

THE

EDITION

OF

THE WORKS AND MEMOIRS OF A GREAT POET,

IN WHOSE SENTIMENTS OF FREEDOM HE SHARES,

AND WHOSE PICTURES OF SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE HE LOVES,

IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE LIFE,
PORTRAIT OF BURNS.
PORTRAIT OF ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.
THE GENIUS OF POBIE FINDING BURNS
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THE POEMS.
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THE CORRESPONDENCE, &C.
MRS. BURNS AND HER GRANDDAUGHT.
DEDICATION

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HUNT.

[On the title-page of the second or Edinburgh edition, were these words: "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns, printed for the Author, and sold by William Creech, 1787." The motto of the Kilmarnock edition was omitted; a very numerous list of subscribers followed; the volume was printed by the celebrated Smellie.]

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN:

A SCOTTISH Bard, proud of the 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 honours 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 honoured 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 those 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 congratulate 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.
the composition of Shenstone, and which is to be found in the churchyard of Hales Owen: as it is not included in every edition of that poet’s acknowledged works, Burns who was an admirer of his genius, had, it seems, copied it with his own hand, and hence my error. If I hesitated about the exclusion of “The Tree of Liberty,” and the three false brethren, I could have no scruples regarding the fine song of “Evan Banks,” claimed and justly for Miss Williams by Sir Walter Scott, or the humorous song called “Shelah O’Neal,” composed by the late Sir Alexander Boswell. When I have state that I have arranged the Poems, the Songs, and the Letters of Burns, as nearly as possible in the order in which they were written; that I have omitted no piece of either verse or prose which bore the impress of his hand, nor included any by which his high reputation would likely be impaired, I have said all that seems necessary to be said, say that the following letter came too late for insertion in its proper place: it is characteristic and worth a place anywhere.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

TO DR. ARCHIBALD LAURIE.

Musselburgh, 18th Nov. 1795

DEAR SIR,

I have along with this sent the two volumes of Osian, with the remaining volume of the Song Osian I am not in such a hurry about; but I wish the Songs, with the volume of the Scotch Poet returned as soon as they can conveniently be dispatched. If they are left at Mr. Wilson’s bookseller’s shop, Kilmarnock, they will easily reach me.

My most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Laurie; and a Poet’s warmest wishes for their happiness to the young ladies; particularly the fair musician, whom I think much better qualified than ever David was, or could be, to charm an evil spirit out of a Saul.

Indeed, it needs not the feelings of a poet to be interested in the welfare of one of the sweet scenes of domestic peace and kindred love that ever I saw; as I think the peaceful unity of Margaret’s Hill can only be excelled by the harmonious concord of the Apocalyptic Zion.

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

ROBERT BURNS.
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LIFE
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

Robert Burns, the chief of the peasant poets of Scotland, was born in a little mud-walled cottage on the banks of Doon, near "Alloway's auld haunted kirk," in the shire of Ayr, on the 25th day of January, 1759. As a natural mark of the event, a sudden storm at the same moment swept the land: the gable-wall of the frail dwelling gave way, and the bale-hurd was hurried through a tempest of wind and sleet to the shelter of a secular hovel. He was the eldest born of three sons and three daughters; his father, William, who in his native Kincardineshire wrote his name Burness, was bred a gardener, and sought for work in the West; but coming from the lands of the noble family of the Keiths, a suspicion accompanied him that he had been out—as rebellion was softly called—in the forty-five: a suspicion fatal to his hopes of rest and bread, in so loyal a district; and it was only when the clergyman of his native parish certified his loyalty that he was permitted to toil. This suspicion of Jacobitism, revived by Burns himself, when he rose into fame, seems not to have influenced either the feelings, or the tastes of Agnes Brown, a young woman on the Doon, whom he wooed and married in December, 1757, when he was thirty-six years old. To support her, he leased a small piece of ground, which he converted into a nursery and garden, and to shelter her, he raised with his own hands that humble abode where she gave birth to her eldest son.

The elder Burns was a well-informed, silent, austere man, who endured no idle gaiety, nor indecorous language: while he relaxed somewhat the hard, stern creed of the Covenanting times, he enforced all the work-day, as well as sabbath-day observances, which the Calvinistic kirk requires, and scurped at promiscuous dancing, as the stain of our own day scruple at the walls. His wife was of a milder mood: she was blest with a singular fortitude of temper; was as devout of heart, as she was calm of mind; and loved, while busied in her household concerns, to sweeten the bitterer moments of life, by chanting the songs and ballads of her country, of which her store was great. The garden and nursery prospered so much, that he was induced to widen his views, and by the help of his kind landlord, the laird of Doonholm, and the more questionable aid of borrowed money, he entered upon a neighbouring farm, named Mount Oliphant, extending to an hundred acres. This was in 1765; but the land was hungry and sterile; the seasons proved rainy and rough; the toll was certain, the reward unsure; when to his sorrow, the laird of Doonholm—a generous Ferguson,—died: the strict terms of the lease, as well as the rent, were exacted by a harsh factor, and with his wife and children, he was obliged, after a losing struggle of six years, to relinquish the farm, and seek shelter on the grounds of Lochtie, some ten miles off, in the parish of Tarbolton. When, in after-days, men's characters were in the hands of his eldest son the secondel factor sat for that lasting portrait of insolence and wrong, in the "Twa Dogs."

In this new farm William Burns seemed to strike root, and thrive. He was strong of body and ardent of mind. every day brought increase of vigour to his three sons, who, though very young,
already put their hands to the plough, the reap-hook, and the flail. But it seemed that nothing which he undertook was decreed in the end to prosper: after four seasons of prosperity a change ensued: the farm was far from cheap; the gains under any lease were then so little, that the loss of a few pounds was ruinous to a farmer: bad seed and wet seasons had their usual influence: "The gloom of hermits and the moil of galley-slaves," as the poet, alluding to those days, said, were endured to no purpose; when, to crown all, a difference arose between the landlord and the tenant, as to the terms of the lease; and the early days of the poet, and the declining years of his father, were harassed by disputes, in which sensitive minds are sure to suffer.

Amid these labours and disputes, the poet's father remembered the worth of religious and moral instruction: he took part of this upon himself. A week-day in Lochlea wore the sober looks of a Sunday: he read the Bible and explained, as intelligent peasants are accustomed to do, the sense, when dark or difficult; he loved to discuss the spiritual meanings, and gase on the mystical splendours of the Revelations. He was aided in these labours, first, by the school-master of Alloway-mill, near the Doon; secondly, by John Murdoch, student of divinity, who undertook to teach arithmetick, grammar, French, and Latin, to the boys of Lochlea, and the sons of five neighbouring farmers. Murdoch, who was an enthusiast in learning, much of a pedant, and such a judge of genius that he thought wit should always be laughing, and poetry wear an eternal smile, performed his task well: he found Robert to be quick in apprehension, and not afraid to study when knowledge was the reward. He taught him to turn verse into its natural prose order; to supply all the ellipses, and not to desist till the sense was clear and plain: he also, in their walks, told him the names of different objects both in Latin and French; and though his knowledge of these languages never amounted to much, he approached the grammar of the English tongue, through the former, which was of material use to him, in his poetic compositions. Burns was, even in those early days, a sort of enthusiast in all that concerned the glory of Scotland; he used to fancy himself a soldier of the days of the Wallace and the Bruce: loved to strut after the bag-pipe and the drum, and read of the bloody struggles of his country for freedom and existence, till "a Scottish prejudice," he says, "was poured into my veins, which will boil there till the flood-gates of life are shut in eternal rest."

In this mood of mind Burns was unconsiously approaching the land of poetry. In addition to the histories of the Wallace and the Bruce, he found, on the shelves of his neighbours, not only whole bodies of divinity, and sermons without limit, but the works of some of the best English as well as Scottish poets, together with songs and ballads innumerable. On these he lورد to pore whenever a moment of leisure came; nor was verse his sole favourite; he desired to drain knowledge at any fountain, and Guthrie's Grammar, Dickson on Agriculture, Addison's Spectator Locke on the Human Understanding, and Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, were a welcome to his heart as Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Thomson, and Young. There is a mystery in the workings of genius: with these poets in his head and hand, we see not that he has advance one step in the way in which he was soon to walk, "Highland Mary" and "Tam o' Shanter" sprang from other inspirations.

Burns lifts up the veil himself, from the studies which made him a poet. "In my boyish days," he says to Moore, "I owed much to an old woman (Jenny Wilson) who resided in th family, remarkable for her credulity and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs, concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunksies, kelpies, elfcandles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrips, giants, enchanters, towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had a strong an effect upon my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a look-out on suspicious places." Here we have the young poet taking lessons in the classical lore of his native land: in the school of Janet Wilson he profited largely; her tales gave a hu all their own, to many noble effusions. But her teaching was as the heath-stone: when he was in the fields, either driving a cart or walking to labour, he had ever in his hand a collection of songs, such as any stall in the land could supply him with; and over these he pored, ballad by ballad, and verse by verse, noting the true, tender, and the natural sublimes from affection as fastian. "To this," he said, "I am convinced that I owe much of my critic craft, such as it is.
LETTER TO HIS FATHER.

His mother, too, unconsciously led him in the ways of the muse: she loved to recite or sing to him a strange, but clever ballad, called "the Life and Age of Man," this strain of piety and imagination was in his mind when he wrote "Man was made to Mourn."

He found other teachers—of a tenderer nature and softer influence. "You know," he says to Moore, "our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself: she was in truth a bonnie, sweet, sunny lass, and unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worn philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys. How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; I never expressly said I loved her; indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind her, when returning in the evenings from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart strings thrill like an Eolian harp, and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rate, when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly, and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted to give an embodied vehicle in rhyme; thus with me began love and verse." This intercourse with the fair part of the creation, was to his slumbering emotions, a voice from heaven to call them into life and poetry.

From the school of traditioanry lore and love, Burns now went to a rougher academy. Lochlea, though not producing fine crops of corn, was considered excellent for flax; and while the cultivation of this commodity was committed to his father and his brother Gilbert, he was sent to Irvine at Midsummer, 1781, to learn the trade of a flax-dresser, under one Peacock, hisman to his mother. Some time before, he had spent a portion of a summer at a school in Kirkoswald, learning mensuration and land-surveying, where he had mingled in scenes of sociality with smugglers, and enjoyed the pleasure of a silent walk, under the moon, with the young and the beautiful. At Irvine he laboured by day to acquire a knowledge of his business, and at night he associated with the gay and the thoughtless, with whom he learnt to empty his glass, and indulge in free discourse on topics forbidden at Lochlea. He had one small room for a lodging, for which he gave a shilling a week: meat he seldom tasted, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal and potatoes sent from his father's house. In a letter to his father, written with great purity and simplicity of style, he thus gives a picture of himself, mental and bodily: "Honoured Sir, I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on new years' day, but work comes so hard upon us that I do not choose to be absent on that account. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees: the weakness of my nerves had so debilitated my mind that I dare neither review past wants nor look forward into futurity, for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal and indeed my only pleasurable employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains and uneasinesses, and disquietudes of this weary life. As for the world, I despair of ever making a figure in it: I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were but too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope, have been remembered ere it is yet too late." This remarkable letter was written in the twenty-second year of his age; it alludes to the illness which seems to have been the companion of his youth, a nervous headache, brought on by constant toil and anxiety; and it speaks of the melancholy which is the common attendant of genius, and its sensibilities, aggravated by despair of distinction. The catastrophe which happened ere this letter was well in his father's hand, accords ill with quotations from the Bible, and hopes fixed in heaven: "As we gave," he says, "a welcome manual to the new year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence."
This disaster was followed by one more grievous: his father was well in years when he was married, and age and a constitution injured by toil and disappointment, began to press him down, ere his sons had grown up to man's estate. On all sides the clouds began to darken; the farm was unprosperous: the speculations in flax failed; and the landlord of Lochlea, raising a question upon the meaning of the lease, concerning rotation of crop, pushed the matter to a lawsuit, alike ruinous to a poor man either in its success or its failure. "After three years' toasting and whirling," says Burns, "in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly slept in and carried him away to where the 'wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.' His soul went among the hell-hounds that prowled in the kennel of justice. The finishing evil which brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.'"

Robert Burns was now the head of his father's house. He gathered together the little that law and misfortune had spared, and took the farm of Mossgiel, near Mauchline, containing on hundred and eighteen acres, at a rent of ninety pounds a year: his mother and sisters took the domestic superintendence of home, barn, and byre; and he associated his brother Gilbert in the labours of the land. It was made a joint affair: the poet was young, willing, and vigorous, an excelld in ploughing, sowing, reaping, mowing, and thrashing. His wages were fixed at seven pounds per annum, and such for a time was his care and frugality, that he never exceeded the small allowance. He purchased books on farming, held conversations with the old and the knowing; and said unto himself, "I shall be prudent and wise, and my shadow shall increase in the land." But it was not decreed that these resolutions were to endure, and that he was to become a mighty agriculturist in the west. Farmer Attention, as the proverb says, is a good farmer, and the world over, and Burns was such by fits and by starts. But he who writes an ode on the shepherd is about to shear, a poem on the flower that he covers with the burrow, who sees visions on his way to market, who makes rhymes on the horse he is about to yoke, and a song on the girl who shows the whitest hands among his reapers, has small chance of leading a market, or of being laird of the fields he rents. The dreams of Burns were of the muse, and not of rising market of golden locks rather than of yellow corn: he had other faults. It is not known that Wills Burns was aware before his death that his eldest son had sinned in rhyme; but we have Gilbert assurance, that his father went to the grave in ignorance of his son's errors of a less venial kind—unwitting that he was soon to give a two-fold proof of both in "Rob the Rhymer's Address to his Bastard Child"—a poem less decorous than witty.

The dress and condition of Burns when he became a poet were not at all poetical, in the minutest meaning of the word. His clothes, coarse and homely, were made from home-grown wool, shot off his own sheep's backs, carded and spun at his own fireside, woven by the village weaver, as when not of natural hadden-gray, dyed a half-blue in the village vat. They were shaped as a sewed by the district tailor, who usually wrought at the rate of a groat a day and his food; as the wool was coarse, so also was the workmanship. The linen which he wore was home-grown home-hackled, home-spun, home-woven, and home-bleached, and, unless designed for Sunday use, was of coarse, strong stuff, to suit the tear and wear of barn and field. His shoes came from rustic tarps, for most farmers then prepared their own leather; were armed, sole and heel, with heavy, broad-headed nails, to endure the clod and the road: as hats were then little in use, as among small lairds or country gentry, westland heads were commonly covered with a coarse, blue bonnet, with a stopple on its flat crown, made in thousands at Kilmarnock, and known in all lands by the name of scome bonnets. His plaid was a handsome red and white check for pride in poetics, he said, was no sin—prepared of fine wool with more than common care, in the hands of his mother and sisters, and woven with more skill than the village weaver was usually required to exert. His dwelling was in keeping with his dress, a low, thatched house with a kitchen, a bedroom and closet, with floors of knapped clay, and ceilings of moorland turf a few books on a shelf, thumbed by many a thumb; a few hams drying above head in the smol
which was in no haste to get out at the roof—a wooden settle, some oak chairs, chaff beds well covered with blankets, with a fire of peat and wood burning at a distance from the gable wall, on the middle of the floor. His food was as homely as his habitation, and consisted chiefly of oatmeal-porridge, barley-broth, and potatoes, and milk. How the muse happened to visit him in this clay biggin, take a fancy to a clouterly peasant, and teach him strains of consummate beauty and elegance, must ever be a matter of wonder to all those, and they are not few, who hold that noble sentiments and heroic deeds are the exclusive portion of the gently nursed and the far daccened.

Of the earlier verses of Burns few are preserved: when composed, he put them on paper, but he kept them to himself: though a poet at sixteen, he seems not to have made even his brother his confidant till he became a man, and his judgment had ripened. He, however, made a little clasped paper book his treasurier, and under the head of "Observations, Hints, Songs, and Scraps of Poetry," we find many a wayward and impassioned verse, songs rising little above the humblest country strain, or bursting into an elegance and a beauty worthy of the highest of minstrels. The first words noted down are the stanzas he composed on his fair companion of the harvest-field, out of whose hands he loved to remove the nettles-stings and the thistles: the prettier song, beginning "Now westlin win's and slaughtering guns," written on the lass of Kircoswald, with whom, instead of learning mensuration, he chose to wander under the light of the moon: a strain better still, inspired by the charms of a neighbouring maiden, of the name of Annie Donald; another, of equal merit, arising out of his nocturnal adventures among the lasses of the west; and, finally, that crowning glory of all his lyric compositions, "Green grow the rashes." This little clasped book, however, seems not to have been made his confidant till his twenty-third or twenty-fourth year: he probably admitted to its pages only the strains which he loved most, or such as he had taken in his memory: at whatever age it was commenced, he had then begun to estimate his own character, and intimate his fortunes, for he calls himself in its pages "a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it."

We have not been told how welcome the incense of his songs rendered him to the rustic maidens of Kyle: women are not apt to be won by the charms of verse; they have little sympathy with dreamers on Parnassus, and allow themselves to be influenced by something more substantial than the roses and lilies of the muse. Burns had other claims to their regard than those arising from poetic skill: he was tall, young, good-looking, with dark, bright eyes, and words and wit at will: he had a sarcastic sally for all lads who presumed to cross his path, and a soft, persuasive word for all lasses on whom he fixed his fancy: nor was this all—he was adventurous and bold in love trysts and love excursions: long, rough roads, stormy nights, flooded rivers, and lonesome places, were no let to him; and when the dangers or labours of the way were braved, he was alike skilful in eluding vigilant aunts, wakerife mothers, and envious or suspicious sisters: for rivals he had a blow as ready as he had a word, and was familiar with snug stack-yards, broomy glens, and nooks of hawthorn and honeysuckle, where maidens love to be wooed. This rendered him dearer to woman’s heart than all the lyric effusions of his fancy; and when we add to such allurements, a warm, flowing, and persuasive eloquence, we need not wonder that woman listened and was won; that one of the most charming damsels of the West said, an hour with him in the dark was worth a lifetime of light with any other body; or that the accomplished and beautiful Duchess of Gordon declared, in a latter day, that no man ever carried her so completely off her feet as Robert Burns.

It is one of the delusions of the poet’s critics and biographers, that the sources of his inspiration are to be found in the great classic poets of the land, with some of whom he had from his youth been familiar: there is little or no trace of them in any of his compositions. He read and wondered—he warmed his fancy at their flame, he corrected his own natural taste by theirs, but he neither copied nor imitated, and there are but two or three allusions to Young and Shakspeare in all the range of his verse. He could not but feel that he was the scholar of a different school, and that his thirst was to be slaked at other fountains. The language in which those great bards embodied their thoughts was unapproachable to an Ayrshire peasant; it was to him as an almost foreign tongue: he had to think and feel in the not ungraceful or inharmonious
language of his own vale, and then, in a manner, translate it into that of Pope or of Thomson with the additional difficulty of finding English words to express the exact meaning of those of Scotland, which had chiefly been retained because equivalents could not be found in the more elegant and grammatical tongue. Such strains as those of the polished Pope or the sublime Milton were beyond his power, less from deficiency of genius than from lack of language: he could, indeed, write English with ease and fluency; but when he desired to be tender or impassioned, to persuade or subdue, he had recourse to the Scottish, and he found it sufficient.

The goddesses or the Daillaha of the young poet's song were, like the language in which he celebrated them, the produce of the district; not dames high and exalted, but lasses of the ha and of the byre, who had never been in higher company than that of shepherds or ploughmen or danced in a politer assembly than that of their fellow-peasants, on a barn-floor, to the sound of the district fiddle. Nor even of these did he choose the loveliest to lay out the wealth of verse upon: he has been accused, by his brother among others, of lavishing the colours of his fancy on very ordinary faces. "He had always," says Gilbert, "a jealousy of people who were richer than himself; his love, therefore, seldom settled on persons of this description. When selected any one, out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination: and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captor, as she appeared to others and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her." "My heart," he himself, speaking of those days, observes, "was completely tinder, a was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other." Yet, it must be acknowledged that sufficient room exists for believing that Burns and his brethren of the West had very different notions of the captivating and the beautiful; while they were moved by rosy cheeks and looks of ruf health, he was moved, like a sculptor, by beauty of form or by harmony of motion, and expression, which lightened up ordinary features and rendered them captivating. Such, I have been told, were several of the lasses of the West, to whom, if he did not surrender his heart, rendered homage; and both elegance of form and beauty of face were visible to all in those whom he afterwards sang—the Hamiltions and the Burnets of Edinburgh, and the Millers and M'Murdoes of the Nith.

The mind of Burns took now a wider range: he had sung of the maidens of Kyle in strains not likely soon to die, and though not weary of the softnesses of love, he desired to try his genius on matters of a sterner kind—what those subjects were he tells us; they were homely and hand, of a native nature and of Scottish growth: places celebrated in Roman story, vales more famous in Grecian song—hills of vines and groves of myrtle had few charms for him. "I hurt," thus he writes in August, 1785, "to see other towns, rivers, woods, and haughs of Scotland immortalized in song, while my dear native county, the ancient Bailleries of Carrick, K' and Cunningham, famous in both ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants—a county where civil and religious liberty have ever found their first support; their asylum—a county, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, and statesmen and the scene of many great events recorded in history, particularly the actions of the glorious Wallace—yet we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes of ayr, and the mountainous source of winding sweep of the Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Ettrick, and Tweed. This is a complaint I write gladly remedy, but, alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in genius and education." To up with glowing verse the outline which this sketch indicates, was to raise the long-laid spirit national song—to awaken a strain to which the whole land would yield response—a miracle attempted—certainly unperformed—since the days of the Gentle Shepherd. It is true that tongue of the muse had at no time been wholly silent; that now and then a burst of sublime we like the song of "Mary, weep no more for me," and of lasting merriment and humour, like that of "Tibbie Fowler," proved that the fire of natural poesie shone more, if it did not blaze; with the social strains of the unfortunate Ferguson revived in the city, if not in the field, the mem of him who sang the "Monk and the Miller's wife." But notwithstanding these and other productions of equal merit, Scottish poesie, it must be owned, had lost much of its original est
and servour, and that the boldest efforts of the muse no more equalled the songs of Dunbar, of Douglas, of Lyndsay, and of James the Fifth, than the sound of an artificial cascade resembles the undying thunders of Corra.

To accomplish this required an acquaintance with man beyond what the forge, the change-house, and the market-place of the village supplied; a look further than the barn-yard and the furrowed field, and a livelier knowledge and deeper feeling of history than, probably, Burns ever possessed. To all ready and accessible sources of knowledge he appears to have had recourse; he sought matter for his muse in the meetings, religious as well as social, of the district—consorted with staid matrons, grave plodding farmers—with those who preached as well as those who listened—with sharp-tongued attorneys, who laid down the law over a Mauchline gill—with country squires, whose wisdom was great in the game-laws, and in contested elections—and with roving smugglers, who at that time hung, as a cloud, on all the western coast of Scotland. In the company of farmers and fellow-peasants, he witnessed scenes which he loved to embody in verse, saw pictures of peace and joy, now woven into the web of his song, and had a poetic impulse given to him both by cottage devotion and cottage merriment. If he was familiar with love and all its outgoings andcomings—had met his lass in the midnight shade, or walked with her under the moon, or braved a stormy night and a haunted road for her sake—he was as well acquainted with the joys which belong to social intercourse, when instruments of music speak to the feet, when the reek of punchbowls gives a tongue to the staid and demure, and bridal festivity, and harvest-homes, bid a whole valley lift up its voice and be glad. It is more difficult to decide what poetic use he could make of his intercourse with that loose and lawless class of men, who, from love of gain, broke the laws and bribed the police of their country: that he found, among smugglers, as he says, “men of noble virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and modesty,” is easier to believe than that he escaped the contamination of their sensual manners and profligacy. The people of Kyle regarded this conduct with suspicion: they were not to be expected to know that when Burns ranted and housed with smugglers, conversed with tinkers huddled in a kiln, or listened to the riotous mirth of a batch of “randie gangrel bodies” as they “toosed their powks and pawnet their duds,” for liquor in Poosie Nansie’s, he was taking sketches for the future entertainment and instruction of the world; they could not foresee that from all this moral strength and poetic beauty would arise.

While meditating something better than a ballad to his mistress’s eye-brow, he did not neglect to lay out the little skill he had in cultivating the grounds of Mossgiel. The prosperity in which he found himself in the first and second seasons, induced him to hope that good fortune had not yet forsaken him: a genial summer and a good market seldom come together to the farmer, but at first they came to Burns; and to show that he was worthy of them, he bought books on agriculture, calculated rotation of crops, attended sales, held the plough with diligence, used the scythe, the reap-hook, and the flail, with skill, and the malicious ever began to say that there was something more in him than wild sallies of wit and foolish rhymes. But the farm lay high, the bottom was wet, and in a third season, indifferent seed and a wet harvest robbed him at once of half his crop; he seems to have regarded this as an intimation from above, that nothing which he undertook would prosper: and consoled himself with joyous friends and with the society of the muse. The judgment cannot be praised which selected a farm with a wet cold bottom, and sowed it with unsound seed; but that man who despairs because a wet season robs him of the fruits of the field, is unfit for the warfare of life, where fortitude is as much required as by a general on a field of battle, when the tide of success threatens to flow against him. The poet seems to have believed, very early in life, that he was none of the elect of Mammon; that he was too much of a genius ever to acquire wealth by steady labour, or by, as he loved to call it, gin-horse prudence, or grubb ing industry.

And yet there were hours and days in which Burns, even when the rain fell on his unhoused sheaves, did not wholly despair of himself: he laboured, nay sometimes he sloved on his farm; and at intervals of toil, sought to embellish his mind with such knowledge as might be useful, should chance, the goddess who ruled his lot, drop him upon some of the higher places of the land. He had, while he lived at Tarbolton, united with some half-dozen young men, all sons of
fanners in that neighbourhood, in forming a club, of which the object was to charm away a fit evening hours in the week with agreeable chit-chat, and the discussion of topics of economy love. Of this little society the poet was president, and the first question they were called on settle was this, "Suppose a young man bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has it in power to marry either of two women; the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome person, nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm w enough; the other of them, a girl every way agreeable in person, conversation, and behaviour but without any fortune, which of them shall he choose?" This question was started by the poet, and once every week the club were called to the consideration of matters connected with rural life and industry: their expenses were limited to threepence a week; and till the departure of Burns to the distant Mossiegil, the club continued to live and thrive; on his removal it lost its spirit which gave it birth, and was heard of no more; but its aims and its usefulness were revived in Mauchline, where the poet was induced to establish a society which only differed from the other in spending the moderate fines arising from non-attendance, on books, instead of liquors. Here, too, Burns was the president, and the members were chiefly the sons of husbandsmen, whom he found, he said, more natural in their manners, and more agreeable than the self-sufficient mechanics of villages and towns, who were ready to dispute on all topics, and inclined to be convinced on none. This club had the pleasure of subscribing for the first edition of the works of its great associate. It has been questioned by his first biographer, whether the refinement of mind, which follows the reading of books of eloquence and delicacy,—the mental improvement resulting from such calm discussions as the Tarbolton and Mauchline clubs indulged in, was not injurious to men engaged in the barn and at the plough. A well-ordered mind will be strengthened, as well as embellished, by elegant knowledge, while over those naturally barren and ungenial all that is refined or noble will pass as a sunny shower scuds over lumps of granite, bring neither warmth nor life.

In the account which the poet gives to Moore of his early poems, he says little about his exquisite lyrics, and less about "The Death and dying Words of Poor Maillie," or her "Elegy," first of his poems where the inspiration of the muse is visible; but he speaks with exultation of the same which those indecorous sallies, "Holy Willie's Prayer" and "The Holy Tulzie" brook from the sons of the clergy, and the people of Ayrshire. The west of Scotland is ever in the vanguard when matters either political or religious are agitated. Calvinism was shaken, at this time, a controversy among its professors, of which it is enough to say, that while one party rigidly adhered to the word and letter of the Confession of Faith, and preached up the palm and wilderness days of the Covenant, the other sought to soften the harsher rules and observances of kirk, and to bring moderation and charity into its discipline as well as its councils. Both belted themselves right, both were loud and hot, and personal,—bitter with a bitterness only known to religious controversy. The poet sided with the professors of the New Light, as the more tolerable were called, and handled the professors of the Old Light, as the other party were named, with the most unsparing severity. For this he had sufficient cause: he had experienced the meanness of kirk-discipline, when its frailties caused him to visit the stooil of repentance; moreover his friend Gavin Hamilton, a writer in Mauchline, had been sharply censured by some authorities, for daring to gallop on Sundays. Moodie, of Riccarton, and Russel, of Kiln nock, were the first who tasted of the poet's wrath. They, though professors of the Old Light, had quarrelled, and, it is added, fought: "The Holy Tulzie," which recorded, gave at the same time wings to the scandal; while for "Holy Willie," an elder of Mauchline, and an austere holy and pretender to righteousness, he reserved the fiercest of all his lampoons. In "Holy Will Prayer," he lays a burning hand on the terrible doctrine of predestination: this is a satire, dark, personal, and profane. Willie claims praise in the singular, acknowledges folly in the plural, and makes heaven accountable for his sins! In a similar strain of undevout satire, he eulogizes Goudie, of Kilmarnock, on his Essays on Revealed Religion. These poems, particularly two latter, are the sharpest lampoons in the language.

While drudging in the cause of the New Light controversialists, Burns was not unconscious strengthening his hands for worthier toils: the applause which selfish divines bestowed on
THE HOLY FAIR—HALLOWEEN.

...but graceless effusions, could not be enough for one who knew how fleeting the same was which came from the best of party disputes; nor was he insensible that songs of a beauty unknown for a century to national poetry, had been unregarded in the hue and cry which arose on account of "Holy Willie's Prayer" and "The Holy Tulsi." He hesitated to drink longer out of the sagitted pottle of Calvinistic controversy, he resolved to slake his thirst at the pure well-springs of patriotic feeling and domestic love; and accordingly, in the last and best of his controversial compositions, he rose out of the lower regions of lampoon into the upper air of true poetry.

"The Holy Fair," though stained in one or two verses with personalities, exhibits a scene glowing with character and incident and life: the aim of the poem is not so much to satirize one or two Old Light divines, as to expose and rebuke those almost indecent festivities, which in too many of the western parishes accompanied the administration of the sacrament. In the earlier days of the church, when men were staid and sincere, it was, no doubt, an impressive sight to see rank succeeding rank, of the old and the young, all calm and all devout, seated before the tent of the preacher, in the sunny hours of June, listening to his eloquence, or partaking of the mystic bread and wine; but in these our latter days, when discipline is relaxed, along with the sedate and the pious come swarms of the idle and the profligate, whom no eloquence can edify and no solemn rite affect. On these, and such as these, the poet has poured his satire; and since this desirable reparation the Holy Fairs, east as well as west, have become more decorous, if not more devout.

His controversial sallies were accompanied, or followed, by a series of poems which showed that national character and manners, as Lockhart has truly and happily said, were once more in the hands of a national poet. These compositions are both numerous and various: they record the poet's own experience and emotions; they exhibit the highest moral feeling, the purest patriotic sentiments, and a deep sympathy with the fortunes, both here and hereafter of his fellow-men; they delineate domestic manners, man's stern as well as social hours, and mingle the serious with the joyous, the sarcastic with the solemn, the mournful with the pathetic, the amiable with the gay, and all with an ease and unaffected force and freedom known only to the genius of Shakespeare. In "The Twa Dogs" he seeks to reconcile the labourer to his lot, and intimates, by examples drawn from the hall as well as the cottage, that happiness resides in the humblest abodes, and is even partial to the clouted shoe. In "Scotch Drink" he excites man to love his country, by precepts both heroic and social; and proves that while wine and brandy are the tipple of slaves, whiskey and ale are the drink of the free: sentimemts of a similar kind distinguish his "Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons," each of whom he exhorts by name to defend the remaining liberties and immunities of his country. A higher tone distinguishes the "Address to the Dell," he records all the names, and some of them are strange ones; and all the acts, and some of them are as whimsical as they are terrible, of this far kenned and noted personage; to these he adds some of the fiend's doings as they stand in Scripture, together with his own experiences; and concludes by a hope, as unexpected as meretricious and relenting, that Satan may not be exposed to an eternity of torments. "The Dream" is a humorous sally, and may be almost regarded as prophetic. The poet feigns himself present, in slumber, at the Royal birth-day; and supposes that he addresses his majesty, on his household matters as well as the affairs of the nation. Some of the princes, it has been satirically hinted, behaved afterwards in such a way as if they wished that the scripture of the Burns should be fulfilled: in this strain he has imitated the license and equalled the wit of some of the elder Scottish Poets.

"The Vision" is wholly serious; it exhibits the poet in one of those fits of despondency which the dull, who have no misgivings, never know: he dwells with sarcastic bitterness on the opportunities which, for the sake of song, he has neglected of becoming wealthy, and is drawing a sad parallel between rags and riches, when the muse steps in and cheers his despondency, by assuring him of undying fame. "Halloween" is a strain of a more homely kind, recording the superstitious beliefs, and no less superstitious doings of Old Scotland, on that night, when witches and elves and evil spirits are let loose among the children of men: it reaches far back into manners and customs, and is a picture, curious and valuable. The tastes and feelings of husbandman
inspired "The old Farmer's Address to his old mare Maggie," which exhibits some pleasing recollections of his days of courtship and hours of sociality. The calm, tranquil picture of household happiness and devotion in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," has induced Hogg, among others, to believe that it has less than usual of the spirit of the poet, but it has all the spirit that was required. The toil of the week has ceased, the labourer has returned to his well-ordered home—his "cottage and his clean hearth-stone,"—and with his wife and children beside him, turns his thoughts to the praise of that God to whom he owes all: this he performs with a reverence and an awe at once natural, national, and poetical. "The Mouse" is a brief and happy and very moving poem, happy, for it delineates, with wonderful truth and life, the agitation of the mouse when the cowt broke into its abode; and moving, for the poet takes the lesson of ruin to himself, and feels its present and dreads the future. "The Mountain Daisy," once, more properly, called by Burns "The Gowan," resembles "The Mouse" in incident and in moral, and is equally happy, in language and conception. "The Lament" is a dark, and all but tragic page, from the poet's own life. "Man was made to mourn" takes the part of the humble and the homeless, against the coldness and selfishness of the wealthy and the powerful, a favourite topic of meditation with Burns. He refrained, for a while, from making "Death and Doctor Hornbook" public; a poem which deviates from the offensiveness of personal satire, into a strain of humour, at once satirical and original.

His epistles in verse may be reckoned amongst his happiest productions: they are written all moods of mind, and are, by turns, lively and sad; careless and serious;—now giving advice then taking it; laughing at learning, and lamenting its want; scoffing at propriety and wealth yet admitting, that without the one he cannot be wise, nor wanting the other, independent. The Epistle to David Sillar is the first of these compositions: the poet has no news to tell, and serious question to ask: he has only to communicate his own emotions of joy, or of sorrow, as these he relates and discusses with singular elegance as well as ease, twining, at the same time, in the fabric of his composition, agreeable allusions to the taste and affections of his correspondent. He seems to have rated the intellect of Sillar as the highest among his rustic friends: he pays him more deference, and addresses him in a higher vein than he observes to others. The Epistles to Lapraik, to Smith, and to Rankine, are in a more familiar, or social mood, and lift the veil for the darkness of the poet's condition, and exhibit a mind of first-rate power, groping, and yet surely, its way to distinction, in spite of humility of birth, obscurity of condition, and the weakness of the wealthy or the titled. The epistles of other poets owe some of their fame to the raillery or the reputation of those to whom they are addressed; those of Burns are written, one and all, to nameless and undistinguished men. Sillar was a country schoolmaster, Lapraik a moorland laird, Smith a small shop-keeper, and Rankine a farmer, who loved a gill and a joke. These men were the chief friends, the only literary associates of the poet, during those early years, in which, with some exceptions, his finest works were written.

Burns, while he was writing the poems, the chief of which we have named, was a labouring husbandman on the little farm of Mosgool, a pursuit which affords but few leisure hours for either reading or pondering; but to him the stubble-field was musing-ground, and the walk behind the plough, a twilight saunter on Parnassus. As, with a careful hand and a steady eye, he guided his horses, and saw an evenly furrow turned up by the share, his thoughts were on other themes: he was straying in haunted glens, when spirits have power—looking in fancy on the last "sleeping barefoot," in silks and in scarlets, to a field-preaching—walking in imagination with the rosy widow, who on Halloween ventured to dip her left sleeve in the burn, where three lairds met—making the "bottle clank," with joyous smugglers, on a lucky run of gin or brandy, or if his thoughts at all approached his acts—he was moralizing on the daisy oppressed by the furrow which his own ploughshare had turned. That his thoughts were thus wandering have his own testimony, with that of his brother Gilbert; and were both wanting, the certain that he composed the greater part of his immortal poems in two years, from the summer of 1786 to the summer of 1788, would be evidence sufficient. The muse must have been strong with him, when, in spite of the rains and sleet of the "ever-dropping west"—when in defiance of hot and sweaty brows occasioned by reaping and thrashing—declining markets, and shows...
MOSSGIEL—HIS FARMING.

harvests—the clamber of his laird for his rent, and the tradesman for his account, he persevered in song, and sought solace in verse, when all other solace was denied him.

The circumstances under which his principal poems were composed, have been related: the "Lament of Mailie" found its origin in the catastrophe of a pet ewe; the "Epistle to Sillar" was confided by the poet to his brother while they were engaged in weeding the kale-yard; the "Address to the Dell" was suggested by the many strange portraits which belief or fear had drawn of Satan, and was repeated by the one brother to the other, on the way with their carts to the kilm, for lime; the "Cotter's Saturday Night" originated in the reverence with which the worship of God was conducted in the family of the poet's father, and in the solemn tone with which he desired his children to compose themselves for praise and prayer; "the Mouse," and its moral companion "the Daisy," were the offspring of the incidents which they relate; and "Death and Doctor Hornbook" was conceived at a freemason-meeting, where the hero of the piece had shown too much of the pedant, and composed on his way home, after midnight, by the poet, while his head was somewhat dizzy with drink. One of the most remarkable of his compositions, the "Jolly Beggars," a drama, to which nothing in the language of either the North or South can be compared, and which was unknown till after the death of the author, was suggested by a scene which he saw in a low ale-house, into which, on a Saturday night, most of the sturdy beggars of the district had met to sell their meal, pledge their superfluous rags, and drink their gains. It may be added, that he loved to walk in solitary spots; that his chief muses-ground was the banks of the Ayr; the season most congenial to his fancy that of winter, when the winds were heard in the leafless woods, and the voice of the swollen streams came from vale and hill; and that he seldom composed a whole poem at once, but satisfied with a few fervent verses, laid the subject aside, till the muse summoned him to another exertion of fancy. In a little back closet, still existing in the farm-house of Mossgiel, he committed most of his poems to paper.

But while the poet rose, the farmer sank. It was not the cold clayey bottom of his ground, nor the purchase of unsound seed-corn, nor the fluctuation in the markets alone, which injured him; neither was it the taste for freemason socialities, nor a desire to join the mirth of comrades, either of the sea or the shore; neither could it be wholly imputed to his passionate following of the softer sex—indulgence in the "illicit rove," or giving way to his eloquence at the feet of one whom he loved and honoured; other farmers indulged in the one, or suffered from the other, yet were prosperous. His want of success arose from other causes; his heart was not with his task, save by fits and starts: he felt he was designed for higher purposes than ploughing and harrowing, and sowing, and reaping: when the sun called on him, after a shower, to come to the plough, or when the ripe corn invited the sickle, or the ready market called for the measured grain, the poet was under other spells, and was slow to avail himself of those golden moments, which come but once in the season. To this may be added, a too superficial knowledge of the art of farming, and a want of intimacy with the nature of the soil he was called to cultivate. He could speak fluently of leas, and fags, and fowls, of change of seed and rotation of crops, but practical knowledge and application were required, and in these Burns was deficient. The moderate gain which those dark days of agriculture brought to the economical farmer, was not obtained: the close, the ill but niggardly care by which he could win and keep his crop-pieces,—gold was seldom in the farmer's hand,—was either above or below the mind of the poet, and Mossgiel, which, in the hands of an assiduous farmer, might have made a reasonable return for labour, was unproductive, under one who had little skill, less economy, and no taste for the task.

Other reasons for his failure have been assigned. It is to the credit of the moral sentiments of the husbandmen of Scotland, that when one of their class forgets what virtue requires, and dishonours, without reparation, even the humblest of the maidens, he is not allowed to go unpunished. No proceedings take place, perhaps one hard word is not spoken; but he is regarded with loathing by the old and the devout; he is looked on by all with cold and reproachful eyes—sorrow is foretold as his lot, sure disaster as his fortune; and if these chance to arrive, the only sympathy expressed is, "What better could he expect?" Something of this sort befell Burns: he had already satisfied the kirk in the matter of "Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess," his daughter, by one of his mother's maids; and now, to use his own words, he was brought within point-blank
of the heaviest metal of the kirk by a similar folly. The fair transgressor, both for her father's sake and her own youth, had a large share of public sympathy. Jean Armour, for it is of her speak, was in her eighteenth year; with dark eyes, a handsome foot, and a melodious tongue, she made her way to the poet's heart—and, as their stations in life were equal, it seemed that she had only to be satisfied themselves to render their union easy. But her father, in addition being a very devout man, was a zealot of the Old Light; and Jean, dreading his resentment was willing, while she loved its unforgiven satirist, to love him in secret, in the hope that time would come when she might safely show it: she admitted the poet, therefore, to her company in lonesome places, and walks beneath the moon, where they both forgot themselves, and were last obliged to own a private marriage as a protection from kirk censure. The professors of the Old Light rejoiced, since it brought a scoffing rhymery within reach of their hand; but her fate felt a twofold sorrow, because of the shame of a favourite daughter, and for having committed the folly with one both loose in conduct and profane of speech. He had cause to be angry, b his anger, through his zeal, became tyrannous: in the exercise of what he called a father's power he compelled his child to renounce the poet as her husband and burn the marriage-lines; for I regarded her marriage, without the kirk's permission, with a man so utterly cast away, as a worse crime than her folly. So blind is anger! She could renounce neither her husband nor his offspring in a lawful way, and in spite of the destruction of the marriage lines, and renouncing a name of wife, she was as much Mrs. Burns as marriage could make her. No one concerned seems to think so. Burns, who loved her tenderly, went all but mad when she denounced him: he gave up his share of Mossgiel to his brother, and roamed, moody and idle, about the land, with better aim in life than a situation in one of our western sugar-issles, and a vague hope of distincti as a poet.

How the distinction which he desired as a poet was to be obtained, was, to a poor bard in provincial place, a sore puzzle: there were no enterprising booksellers in the western land, a it was not to be expected that the printers of either Kilmarnock or Paisley had money to expend on a speculation in rhyme: it is much to the honour of his native country that the publicists which he wished for was at last made easy. The best of his poems, in his own handwriting, b found their way into the hands of the Ballantynes, Hamiltons, Parkers, and Mackenzies, and were much admired. Mrs. Stewart, of Stair and Afton, a lady of distinction and taste, had m accidentally, the acquaintance both of Burns and some of his songs, and was ready to befriend him; and so favourable was the impression on all hands, that a subscription, sufficient to defray the outlay of paper and print, was soon filled up—one hundred copies being subscribed for by the Parkers alone. He soon arranged materials for a volume, and put them into the hands of a printer in Kilmarnock, the Wee Johnnie of one of his biting epigrams. Johnnie was startled at the unceremonious freedom of most of the pieces, and asked the poet to compose one of modest language and moral aim, to stand at the beginning, and excuse some of those free ones which followed. Burns, whose "Twa Dogs" was then incomplete, finished the poem at a sitting, and put it in, much to his printer's satisfaction. If the "Jolly Beggars" was omitted for any other cause than its freedom of sentiment and language, or "Death and Doctor Hornbook" from any of feeling that than of being too personal, the causes of their exclusion have remained a secret. Is less easy to account for the omission of many songs of high merit which he had among papers: perhaps he thought those which he selected were sufficient to test the taste of the public. Before he printed the whole, he, with the consent of his brother, altered his name fi Burns to Burns, a change which, I am told, he in after years regretted.

In the summer of the year 1786, the little volume, big with the hopes and fortunes of the b made its appearance: it was entitled simply, "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect; by Rol Burns!” and accompanied by a modest preface, saying, that he submitted his book to his cous with fear and with trembling, since it contained little of the art of poetry, and at the best but a voice given, rude, he feared, and uncouth, to the loves, the hopes, and the fears of his bosom. Had a summer sun risen on a winter morning, it could not have surprised the Lows of Scotland more than this Kilmarnock volume surprised and delighted the people, one and a milkmaid sang his songs, the ploughman repeated his poems; the old quoted both, and
the devout rejoiced that idle verse had at last mixed a tone of morality with its mirth. The volume penetrated even into Nithsdale. "Keep it out of the way of your children," said a Cameronian divine, when he lent it to my father, "lest ye find them, as I found mine, reading it on the Sabbath." No wonder that such a volume made its way to the hearts of a peasantry whose taste in poetry had been the marvel of many writers: the poems were mostly on topics with which they were familiar: the language was that of the fireside, raised above the vulgarities of common life, by a purifying spirit of expression and the exalting fervour of inspiration: and there was such a brilliant and graceful mixture of the elegant and the homely, the lofty and the low, the familiar and the elevated—such a rapid succession of scenes which moved to tenderness or tears; or to subdued mirth or open laughter—unlooked for allusions to scripture, or touches of sarcasm and scandal—of superstitions to scare, and of humour to delight—while through the whole was diffused, as the scent of flowers through summer air, a moral meaning—a sentimental beauty, which sweetened and sanctified all. The poet's expectations from this little venture were humble: he hoped as much money from it as would pay for his passage to the West Indies, where he proposed to enter into the service of some of the Scottish settlers, and help to manage the double mystery of sugar-making and slavery.

The hearty applause which I have recorded came chiefly from the husbandman, the shepherd, and the mechanic: the approbation of the magnates of the west, though not less warm, was longer in coming. Mrs. Stewart of Stair, indeed, commended the poems and cheered their author: Dugald Stewart received his visits with pleasure, and wondered at his vigour of conversation as much as at his muse: the door of the house of Hamilton was open to him, where the table was ever spread, and the hand ever ready to help: while the purses of the Ballantynes and the Parkers were always as open to him as were the doors of their houses. Those persons must be regarded as the real patrons of the poet: the high names of the district are not to be found among those who helped him with purse and patronage in 1786, that year of deep distress and high distinction. The Montgomeries came with their praise when his fame was up; the Kennedys and the Boswells were silent; and though the Cunninghams gave effectual aid, it was when the muse was crying with a loud voice before him, "Come all and see the man whom I delight to honour." It would be unjust as well as ungenerous not to mention the name of Mrs. Dunlop among the poet's best and early patrons: the distance at which she lived from Mossiegil had kept his name from her till his poems appeared: but his works induced her to desire his acquaintance, and she became his warmest and surest friend.

To say the truth, Burns endeavoured in every honourable way to obtain the notice of those who had influence in the land: he copied out the best of his unpublished poems in a fair hand, and inserting them in his printed volume, presented it to those who seemed slow to buy: he rewarded the notice of this one with a song—the attentions of that one with a sally of encomiastic verse: he left psalms of his own composing in the manse when he feasted with a divine: he enclosed "Holy Willie's Prayer," with an injunction to be grave, to one who loved mirth: he sent the "Holy Fair" to one whom he invited to drink a Gill out of a mustachin stoup, at Mauchline market: and on accidentally meeting with Lord Daer, he immediately commemorated the event in a sally of verse, of a strain more free and yet as flattering as ever flowed from the lips of a court bard. While musing over the names of those on whom fortune had smiled, yet who had neglected to smile on him, he remembered that he had met Miss Alexander, a young beauty of the west, in the walks of Ballochmyle; and he recorded the impression which this fair vision made on him in a song of unequalled elegance and melody. He had met her in the woods in July, on the 18th of November he sent her the song, and reminded her of the circumstance from which it arose, in a letter which it is evident he had laboured to render polished and complimentary. The young lady took no notice of either the song or the poet, though willing, it is said, to hear of both now:—this seems to have been the last attempt he made on the taste or the sympathies of the gentry of his native district: for on the very day following we find him busy in making arrangements for his departure to Jamaica.

For this step Burns had more than sufficient reasons: the profits of his volume amounted to little more than enough to waft him across the Atlantic: Wes Johnnie, though the edition was
all sold, refused to risk another on speculation: his friends, both Ballantynes and Parkers volunteered to relieve the printer's anxieties, but the poet declined their bounty, and gloomily indented himself in a ship about to sail from Greenock, and called on his muse to take farewell of Caledonia, in the last song he ever expected to measure in his native land. That fine lyric beginning "The gloomy night is gathering fast," was the offspring of these moments of regret and sorrow. His feelings were not expressed in song alone: he remembered his mother and his natural daughter, and made an assignment of all that pertained to him at Mossgiel—and this was but little—and of all the advantage which a cruel, unjust, and insulting law allowed in the proceeds of his poems, for their support and behoof. This document was publicly read in the presence of the poet, at the market-cross of Ayr, by his friend William Chalmers, a notary public. Even this step was to Burns one of danger: some ill-advised person had uncoupled the mercers' pack of the law at his heels, and he was obliged to shelter himself as best could, in woods, it is said, by day and in barns by night, till the final hour of his departure came. That hour arrived, and his chest was on the way to the ship, when a letter was put into his hand which seemed to light him to brighter prospects.

Among the friends whom his merits had procured him was Dr. Laurie, a district clergyman who had taste enough to admire the deep sensibilities as well as the humour of the poet, and the generosity to make known both his works and his worth to the warm-hearted and amiable Blocklock, who boldly proclaimed him a poet of the first rank, and lamented that he was not in Edinburgh to publish another edition of his poems. Burns was ever a man of impulse: he recalled his che from Greenock; he relinquished the situation he had accepted on the estate of one Douglas; he was secret leave of his mother, and, without an introduction to any one, and unknown personally, all, save to Douglas Stewart, away he walked, through Glenap, to Edinburgh, full of new hope and confidence in his genius. When he arrived, he scarcely knew what to do: he hesitated to tell the professor; he refrained from making himself known, as it has been supposed he did, the enthusiastic Blocklock; but, sitting down in an obscure lodging, he sought out an obscure printer, recommended by a humble comrade from Kyle, and began to negotiate for a new edition of the Poems of the Ayrshire Ploughman. This was not the way to go about it: his barque was well nigh been shipwrecked in the launch; and he might have lived to regret the letter which hindered his voyage to Jamaica, had he not met by chance in the street a gentleman of the name of Dalzell, who introduced him to the Earl of Glencarin, a nobleman whose classic education did not hurt his taste for Scottish poetry, and who was not too proud to lend his hand to a rustic stranger of such merit as Burns. Cunningham carried him to Cress, the Murray of Edinburgh, a shrewd man of business, who opened the poet's eyes to his interests: the first proposals, then all but issued, were put in the fire, and new ones printed a diffusion over the island. The subscription was headed by half the noblemen of the north: Caledonian Hunt, through the interest of Glencarin, took six hundred copies: duchesses and countesses swelled the list, and such a crowding to write down names had not been witness since the signing of the solemn league and covenant.

While the subscription-papers were filling and the new volume printing on a paper and the type worthy of such high patronage, Burns remained in Edinburgh, where, for the winter seas he was a lion, and one of an unwonted kind. Philosophers, historians, and scholars had shall the elegant coteries of the city with their wit, or enlightened them with their learning, but there were all men who had been polished by polite letters or by intercourse with high life, and that was a sameness in their very dress as well as address, of which peers and peeresses had become weary. They therefore welcomed this rustic candidate for the honour of giving wings to their hours of lassitude and weariness, with a welcome more than common; and when his appro was announced, the polished circle looked for the advent of a lout from the plough, in whose uncouth manners and embarrassed address they might find matter both for mirth and woe. But they met with a barbarian who was not at all barbarous: as the poet met in Lord Daer's ings and sentiments as natural as those of a ploughman, so they met in a ploughman manly worthy of a lord: his air was easy and unperplexed: his address was perfectly well-bred, elegant in its simplicity: he felt neither eclipsed by the titled nor struck dumb before
approving of personal looks and connexions, were averse to see a daughter bestow her hand on one, whose language in religion was indiscreet, and whose morals were suspected. Yet, neither the vigilance of fathers, nor the suspicious care of aunts and mothers, could succeed in keeping those saunter whose hearts were together; but in these meetings circumspection and inventiveness were necessary: all fears were to be lulled by the seeming carelessness of the less—all perfumes were to be met and braved by the spirit of the lad. His home, perhaps, was at a distance, as he had wild woods to come through, and deep streams to pass, before he could see the signal-light now shown and now withdrawn, at her window; he had to approach with a quick eye and a war-foot, lest a father or a brother should see, and deter him: he had sometimes to wish for a closet upon the moon, whose light, welcome to him on his way, was likely to betray him when near; and he not infrequently reckoned a wild night of wind and rain as a blessing, since it helped to conceal his coming, and proved to his mistress that he was ready to brave all for her sake. Of rivals met and baffled; of half-willing and half-unconsenting maidens, persuaded as won; of the light-hearted and the careless becoming affectionate and tender; and of the coy, the proud, and the satiric being gained by "persuasive words, and more persuasive sighs," as dam had been gained of old, he had tales enough. The ladies listened, and smiled at the tender narratives of the poet.

Of his appearance among the sons as well as the daughters of men, we have the account of Dugald Stewart. "Burns," says the philosopher, "came to Edinburgh early in the winter: the attentions which he received from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country: his dress was suited to his stature, plain and unpretending, with sufficient attention to neatness: he always wore boots, and, when more than usual ceremony, buckskin breeches. His manners were manly, simple, and independent, strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without any indication of forward arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him and listened with apparent deference on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation of his temper, he would have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance, and his dread of anything approaching to meanness servility, rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing perhaps was more remarkable among his various attainments, than the fluency and precision and originality of language when he spoke in company; more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression and avoided more successfully than most Scotsmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to have been fitted to excel in whatevers walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities. He was passionately fond of the beau of nature, and I recollect he once told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and worth which cottages contained."

Such was the impression which Burns made at first on the fair, the titled, and the learned Edinburgh; an impression which, though lessened by intimacy and closer examination on part of the men, remained unimpaired, on that of the softer sex, till his dying-day. His company, during the season of balls and festivities, continued to be courted by all who desired to reckon gay or polite. Cards of invitation fell thick on him; he was not more welcome to plumed and jewelled groups, whom her fascinating Grace of Gordon gathered about her, that was to the grave divines and polished scholars, who assembled in the rooms of Stewart, or Robertson. The classic socialities of Tylor, afterwards Lord Woodhouselee, or the elaborate supper-tables of the whimsical Monboddo, whose guests imagined they were entertained in manner of Lucullus or of Cicero, were not complete without the presence of the ploughman Kyle; and the feelings of the rustic poet, facing such companies, though of surprise and del at first, gradually subdued, he said, as he discerned, that man differed from man only in polish, and not in the grain. But Edinburgh offered tables and entertainers of a less ord
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character than those I have named—where the glass circulated with greater rapidity; wit flowed more freely; and where there were neither highbred ladies to charm con- within the bounds of modesty, nor serious philosophers, nor grave divines, to set a limit use of speech, or the hours of enjoyment. To these companions—and these were all in classes, the levities of the rustic poet's wit and humour were as welcome as were set of his narratives to the accomplished Duchess of Gordon and the beautiful Miss Monboddo; they raised a social roar not at all classic, and demanded and provoked of wild humour, or indecorous mirth, with as much delight as he had witnessed among Kyle, when, at mill or forge, his humorous salles abounded as the ale flowed. In moments the rough, but learned William Nicol, and the young and amiable Robert Ains— the name of the poet was coupled with those of profane wits, free livers, and that if-idle gentlemen who hang about the courts of law, or for a season or two wear the lars, and handle cold iron.

gh had still another class of genteel convivialists, to whom the poet was attracted by as well as by pleasure; these were the relics of that once numerous body, the Jacobites, vred to cherish the feelings of birth or education rather than of judgment, and toasted of Stuart, when the last of the race had renounced his pretensions to a throne, for the see and the cross. Young men then, and high names were among them, annually met tenders birth-day, and sang songs in which the white rose of Jacobitism flourished: s announcing adherence to the male line of the Bruce and the Stuart, and listened ins of the laureate of the day, who prophesied, in drink, the dismissal of the intrusive b, by the right and might of the righteous and disinherited line. Burns, who was from a northern race, whose father was suspected of having drawn the claymore in who loved the blood of the Keith-Mariabells, under whose banners his ancestors had easily united himself to a band in whose sentiments, political and social, he was a sharer. veiled with acclamation: the dignity of laureate was conferred upon him, and his odes, in which he recalled the names and the deeds of the Grants, the Erskines, and the Gordons, was applauded for its fire, as well as for its sentiments. Yet, though drank and sang with Jacobites, he was only as far as sympathy and paeos went, of er: his reason renounced the principles and the religion of the Stuart line; and though ec over their fallen fortunes—though he sympathized with the brave and honourable perished in their cause—though he cursed "the butcher, Cumberland," and the bloody l commanded the heads of the good and the heroic to be stuck where they would affright ly, and pollute the air—he had no desire to see the splendid fabric of constitutional bich the united genius of all parties had raised, thrown wantonly down. His Jacobitism not his head, but his heart, and gave a mournful hue to many of his lyric compositions.

ese his poems were passing through the press. Burns made a few emendations of those in the Kilmarnock edition, and he added others which, as he expressed it, he had spun, since he passed Glenbuck. Some rather coarse lines were softened or omitted "a Dogs;" others, from a change of his personal feelings, were made in the " Vision:" d Doctor Hornbook," excluded before, was admitted now: the "Dream" was retained, the remonstrances of Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, and Mrs. Dunlop; and the "Brigs of opulent to his patrons in his native district, and the "Address to Edinburgh," in his titled and distinguished friends in that metropolis, were printed for the first time.

willing to alter what he had once printed: his friends, classic, titled, and rustic, found un and unpleasing, in matters of criticism; yet he was generally of a complimentary ated the robe of Calila in the "Vision;" with more scenes than it could well contain, right include in the landscape, all the country-seats of his friends, and he gave more share of commendation to the Wallaces, out of respect to his friend Mrs. Dunlop. Of of Edinburgh he said, they spun the thread of their criticisms so fine that it was unfit varp or weft; and of its scholars, he said, they were never satisfied with any Scottish s they could trace him in Horace. One morning at Dr. Blair's breakfast-table, when "Fair" was the subject of conversation, the reverend critic said, "Why should
if you had said, with tidings of damnation, the satire would have been the better and the bitterer."
"Excellent!" exclaimed the poet, "the alteration is capital, and I hope you will honour me by allowing me to say in a note at whose suggestion it was made." Professor Walker, who tells the anecdote, adds that Blair evaded, with equal good humour and decision, this not very polite request; nor was this the only slip which the poet made on this occasion: some one asked him in which of the churches of Edinburgh he had received the highest gratification: he named the High-church, but gave the preference over all preachers to Robert Walker, the colleague and rival in eloquence of Dr. Blair himself, and that in a tone so pointed and decisive as to make all at the table stare and look embarrassed. The poet confessed afterwards that he never reflected on his blunder without pain and mortification. Blair probably had this in his mind, when, on reading the poem beginning "When Guildford good our pilot stood," he exclaimed, "Ah! the politics of Burns always smell of the smithy," meaning, that they were vulgar and common.

In April, the second or Edinburgh, edition was published: it was widely purchased, and as warmly commended. The country had been prepared for it by the generous and discriminating criticisms of Henry Mackenzie, published in that popular periodical. "The Lounger," where he says, "Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet; that honest pride and independence of soul, which are sometimes the muse's only dower, break forth on every occasion, in his works." The praise of the author of the "Man of Feeling" was not more felt by Burns, than it was by the whole island: the harp of the north had not been swept for centuries by a hand so forcible, and at the same time so varied, that it awakened every tone, whether of joy or woe: the language was that of rustic life; the scenes of the poems were the dusty barn, the clay-floor'd rocky cottage, and the furrowed field; and the characters were cowherds, ploughmen, and mechanics.

The volume was embellished by a head of the poet from the hand of the now venerable Alexander Nasmyth; and introduced by a dedication to the noblemen and gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt, in a style of vehement independence, unknown hitherto in the history of subscriptions. The whole work, verse, prose, and portrait, won public attention, and kept it; and though some critics signified their displeasure at expressions which bordered on profanity, and at a license of language which they pronounced impure, by far the greater number united their praise to the all but general voice; nay, some scrupled not to call him, from his perfect ease and nature and variety, the Scottish Shakspeare. No one rejoiced more in his success and his fame, than the matron of Mossiel.

Other matters than his poems and socialities claimed the attention of Burns in Edinburgh. He had a hearty relish for the joyous genius of Allan Ramsay; he traced out his residences, and rejoiced to think that while he stood in the shop of his own bookseller, Creech, the same floor had been trod by the feet of his great forerunner. He visited, too, the lowly grave of the unfortunate Robert Fergusson; and must be recorded to the shame of the magistrates of Edinburgh, that they allowed him to erect a headstone to his memory, and to the scandal of Scotland, that it such a memorial he had not been anticipated. He seems not to have regarded the graves of scholars or philosophers; and he trod the pavements where the warlike princes and nobles had walked without any emotion. He loved, however, to see places celebrated in Scottish song, and the fields where battles for the independence of his country had been stricken; and, with money in his pocket which his poems had produced, and with a letter from a witty but weak man, Lord Buchan, instructing him to pull birks on the Yarrow, broom on the Cowden-knowes, and not to neglect to admire the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, Burns set out on a border tour, accompanied by Robert Ainslie, of Berrywell. As the poet had talked of returning to the plough, Dr. Blair imagined that he was on his way back to the furrowed field, and wrote him a handsome farewell saying he was leaving Edinburgh with a character which had survived many temptations; with a name which would be placed with the Ramsays and the Fergussons, and with the hopes of all that, in a second volume, on which his fate as a poet would very much depend, he might rise yet higher in merit and in fame. Burns, who received this communication when laying his leg ove
the saddle to be gone, is said to have muttered, "Ay, but a man's first book is sometimes like his first babe, healthier and stronger than those which follow."

On the 6th of May, 1787, Burns reached Berrywell: he recorded of the laisl, that he was clear-headed, and of Miss Ainslie, that she was amiable and handsome—of Dudgeon, the author of "The Maid that tends the Goats," that he had penetration and modesty, and of the preacher, Bowmaker, that he was a man of strong lungs and vigorous remark. On crossing the Tweed at Coldstream he took off his hat, and kneeling down, repeated aloud the two last verses of the " Cotter's Saturday Night": on returning, he drank tea with Bydone, the traveller, a man, he said, kind and benevolent: he cursed one Cole as an English Hottentot, for having rooted out an ancient garden belonging to a Romish ruin; and he wrote of Macdowal, of Caverton-mill, that by his skill in rearing sheep, he sold his flocks, ewe and lamb, for a couple of guineas each: that he washed his sheep before shearing—and by his turnips improved sheep-husbandry; he added, that lands were generally let at sixteen shillings the Scottish acre; the farmers rich, and, compared to Ayrshire, their houses magnificent. On his way to Jedburgh he visited an old gentleman in whose house was an arm-chair, once the property of the author of "The Seasons;" he reverently examined the relic, and could scarcely be persuaded to sit in it: he was a warm admirer of Thomson.

In Jedburgh, Burns found much to interest him: the ruins of a splendid cathedral, and of a strong castle—and, what was still more attractive, an amiable young lady, very handsome, with "beautiful hazel eyes, full of spirit, sparkling with delicious moisture," and looks which betokened a high order of female mind. He gave her his portrait, and entered this remembrance of her attractions among his memoranda:—"My heart is thawed into melting pleasure, after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of indiffERENCE, amid the noise and nonsense of Edinburgh. I am afraid my bosom has nearly as much tinder as ever. Jed, pure be thy streams, and hallowed thy sylvan banks; sweet Isabella Lindsay, may pence dwell in thy bosom uninterrupted, except by the tumultuous throbblings of rapturous love!" With the freedom of Jedburgh, handsomely bestowed by the magistrates, in his pocket, Burns made his way to Wauchope, the residence of Mrs. Scott, who had welcomed him into the world as a poet in verses lively and graceful: he found her, he said, "a lady of sense and taste, and of a decision peculiar to female authors." After dining with Sir Alexander Don, who, he said, was a clever man, but far from a match for his divine lady, a sister of his patron Glencairn, he spent an hour among the beautiful ruins of Dryburgh Abbey; glanced on the splendid remains of Melrose; passed, unconscious of the future, over that ground on which have arisen the romantic towers of Abbotsford; dined with certain of the Souters of Selkirk; and visited the old keep of Thomas the Rymer, and a dozen of the hills and streams celebrated in song. Nor did he fail to pay his respects, after returning through Dunse, to Sir James Hall, of Dunglass, and his lady, and was much pleased with the scenery of their romantic place. He was now joined by a gentleman of the name of Kerr, and crossing the Tweed a second time, penetrated into England, as far as the ancient town of Newcastle, where he smiled at a facetious Northumbrian, who at dinner caused the beef to be eaten before the broth was served, in obedience to an ancient injunction, lest the hungry Scotch should come and snatch it. On his way back he saw, what proved to be prophetic of his own fortune—the rony of an unfortunate farmer's stock: he took out his journal, and wrote with a troubled brow, "B.C. A economy, and decent industry, do you preserve me from being the principal dramatic personage, in such a scene of horror." He extended his tour to Carlisle, and from thence to the banks of the Nith, where he looked at the farm of Ellisland, with the intention of trying once more his fortune at the plough, should poetry and patronage fail him.

On his way through the West, Burns spent a few days with his mother at Mossgiel: he had left her an unknown and an almost banished man: he returned in fame and in sunshine, admired by all who aspired to be thought tasteful or refined. He felt offended alike with the patriarchal stateliness of Edinburgh and the plebeian servility of the husbandmen of Ayrshire; and dreading the influence of the unlucky star which had hitherto ruled his lot, he bought a pocket Milton, he said, for the purpose of studying the intrepid independence and daring magnanimity, and noble defence of hardships, exhibited by Satan! In this mood he reached Edinburgh—only to leave it
some where Robert the Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn." He then proceeded northward by Ochtertyre, the water of Earn, the vale of Glen Almond, and the traditional grave of Ossian. He looked in at princely Taymouth; mused an hour or two among the Birks of Aberfeldy; gazed from Birnam top; paused amid the wild grandeur of the pass of Killiecrankie, at the stone which marks the spot where a second patriot Graham fell, and spent a day at Blair, where he experienced the graceful kindness — the Duke of Atholl, and in a strain truly elegant, petitioned him, in the name of Bruar Water, to hide the utter nakedness of its otherwise picturesque banks, with plantations of birch and oak. Quitting Blair he followed the course of the Spey, and passing, as he told his brother, through a wild country, among cliffs gray with eternal snows, and glens gloomy and savage, reached Findhorn in mist and darkness; visited Castle Cawdor, where Macbeth murdered Duncan; hastened through Inverness to Urquhart Castle, and the Falls of Fyres, and turned southward to Kilravock, over the fatal moor of Culoden. He admired the ladies of that classic region for their snooded ringlets, simple elegance of dress, and expressive eyes: in Mrs. Ross, of Kilravock Castle, he found that matronly grace and dignity which he owned he loved; and in the Duke and Duchess of Gordon a renewal of that more than kindness with which they had welcomed him in Edinburgh. But while he admired the palace of Fochabers, and was charmed by the condescensions of the noble proprietors, he forgot that he had left a companion at the inn, too proud and captious to be pleased at favours showered on others: he hastened back to the inn with an invitation and an apology: he found the fiery pedant in a foaming rage, striving up and down the street, cursing in Scotch and Latin the loitering postillions for not jockeying the horses, and hurrying him away. All apology and explanation was in vain, and Burns, with a vexation which he sought not to conceal, took his seat silently beside the irascible pedagogue, and returned to the South by Droughty Castle, the banks of Enderney and Queensferry. He parted with the Highlands in a kindly mood, and loved to recall the scenes and the people, both in conversation and in song.

On his return to Edinburgh he had to bide the time of his bookseller and the public: the impression of his poems, extending to two thousand eight hundred copies, was sold widely: much of the money had to come from a distance, and Burns lingered about the northern metropolis, expecting a settlement with Creech, and with the hope that those who dispensed his country's patronage might remember one who then, as now, was reckoned an ornament to the land. But Creech, a parsimonious man, was slow in his payments; the patronage of the country was swelled up in the sink of politics, and though noblemen smiled, and ladies of rank nodded their jewelled heads in approbation of every new song he sung and every witty sally he uttered, they reckoned any further notice or care superfluous: the poet, an observant man, saw all this; but hope was the cordial of his heart, he said, and he hoped and lingered on. Too active a genius to remain idle, he addressed himself to the twofold business of love and verse. Repulsed by the stately Beauty of the Devon, he sought consolation in the society of one, as fair, and infinitely more witty; and as an accident had for a time deprived him of the use of one of his legs, he gave wings to hours of pain, by writing a series of letters to this Edinburgh enchantress, in which he signed himself Sylvander, and addressed her under the name of Clarinda. In these compositions, which no one can regard as serious, and which James Graehame the poet called "a romance of real Platonic affection," amid much affection both of language and sentiment, and a desire to say fine and startling things, we can see the proud heart of the poet thronging in the dread of being neglected or forgotten by his country. The love which he offers up at the altar of wit and beauty, seems assumed and put on, for its rapture is artificial, and its brilliancy that of an icicle: no woman was ever wooed and won in that Malvolio way; and there is no doubt that Mrs. M'Lehose felt as much offence as pleasure at this boisterous display of regard. In aftertimes he loved to remember her:—when wine circulated, Mrs. Mac was his favourite toast.

During this season he began his lyric contributions to the Musical Museum of Johnson, a work which, amid many imperfections of taste and arrangement, contains more of the true old music and genuine old songs of Scotland, than any other collection with which I am acquainted. Burns gathered oral airs, and fitted them with words of mirth or of woe, of tenderness or of humour, with unexampled readiness and felicity; he eked out old fragments and sobered down licentious
strains so much in the olden spirit and feeling, that the new cannot be distinguished from the ancient; nay, he inserted lines and half lines, with such skill and nicety, that antiquarian are perplexed to settle which is genuine or which is simulated. Yet with all this he abated not of the natural mirth or the racy humour of the lyric muse of Scotland: he did not like her the less because she walked like some of the maidens of her strains, high-kilted at times, and spoke with the freedom of innocence. In these communications we observe how little his border-jaunt among the fountains of ancient song contributed either of sentiment or allusion, to his lyrics; and how deeply his strains, whether of pity or of merriment, were coloured by what he had seen, and heard, and felt in the Highlands. In truth, all that lay beyond the Forth was an undiscovered land to him; while the lowland districts were not only familiar to his mind and eye, but all their more romantic vales and hills and streams were already musical in songs of such excellence as induced him to dread failure rather than hope triumph. Moreover, the Highlands teemed with Jacobitical feelings, and scenes hallowed by the blood or the sufferings of men heroic, and perhaps misguided; and the poet, willingly yielding to an impulse which was truly romantic, and believed by thousands to be loyal, penned his songs on Drumossie, and Killiecrankie, as the spirit of sorrow or of bitterness prevailed. Though accompanied, during his northern excursions, by friends whose socialities and conversation forbade deep thought, or even serious remark, it will be seen by those who read his lyrics with care, that his wreath is indebted for some of its fairest flowers to the Highlands.

The second winter of the poet's abode in Edinburgh had now arrived: it opened, as might have been expected, with less rapturous welcomes and with more of frosty civility than the first. It must be confessed, that indulgence in prolonged socialities, and in company which, though clever, could not be called select, contributed to this; nor must it be forgotten that his love for the sweeter part of creation was now and then carried beyond the limits of poetic respect, and the delicacies of courtesy; tending to estrange the austere and to lessen the admiration at first common to all. Other causes may be assigned for this wane of popularity: he took no care to conceal his contempt for all who depended on mere scholarship for eminence, and he had a perilous knack in sketching with a sarcastic hand the characters of the learned and the grave. Some indeed of the high literati of the north—Home, the author of Douglas, was one of them—spoke of the poet as a chance or an accident: and though they admitted that he was a poet, yet he was not one of settled grandeur of soul, brightened by study. Burns was probably aware of this; he takes occasion in some of his letters to suggest, that the hour may be at hand when he shall be accounted by scholars as a meteor, rather than a fixed light, and to suspect that the praise bestowed on his genius was partly owing to the humility of his condition. From his lingering so long about Edinburgh, the nobility began to dread a second volume by subscription, the learned to regard him as a fierce Thoban, who resolved to carry all the outworks to the temple of Fame without the labour of making regular approaches; while a third party, and not the least numerous, looked on him with distrust, as one who hovered between Jacobite and Jacobin; who disliked the loyal-minded, and loved to lampoon the reigning family. Besides, the marvel of the inspired ploughman had begun to subside; the bright gloss of novelty was worn off, and his fault lay in his unwillingness to see that he had made all the sport which the Philistines expected, and was required to make room for some "salvage" of the season, to paw, and roar, and shake the mane. The doors of the titled, which at first opened spontaneously, like those in Milton's heaven, were now unclosed for him with a tardy courtesy: he was received with measured stateliness, and seldom requested to repeat his visit. Of this charged aspect of things he complained to a friend: but his real sorrows were mixed with those of the fancy:—he told Mrs. Dunlop with what pangs of heart he was compelled to take shelter in a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle him in the mire. In this land of titles and wealth such querulous sensibilities must have been frequently offended.

Burns, who had talked lightly hitherto of resuming the plough, began now to think seriously about it, for he saw it must come to that at last. Miller, of Dalwinton, a gentleman of scientific acquirements, and who has the merit of applying the impulse of steam to navigation, had offered the poet the choice of his farms, on a fair estate which he had purchased on the Nith: aided by
brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding." To the accomplished Margaret Chalmers, of Edinburgh, he adds, to complete the picture, "I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and kindest heart in the country: a certain late publication of Scots' poems she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads in the land, as she has the finest woodnote wild you ever heard." With his young wife, a punch bowl of Scottish marble, and an eight-day clock, both presents from Mr. Armour, now reconciled to his eminent son-in-law with a new plough, and a beautiful heifer, given by Mrs. Dunlop, with about four hundred pound in his pocket, a resolution to toil, and a hope of success, Burns made his appearance on the bank of the Nith, and set up his staff at Ellisland. This farm, now a classic spot, is about six miles up the river from Dumfries; it extends to upwards of a hundred acres: the soil is kindly; the hollands portion of it loamy and rich, and it has at command fine walks on the river side, a view of the Friar's Carse, Cowshill, and Dalswinton. For a while the poet had to hide his head in a smoky hovel; till a house to his fancy, and offices for his cattle and his crops were built, his accommodation was sufficiently humble; and his mind taking its bus from his situation, infused a bitterness into the letters in which he first made known to his western friends that he had fix his abode in Nithsdale. "I am here," said he, "at the very elbow of existence: the only thing to be found in perfection in this country are stupidity and canting; prose they only know in grace and prayers, and the value of those they estimate as they do their plaiden webs, by the ell: for the muse, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet." "This is an undiscovere clime," he at another period exclaims, "it is unknown to poetry, and prose never looked on save in drink. I sit by the fire, and listen to the hum of the spinning-wheel: I hear, but cannot see it, for it is hidden in the smoke which eddies round and round me before it seeks to escape the window and door. I have no converse but with the ignorance which encloses me: no kenned fat but that of my old mare, Jenny Geddes—my life is dwindled down to mere existence." When the poet's new house was built and pleased, and the atmosphere of his mind began to clear, he found the land to be fruitful, and its people intelligent and wise. In Riddel, of Friar Carse, he found a scholar and antiquarian; in Miller, of Dalswinton, a man conversant with science as well as with the world; in M'Merdo, of Drumlanrig, a generous and accomplished gentleman; and in John Syme, of Ryedale, a man much after his own heart, and a lover of wit and socialities of polished life. Of these gentlemen Riddel, who was his neighbour, was the favourite: a door was made in the march-fence which separated Ellisland from Friar's Cars that the poet might indulge in the retirement of the Carse hermitage, a little lodge in the woe as romantic as it was beautiful, while a pathway was cut through the dwarf oaks and birch which fringed the river bank, to enable the poet to saunter and muse without let or interrupt. This attention was rewarded in an inscription for the hermitage, written with elegance as well feeling, and which was the first fruits of his fancy in this unpoetic land. In a happier strain I remembered Matthew Henderson: this is one of the sweetest as well as happiest of his poet compositions. He heard of his friend's death, and called on nature animate and inanimate to lament the loss of one who held the patent of his honours from God alone, and who loved that was pure and lovely and good. "The Whistle" is another of his Ellisland compositions: its contest which he has recorded with such spirit and humour took place almost at his door: the heroes were Ferguson, of Craigdarroch, Sir Robert Laurie, of Maxwelltown, and Riddell, the Friar's Carse: the poet was present, and drank bottle and bottle about with the best, as when all was done he seemed much disposed, as an old servant at Friar's Carse remembered, take up the victor.

Burns had become fully reconciled to Nithsdale, and was on the most intimate terms with the muse when he produced Tam O'Shanter, the crowning glory of all his poems. For this marvellous tale we are indebted to something like accident: Francis Grose, the antiquary, happened to visit Friar's Carse, and as he loved wine and wit, the total want of imagination was no hindrance his friendly intercourse with the poet: "Alloway's bold haunted kirk" was mentioned, and Grose said he would include it in his Illustrations of the antiquities of Scotland, if the bard of Doon would write a poem to accompany it. Burns consented, and before he left the table, various traditions which belonged to the ruin were passing through his mind. One of these w
that touching ode; and he thus intimates the continuance of his early affection for "The fair
haired lass of the west," in a letter of that time to Mrs. Dunlop. "If there is another life, I
must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane. What a flattering idea
then, is a world to come! There shall I, with speechless agony of rapture, again recognise my
lost, my ever dear Mary, whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love.
These melancholy words gave way in their turn to others of a nature lively and humorous: "Tan
Glen," in which the thoughts flow as freely as the waters of the Nith, on whose banks he wrote
it; "Findlay," with its quiet vein of sly simplicity; "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," the first
of social, and "She's fair and fause," the first of sarcastic songs, with "The dell's awa wi' th
Exciseman," are all productions of this period—a period which had besides its own fears and its
own forebodings.

For a while Burns seemed to prosper in his farm: he held the plough with his own hand, he
guided the harrows, he distributed the seed-corn equally among the furrows, and he reaped th
crop in its season, and saw it safely covered in from the storms of winter with "thack and rape;" his
wife, too, superintended the dairy with a skill which she had brought from Kyle, and as th
harvest, for a season or two, was abundant, and the dairy yielded butter and cheese for th
market, it seemed that "the luckless star" which ruled his lot had relented, and now shone
unbending and benignly. But much more is required than toil of hand to make a successful
farmer, nor will the attention bestowed only by fits and starts, compensate for carelessness o
oversight: frugality, not in one thing but in all, is demanded, in small matters as well as in gres
while a careful mind and a vigilant eye must superintend the labours of servants, and the whole
system of in-door and out-door economy. Now, during the three years which Burns stayed 1
Ellisland, he neither wrought with that constant diligence which farming demands, nor did he
bestow upon it the unremitting attention of eye and mind which such a farm required: beside
his skill in husbandry was but moderate—the rent, though of his own fixing, was too high for
him and for the times; the ground, though good, was not so excellent as he might have had e
the same estate—he employed more servants than the number of acres demanded, and spread $t
them a richer board than common: when we have said this we need not add the expensive tastes
induced by poetry, to keep readers from starting, when they are told that Burns, at the close of
the third year of occupation, resigned his lease to the landlord, and bade farewell for ever to th
plough. He was not, however, quite desolate; he had for a year or more been appointed on th
excise, and had superintended a district extending to ten large parishes, with applause; indeed
it has been assigned as the chief reason for failure in his farm, that when the plough or the sick
summoned him to the field, he was to find, either pursuing the defaulters of the revenu
among the valleys of Dumfriesshire, or measuring out pastoral verses to the beauties of the la
He retired to a house in the Bank-vennel of Dumfries, and commenced a town-life: he commenced
it with an empty pocket, for Ellisland had swallowed up all the profits of his poems: he had no
neither a barn to produce meal nor barley, a barn-yard to yield a fat hen, a field to which I
would go at Martinmas for a mart, nor a dairy to supply milk and cheese and butter to the tab
—he had, in short, all to buy and little to buy with. He regarded it as a compensation that I
had no farm-rent to provide, no bankruptcies to dread, no horse to keep, for his excise duties he
now confined to Dumfries, and that the burden of a barren farm was removed from his mind, as
his muse at liberty to renew his unsolicited strains.

But from the day of his departure from "the barren" Ellisland, the downward course of Burns
may be dated. The cold neglect of his country had driven him back indignantly to the plough
and he hoped to gain from the furrowed field that independence which it was the duty of Scotla
to have provided: but he did not resume the plough with all the advantages he possessed when
he first forsook it: he had revelled in the luxuries of polished life—his tastes had been render
expensive as well as pure; he had witnessed, and he hoped for the pleasures of literary retire
ment, while the hands which had led jewelled dames over scented carpets to supper tables load
with silver took hold of the hilt of the plough with more of reluctance than goodwill. Edinburgh
with its lords and its ladies, its delights and its hopes, spoiled him for farming. Nor were the
new labours more acceptable to his haughty spirit than those of the plough: the excise for
garlands of the muse on unlovely altars; he was liable to no such censure in Nithdale; he poured out the incense of poetry only on the fair and captivating: his Jane, his Lucy, his Phillis, and his Jessie were ladies of such mental or personal charms as the Reynolds’s and the Lawrences of the time would have rejoiced to lay out their choicest colours on. But he did not limit himself to the charms of those whom he could step out to the walks and admire: his lyrics give evidence of the wandering of his thoughts to the distant or the dead—he loves to remember Charlotte Hamilton and Mary Campbell, and think of the sighs and vows on the Devon and the Doon, while his harpstrings were still quivering to the names of the Millers and the M‘Mours—to the charms of the lasses with golden or with flaxen locks, in the valley where he dwelt. Of Jean M‘Mour and her sister Phillis he loved to sing; and their beauty merited his strains: to one who died in her bloom, Lucy Johnston, he addressed a song of great sweetness; to Jessie Lewars, two or three songs of gratitude and praise: nor did he forget other beauties, for the accomplished Mrs. Riddel is remembered, and the absence of fair Clarinda is lamented in strains both impassioned and pathetic.

But the main inspirer of the latter songs of Burns was a young woman of humble birth: of a form equal to the most exquisite proportions of sculpture, with bloom on her cheeks, and merriment in her large bright eyes, enough to drive an amatory poet crazy. Her name was Jean Lorimer; she was not more than seventeen when the poet made her acquaintance, and though she had got a sort of brevet-right from an officer of the army, to use his southerner name of Whelpdale, she loved best to be addressed by her maiden designation, while the poet chose to veil her in the numerous lyrics, to which she gave life, under the names of “Chloris,” “The laes of Craigie-burnwood,” and “The lassie wi’ the linte white locks.” Though of a temper not much inclined to conceal anything, Burns complied so tastefully with the growing demand of the age for the exterior decencies of life, that when the scrupling dames of Caledonia sung a new song in her praise, they were as unconscious whence its beauties came, as is the lover of art, that the shape and the gracefulness of the marble nympher which he admires, are derived from a creature who sells the use of her charms indifferently to sculpture or to love. Fine poetry, like other arts called fine, springs from “strange places,” as the flower in the fable said, when it bloomed on the dunghill; nor is Burns more to be blamed than was Raphael, who painted Madonnas, and Magdalenas with dishevelled hair and lifted eyes, from a loose lady, whom the pope, “Holy at Rome—here Antichrist,” charitably prescribed to the artist, while he laboured in the cause of the church. Of the poetic use which he made of Jean Lorimer’s charms, Burns gives this account to Thomson. “The lady on whom the song of Craigie-burnwood was made is one of the finest women in Scotland, and in fact is to me in a manner what Sterne’s Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of platonic love. I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of my best songs. Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life and love and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book? No! no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? Quite the contrary. I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion are you delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile, the divinity of Helicon.”

Most of the songs which he composed under the influences to which I have alluded are of the first order: “Bonnie Lesley,” “Highland Mary,” “Auld Rob Morris,” “Duncan Gray,” “Wandering Willie,” “Meg o’ the Mill,” “The poor and honest solder,” “Bonnie Jean,” “Phillis the fair,” “John Anderson my Jo,” “Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,” “Whistle and I’ll come to you, my lad,” “Bruce’s Address to his men at Bannockburn,” “Auld Lang Syne,” “Thou is I, my faithful fair,” “Wilt thou be my dearie,” “O Chloris, mark how green the groves,” “Con tented wi’ little, and cantil wi’ mair,” “Their groves of sweet myrtle,” “Last May a braw woof came down the lang gien,” “O Mally’s meek, Mally’s sweet,” “Hey for r laes wi’ a tocher,}
boroughs which Burns wished he might lose, and Heron lost the county which he foretold he would gain. It must also be recorded against the good taste of the poet, that he loved to recite "The Heron Ballads," and reckon them among his happiest compositions.

From attacking others, the poet was—in the interval between penning these election lampoons—called on to defend himself: for this he seems to have been quite unprepared, though in those yeasty times he might have expected it. "I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted," he thus writes to Graham, of Fintry, "by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government. Sir, you are a husband and a father: you know what you would feel, to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless prickling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced, from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected. I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be than those I have mentioned, hung over my head, and I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British constitution, on Revolution principles, next after my God, I am devotedly attached. To your patronage as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem as an honest man I know is my due. To these, sir, permit me to appeal: by these I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which with my latest breath I will say I have not deserved." In this letter, another, intended for the eye of the Commissioners of the Board of Excise, was enclosed, in which he disclaimed entertaining the idea of a British republic—a wild dream of the day—but stood by the principles of the constitution of 1688, with the wish to see such corruptions as had crept in, amended. This last remark, it appears, by a letter from the poet to Captain Erskine, afterwards Earl of Mar, gave great offence, for Corbet, one of the superiors, was desired to inform him, "that his business was to act, and not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was his duty to be silent and obedient." The intercession of Fintry, and the explanations of Burns, were so far effectual, that his political offence was forgiven, "only I understand," said he, "that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted." The records of the Excise Office exhibit no trace of this memorable matter, and two noblemen, who were then in the government, have assured me that this harsh proceeding received no countenance at head-quarters, and must have originated with some ungenerous or malicious person, on whom the poet had split a little of the nitric acid of his wrath.

That Burns was numbered among the republicans of Dumfries I well remember; but then those who held different sentiments from the men in power, were all, in that loyal town, stigmatised as democrats: that he either desired to see the constitution changed, or his country invaded by the liberal French, who proposed to set us free with the bayonet, and then admit us to the "fraternal embrace," no one ever believed. It is true that he spoke of premiers and peers with contempt; that he hesitated to take off his hat in the theatre, to the air of "God save the king!" that he refused to drink the health of Pitt, saying he preferred that of Washington—a far greater man; that he wrote bitter words against that combination of princes, who desired to put down freedom in France; that he said the titled spurred and the wealthy switched England and Scotland like two buck-horses; and that all the high places of the land, instead of being filled by genius and talent, were occupied, as were the high-places of Israel, with idols of wood or of stone. But all this and more had been done and said before by thousands in this land, whose love of their country was never questioned. That it was bad taste to refuse to remove his hat when other heads were bared, and little better to refuse to pledge in company the name of Pitt, because he preferred Washington, cannot admit of a doubt; but that he desired to be written down traitor, for mere matters of whim or caprice, or to be turned out of the unenvied situation of "gauging auld wives’ barrels," because he thought there were some stains on the white robes of the constitution, seems a sort of tyranny new in the history of oppression. His love of country is recorded in too many undying lines to admit of a doubt now: nor is it that chivalrous love alone which men call romantic; it is a love which may be laid up in every man's heart and practised in every man's life; the words are homely, but the words of Burns are always expressive:
could alone swallow, and that but in small quantities. When it is recollected that he had no more than thirty shillings a week to keep house, and live like a gentleman, no one need wonder that his wife had to be obliged to a generous neighbour for some of the chief necessities for her coming confinement, and that the poet had to beg, in extreme need, two guineas notes from a distant friend.

His sinking state was not unobserved by his friends, and Syme and M'Murdo united with Dr. Maxwell in persuading him, at the beginning of the summer, to seek health at the Brow-well, a few miles east of Dumfries, where there were pleasant walks on the Solway-side, and salubrious breezes from the sea, which it was expected would bring the health to the poet they had brought to many. For a while, his looks brightened up, and health seemed inclined to return: his friend, the witty and accomplished Mrs. Riddel, who was herself ailing, paid him a visit. "I was struck," she said, "with his appearance on entering the room: the stamp of death was impressed on his features. His first words were, 'Well, Madam, have you any commands for the other world?' I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest; he looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me so ill, with his usual sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing: we had a long conversation about his present state, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He showed great concern about his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works; he said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revised against him, to the injury of his future reputation; that letters and verses, written with unguarded freedom, would be handed about by vanity or malevolence when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent malice or envy from pouring forth their venom on his name. I had seldom seen his mind greater, or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies; but the concern and dejection I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed willing to indulge." This was on the evening of the 6th of July; another lady who called to see him, found him seated at a window, gazing on the sun, then setting brightly on the summits of the green hills of Nithdale. "Look how lovely the sun is," said the poet, "but he will soon have done with shining for me."

He now longed for home: his wife, whom he ever tenderly loved, was about to be confined in child-bed: his papers were in sad confusion, and required arrangement; and he felt that desire to die, at least, among familiar things and friendly faces, so common to our nature. He had not long before, though much reduced in pocket, refused with scorn an offer of fifty pounds, which a speculating bookseller made, for leave to publish his looser compositions; he had refused an offer of the like sum yearly, from Perry of the Morning Chronicle, for poetical contributions to his paper, lest it might embroil him with the ruling powers, and he had resisted the remittance of five pounds from Thomson, on account of his lyric contributions, and desired him to do so no more, unless he wished to quarrel with him; but his necessities now, and they had at no time been so great, induced him to solicit five pounds from Thomson, and ten pounds from his cousin, James Burns, of Montrose, and to beg his friend Alexander Cunningham to intercede with the Commissioners of Excise, to depart from their usual practice, and grant him his full salary; "for without that," he added, "if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger." Thomson sent the five pounds, James Burns sent the ten, but the Commissioners of Excise refused to be either merciful or generous. Stable, a young expectant in the customs, was both;—he performed the duties of the dying poet, and refused to touch the salary. The mind of Burns was haunted with the fears of want and the terrors of a jail; nor were those fears without foundation; one Williamson, to whom he was indebted for the cloth to make his volunteer regimentals, threatened the one; and a feeling that he was without money for either his own illness or the confinement of his wife, threatened the other.

Burns returned from the Brow-well, on the 18th of July: as he walked from the little carriage which brought him up the Mill hole-brae to his own door, he trembled much, and stopped with weakness and pain, and kept his feet with difficulty: his looks were woe-worn and ghastly, and no one who saw him, and there were several, expected to see him again in life. It was soon circulated through Dumfries, that Burns had returned worse from the Brow-well; that Maxwell thought ill of him, and that, in truth, he was dying. The anxiety of all classes was great; dif
crowd which filled the street seemed conscious what they were now losing for ever. Even while this pageant was passing, the widow of the poet was taken in labour; but the infant born in that unhappy hour soon shared his father's grave. On reaching the northern nook of the kirkyard, where the grave was made, the mourners halted; the coffin was divested of the mort-cloth, and silently lowered to its resting-place, and as the first shovel-full of earth fell on the lid, the volunteers, too agitated to be steady, justified the fears of the poet, by three ragged volleys. He who now writes this very brief and imperfect account, was present: he thought then, as he thinks now, that all the military array of foot and horse did not harmonize with either the genius or the fortune of the poet, and that the tears which he saw on many cheeks around, as the earth was replaced, were worth all the splendour of a show which mocked with unintended mockery the burial of the poor and neglected Burns. The body of the poet was, on the 6th of June, 1816, removed to a more commodious spot in the same burial-ground—his dark, waving locks looked then fresh and glossy—to afford room for a marble monument, which embodies, with neither skill nor grace, that well-known passage in the dedication to the gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt:—

"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." The dust of the bard was again disturbed, when the body of Mrs. Burns was laid, in April, 1834, beside the remains of her husband: his skull was dug up by the district craniologists, to satisfy their minds by measurement that he was equal to the composition of "Tam," "Shanter," or "Mary in Heaven." This done, they placed the skull in a leaden box, "carefully lined with the softest materials," and returned it, we hope for ever, to the hallowed ground.

Thus lived and died Robert Burns, the chief of Scottish poets: in his person he was tall and sinewy, and of such strength and activity, that Scott alone, of all the poets I have seen, seemed his equal: his forehead was broad, his hair black, with an inclination to curl, his visage uncommonly swarthy, his eyes large, dark and lustrous, and his voice deep and manly. His sensibility was strong, his passions full to overwoaming, and he loved, nay, adored, whatever was gentle and beautiful. He had, when a lad at the plough, an eloquent word and an inspired song for every fair face that smiled on him, and a sharp sarcasm or a fierce lampoon for every rustic who thwarted or contradicted him. As his first inspiration came from love, he continued through life to love on, and was as ready with the lasting incense of the muse for the ladies of Nithsdale as for the lasses of Kyle: his earliest song was in praise of a young girl who reaped by his side, when he was seventeen—his latest in honour of a lady by whose side he had wandered and dreamed on the banks of the Devon. He was of a nature proud and suspicious, and towards the close of his life seemed disposed to regard all above him in rank as men who unworthily possessed the patrimony of genius; he desired to see the order of nature restored, and worth and talent in precedence of the base or the dull. He had no medium in his hatred or his love; he never spared the stupid, as if they were not to be endured because he was bright; and on the heads of the innocent possessors of titles or wealth he was ever ready to shower his lampoons. He loved to start doubts in religion which he knew inspiration only could solve, and he spoke of Calvinism with a latitude of language that grieved pious listeners. He was warm-hearted and generous to a degree, above all men, and scorned all that was selfish and mean with a scorn quite romantic. He was a steadfast friend and a good neighbour: while he lived at Ellistand few passed his door without being entertained at his table; and even when in poverty, on the Millhole-brue, the poet seldom left his door but with blessings on their lips.

Of his modes of study he has himself informed us, as well as of the seasons and places in which he loved to muse. He composed while he stalked along the secluded banks of the Doon, the Ayr, or the Nith; as the images crowded on his fancy his pace became quickened, and in his highest moods he was excited even to tears. He loved the winter for its leafless trees, its swelling floods, and its winds which swept along the gloomy sky, with frost and snow on their wings: but he loved the autumn most—he has neglected to say why—the muse was then most liberal of her favours, and he composed with a happy sincerity unfelt in all other seasons. He filled his mind and heart with the materials of song—and retired from gazing on woman's beauty.
and from the excitement of her charms, to record his impressions in verse, as a painter delineates
on his canvas the looks of those who sit to his pencil. His chief place of study at Ellisland is
still remembered: it extends along the river-bank towards the Isle: there the neighbouring gentry
love to walk and peasants to gather, and hold it sacred, as the place where he composed Tam
O'Shanter. His favourite place of study when residing in Dumfries, was the ruins of Lincluden
College: made classic by that sublime ode, "The Vision," and that level and lowly award con-
tiguous to the College, on the northern side of the Nith: the latter place was his favourite resort;
it is known now by the name of Burns's musing ground, and there he conceived many of his latter
lyrics. In case of interruption he completed the verses at the fireside, where he swung to and fro
in his arm-chair till the task was done: he then submitted the song to the ordeal of his wife's
voice, which was both sweet and clear, and while she sang he listened attentively, and altered or
amended till the whole was in harmony, music and words.

The genius of Burns is of a high order: in brightness of expression and unsolicited ease and
natural vehemence of language, he stands in the first rank of poets: in choice of subjects, in
happiness of conception, and loftiness of imagination, he recedes into the second. He owes little
of his fame to his subjects, for, saving the beauty of a few ladies, they were all of an ordinary
kind: he sought neither in romance nor in history for themes to the muse; he took up topics
from life around which were familiar to all, and endowed them with character, with passion, with
tenderness, with humour—elevating all that he touched into the regions of poetry and morals.
He went to no far lands for the purpose of surprising us with wonders, neither did he go to
crowns or coronets to attract the stare of the peasantry around him, by things which to them
were "as a book shut and sealed: "The Daisy" grew on the lands which he ploughed; "The
Mouse" built her frail nest on his own stubble-field; "The Haggis" reeked on his own table;
"The Scotch Drink" of which he sang was the produce of a neighbouring still; "The Two Dogs,"
which conversed so wisely and wittily, were, one of them at least, his own collies; "The Vision"
is but a picture, and a brilliant one, of his own hopes and fears; "Tam Samson" was a friend
whom he loved; "Doctor Hornbook" a neighbouring pedant; "Matthew Henderson" a social
captain on half-pay; "The Scotch Bard" who had gone to the West Indies was Burns himself;
the heroine of "The Lament" was Jean Armour; and "Tam O'Shanter" a facetious farmer of
Kyle, who rode late and loved pleasant company, nay, even "The Dell" himself, whom he had
the hardihood to address, was a being whose eldritch croon had alarmed the devout matrons of
Kyle, and had wandered, not unseen by the bard himself, among the lonely glens of the Doon.
Burns was one of the first to teach the world that high moral poetry resided in the humblest
subjects: whatever he touched became elevated; his spirit possessed and inspired the commonest
topics, and endowed them with life and beauty.

His songs have all the beauties and but few of the faults of his poems: they flow to the
music as readily as if both air and words came into the world together. The sentiments are
from nature, they are rarely strained or forced, and the words dance in their places and echo the
music in its pastoral sweetness, social glee, or in the tender and the moving. He seems always
to write with woman's eye upon him: he is gentle, persuasive and impassioned: he appears to
watch her looks, and pours out his praise or his complaint according to the changeable moods of
her mind. He looks on her, too, with a sculptor's as well as a poet's eye: to him who works in
marble, the diamonds, emeralds, pearls, and elaborate ornaments of gold, but load and injure
the harmony of proportion, the grace of form, and divinity of sentiment of his nymph or his
goddess—so with Burns the fashion of a lady's bodice, the lustre of her satins, or the sparkle
of her diamonds, or other finery with which wealth or taste has loaded her, are neglected as idle
frippery—while her beauty, her form, or her mind, matters which are of nature and not of fashion,
are remembered and praised. He is none of the millinery bards, who deal in scented
silks, spider-net laces, rare gems, set in rarer workmanship, and who shower diamonds and
pearls by the bushel on a lady's locks: he makes bright eyes, flushing cheeks, the magic of
the tongue, and the "pulses' maddening play" perform all. His songs are, in general, pas-
torial pictures: he seldom finishes a portrait of female beauty without enclosing it in a natural
frame-work of waving woods, running streams, the melody of birds, and the lights of heaven.
Those who desire to feel Burns in all his force, must seek some summer glen, when a country girl searches among his many songs for one which sympathises with her own heart, and gives it full utterance, till wood and vale is filled with the melody. It is remarkable that the most naturally elegant and truly impassioned songs in our literature were written by a ploughman in honour of the rustic lasses around him.

His poetry is all life and energy, and bears the impress of a warm heart and a clear understanding: it abounds with passions and opinions—vivid pictures of rural happiness and the raptures of successful love, all fresh from nature and observation, and not as they are seen through the spectacles of books. The wit of the clouted shoe is there without its coarseness: there is a prodigality of humour without licentiousness, a pathos ever natural and manly, a social joy akin sometimes to sadness, a melancholy not unallied to mirth, and a sublime morality which seeks to elevate and soothe. To a love of man he added an affection for the flowers of the valley, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field: he perceived the tie of social sympathy which united animated with unanimated nature, and in many of his finest poems most beautifully he has enforced it. His thoughts are original and his style new and unborrowed: all that he has written is distinguished by a happy carelessness, a bounding elasticity of spirit, and a singular felicity of expression, simple yet inimitable; he is familiar yet dignified, careless, yet correct, and concise, yet clear and full. All this and much more is embodied in the language of humble life—a dialect reckoned barbarous by scholars, but which, coming from the lips of inspiration, becomes classic and elevated.

The prose of this great poet has much of the original merit of his verse, but it is seldom as natural and so sustained: it abounds with fine outflashes and with a genial warmth and vigour but it is defaced by false ornament and by a constant anxiety to say fine and forcible things. He seems not to know that simplicity was as rare and as needful a beauty in prose as in verse; he covets the pauses of Sterne and the point and antithesis of Junius, like one who believes that to write prose well he must be ever lively, ever pointed, and ever smart. Yet the account which he wrote of himself to Dr. Moore is one of the most spirited and natural narratives in the language and composed in a style remote from the strained and groped-for wit and sensibilities of many of his letters:—"Simple," as John Wilson says, "we may well call it; rich is fancy, overflowing in feeling, and dashed off in every other paragraph with the easy boldness of a great master."
PREFACE.

[The first edition, printed at Kilmarnock, July, 1786, by John Wilson, bore on the title-page these simple words:—"Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns;" the following motto, marked "Anonymous," but evidently the poet's own composition, was more ambitious:—

"The simple Bard, unbroke by rules of art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart:
And if inspired, 'tis nature's pow'res inspire—
Here all the melting thrill, and here the kindling fire."]

The following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses 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 requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compères around him in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship awakened 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 fatigue 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, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—an impertinent blockhead,
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

...bruting 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 honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "Humility has depressed many genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any 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 manoeuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawns 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 pretensions. 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 the dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the 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, contempt and oblivion.
THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

I.

WINTER.

A DIAIRIE.

(This is one of the earliest of the poet's recorded compositions; it was written before the death of his father, and is called by Gilbert Burns, 'a juvenile production.' To walk by a river while flooded, or through a wood on a rough winter day, and hear the storm howling among the leafless trees, excited the poet's thoughts. "In such a season," he said, "just after a train of misfortunes, I composed Winter, a Dairie."")

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blow;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snow;
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars freee 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 Power 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 (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign!

II.

DEATH AND DYING WORDS

OF

POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNO MOURNE'S TALM.

(This tale is partly true; the poet's pet ewe got entangled in her tether, and tumbled into a ditch; the face of ludicrous and awkward sorrow with which this was related by Hughie, the herd-boy, amused Burns so much, who was on his way to the plough, that he immediately composed the poem, and repeated it to his brother Gilbert when they met in the evening; the field where the poet held the plough, and the ditch into which poor Mailie fell, are still pointed out.)

- As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
  Were as day nibbling on the tether,
  Upon her cloot she coost a hichit,
  An' owre she wals'ld in the ditch:
  There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
  When Hughie he cam doyin by.
  Wi' glowing e'en an' lifted han's,
  Poor Hughie like a statute stane's;
  He saw her days were near and ended,
  But, was my heart! he could na mend it!
  He gaped wide but naething spak—
  At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whose lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woeful 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!

1 Dr. Young.

2 A neighbour's callan.
THE POETICAL WORKS

I'ut ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will,
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' wool!

"Tell him he was a master kin'!
An' ay was gude 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
Frere dogs, and tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guld cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel';
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, an' rippes o' corn.

"An' may they never learn the gaits
Of other vils, waurerst' pets!
To sink thro' slaps, an' rears an' steal
At stacks o' peas, 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 gree for them when they're dead.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' hair,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care;
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havens in his breast!
An' warn him what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at home
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, gracelesse brute.

"An' niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' any blastit, moorland toop,
But ay keep mind to moop an' nell
Wi' sheep o' credit like theysel!

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blissin' wi' you baith:
An' when you think up'o' your mither,
Mind to be kind to ans anither.

"Now, honest Hughie, dinna fall
To tell my master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'rt get my blather."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
And clos' her een among the dead.

III.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

[Burns, when he calls on the bards of Ayre and...]

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 less o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, doosie, wear
The mourning wood;
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the town she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly blest, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him:
Than Mailie dead.

I wis, she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel' wi' messe:
I'll say't, she never brake a fence,
Thro' thievish greed:
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wonders up the bowe,
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;

VARIATION.

'She was nae get o' ranted rams,
Wi' woo' like goats an' legs like tramps;
She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs,
A famous breed!
Now Robin, greenie, chews the hams
O' Mailie dead.'
OF ROBERT BURNS.

For her forbears were brought in ships
Fae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mallie dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wan-chancie thing—a rape!
It makes guid fellows grin an' gape,
Wi' shokin' dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mallie dead.

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

IV.
FIRST EPISTLE TO DAVIE,
A BROTHER POET.

[In the summer of 1784, Burns, while at work in the gardens, repeated this Epistle to his brother Gilbert, who was much pleased with the performance, which he considered equal if not superior to some of Allan Ramsay's Epistles, and said if it were printed he had no doubt that it would be well received by people of taste.]

— January, [1784.]

I.

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driv'ng snow,
And hing us o'wer the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hammer westlin' jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla mug,
I gude a wee the great folks' gift,
That live sae bien an' snug:
I ten less and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But banker and canker
To see their cursed pride.

II.

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

III.

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 could make us blest;
E'r then, sometimes we'd smatch a taste
O' trust 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 we can ca'.

IV.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hall?
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 brus when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till we're time till't,
And sing't when we has done.

V.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lou'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in makin' muckle hair;
It's no in books, it's no in leer,
To make us truly blest.

Ramsay.
If happiness has 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.

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

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

VIII.
But tend me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And datt'rey 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 kins'n:
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!

IX.
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 hea
Or my more 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 haur my fervent pray'r!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

X.
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 tempest's scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

XI.
O, how that name inspires my style
The words come skelpin, rank and fit
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure runs as fine,
As Phoebus and the famous Nine
Were glowerin' owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
'Till ance he's fairly hot,
And then he'll hich, and stilt, and jib
An' rin an unco fit:
But least then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dights now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.
SECOND WHISTLE TO HAVE A BROTHER FORT.

Hark by your heart, hark is your bible,
Long may your elbow sink and stumble,
To cheer your thee, the weary saddle.
O' war be gone,
Till hark make harps kindly wrestle,
Your gold, grey hairs.
V.
SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,
A BROTHER POET.

[David Sillar, to whom these epistles are addressed, was at that time master of a country school, and was welcome to Burns both as a scholar and a writer of verse. This epistle he prefixed to his poems printed at Kilmar-nock in the year 1798; he loved to speak of his early concrete, and supplied Walker with some very valuable anecdotes: he died one of the magistrates of Irvine, on the 2d of May, 1829, at the age of seventy.]

AULD HIBERN.
I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your sail-far-sent, friendly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair.
For my sake, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair.

siale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your alhuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you thro' the weary widdle
O' warly cares,
Till bairn's bairns kindly cuddle
Your said, gray hairs.

But DAVIE, lad, I'm red ye're glasikit;
I'm taund the Muse ye hae neglectit;
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be lickeret
Until ye fyke;
Sic hauns as you sound ne'er be faiket,
Be ha'n a wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brine,
Rivin' the words to gie them clink;
Whyles dae'st wi' love, whyles dae'st wi' drink,
Wi' jads or maasons;
An' whyles, but ay owre late, I think
Draaw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' 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 care to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the poughie put the nieve in,
An' while outha' there,
Then hiltie skittle, we gae screevin',
An' faash nae mair.

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

Hauld to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you monie a shawie;
But for the Muse she'll never leave ye,
Tho' o'er so purd,
Na, even th' limpin' wi' the spawie
Frasa door to door.

VI.
ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

"O Prince! O Chief of many throned Pow'r's,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.
"

[The beautiful and relenting spirit in which this fine poem finishes moved the heart of one of the coldest of our critics. "It was, I think," says Gilbert Burns, "in the winter of 1784, as we were going with carts for coal to the family fire, and I could yet point out the particular spot, that Robert first repeated to me the 'Address to the Deil.' The idea of the address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts we have of that august personage."]

O ye war, whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in your cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scald poor wretches!

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

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame:
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' you lovin' heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An', faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scum.

Whyles, ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles, on the strong-winged tempest flyin,
Tirlin the k'irs.


WHILES, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Graunie say,
In laden glens ye like to stray;
Or where suld-ruin'd castles, gray,
Ned to the moon,
Ye frite the night'ry wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yost the dyke she's heard you bumin,
Wi' earie drone;
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortries comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

As dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklen'tin light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a raash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' wavin' sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristil'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quack—quack—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd bogs,
Tell how wi' you, on rag weed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dissy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toll an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirk 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 work-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

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

Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction;
An' nighted trav'lers are’allur’d
To their destruction
An' ait your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk
The bleesin, cursd, mischievous monks
Dulide 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 stoj
Or, strange to tell
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,

The raptor'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry award,
In shady bow'r:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing doog
Ye came to Paradise incoig.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!”
An' gied the infant world a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, an' reesit gizz,
Ye did present your amoutie phix
'Mang better folk,
An' sklent on the man of Uss
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs an' botches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lowd's his ill tongu'd, wicked sooth,
Was worst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechin' fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to, this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Eree,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye've thair
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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 minnies:
Tho' ye was trinkle, sels, an' funny,
Ye ne'er was doonie:
But hame, tawie, quiet an' cannie,
An' unco sonnie.

That day ye pranced wi' muckle pride,
When ye bare 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 hootie and noble,
An' wrinkle like a saamont-coble,
That day, ye was a jinker noble,
For heils an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far, behin'!

When thou an' I were young an' skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreich;
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, an' 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 every tall thou pay't them hollow,
Where'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rump'it, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins war't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whailes;
Nae whip nor spur, but just a whattle
O' saugh or hazele.

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 brained't, an' fetch't, an' fiskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreash thy weel-sll'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r!
'Till spiritry knowes wad ra'r't and risket,
An' sllyet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' swaws were deep,
An' threatens'd labour back to keep,
I gled 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 ha' fa'd it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, an' breastit,
Then stood to blow;
But just thy stop a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoor't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairm-time a';
Four gallant brutes an'e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sellit awa,
That thou hast nae fit:
They drew me threetsen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An', wi' the weary war! fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to cyazy 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 fow,
A heapsit stimpard, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We're worn to cyazy years thegither;
We'll tayts about wi' ane another;
Wi' tentis care I'll fit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Where ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

VIII.
TO A HAGGIS.

[The vehement nationality of this poem is not a part of its merit. The haggis of the north is the mi
pie of the south; both are characteristic of the pec
the ingredients which compose the former are at
Scottish growth, including the be. nich contains th
the ingredients of the latter a gathered chiefly
the four quarters of the globe; the haggis is the trio
of poverty, the minced pie the triumph of wealth.]

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the pudding-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,

Painch, tripe, or thaim
Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurldies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distill
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic-labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reokin, rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch an'stop
Deli tak the hindmost, on they drive,
'Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld Guldman, maist like to rive,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or friessses wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect aconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his treas
Clap in his wake niece a blade,
He'll mak it whistle;
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
Like tape o' thistle.

Ye pow'r wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nee skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a Haggis!

X.
A PRAYER
IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

[I have heard the third verse of this very moving Prayer quoted by scrupulous men as a proof that the poet imputed his errors to the Being who had endowed him with wild and unruly passions. The meaning is very different: Burns felt the torrent-strength of passion overpowering his resolution, and trusted that God would be merciful to the errours of one on whom he had bestowed such o'ermastering gifts.]

O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause Of all my hope and fear? In whose dread presence, ere an hour Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths Of life I ought to shun; As something, loudly, in my breast, Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me, With passions wild and strong; And list'ning to their witching voice Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has some short, Or frailty stept aside, Do Thou, All-Good! for such thou art, In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd, No other plea I have, But, Thou art good; and goodness still Delighteth to forgive.

XI.
STANZAS
ON THE SAME OCCASION.

[These verses the poet, in his common-place book, calls "Mingivings in the Hour of Despondency and Prospect of Death." He elsewhere says they were composed when fainting-fit and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, first put nature on the alarm.]

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene? Have I so found it full of pleasing charms? Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between: Some gleams of sunshine "mid renewing storms:
THE POETICAL WORKS

Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or Death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Pain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Pain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way:
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me
Those heading furious passions to confine;
For all until I feel my pow'rs to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line;
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

Or through the mining outlet boomed,
Down headlong hurl.

Listening, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the currie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And through 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' these?

Where wilt thou cower thy glittering wing,
An' close thy e's?

Ev'n you on murr'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stained roost, and sheep-cote spell
My heart forgets,
While pitiless wild beasts
Beats.

Now Phoebus, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffied, viewed 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 unremitting,
Than heaven-illumined man on brother breastows:
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!
Even in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd luxury, flattery by her side,
The parasite empoinsoning her ear,
With all the servile wreathes in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic kind,
Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus below.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Where, where is love’s fond, tender throb,
With lordly honour’s lofty brow,
The powers you proudly own?
Is there, beneath love’s noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark maiden innocence a prey
To love—pretending smears,
This boasted honour turns away,
Shunning soft pity’s rising baw.
Regardless of the tears and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps this hour, in misery’s squaid 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 clamorous call,
Stretched on his straw he lays himself to sleep.
While through the ragged roof and chintzy wall,
Chill o’er his slumber piles the shifty 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 crushed low
By cruel fortune’s undeserved blow?
Addiction’s sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!”

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery saw,
And hailed the morning with a cheer—
A cottage-rousing crow!
But deep this truth impressed my mind—
Through all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles G—n.

XIII.
REMORSE.
A FRAGMENT.

[“I only agree,” says Burns, “with the author of the Theory of Moral Sentiments, that Remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom; an ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up admirably well, under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our follies or crimes have made us wretched, to bear all with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.”]

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind has this to say, ‘It was no deed of mine;’
But when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added—‘Blame you foolish self!’
Or worse far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt,—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we’ve involved others;
The young, the innocent, who fondly loved us,
Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There’s not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throes;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O, happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

XIV.
THE JOLLY BEGGARS.
A CANTATA.

[This inimitable poem, unknown to Currie and unheard of while the poet lived, was first given to the world, with other characteristic pieces, by Mr. Stewart of Glasgow, in the year 1801. Some have surmised that it is not the work of Burns; but the parentage is certain: the original manuscript at the time of its composition, in 1783, was put into the hands of Mr. Richmond of Mauchline, and afterwards given by Burns himself to Mr. Woodburn, factor of the laird of Craigmillar; the song of “For a’ that, and a’ that!” was inserted by the poet, with his name, in the Musical Museum of February, 1797. C—mack admired, yet did not, from overruuling advice print it in the Reliques, for which he was sharply censured by Sir Walter Scott, in the Quarterly Review. The scene of the poem is in Mauchline, where Pussie Nanzie had her change-house. Only one copy in the handwriting of Burns is supposed to exist; and of it a very accurate fac-simile has been given.]

RECITATIVO.
When ylyart leaves bestrow the yird,
or waverling like the buckie-bird,
Bedein cauld Boreas’ blast;
THE POETICAL WORKS

When hallstanes drive wi' bitter skyte
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch dreid;
As night at oen a merry core
O' randle, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie-Nanise's held the splore,
To drink their erra duddeyes:
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted an' they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang.

First, neist the fir, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm—
She blinket on her sodger:
An' say he gies the tote drab
The tether skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an amousous diak.
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a sodger's whip,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

AIR.

Tune—"Soldiers' Joy."

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

My 'prenticeship I past
Where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast
On the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade
When the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid
At the sound of the drum.
Lal de daulde, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis,
Amok, the floating batt'ries,
Aid there I left for witness
An arm and a limb;

Yet let my country need me,
With Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps
At the sound of a drum.
Lal de daulde, &c.

And now tho' I must beg,
With a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag
Hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet,
My 'ottle and my callet,
As when I used in scarlet
To follow a drum.
Lal de daulde, &c.

What tho' with hoary looks
I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks
Oftentimes for a home,
When the tother bag I sell,
And the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop o' hell,
At the sound of a drum.
Lal de daulde, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frightened rattons backward leew,
And seek the bearest bore;
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirt'd out—encore!
But up arose the martial Chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when
And still my delight is in proper young;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my son;
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dail, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering lad
To rattle the thundering drum was his forte;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so hot;
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dail, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the
The sword I forsook for the sake of the child.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

He ventur'd the soul, and I risk'd the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy in a Cunningham fair;
His rage regimental they flatter'd so gaudy,
My heart is rejoc'd at my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de dal, &c.

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

RECIDATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy;
At length wi' drink and courting dixy
He stotter'd up an' made a face;
Then turn'd, an' laid a smack on Grizzie,
Synce tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

Tune—"Auld Sir Symon."
Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
Sir Knave is a fool in a session;
He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held a wa to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye has of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck,
A hizzie's the half o' my craft,
But what could ye other expect,
Of one that's avowedly daft?

I ance was ty'd up like a stirk,
For civilly swearing and quaffing;
I ance was abused in the kirk,
For tontauling a lass I' my daffin.

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

Observe'd ye, you reverend lad
Makes faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our mountebank squad,
Its rivalry just I' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that's a fool for himself',
Gude L—d! he's far dastier than L

RECIDATIVO.

Then neist oupspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent fu' weel to ckeck the sterling,
For monie a purse she had hooked,
And had in mony a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fu' the weefu' woodie!
Wl' sighs and sob she thus began
To wall her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—"O en ye were dead, guidman."
A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithful to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

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

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

Sing, hey, &c.

They banished him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.

Sing, hey, &c.
But, ooh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
   Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn,
The pleasures that will ne'er return:
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
   Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.
A pigmy scribbler, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappan limb and gauzy middle,
   He reach'd as higher,
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
   An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haisb, an' upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arieo key,
   The wee Apollo
Set o'f wi' Allegretto glee
   His giga solo.

AIR.
   Tune—"Whistle o'er the lave o' t."
Let me ryke up to dign't that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,
And then your every care and fear
   May whistle owre the lave o' t.

CHORUS.
I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
   Was whistle owre the lave o' t.

At kins and weddings we're se be there,
And O! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll house about till Daddie Care
   Sings whistle owre the lave o' t.
   I am, &c.

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

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on theirms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o' t.
   I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.
Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,
As well as poor gut-scribbler;
He takes the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a roosy rapier—
He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
   To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he wad from that time forth
   Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghaistly e'e, poor tweddle-dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
   And see the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He seign'd to smirle in his sleeve,
   When thus the caird address'd her:

AIR.
   Tune—"Clout the Caudron."
My bonny lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station:
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
   In this my occupation:
I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
   In many a noble squadron:
But vain they search'd, when o'f I marz
   To go and clout the caudron.
   I've taen the gold,

Despire that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and caprin,
And tak a share wi' those that bear
   The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
   An' by that dear Kilbairgie,
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
   May I ne'er weet my craigie.
   An' by that stoup,

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevall'd—th' unblushing fair
   In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
   An' partly she was drunk.

1 A peculiar sort of whiskey.
Sir Viellie, with an air
That shou'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But urshie, Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie,
A sailor rak'd her fore and aft,
Behint the chicken caviere.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,
Tho' limping wi' the sparie,
He hire'd up, and lap like daft,
And shor'ed them Dainty Davie
O' boot that night.

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

AIR.
Tune—"For a' that, an' a' that."

I am a bard of no regard
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that:
But Homer-like, the glorious hekse,
Fare town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.
For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife enough for a' that
I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.

 AIR.

For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it stil
A mortal sin to throw that.

FOR A' THAT, &C.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, an' a' that:
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.

FOR A' THAT, &C.

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

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid
They're welcome till for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nannie's was
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth:
They too'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to ou'er their fuds,
To quench their lowm drouth.
Then ours again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To loose his pack an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.
Tune—"Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses."

Saw! 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?
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
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig. &c.

Life is all a variarum,
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 for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

XV.
DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.
A TRUE STORY.

[John Wilson, raised to the unwelcome elevation of
hero to this poem, was, at the time of its composition,
schoolmaster in Tarbolton: he was, it is said, a fair
scholar, and a very worthy man, but vain of his knowl-
edge in medicines—so vain, that he advertised his merits,
and offered advice gratis. It was his misfortune to
encounter Burns at a masque meeting, who, provoked by a
long and pedantic speech, from the Dominie, exclaimed,
the future lampoon dwarfing upon him, "Sit down, Dr.
Hornbook." On his way home, the poet satirized himself
on the ledge of a bridge, composed the poem, and, overcome
with pessies and drink, fell asleep, and did not awake
'til the sun was shining over Galston Moors. Wilson
went afterwards to Glasgow, embarked in mercantile
and matrimonial speculations, and prospered, and is still
prospering.]

Some books are lies free end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers, they ha' been kenn'd,
A holy rapture,
A swinging wind, at times, to vend,
And nallit 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 h—
Or Dublin-city;
That e'er he nearer comes o'er ael,
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me cante,
I was na fou, but just had plenty;
I stach'er'd whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stones, and bushes, kenn'd ay
Frae ghaists an' witches

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills owre:
To count her horns with a' my pow'r,
I set myself;
But whether she had three or four,
I could na tell.

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

I there wi' something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An' awfu' scythe, owre a' shouter,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-taed leister on the lither
Lay, large an' lang.

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

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

It spak right howe,—"My name is Death,
But nee sel'.'d."—Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're may be come to step my breath;
But telt me, billie;
I red ye weel, take care o' skatih,
See, there's a gully!"

"Guidman," 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 mislead'd,
I wad nae mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."
OF ROBERT BURNS.

"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' choked 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 butchir bred,
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
An' faith, he'll warr me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook 't the Clachan,
Deli mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae weil acquaint wi' Buchan1
An' 'ther chaps,
The weans hand out their fingers laughin'
And pouk my hips.

"See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Hae made them baith no worth a f—,
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

"Twas but yestreen, nae farther guen,
I throw 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 fortisfied the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-run.

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I nearhand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the baud Apothecary,
Withstood the shock;
I might as weil hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"Er'n them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had kent it,
Just sh— in a kailblade, and send it,
As soon's he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
At once he tells't.

"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-marinium o' the seas;
The farina of beans and —ease,
He hasn'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 as;
Salalkall o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Wae's me for Johnny Ged's-Hole now."
Quo' I. "If that thee news be tru'
His braw calf-ward where gowans grew,
Sae white and bonie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew;
They'll ruin Johnie!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says, "Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirkyards will soon be fill'd enough,
Tak ye nae fear;
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three years.

"Where 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
Hae clad a score i' their last clath,
By drap an' pill.

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

1 Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

2 The grave-digger.
"A countra laird had ta'en the batte,
Or some surmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well.
The lad, for twa guld simmer-pets,
Was laird himsell.

"A bonnie lass, ye kend her name,
Some ill-brown drink had hav'd her wame;
She trusts herself, to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

"That's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, ku, an' sly,
An's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his d-mn'd dirt:

"But, hark! I'll tell you o' a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o'it;
I'll nail the self-conceited soot,
As dead's a herrin':
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a great,
He gets his fairin'!

But just as he began to tell,
The said kirk-hammer strak' the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rain'd us baith:
I took the way that pleas'd mysel',
And sae did Death.

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THE TWA HERDS:
on,
THE HOLY TULZIE.

[The actors in this indescent drama were Moodie, minister of Riccarton, and Russell, helper to the minister of Kilmarnock: though apostles of the "Old Light," they forgot their brotherhood in the vehemence of controversy, and went, it is said, to blows. "This poem," says Burns, "with a certain description of the clergy as well as laity, met with a roar of applause."]

O a' ye plous godly folks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wau now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wau will tent the waifs and crooks,
About the dykes!

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That o'er ga' e gospel horn a blast,
These five and twenty simmers past,
O' dool to tell,
Ha' he had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsell.

O, Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistl
And think it fine:
The Lord's cause ne'er got sic a twistle
Sin' I ha'ae min'.

O, sirs! whae'er wad ha' e expectit
Your duty ye wad sae neglectit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respectit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves electit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty ev'ry shank,
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank,
He let them taste,
Frae Calvin's well, ay clear they drank,—
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wili'est, brock, and tod,
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilk's hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kend the Lord's sheep, ilk's tall,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fes a manly sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see's,
Sic famous twa should disagreet.
An' names, like villain, hypocrite,
Likither g'lem,
While New-Light herds, wi' laughin' sp'g
Say neither's lairn'.
HOV ROBERT BURNS.

To ye wha tent the gospel sauld,
There's Duncan, deep, and Peebles, shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, Sirs, how we're beset;
There's scarce a new herb that we get
But comes frae mang that cursed set
I winna name;
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple has been lang our foe,
McGill has wrought us meikle wae,
And that cursed call'd McGhob, And baith the Shawis,
That a' his made us black and blue,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought ay death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turn-costs amang cursel,
There's Smith for aene,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,
An' that ye'll sin'.

O! a' ye flocks o' er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To cow the lairds,
And get the brutes the powers themsel's
To choose their herds;

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bair there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
McGill's close nervous excellence,
McGhob's pathetick manly sense,
And guild M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,
Mist a' pack aff.

XVII.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

"And send the godly in a pet to pray."

[Of this sarcastic and too daring poem many copies in manuscript were circulated while the poet lived, but though not unknown or unfelt by Currie, it continued unpublished till printed by Stewart with the Jolly Beggars, in 1801. Holy Willie was a small farmer leading elder to Auld, a name well known to all lovers of Burns; austere in speech, scrupulous in all outward observances, and, what is known by the name of a "professing Christian." He experienced, however, a "sore fall;" he permitted himself to be "filled for," and in a moment when "self got in" made free, it is said, with the money of the poor of the parish. His name was William Fisher.]

O thou, who 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 any gude or ill
They've done afore thee.

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

What was I, or my generation,
That 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 mother's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burn'in' lake,
Whar damned devils roar and yell,
Cham'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.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm flesh'd wi' fleshly lust.
THE POETICAL WORKS

And sometimes, too, wi' worldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Desi'd in sin.

O Lord! yestreen thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O' may't ne'er be a livin' plague
To my dishonour,
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I trow—
But Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er has steer'd her.

May be thou lets this fleshly thorn,
Beseet thy servant 'en amorn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun '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
And public shame.

Lord, mind Gwen Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cards,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
'Wi' grit and sma',
Fray God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa.

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

Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against the presby'try of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upp' their heads,
Lord weigh it down, and dinna spare
For their miserable.

O Lord my God, that glib-tongu'd Alken,
My very heart and soul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin' lips gaed sneakin'
And hung his head.

Lord, in the day of 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,
And dinna spare.

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

XVIII.

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

[We are informed by Richmond of Mauchline, when he was clerk in Gavin Hamilton's office, Burnet in one morning and said, "I have just composed a psalm, and if you will write it, I will repeat it." repeated Holy Willie's Prayer and Epitaph; Ham came in at the moment, and having read them with delight laughing with them in his hand to Robert All the end of Holy Willie was other than godly: In one of his visits to Mauchline, he drank more than was seemly, fell into a ditch on his way home, and was dead in the morning.]

Hans Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Takes up its last abode;
His saul has ta'en some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! thee he is, as sure's a gun,
Poor, silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the gran,
Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your brunstane devilship I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But hand your nine-tall cat a wee,
Till ane you've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye has none;
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,
And mercy's day is gaen.
But hear me, sir, dell as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

XIX.

THE INVENTORY;

An Answer to a Mandate by the Surveyor of the Taxes.

[We have heard of a poor play-actor who, by a humorous inventory of his effects, so moved the commissioners of the income tax, that they remitted all claim on him then and forever; we know not that this very humorous inventory of Burns had any such effect on Mr. Aiken, the surveyor of the taxes. It is dated "Mossgiel, February 23d, 1786," and is remarkable for wit and sprightliness, and for the information which it gives us of the poet's habits, household, and agricultural implements.]

Sirs, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
O' guedes, an' gear, an' a' my graith,
To which I'm clear to gie me aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I have four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.

My lan' afore's a gude auld has been,
An' wight, an' wilfu' a' his days been.
My lan shin's a weil gaun fillie,
That a' has borne me hame frae Killie,9
An' your auld burro' mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime—
But ance, when in my woon pride,
I like a blockade boost to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
(L—d pardon a' my sins an' that too!)
I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,
She's a' bedevill'd with the spavie.
My fur shin's a wordy beast,
As e'er in tag or tow was tra'd.

The fourth's a Highland Donald haste,
A d—n'd red wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a cowt o' cowt's the wale,
As ever ran afore a tall.
If he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.—
Wheel carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;

As auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
As leg an' baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men I've three mischievous boys,
Run de'il for rantin' an' for noise;
A gaudeman aye, a thrasher o'ther.
Wee Davock hauds the nowt in fother.
I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
An' aften labour them completely;
An' aye on Sundays, duly, nightly,
I on the Questions targe them tightly;
Till, faith. wee Davock's turn'd sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely longer than your leg.
He'll scroed you aff Escocfand calling,
As fast as ony in the dwelling.
I've nane in female servan' station,
(Lord keep me ay frae a temptation!) I
hae a' nae wife—and that my bliss is,
An' ye have laid nae tax on missess;
An' then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils darena touch me.
W' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Hear'na sent me ane mae than I wanted.
My sonnie smirking dear-bought Beas,
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace;
But her, my bonnie sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
An' gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the L—d! ye'ae get them a' thegither.

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of license out I'm takin';
Frae this time forth, I do declare I
Se'ne'er ride horse nor hirzie mair;
Tho' dirt and dub for life I'll paide,
Ere I see dear pay for a saddle;
My travel a' on foot I'll shank it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.
The kirk and you may tak' you that,
It puts but little in your pat;
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
The day and date as under noted;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,

Subscriptus huc

Robert Burns.

1 The fore-horse on the left-hand in the plough.
2 Kilminnock.
3 The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough.
THE POETICAL WORKS

XX.

THE HOLY FAIR.

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon:
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion.

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

(The scene of this fine poem is the churchyard of Mauchline, and the subject handled so cleverly and sharply is the laxity of manners visible in matters so seem and terrible as the administration of the sacrament. "This was indeed," says Lockhart, "an extraordinary performance: no part of any sect could whisper that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, were held up to ridicule: it was acknowledged, amidst the sternest merrymakers of wraith, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet." "It is no doubt," says Hogg, "a reckless piece of satire, but it is a clever one, and must have cut to the bone. But much as I admire the poem I must regret that it is partly borrowed from Ferguson.")

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' smelt the caller air.
The rising sun owre Galston muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glistin';
The hares were hirpin down the furts,
The lav' rocks they were chentin'—
Fuir sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glower'd abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hixies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin up the way;
Twa had mantieless o' doleful black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third, that gaed a-see a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fuir gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' class;
Their visage, wither'd, lang, an' thin,
An' sour as ony a'sices:
The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' w' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as s' er she saw me,
Fuir kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet 'ass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak,
An' takes me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck,
O' a' the ten commands
A picked some day.

"My name is Fun—your cronies dear,
The nearest friend ye hae,
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm gaun to Mauchline holy fair,
To spend an hour in daffin:
Gin ye'll go there, you runkt'd pair,
We will get famous laughin'—
At them this day."

Quoth I, "With a' my heart I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we're has fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a wearie body,
In droves that day.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' garth
Geed hoddin by their cottars;
There, swankies young, in braw braid-claights,
Are springin' o' er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefoot, thrang,
In elk's an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
An' faris bak'd wi' butter,
Fuir crump that day.

When by the plate we set our noes,
Well heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glower Black Bonnet throws,
An' we maun draw our tipence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gathrin',
Some carrying dails, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy blethern',
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to send the show'rs,
An' screen our countra gentry,
There, racer Jess, and twa-three wh'-res,
Are blinkin' at the entry.

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OF ROBERT BURNS.

Here sits a raw of titlin' jades,
With heaving breast and bare neck,
An' there a batch o' wha'ster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock
For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some up' their classes;
Ane curses feet that fy'd his shines,
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winking' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

O happy is that man an' blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Wha's ain dear lass that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him;
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof' upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

Now's the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation:
For Moodie speels the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' ratlin' an' wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin' an' he's jumpin'!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeul and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day.

But bahr! the tent has chang'd its voice:
There's peace an' rest nae languer:
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith opens out his cauld harangues,
On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in throngs,
To gie the jarn an' barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,
Of moral power's and reason?
His English style, an' gestures fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, free the water-fit,
Ascend the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' m'me has view'd it,
While Common Sense has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,
Past, fast, that day.

Wee Miller, neist the guard relieves,
An' orthodoxy raises,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like haffline-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now but an' ben, the Change-house dills
Wi' yell-caup commentators:
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
An' there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic, an' wi' scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leere me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it wakens lair,
It pangs us fou' o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith soul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.

1 At 'net so called, which faces the tent in Mauchlin.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
  They're making observations;
While some are coonie i' the neuk,
  An' formin' assignations
  To meet some day.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
  Till a' the hills are rairin',
An' echoes back return the shouts:
  Black Russell is aa' sparin';
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
  Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' Hell, where devils dwell,
  Our vera sauls does harrow!
Wi' fright that day.

A vast, unbottom'd boundless pit,
  Fill'd fou' lovin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame, an' scorchin' heat,
  Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half saleep start up wi' fear,
  An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear,
  'Twas but some neighbour snorin'
  Asaleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell
  How monie stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill,
  When they were a' dismist:
How drink gae'd round, in coogs an' o'aps,
  Among the furms an' benches:
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
  Was dealt about in lunches,
An' daws that day.

In comes a gauche, gash gudwife,
  An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her keebuck an' her knife;
  The laasses they are a' per.
The auld guildmen, about the grace,
  Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
  An' gie's them't like a tether,
Pu' lang that day.

Wae sux! for him that gets nae lass,
  Or laasses that has naething;
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
  Or melvie his braw clathing!
O wives, be mindfu' ance yourself
  How bonnie lads ye wanted,

An' dinna, for a keebuck-heel,
  Let lasses be afronted
  On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell, wi' ratlin tow,
  Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
  Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies hait a blink,
  Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
  They're a' in famous tune
  For crack that day.

How monie hearts this day converts
  O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
  As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou' o' love divine;
  There's some are fou' o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin
  May end in houghmagandie
  Some ither day.

XXI.

THE ORDINATION.

"For sense they little owe to frugal hear'n—
  To please the mob they hide the little giv'n."

[This sarcastic sally was written on the admission of
Mr. Mackinlay, as one of the ministers to the Leagh, or
parochial Kirk of Kilmarnock, on the 8th of April, 1796
That revered person was an Auld Light professor, and
his ordination incensed all the New Lights, hence the
bitter levity of the poem. These discussions have long
since past away: Mackinlay, a pious and kind-hearted
sincere man, lived down all the personalities of the entire,
and though unwelcome at first, he soon learned to regard
them only as a proof of the powers of the poet.]

KILMARNOCK wabsters fidge an' claw,
  An' pour your cressish nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
  Of a' denominations,
Swith to the Leagh Kirk, ane an' an',
  An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
  An' pour divine libations
  For joy this day.

Curet Common-Sense, that imp o' hell,
  Cam in' wi' Maggie Lauder;

admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr. Landay
to the Leagh Kirk.
But Oliphant a'ft made her yell,
An' Russell sair misca'd her;
This day Mackinlay takes the fall,
An' he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll 'casp a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to dund her
Wi' dirt this day.
Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skiri up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Hereay is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham's length at his dad,
Which made Canaan a niger
Or Phineas' drove the murdering blade,
Wi' wh-re-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah's the scauldin' jad,
Was like a bluddy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

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

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toes thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'll rote out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' runs o' grace the pick and wae,
No gie'na by way o' dainty,
But lika day.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep,
To think upon our Zion,
And bing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin':

Come, screw the pegs, wi' tuneful cheap,
And o'er the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
An' a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day!

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

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

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

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

But there's Morality himsel',
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell
Between his twa companions;
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin' onions!
Now there—they're packed aff to hell,
And banished our dominions,
Henceforth this day.
O, happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come hause about the porter!
Mortality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture:
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cow her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

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

Tho', when some kind, connubial dear,
Your but-land ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowe,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
"Here lies a famous Bullock!"

XXIII.
TO JAMES SMITH.

"Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life and solder of society:
I owe thee much!—"'

[The James Smith, to whom this epistle is addressed,
was at that time a small shopkeeper in Mauchline,
and the comrade or rather follower of the poet in all his
merry expeditions with "Yill-caup commentators." He
was present in Posee Nan's when the Jolly Beggars
first appeared on the fancy of Burns: the comrades of the
poet's heart were not generally very successful in life:
Smith left Mauchline, and established a calico-printing
manufactory at Aven near Linlithgow, where his friend
found him in all appearance prosperous in 1798: but this
was not to last; he failed in his speculations and went
to the West Indies, and died early. His wit was ready,
and his manners lively and unaffected.]

DEAR SMITH, the aleast, pawkie thief,
That o'er attempted stealth or rie,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef!

Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a besom yet was prief
Against your arts.

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

That said capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrippit statuies,
She's turnd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on every feature
She's wrote, the Man.

1 "New Light" is a cant phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended.
Of Robert Burns.

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie nodde's working prime,
My fancy yerkit it up sublime

Wi' hasty summon:

Has ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme a neighbour'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' damn'd my fortune to the grost;
But in requit,

Has blest me with a random shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's ta'en a skent,
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 ensur'd 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 whistling thrang,

An' teach the lonely heights an' bowes
- My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with tenteless heed
How never-haltin' 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 and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave care o'er side!

And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,

Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
For, anse 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 farewell vacant careless roamin';
An' farewell cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;

An' farewell dear, deluding woman!
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausin' Caution's lesson soaring,
We frisk away,

Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;

And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toll'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;

And, haply, eye the barren but
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! sae rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, eternal swervin';
They sig-sag on;

'Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin',
They often groan.
THE POETICAL WORKS

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

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Pow'r's," and warm implore,
"Th' I should wander terra s'or,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping rosetts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing free their beards;
Gie fine braw class to fine life-guards,
And maidis of honour!
And 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 give me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

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

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behind my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel' I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and 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-scarum, ram-stam boys,
The rattling 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 any where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quast my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Where'er I gang.

XXIV.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.

[The Vision and the Briggs of Ayr, are said by Jeffrey to be "the only pieces by Burns which can be classed under the head of pure fiction." but Tam o' Shanter and twenty other of his compositions have an equal right to be classed with works of fiction. The editor of this poem published at Kilmarrock, differs in some particulars from the edition which followed in Edinburgh. The maiden whose foot was so handsome as to match that of Coils, was a Bees at first, but old affection triumphed, and Jean, for whom the honour was from the first designed, regained her place. The robe of Coils, too, was expanded, so far indeed that she got more cloth than she could well carry.]

The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quast their roaring play,
An' hunger'd maunkin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary slingin'-tree
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And when the day had clos'd his e'e
Far 't the west,
Ben 't the spence, right pensivelle,
I gaed to rest.

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

OF ROBERT BURNS.

All in this motty, misty clime,
I backward mused on waster time,
How I had spent my youthful prime,
An' done nae thing.
But stringin' blettes up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

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

I started, muttering, blockhead! coof!
And heaw'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' von starrly roof,
Or some rash ath.
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';
An' by my innings I saw,
Now bleesin' bright,
A tight outlandish hisse, brows
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my wist;
The infant ath, half-form'd, was wrast;
I glower'd as storie's I'd been dusted
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
And stepped ben.

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

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace"
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her:
Her 'ey, 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 scrimpily seen:

And such a leg! my bonnie Jean
Could only peer it;
Sae straight, 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 tossed:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant stone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thunds:
Auld hermit Ayre 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-fly'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their southern foes.

His Country's Saviour, mark him well!
Bold Richardson's heroic swell;
The chief on Sark who glorious fell,
In high command;

1 The Wallace.
2 Sir William Wallace.
3 Adam Wallace, of Richardson, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.
4 Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command under Douglas, Earl of Ormonde, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1418. This glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.
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 portray'd
In colours strong;

Bold, soldier-features, 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 love,

This, all its source and end to draw;
That, to adore.

Brydone'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 whispering throng 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-love,
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-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beatrice 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'n ing storm some, strongly, rain;
Some teach to mollorate 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;

(Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)

2 Catrine, the seat of Professor Dugald Stewart.

3 Berkshinnie, the seat of the Late Lord Justice-Clerk Fullarton.
"Some soothes the lab'rer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

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

"Of these am I—Colia my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fam,
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 carroll'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 through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled 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 general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening 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,
Misaed 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,
Become thy friends.

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

"Yet, all beneath the 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 holy round my head:
The polish'd leaves and berries red
Did rustling play;
And like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

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THE POETICAL WORKS

XXV.

HALLOWEEN.1

"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."2

GOLDMINE.

[This Poem contains a lively and striking picture of some of the superstitious observances of old Scotland: on Halloween the desire to look into futurity was once all but universal in the north; and the charms and spells which Burns describes, form but a portion of those employed to enable the penury to have a peep up the dark vistas of the future. The scene is laid on the romantic shores of Ayr, at a farmer's fireside, and the actors in the rustic drama are the whole household, including super-numerary reapers and bandsmen about to be discharged from the engagements of harvest. "I never can help regarding this," says James Hogg, "as rather a trivial poem!"]

Uron that night, when fairies light
On Cassillis Downana's dance,
Or owre the layes, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly courser prance;  
Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;  
There, up the Cove,3 to stray an' rove
Amang the rocks an' streams  
To sport that night.

Amang the bonnie winding banks,
Where Doon rins, wimpin', clear,
Where Bruce's ance ru'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 real, an' warm, an' kin';
The lads sae trig, wi' wooper babs,
Weel trotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
Gae lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whiles fast at night.

Then, first and foremost, throng the kail,
Their stocks' maun a' be sought ane;
They steek their een; an' graip an' wale,
For muckle anes an' straught anes.
Poor havel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd through the bow-kail,
An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
A ruint was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throuther;
The vera wee-things, todlin', rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouter;
An' gift the custoos' sweet or sour,
Wi' joteleges they taste them;
Syne sorely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've placed them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn;4
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He gippit Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kiuftin' in the fause-house?
Wi' him that night.

1 Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their beneficent midnight errands: particularly those spirit people, the Fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.
2 Certain little, romantic, rocky green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassillis.
3 A noted cavern near Colecan-house, called the Cove of Colecan which, as well as Cassillis Downana, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies.
4 The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.
5 The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand-in-hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the custare, 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.
6 They go to the burn-yard, and pull each at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.
7 When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: thus he calls a fause-house.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

The sauld guidwife's weel hoordet nits,
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthlie, side by side,
An' burn theither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And 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, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel':
He blee'd owre her, an' she owre him,
As they wad never mair pair;
'Till, suff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brutn' wi' pridefull Mallie;
An' Mallie, nae doubt, took the dunt,
'To be compan'd wi' Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brutn it;
While Willie lap, and swoor, by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fane-house in her min',
She pits hersel' an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
'Till white in see they're robbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob, stowlin's, prize'd her bonie mon',
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behind their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel':
She through the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the klin she goes then,

An' darklings graipit for the banks,
And in the blue-clue throws then,
Right fear't that night

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

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple at the glass,
I get frae uncle Johnnie!"
She suff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was nae vap'rin',
She notice't na, an' aisle brutn
Her braw new worsted apron
Out thro' that night

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
I daur you sic sportin',
As seek the foul Thief onie place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a night!
Great cause ye has to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' died delereet
On sic a night

"As hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind't as weel's yestreen,
I was a glipsey then, I'm sure
I was na past fifteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' staff was unco green;
An' ay a rantin' kirk we gat,
An' just on Hellowen
It fell that night.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab Mc'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fellow:

l Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.
2 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 clee of blue gum; wind it in a clee of the old one; and towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand "wha hands?" i.e. who holds? an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.
3 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.
He's sin' gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacall;
He gat hemp-seed, I mind it weel,
And he made unco light o' t;
But monie a day was by himself,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night."

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
An' be soor 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 bud him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometimes when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin';
The grijp he for a harrow taks,
An' hauls 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 that night."

He whistl'd up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fey'd an' eerie:
'Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' grindle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wistle
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld cam rinnin' out,
An' hear the sad narration;

He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean Mc' Crawford,
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 hae gaen,
To win 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,
An' twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipps
That vera night.

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

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice,
They hecht him some fine braw ane,
It chand'd the stack he faddom't thrice,*
Was timmer-propit for thravin';
He takes a swirlie auld moss-oak,
For some black, grouseous carlin;
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
'Till skin in blypess cam haurlin'
Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leesie was,
As canty as a kittlin;
But, och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin'!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gae'd scrivenin,

---

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

2 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 windie door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or features marking the employment or station in life.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,¹
To dip her left sack-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a lim the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimplit;
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays,
Whyles in a wist it dimplit;
Whyles glister’d to the nightly rays,
W’ bickering, dancing dazle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the breakens on the braes,
Between her an’ the moon,
The dell, or else an outler quay,
Dat up an’ gae a croon:
Poor Leezie’s heart maist lap the hool!
Near lae’r-rock height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, an’ in the pool
Out-owre the legs she plumpit,
W’ a plunge that night.

An order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three² are ranged,
And ev’ry time great care is ta’en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock’s joys
Sin Man’s-year did desire,
Because he gat the toom-dish thrice,
He hear’d them on the fire
In wrath that night.

W’ merr’ly sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wit they did na weary;
An’ unco tales, an’ funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap an’ cheery;
Till butter’d so’n’s wi’ fragrant lunt,
Set a’ their gab a-stearin’;
Syne, wi’ a social glass o’ strunt,
They parted aff careerin’
Fu’ bythe that night.

XXVI.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.
A DIOR.B.

[The origin of this fine poem is alluded to by Burns in one of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop: “I had an old and uncle with whom my mother lived in her girlish years; the good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of ‘The Life and Age of Man.’” From that truly venerable woman, long after the death of her distinguished son, Cromek, in collecting the Reliques, obtained a copy by recitation of the older strain. Though the lines and sentiment coincide closely with “Man was made to Mourn,” I agree with Lockhart, that Burns wrote it in obedience to his own habitual feelings.]

When chill November’s surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One evening as I wandered forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy’d a man whose aged 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;
“Doth thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure’s rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast begun
To wander forth, with me to mourn
The miseries of man.

“The sun that overhangs you moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling’s pride:
I’ve seen you 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!

¹ 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, some time 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.

² Take three dishes: put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty; blindfold a person

and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged be (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the be of matrimony a misfit; 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.

³ Bowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween supper.
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the way;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives 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 every land,
All 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, though 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
Ever planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
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 best!
The poor, oppressed, 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 aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn!
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn."

XXVII.
TO RUIN.

["I have been," says Burns, in his common-place book, "taking a peep through, as Young finely says, ‘The dark postern of time long elapsed.’ ‘Twas a useful prospect! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! my life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportions in some parts—what unostentatious, what prosaic ruins in others!’ The fragment, To Ruin, seems to have had its origin in moments such as these.]

L
All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woeful-dreaded train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv’d, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low’ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Though thick’ning and black’ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.
And thou grim pow’r, by life abhor’d,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch’s prayer!
No more I shrink appall’d, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of cares!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Remove life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mould'red in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Unclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace!

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XXVIII.
TO
JOHN GOUDIE OF KILMARNOCK.
ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS.

[This burning commentary, by Burns, on the Essays of Goudie in the Macgill controversy, was first published by Stewart, with the Jolly Beggars, in 1792; it is akin in life and spirit to Holy Willie's Prayer; and may be cited as a sample of the wit and the force which the poet brought to the great, but now forgotten, controversy of the West.]

O Goudie! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and rev'rent wigs,
Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girnin', looks back,
Wakin' the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize ye quick.

Poor gaspin', glowrin' Superstition,
Waes me! she's in a sad condition:
Pie! bring Black Jock, her state physician,
To see her water:
Alas! there's ground o' great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

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

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

'Tis you and Taylor are the chief,
Wha are to blame for this mischief,

---

But gin the Lord's sin focks gat leave,
A toom tan-barrel,
An' twa red pests wad send relief,
An' end the quarrel

---

XXIX.
TO
J. LAPRAIK.
AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.

April 1st, 1795.

(FIRST EPISTLE.)

["The epistle to John Lapraik," says Gilbert Burns, "was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. Rocking is a term derived from primitive times, when our country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the roke or distaff. This simple instrument is a very portable one; and well fitted to the social incli- nation of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of going a rocking, or with the roke. As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the roke gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occa- sions, and men talk of going with their rokes as well as women."]

While briers an' woodibies budding green,
An' patricks scratchin' loud at s'en,
An' morning poussie whidden seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'!
I pray excuse.

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

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

I've scarce heard aught describ'd nae 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.
THE POETICAL WORKS

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And see about him there I spier't,
Then s' that ken't him round declar'd
He had injins,
That, nane excoll'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 himself',
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my plough and graith,
Or die a cadger poonins'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 cramoan-jingle fell,
Tho' rude an' rough,
Yet crowning to a body's self',
Does weel enough.

I am nae poet in a sense,
But just a rhymier, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet what the matter?
Where'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 may-be wrang.

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

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

Gie me as spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then though I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At plough or cart,
My muse, though namely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Ferguson's, the bauld and sleek,
Or bright Lapsait's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lar enough for me,
If I could get it.

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

I winna blaw about myself;  
As ill I like my fants to tell;  
But friends an' folk that wish me weel,  
They sometimes roose me. 
Tho' I maun own, as monie still  
As far abuse me.

There's a' wee fant they whitey lay to me,  
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!  
For monie a plack they wheedle free me,  
At dance or fair;  
May be 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 as night's discharge to care,  
If we forgather,  
An' hae a swap o' rhymein'-ware  
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,  
An' kireen 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,  
What think that havins, sense, an' grace,  
Ev'n love an' friendship, should give places  
To catch-the-plack!  
I dinna like to see your face,  
Nor hear your crack.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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 suld pen's worn to the grizzle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fisile,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

Her doughter excuses pat me mad:
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad!
I'll write, an' that a hearty bland,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose you see weel for your desserts,
In terms see friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to show your parts,
An' thank him kindly?"

Sae I got paper in a blink
An' down gess stumpe in the ink:
Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An' if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland-harp
Wi' glessome touch!
Ne'er mind how fortune waft an' warp;
She's but a b-tch.

She's gien me monie a jirt an' fleeg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the L—d, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the sax an' twentieth simmers
I've seen the bad uto' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the timmer
Frae year to year,
But yet despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am hure.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie and skilent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent, cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A bairie's name.

XXX.

to
J. L. APRAIK.
(SECOND EPISTLE.)

[The John Lapraik to whom these epistles are addressed lived at Dalfrem in the neighbourhood of Muirkirk, and was a rustic worshipper of the Muse: he unluckily, however, involved himself in that Western bubble, the Ayr Bank, and concluded himself by composing in his distress that song which moved the heart of Burns, beginning

"When I a'ton th' bosom leane."
He afterwards published a volume of verse, of a quality which proved that the inspiration in his song of domestic sorrow was no settled power of son.]

April 21st, 1786.

While now-ca'd ky, rowte at the stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take
To own I'm debtor,
To honest-hearted, sauld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, wi' weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours' bite,
My awkart muse sair pleads and begs,
I would na write.

The tapeless ramfeast'd hissie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, "Ye ken, we've been sae busy,
This month' an' mair,
That truth, my head is grown right dixtie,
An' something sair."
Or is’t the paughty, feudal Thane,
Wi’ ruff’d sark an’ glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel’ nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As he by walks!

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o’ wit an’ sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Tho’ Scotland wide;
Wi’ ets nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a’ their pride!"

Wear this the charter of our state,
"On pain’ o’ hell be rich an’ great;"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remeal;
But, thanks to Hear’-n, that’s no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
What’er he be,
’Tis he fulfills great Nature’s plan,
An’ none but he!"

O mandate, glorious and divine!
The followers o’ the ragged Nine,
Poor thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o’ Mammon’s line
Are dark as night.

Tho’ here they scrape, an’ squeeze, an’ growl,
Their worthless niefu’ of a soul
May in some future carcass howl
The forest’s fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, an’ joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship’s ties
Each passing year!

XXXI.

TO J. LAPRAIK.
(THIRD EPISTLE.)

[I have heard one of our most distinguished English poets recite with a sort of ecstasy some of the verses of these epistles, and praise the ease of the language and the happiness of the thoughts. He averred, however, that the poet, when pressed for a word, hesitated not to coin one, and insinced, "tapeties," "ramferted," and "forjasket," as intrusious in our dialect. These words seem indeed, to some Scotchmen, strange and unsavour, but they are true words of the west.]

Sept. 18th, 1786.

Gurn speed an’ furder to you, Johnny,
Guid health, hale han’s, an’ weather bonny;
Now when ye’re nickan down fu’ canny
The staff o’ bread,
May ye ne’er want a stoup o’ bran’
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin’ the stuff o’er muirs an’ haggis
Like drivin’ wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I’m bissie too, an’ skelpin’ at it,
But bitter, daudin’ showers hae wat it,
See my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi’ muckle war,
An’ took my jooteleg an’ whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It’s now twa month that I’m your debtor
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin’ me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While dael a hair yoursel’ ye’re better,
But ma’ir profane.

But let the Kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let’s sing about our noble sel’s;
We’ll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browser wives an’ whiskey stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship, Sir, I winna quat it
An’ if ye mak’ objections at it,
Then han’ in niew some day we’ll knot it
An’ witness take,
An’ when wi’ Usequabae we’ve wat it
It winna break.]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gawn without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
An' thekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
As winter night.

Then mease-inspirin' aqua-vite
Shall make us bath aae blythe an' witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
An' be as canty,
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane aa' twenty!

But stocks are cowpet wi' the blast,
An' now the sin kkees in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
An' quay my chanter;
"ae I subscribo myself in haste,
Yours, Rab the Rantier.

XXXII.

TO
WILLIAM SIMPSON,
OCHILBREE.

[The person to whom this epistle is addressed, was schoolmaster of Ochiltree, and afterwards of New Lanark: he was a writer of verses too, like many more of the poet's comrades;—of verses which rose not above the barren level of mediocrity: "one of his poems," says Chambers, "was a laughable elegy on the death of the Emperor Paul." In his verses to Burns, under the name of a "Tailor, there is nothing to laugh at, though they are intended to be laughable as well as monitory.

May, 1785.

I gat your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' grateful heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say it, I wed be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coazin' billia,
Your flatterin' strain.

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

My senses wad be in a crew,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,

WI' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson, the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musky arts!
My curse upon your whusstane hearts,
Ye Enbrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!

Yet when a tale comes in' 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 Colia, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chieft who 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 measure'd stile;
She lay like some unkennd-o' isle
Beside New-Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boll
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to munie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayre, an' Doon,
Nae body sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in munie 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 an' Colia's plains an' tells,
Her moor's red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bire the gree, as story tells,
Frea southern billies.
At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,
Or glorious dy'd.

O sweet are Colla's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant among the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whids
Their loves enjoy
While thro' the braes the cushion croods
With 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 shows an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts has charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The muse, nas Poet ever fond her,
'Till by himself he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting 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-shounter, jundie, stretch an' strive,
Let me fair Nature's face deserve,
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 brazies;
While terrs firms, on her exes
Diurnal turns;
Count on a friend, in faith an' practices,
La Rossary Burns.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a preen:
I had amait forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean,
By this New Light,
'Bout which our herds sae aft has been,
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans,
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid Lallana,
Like you or me.

In these sauld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a bark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, 'till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewing,
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This past for certain—undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
'Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baint loud an' lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the sauld moon turned a neuk,
An' out o' sight,
An' backlinus-comin', to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirn'd;
The herds an' hasses were alarm'd:
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd and storm'd
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their sauld daddies.

Fae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Fae words an' aiths to cloure an' nicks,
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brutal.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' Auld Light caddies bune sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
'Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bloody pranks.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

But New Light herds get sic a cow,  
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an'-stowe.  
Till now amainst on every know,  
Ye'll find ane pla'od;  
An' some their New Light fair avow,  
Just quite barefooted.

Nae doubt the Auld Light flocks are bleatin';  
Their jealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin';  
Mysel', I've even seen them greetin'  
Wi' giffin' spite,  
To hear the moon sabe sadly lie'd on  
By word an' write.

But shortly they will owre the loons;  
Some Auld Light herds in neibor towns  
Are mind't in things they sa' balloons,  
To tak a flight,  
An' stay as month amang the moons  
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them:  
An' when the auld moon's gane to less' them,  
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,  
Just l' their pouch,  
An' when the New Light billies see them,  
I think they'll crouch l

See, ye observe that a' this clatter  
Is naething but a 'moonshine matter;"  
But the dull prose-folk Latin splatter  
In rogue tusie,  
I hope we badlies ken some better  
Than mind sic bruslie.

XXXIII.
ADDRESS  
TO AN  
ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

[This hasty and not very decorous effusion, was originally entitled "The Poet's Welcome; or, Rob the Rhymers Address to his Bastard Child." A copy, with the more softened, but less expressive title, was published by Stewart, in 1801, and is alluded to by Burns himself, in his biographical letter to Moore. "Bottle Betty," the mother of the "sonrisie-smirking, dear-bought Bess," of the Inventory, lived in Largieside; to support this daughter the poet made over the copyright of his works when he proposed to go to the West Indies. She lived to a woman, and to marry see John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, where she died in 1817. It is said she resembled Burns quite as much as any of the rest of his children.]

Toow's welcome, wean, mischanner fa' me,  
If ought of thee, or of thy mammy,  
Shall ever daunton me, or awe me,  
My sweet wee lady,  
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me  
Tilt ta' daddy.

Wee image of my bonny Betty,  
L, fatherly, will kiss and daut thee,  
As dear and near my heart I set thee  
Wi' as gude will  
As a' the priests had seen me get thee  
That's out o' hell.

What tho' they ca' me fornicator,  
An' tease my name in kintry clatter;  
The mair they talk I ken the better,  
Een let them clash;  
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter  
To gie aene fash.

Sweet fruit o' mony a merry dint,  
My funny toil is now a' tint,  
Sin' thou came to the wabi askient,  
Which fools may scoff at,  
In my last plack thy part's be in't  
The better ha'f o't.

An' if thou be what I wad ha' thee,  
An' tak the counsel I saul gie thee,  
A lovin' father I'll be to thee,  
If thou be spar'd;  
Thro' a' thy childish years I'll o' thee,  
An' think'n't weel ward'd.

Gude grant that thou may ay inherit  
Thy nither's person, grace, an' merit,  
An' thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,  
Without his failings;  
'Twill please me mair to hear am' see it  
Than stocket mailens.

XXXIV.
NATURE'S LAW.

A POEM HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO G. H. ESQ.

"Great nature spoke, observant man obey'd"  

Poets  

[This Poem was written by Burns at Mossgiel, and "humbly inscribed to Gavin Hamilton, Esq." It is supposed to allude to his intercourse with Jean Armour, with the circumstances of which he seems to have made many of his comrades acquainted. These verses were well known to many of the admirers of the poet, but they remained in manuscript till given to the world by Sir Harris Nicolson, in Pickering's Aldine Edition of the British Poets.]

Lay other heroes boast their scars.  
The marks of sturt and strife:
And other poets sing of wars,
The plague of human life;
Shame fa' the fun; wi' sword and gun
To slap mankind like lumber!
I sing his name, and nobler fame,
Wha multiplies our number.

Great Nature spoke with air benign,
"Go on, ye human race!"
This lower world I you resign;
Be fruitful and increase.
The liquid fire of strong desire
'I've pour'd it in its bosom;
Here, in this hand, does mankind stand,
And there, is beauty's blossom."

The hero of these artless strains,
A lowly bard was he,
Who sung his rhymes in Coila's plains
With meikle mirth an' glee;
Kind Nature's care had given his share,
Large, of the flaming current;
And all devout, he never sought
To stem the sacred torrent.

He felt the powerful, high behest,
Th' vital through and through;
And sought a correspondent breast,
To give obedience due:
Propitious Powers screen'd the young flowers,
From mildews of abortion;
And lo! the bard, a great reward,
Has got a double portion!

Auld cantie Coll may count the day,
As annual it returns,
The third of Libris' equal away,
That gave another B[urns].
With future rhymes, an' other times,
To emulate his sire;
To sing auld Coll in nobler style,
With more poetic fire.

Ye Powers of peace, and peaceful song,
Look down with gracious eyes;
And bless auld Coila, large and long,
With multiplying joys:
Lang may she stand to prop the land,
The flow'r of ancient nations;
And B[urns'] spring, her fame to sing
Thro' endless generations!

---

TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH.

[Poem about John M'Math, a minister of the Church of Scotland, who is praised for his preaching and his role in the Battle of Killiecrankie.]

Sept. 17th, 1786.

WHILE at the stock the shearsers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage riinnin' scow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

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

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple countra bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack ane sturdy,
Whe, 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, and hauft-mile graces,
Their raxin' conscience,
Whose greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces,
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's Gaun,¹ miska't waur than a beast,
Whe has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guld's the priest
Whe see abus't him.
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him

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

¹ Gavin Hamilton, Esq.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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 juggling' 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 wou'd 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 fane
He'll still disdain,
'An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what?—to gie their malice akouth
On some poor wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right, an' ruth,
To ruin straight.

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

Tho' blotch'd an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with 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 presbyterian bound
A candid liberal band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are namm'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blamm'd,
(Which gies you 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
Whose heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

XXXVI.

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

(This beautiful poem was imagined while the poet was holding the plough, on the farm of Mossgiel: the field is still pointed out: and a man called Blane is still living, who says he was grandson to the bard at the time, an chased the mouse with the plough-pettle, for which he was rebuked by his young master, who inquired what harm the poor mouse had done him. In the night that followed, Burns awoke his grandson, who was in the same bed with him, recited the poem as it now stands, and said, "What think you of our mouse now?"

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

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

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

Thy wees bit housetie, too, in ruin;
Its silly we's the win's are swrewwin'!
XXXVII.

SCOTCH DRINK.

"Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his blood,
That's great wi' grief an' care;
There let him house, an' deep carouse,
Wi' barmers nowin' o'er,
Till he forgets his cares or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more."

SOLOMON'S PROVERB, XXXI. 6, 7.

"I here enclose you," saidBurn's, 30 March, 1788, to his friend Kennedy, "my Scotch Drink; I hope some time before we hear the ghost, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmenach: when I intend we shall have a gill between us, in a mustard and spice."

Let other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vino, an' wines, an' druken Bacchus.

An' crabbit names and stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

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

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

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the waile o' food!
Or tumblin' in the bollin' flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the same an' keeps us livin';
Thou life's a gift no worth receivin';
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';
But, oor'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gas down-hill, scrivin',
Wi' rattlein' gles.

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

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

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairest an' rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saints,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly thr'd.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouls torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whiskey punch
Wi' honest men;

O whiskey! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's grateful thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comest—they rattle 'r their ranks
At ither's a−s−a!

Thae, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now collo grips, an' barkin' boast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast,
Is ta'en awa.

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whiskey stells their prize!
Hand up thy han', Dell! ane, twice, thrice!
There, seise the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d−n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scene, an' whiskey gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak' a' the rest,
An' dealt about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

XXXVIII.

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

' Dearest of distillation! last and best!——
———How art thou lost!———'

Parody on Milton

["This Poem was written," says Burns, "before the act about the Scottish distilleries, of session 1798, for which Scotland and the author return their most grateful thanks." Before the passing of this lenient act, no sharp was the law in the North, that some distillers
relinquished their trade; the price of barley was affected, and Scotland, already exasperated at the refusal of a militia, for which she was a petitioner, began to handle her claymore, and was perhaps only hindered from drawing it by the act mentioned by the poet. In an early copy of the poem, he thus alludes to Colonel Hugh Montgomery, afterwards Earl of Eglinton—:

"Thou, sodger Hugh, my watchman standest,
If barleys e'er are represented,
I ken if that yere sword were wanted
Ye'd lend yere head;
But when there's ought to say amen it
Ye're at a stand."

The poet was not sure that Montgomery would think the compliment to his ready hand an excuse in full for the allusion to his uneasy tongue, and omitted the stanza.)

Ya Irish lords, ya knights an' squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucey manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your honours' hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin' on her a—
Low i' the dust,
An' scriechin' out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'r sin' they laid that curt restriction
On aquavitae;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell you Premier youth,
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does any great man glunch an' gloom?
Speak out, an' never flash your thumb!
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna cohe,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin' votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;

\[1 Sir Adam Ferguson.\]

Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greetin' owre her thrizzle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whistle:
An' damn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seisin' a stell,
Triumphant cruishin' like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler, right behind her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie xittern,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

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

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod' i' the mire out o' sight!
But could I like Montogmeryes fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose wall.

God bless your honours, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, canty carlin greet,
An' no get warmly on your feet,
An' gar them hear it!
An' tell them with a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues:
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangae.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran';
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;\[1\]
An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;\[2\]
An' a, a chap that's damn'd auldforren,
Dundas his name.

\[2 The Duke of Montrose.\]
Erakine, a spunkit Norland billie;
True Campbell, Frederick an' Hay;
An' Livingstone, the banid Sir Willie;
An' monie ithers,
Whom auld Demothenez or Tully
Might own for brothers.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettel;
Or faith! I'll wad my new plough-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost militia's't'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her whiskey!

An' L—d, if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kill,
An' dark an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' th' first she meets!

For God sake, a'irs, then speak her fair,
An' straik her carnal wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit and leer,
To get remeade.

Yon ill-tongued dinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cockes!
E'en cowe the cadie!
An' send him to his dicing box,
An' sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's
I'll be his debt twa mashum bonnocks,
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's!
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch.

His need na fear their soul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

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

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

God bless your honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brets o' claice,
In spite o' a' the thiefish kae,
That haunt St. James's,
Your humble Poet signs a' prays
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Levy half-starved slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clout-ering, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blythe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys,
Tak aff their whiskey.

What tho' their Phoebeus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

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

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

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID,
or the
RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

"My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them ay thegither;
The Rigid Rightheous is a fool,
The Rigid Wise anither;
The cleanest corn that o’er was sitt’d
May has some grains o’ catt in;
So never a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o’ daffin."

—Boswell.—Eccles. ch. vii. ver. 18.

["Burns," says Hogg, in a note on this Poem, "it has
written more from his own heart and his own feelings
than any other poet. External nature had few charms
for him; the sublime shades and hues of heaven and
earth never excited his enthusiasm: but with the secret
fountains of passion in the human soul he was well
acquainted." Burns, indeed, was not what is called a
descriptive poet: yet with what exquisite snatches of
description are some of his poems adorned, and in what
fragrant and romantic scenes he endures the heroes and
heroines of many of his finest songs! Who the high,
exalted, virtuous dames were, to whom the Poem refers,
we are not told. How much men stand indebted to want
of opportunity to sin, and how much of their good name
they owe to the ignorance of the world, were inquiries
in which the poet found pleasure.]

L

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel',
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neighbour's faults and folly!
Whose life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heaped hopper's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

II.

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

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the nisser,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

IV.

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

V.

See social life and gies sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
'Till, quite transmogrify'd, they're grown
Debauchery and drinking;
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
D—mnation of expenses!

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly lasses,
Before ye gie poor frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lover's lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper, 'tis your log,
Y're aiblins nea temptation.

VII.
Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though 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.

VIII.
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.

X.
TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY. 1

An honest man's the noblest work of God. 2

Parn.

[Tam Samson was a west country seedsman and sportsman, who loved a good song, a social glass, and relished a shot so well that he expressed a wish to die and be buried in the moors. On this hint Burns wrote the Elegy: when Tam heard o' this he written on the post, causing him to recite it, and expressed displeasure at being numbered with the dead: the author, whose wit was as ready as his rhymes, added the Par Contra in a moment, much to the delight of his friend. At his death the four lines of Epitaph were cut in his gravestone. 1 'This poem of a child, says Hogg, 'been a great country favourite: it abounds with happy expressions.

'In vain the burns cam' down like waters,
An acre braid.'

What a picture of a flooded burn! any other poet would have given us a long description: Burns dashes it down at once in a style so graphic no one can mistake it.

'Perhaps upon his mourning breast
Some spikelet's moorcow! bides her nest.'

Match that sentence who can.'

Has auld Kilmarnock seen the dell?
Or great M'Kinlay thrashed his heel?
Or Robinson again grown weel,
To preach an' read?

"Na, waur than a'!" cries Ilka chiel,
Tam Samson's dead!

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sob, an' grieve her lane,
An' cleed her bairs, man, wife, an' wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane,
Tam Samson's dead!

The brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bavel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony dead;
Death's gien the lodge an unco bavel,
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter musses up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the lochs the curlers flock,
'Wi' glessome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock?
Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard or draw, or wick a borse,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need;
But now he lags on death's hog-score,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts be-drop'd wi' crimson ball,
And eels weel ken'd for souple tail,
And gods for greed,
Since dark in death's fish-creeel we wall
Tam Samson dead.

Rejoice, ye birring patricks a';
Ye cooie moorcocks, cursely craw;
Ye mauthins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal sae is now awa'—
Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd
Saw him in shootin' graith adorn'd,

1 When this worthy old sportsman went out last morning, he supposed it to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his kind."
2 A preacher, a great favourite with the million. Vide the Ordination, stanza II.
3 Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few who was at that time ailing. For him see also the Orphan, stanza IX.
While pointers round impatient burn'd,  
Fras' couples freed;  
But, Och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!  
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;  
In vain the gout his ankles fettlers;  
In vain the burns cam' down like waters,  
An acre braid!

Now ev'ry auld wife, grieve'st, clatter's,  
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre many a weary hag he limpit,  
An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,  
Till coward death behind him jumplit,  
Wit' deadly felde;

Now he proclaims, wit' tout o' trumpet,  
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,  
He reel'd his wonted bottle swagger,  
But yet he drew the mortal trigger  
Wit' weil-aim'd heed;

"L—d, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger;  
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;  
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;  
Yon auld grey stane, amang the heather,  
Marks out his head,

Whare Burns has wrote in rhyming bieither  
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;  
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast  
Some spitefu' muirfowl bics her nest,  
To hatch an' breed;

Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!  
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,  
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,  
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave  
O' pouther an' lead,

"Till echo answer frae her cave  
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his soul, where'er he be!  
Is th' wish o' mony maes than me;  
He had twa faults, or may be three,  
Yet what remead?

As social, honest man want we:  
Tam Samson's dead!

---

EPITAPHL

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,  
Ye canting zealots spare him!

If honest worth in heaven rise,  
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

---

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, an' canter like a fly  
Thro' a' the streets an' neaks o' Killie,  
Tell ev'ry social honest billie

To cease his grievin',  
For yet, unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,  
Tam Samson's livin'.

---

XLI.

LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSU

OF A FRIEAD'S AMOUR.

"Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself!  
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe."

—HOMA.

[The hero and heroine of this little mournful poem, were Robert Burns and Jean Armour. "This was a most melancholy affair," says the poet in his letter to Moore, "which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart and mistaken the reckoning of rationality." Hogg and Motherwell, with an ignorance which is easier to laugh at than account for, say this Poem was "written on the occasion of Alexander Cunningham's darling sweetheart slighting him and marrying another:—she acted a wise part." With what care they had read the great poet whom they jointly edited in its needless to say: and how they could read the last two lines of the third verse and commend the lady's wisdom for slighting her lover, seems a problem which defies definition. This mistake was pointed out by a friend, and corrected in a second issue of the volume.]

I.

O thou pale orb, that silent shines,  
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!  
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,  
And wanders here to wail and weep!  
With woe I nightly vigil keep,  
Beneath thy wan, unwarmed beam,  
And mourn, in lamentation deep,  
How life and love are all a dream.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I.

A joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly marked 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 agonising thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

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'r's above;
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

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?

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less!

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Eonraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd,
That breast, how dreamy 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!

VII.

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.

VIII.

Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phoebus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

IX.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-best 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.

X.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft hast thy silent-marking glance
Obser've us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse best high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes never, never to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

DESPONDENCY.

AN ODE.

["I think," said Burns, "it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, and loves an embodiment form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease." He elsewhere says, "My passions raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme." That eminent painter, Fuseli, on seeing his wife in a passion, said composedly, "Swear, my love, swear heartily: you know not how much it will ease you!" This poem was printed in the Kilmarnock edition, and gives a true picture of those bitter moments experienced by the bard, when love and fortune alike deceived him.]

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I set me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim-backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro'!
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ye'er
But with the closing tomb!

II.
Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard?
Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night
And joyless morn the same;
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

III.
How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his evening thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream;
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meandering,
He views the solemn sky.

IV.
Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep tro'd,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art:
But, ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,

The solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he needs not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here, must cry here
At perfidy ingrati!

V.
Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's mass,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnet's in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age!

XLI.
THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.
INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

"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.

[The house of William Burns was the scene of this exquisite, devout, and tranquil drama, and William himself was the saint, the father, and the husband, who gives life and sentiment to the whole. "Robert had frequently remarked to me," says Gilbert Burns, "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." To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the Cotter's Saturday Night.] He owed something, however, of the inspiration to Ferguson's "Farmer's Almanack," a poem of great merit. The calm tone and holy composition of the Cotter's Saturday Night have been imitated by Hogg for want of nerve and life. "It is a dull, heavy, lifeless poem," he says, "and the only beauty it possesses, in my estimation, is, that it is a sort of family picture of the poet's family. The worst thing of all, it is not original, but is a decided imitation of Ferguson's beautiful pastoral, 'The Farmer's Almanack.' I have a perfect contempt for all plagiarisms and imitations." Motherwell tries to qualify the censure of his brother editor, by quoting Cockburn's opinion—at once lofty and just, of this fine picture of domestic happiness and devotion.]
OF ROBERT BURNS. 115

I.
Mr 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!

II.
November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough:
The black'ning trains o' craws to their re-pose:
The toll-worn Cotter frace his labour goes,
This night his weekly roll 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.

III.
At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin', stacher thro'
To meet their Dad, wi' flchterin' noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thirstie Wife's smile,
The lying infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

IV.
Belyve, the elder bairns come drappin' in,
At service out amang the farmers roun':
Some ca' the plough, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthful bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

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

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

VII.
But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convey her hame.
The wily Mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek,
With heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name.
While Jenny ha'flins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleasa'd the Mother hears it's nae wild,
worthless rake.

VIII.
Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he takes the Mother's eye;
Slythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The Father cracks of horses, ploughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate, an' laithful, scarce can weel be-have;
The Mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleasa'd to think her bairn's respekted like the lave.
IX.
O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If heaven in 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."

X.
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?

XI.
But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The baleful parrich, chief of Scotia's food:
The soups their only hawksie does afford,
That 'tont the hallan snugly shows her good:
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd keebuck, hell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmound auld, sin' lint was 't the bell.

XII.
The cheerful' supper done, wi' serious face,
They round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The Sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing this 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.

XIII.
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 beats the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tick'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison has they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.
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 wil'd, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV.
Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How Hz., 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 banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

XVI.
Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The Saint, the Father, and th. Husband prays:
Hope 'springs exulting on triumph's last 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.

1 Pope.
OF ROBERT BURNS. 117

XVII.

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 Pow'r, incensed, 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 enrol.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their sever'al way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
Their Parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stils 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.

XIX.

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 ceres, in fair virtue's flow'ry 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!

XX.

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, O! may heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, how'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.

XXI.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through 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!

XXIV.

THE FIRST PSALM.

[This version was first printed in the second edition of the poet's works. It cannot be regarded as one of his happiest compositions: it is inferior, not indeed in ease, but in simplicity and antique vigour of language, to the common version used in the Kirk of Scotland. Burns had admitted "Death and Dr. Horsabook" into Creech's edition, and probably desired to balance it with some thing at which the devout could not cavil.]

The man, in life wherever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!
Not from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.
But he whose blossom buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.
XLV.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES
OF THE
NINETIETH PSALM.

[The ninety-first Psalm is said to have been a favorite
in the household of William Burns: the version used by
the Kirk, though unequal, contains beautiful verses, and
possesses the same strain of sentiment and moral reasoning
as the poem of "All is was made to Mourn." These
verses first appeared in the Edinburgh edition; and they
might have been spared; for in the hands of a poet igno-
rant of the original language of the Psalmist, how could
they be so correct in sense and expression as in a sacred
strain is not only desirable but necessary!]

O Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself
Arose at Thy command;

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride arrow'd;
But long ere night, cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

XLVI.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,
ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786.

[This was not the original title of this sweet poem: I
have a copy in the handwriting of Burns entitled "The
Gowan." This more natural name he changed as he did
his own, without reasonable cause; and he changed it
about the same time, for he ceased to call himself Burns
and his poem "The Gowan," in the first edition of his
works. The field at Mosgael where he turned down the
Daisy is said to be the same field where some five months
before he turned up the Mouse; but this seems likely
only to those who are little acquainted with tillage—who
think that in time and place reside the chief charms of
verse; and who feel not the beauty of "The Daisy," till
they seek and find the spot on which it grew. Sublime
morality and the deepest emotions of the soul pass for
little with those who remember only what genius loves
to forget.]

Wass, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou'st 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' spreckil'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Caudl blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glistened forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shell'ring woods and wa's maun shield
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' cloid or stane,
Adorns the histic stilect-field,
Unseen, slane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy sawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lift's thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share upears thy bed,
And low thou lies!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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 every stay but Hew'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—so distant date;
Steer Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
"Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a song,
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

II.
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 attain'd;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

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

IV.
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' poorith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nac cash to spare him.

V.
Ay free, aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crosy;
But still keep something to yourself
Ye scarcecely tell to any.
Conceal yourself as weel ye can
Frase critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, ey inspection.

VI.
The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling.
VII.
To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

VIII.
The fear o' Hell's a hangman's whip,
To hound the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that ay be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debea' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.
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 wise profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An Atheist laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X.
When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she give 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!

XI.
Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, 'God send you speed,'
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may you better rock the rede
Than ever did th' adviser!

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

[A Maucline incident of a Maucline lady is related
in this poem, which is one of the wiser friends of the
bard was anything but welcome: it appeared in the Kil-
marnock copy of his Poems, and remonstrance and per-
suasion were alike tried in vain to keep it out of the
Edinburgh edition. Instead of regarding it as a season-
able rebuke to pride and vanity, some of his learned
commentators called it coarse and vulgar—those classic
persons might have remembered that Julian, no vulgar
person, but an emperor and a scholar, wore a populous
beard, and was proud of it.]

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

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wunner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt an' sinner,
How dare you 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 squattele;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattie,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unseattle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rells, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet? ye'll no be right
'Till ye've got on it,
The vera topmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' grey as onie grosset,
O for some rank, merceruil roset,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad drose your droddum!

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an ald wif's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddey boy,
On's wyllecloot;
But Miss's fine Lunardi! së!
How daur ye do't?
OF ROBERT BURNS.

O, Jenny, dina toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin'!
These winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see ourse'ls as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion;
What airs in dress an' gait wad les'e us,
And ev'n devotion!

XLIX.

EPISTLE TO J. RANKINE,
ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

[The person to whom these verses are addressed lived at Adamhill in Ayrshire, and merited the praise of rough and ready-witted, which the poem bestows. The humorous dream alluded to, was related by way of rebuke to a wight country earl, who was in the habit of calling all people of low degree "Brutes! — damned brutes."

"I dreamed that I was dead," said the rustic seriatist to his superior, "and condemned for the company I kept. When I came to hell-door, where many of your lordship's friends gang, I chappit, and 'Wha are ye, and where d'ye come frae?' Satan exclaimed. I just said, that my name was Rankine, and I came frae yere lordship's land. 'Awa wi' you,' cried Satan; 'ye cannot come here: hell's 'sae o' his lordship's damned brutes already.'"

O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin'!
There's monie godly folks are thinkin',
Your dreams' an' tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin'
Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks an' cants,
And in your wicked, dru'ken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
An' fill them fou;
And then their fallings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!

Spare't for their sakes wha often wear it,
The lads in black!
But your currst wit, when it comes near it,
Rivers' aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're sakieth,
It's just the blue-gown badge an' claieth
'O saunts; tak that, ye les'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frear unregenerate heathen,
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair;
Sae, when you hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang, ye'll sent wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarce'ly spread her wing!
I've play'd mysel' a bonnie spring,
An' dano'd my ill
I'd better gaen an' sairt the king,
At Bunker's Hill

'Twas ane night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a pastrick to the grum',
A bonnie hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought none wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I strakit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for';
But, deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-courte
The hale affair.

Some sauld us'd hands had taen a note,
That sic a ben had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie;
So gan the whistle o' my groat,
An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pouther an' my hail,
An' by my han, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!
The game shall pay o'er moor an' dae,
For this next year.

1 A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.

2 A song he had promised the author.
As soon's the clockin-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—d, 'tis hae sportin' by an' by,
    For my gowd guineas;
Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
    For't, in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three drops about the wame
    Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a yellow George to claim,
    An' thole their brethren!

It pits me ay as mad's a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
    When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
    Your most obedient.

ON A SCOTCH BARD,
SOME TO THE WEST INDIES.

[Burns in this Poem, as well as in others, speaks openly of his tastes and passions: his own fortunes are dwelt on with painful minuteness, and his errors are recorded with the accuracy, but not the seriousness of the confessional. He seems to have been fond of taking himself to task. It was written when "Hungry ruin had him in the wind," and emigration to the West Indies was the only refuge which he could think of, or his friends suggest, from the persecutions of fortune.]

A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
    Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,
    An' owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random-spleene,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar
    In social key;
For now he's taen another shore,
    An' owre the sea!

The bonnie laesee weel may miss him,
And in their dear petitions place him;
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,
    Wi' tearfu' e';
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him.
    That's owre the sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hads thow taen' aff some drowsy bunnle
Wha can no dought but fyke and fame.
    'Twash been nae plea,
But he was gleg as onie wumble,
    That's owre the sea!

Auld, cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
An' stail them wi' the saut, saut tear;
'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
    In flinders fay;
He was her laureate monie a year,
    That's owre the sea!

He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang masterin' up a bitter blast;
A jilet brak his heart at last,
    I'll may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast.
    An' owre the sea.

To tremble under fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
    An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet colin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding;
    He dealt it free;
The muse was a' that he took pride in,
    That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel;
Ye'll find him ay a dauntie chiel,
    And fou o' glee;
He wad na wrang'd the vera dell,
    That's owre the sea.

Farewell, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
    Now bonnie!
I'll toast ye in my kindmost gillie,
    Thou' owre the sea!
LI.

THE FAREWELL.

"The wench, in himself, what can be suffer?
Oh'! alas! does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
To avarice, to the love's tender sir,
To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children: then, then, O then! he feels
The point of misery fix't in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Yet, such a man! undone."

THOMSON.

[In these serious stanzas, where the comic, as in the case to the Scottish bard, are not permitted to mingle, Burns bids farewell to all on whom his heart had any claim. It seems to have been written on the sea as only a place of peril, and on the West Indies as a charnel-house.]

L.

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess! tho' thou'rt bereft
Of my parental care,
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith, my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
O then befriend my Jean!

II.

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
From 'hee, my Jeany, must I part!
Thou weeping ans'werst—"No!"
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace,
I for thy sake must go!
Thee, Hamilton, and Aiken dear,
A grateful, warm adieu;
I, with a much-indebted tear,
Shall still remember you!
All-hail then, the gale then,
Waits me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles, and whistles
I'll never see thee more!

LII.

WRITTEN

ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF MY POEMS, PRESENTED TO AN OLD SWEETHEART, THEN MARRIED.

This is another of the poet's lamentations, at the prospect of "torrid climes" and the roar of the Atlantic. To Burns, Scotland was the land of promise, the west of Scotland his paradise; and the land of dread, Jamaica! I found these lines copied by the poet into a volume which he presented to Dr. Geddes; they were addressed, as it is thought, to the "Dear E." of his earliest correspondence.]

Once fondly lov'd and still remember'd dear;
Sweet early c'j't. of my youthful vows!
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere;
Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more,—
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or hapy lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

LIII.

A DEDICATION

to

GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

[The gentleman to whom these manly lines are addressed, was of good birth, and of an open and generous nature: he was one of the first of the gentry of the west to encourage the muse of Colini to stretch her wings at full length. His free life, and free speech, exposed him to the censures of that stern divine, Daddie Auld, who charged him with the sin of assenting himself from church for three successive days; for having, without the fear of God's servant before him, profanely said damn it, in his presence, and for having galluped on Sunday. These charges were contemptuously dismissed by the presbyterian court. Hamilton was the brother of the Charlotte to whose charms, on the banks of Devou, Burns, it is said, paid the homage of a lover, as well as of a poet. The poem had a place in the Kilmarock edition, but not as an express dedication.]

EXPECT na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleecchin', flathrin' dedication,
To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye're surmumd' like his Grace;
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tir'd—and see are ye,
W' monie a falsome, sinner, lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,  
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha  
Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;  
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,  
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;  
And when I downs yokes at naig,  
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;  
Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flait'rin',  
It's just sic poet, an' sic patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,  
Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp him,  
He maun do weel for a' he's done yet,  
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The Patron, (Sir, ye maun forgie me,  
I winna lie, come what will o' me,)  
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,  
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,  
He downs see a poor man want;  
What's no his ain, he winna tak it;  
What ance he says, he winna break it;  
Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,  
'Till aft his guidness is abus'd;  
And rascals whyles that do him wrang.  
Er'n that, he does na mind it lang:  
As master, landlord, husband, father,  
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;  
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;  
It's naething but a milder feature,  
Of our poor sinful, corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,  
'Mang black Gentoois and pagan Turks,  
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,  
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.

That he's the poor man's friend in need,  
The gentleman in word and deed,  
It's no thro' terror of damnation;  
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,  
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!  
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is  
In moral mercy, truth and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;  
Abuse a brother to his back;

Steal thro' a winnock frae a whore,  
But point the rake that takes the door;  
Be to the poor like onie whunstane,  
And hand their noses to the grunstane,  
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;  
No matter—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs an' half-mile graces  
Wi' weel-spread looers, and lang wry faces;  
Grunten up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,  
And damn a' parties but your own;  
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceive,  
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye who leave the springs o' Calvin,  
For gummie dubs of your ain delvins!  
Ye sons of heresey and error,  
Ye'll some day squeal in quaking terror!  
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,  
And in the fire throws the sheath;  
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,  
Just frets 'till Heavn commision gies him  
While o'er the harp pale Mis'ry moans,  
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,  
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,  
I maist forget my dedication;  
But when divinity comes cross me  
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,  
But I maturely thought it proper,  
When a' my works I did review,  
To dedicate them, Sir, to you:  
Because (ye need na tak it ill)  
I thought them something like yourse'el'.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,  
And your petitioner shall ever—  
I had amain said, ever pray,  
But that's a word I need na say:  
For prayin' I hae little skill o'it;  
I'm baith dead sweer, an' wretched ill o't;  
But I'll repeat each poor man's pray'r,  
That kens or hears about you, Sir—

"May ne'er misfortune's growling bark,  
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk!  
May ne'er his gen'r'ous, honest heart,  
For that same gen'r'ous spirit smart!  
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name  
Lang beest his hymeneal flame,  
Till Hamiltons, at least a disen,  
Are free their nupial labours risen:
Five bonnie lasses round their table,  
And seven braw fellows, stout an' able  
To serve their king and country weel,  
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!  
May health and peace, with mutual rays,  
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;  
"Till his wee curlie John's-ieer-o,  
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,  
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow."  

I will not wind a lang conclusion,  
With complimentary effusion:  
But whilst your wishes and endeavours  
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,  
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,  
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which pow'r above prevent)  
That iron-hearted carl, Want,  
Attended in his grim advances  
By sad mistakes and black mischances,  
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,  
Make you as poor a dog as I am,  
Your humble servant then no more;  
For who would humbly serve the poor!  
But by a poor man's hope in Heav'n!  
While recollection's pow'r is given,  
If, in the vale of humble life,  
The victim sad of fortune's strife,  
I, thro' the tender gushing tear,  
Should recognize my Master dear,  
If friendless, low, we meet together,  
Then Sir, your hand—my friend and brother.

OF ROBERT BURNS.  
To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,  
Except the moment that they crush't him;  
For sure as chance or fate had hush't 'em,  
Tho' o'er sae short,  
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lasth 'em,  
And thought it sport.

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

LIV.  
LETTER TO JAMES TENNANT,  
of Glenconner.  
(The west country farmer to whom this letter was  
 sent, was a social man. The poet depended on his judg-  
 ment in the choice of a farm, when he resolved to quit  
 the harp for the plough: but as Ellisland was his choice,  
 his skill may be questioned.)  

Auld comrade dear, and brither sinner.  
How's a' the folk about Glenconner?  
How do you this blae eastlin wind,  
That's like to blaw a body blind?  
For me, my faculties are frozen,  
My dearest member nearly dozed.'  
I've sent you here, by Johnie Simson  
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on;  
Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,  
An' Reid, to common sense appealing.  
Philosophers have fought and wrangled,  
An' meikle Greek and Latin mangled,  
Till wi' their logic-jargon tir'd,  
An' in the depth of science mir'd,  
To common sense they now appeal,  
What wives and wabaters see and feel.  
But, hark ye, friend! I charge you strictly  
Peruse them, an' return them quickly,  
For now I'm grown see cursed doute  
I pray and ponder butt the house,  
My shins, my lane, I there sit roostin',  
Perusing Bunyan, Brown, an' Boston;  
Till by an' by, if I haud on,  
I'll grunt a real gospel groan:  
Already I begin to try it,  
To cast my o'en up like a pyet,  
When by the gun she tumbles o'er,  
Flutt'ring an' gasping in her gowe.

ELEGY  
on  
THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAU.  
[Cromek found these verses among the loose papers of Burns, and printed them in the Reliques. They contain a portion of the character of the poet, record his habitual carelessness in worldly affairs, and his desire to be dis-  
thrusted.]  

Now Robin lies in his last lair,  
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,  
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stairs,  
Nae mair shall fear him;  
Nor anxious fear, nor sankert care,  
E'er mair come near him.
Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning and a shining light.

My heart-warm love to gild ausd Glen,
The aec an' wale of honest men:
When bending down wi' ausd gray hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
An' views beyond the grave comfort him,
His worthy family far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear!

My ausd schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my mason Billie,
An' Auchenbay, I wish him joy;
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad, and Meg the mither,
Just five-and-forty years thegither!
An' no forgetting webster Charlie,
I'm taud he offers very fairly.
An' Lord, remember singing Sannock.
Wi' hale breaks, saxpence, an' a bannock,
An' next my ausd acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy;
An' her kind stars has aird thil her
A good chiel wi' a pickle siller.
My kindest, best respects I sen' it,
To cousin Kate, an' sister Janet;
Tell them, fae me, wi' chiel be cautions,
For, faith, they'll abnibin' fin' them fashion;
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant the maidenhead's the devil.
An' lastly, Jamie, for yourself,
May guardian angels tak a spell,
An' steer you seven miles south o' hell:
But first, before you see heaven's glory,
May ye get monie a merry story,
Monie a laugh, and monie a drink,
And aye enough, o' needfu' clink.

Now fare ye weel, an' joy be wi' you,
For my sake this I beg it o' you.
Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
Ye'll fin' him just an honest man;
Sae I conclude, and qua my chanter,
Yours, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANIER.

LVI.

ON THE

BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD.

[From letters addressed by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, it would appear that this "Sweet flow'rest, pledge o' meikle love," was the only son of her daughter, Mrs. Heart, who had married a French gentleman. The mother soon followed the father to the grave: she died in the south of France, whither she had gone in search of health.]

Sweet flow'rest, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a pray'r,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirple o'er the seas,
Chill on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shell'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
The bitter frost and snow!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer-morn,
Now fecably bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
- Unsae'th'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

LVII.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANK,

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

[The beauteous rose-bud of this poem was one of the daughters of Mr. Cruikshank, a master in the High School of Edinburgh, at whose table Burns was a frequent guest during the year of hopes which he spent in the northern metropolis.]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

BEAUTIFUL rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,
Never may't thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in lonely show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Boreus' poisonous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem:
'Till some evening, sober, calm,
Dropping dews and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And every bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she ever gave birth.

LXXX.

WILLIE CHALMERS.

[Lockhart first gave this poetical curiosity to the world: he copied it from a small manuscript volume of Poems given by Burns to Lady Harriet Don, with an explanation in these words: "W. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetical epistle to a young lady, his Duscia. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows." Chalmers was a writer in Ayr. I have not heard that the lady was influenced by this voluble effusion: ladies are seldom rhymed into the matrimonial maze.]

I.

Wi' braw new branks in mickle pride,
And sike a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin;
While owre a bush wi' downward crush
The doile beastie stammers;
Then up he gets and off he sets
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

II.

I doubt na, lass, that weel kenned name
May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Her his warm urged wishes.

Your bonnie face sae mild and sweet
His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye'll no be lost a whit
Tho' waired on Willie Chalmers.

III.

Auld Truth hersel' might swear ye're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And nae'er a ne'er mistak' her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy Palmers;
Nae wonder then they've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

IV.

I doubt na fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou'd potted priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But Oh! what signifieth to you
His lexicons and grammars;
The feeling heart's the royal blue,
And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

V.

Some gapin' glornin' countra laird,
May warship for your favour;
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And hoast up some palaver.
My bonnie maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammer,
Seek Heaven for help, and baredist skelp
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

VI.

Forgive the Bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom,
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his duess,
For de'il a hair I roose him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.
LIX.

LIVING AT A REFERENCE FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT,
THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING

VERSES

IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

[Of the origin of these verses Gilbert Burns gives the following account. "The first time Robert heard the spinnet played was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minister of Loudon, now in Glasgow. Dr. Lawrie has several daughters; one of them played; the father and the mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world: his mind was moved to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept."]

I.

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.

II.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleased to spare;
"To bless his filial little flock
And show what good men are.

III.

She who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

IV.

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!

V.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snare's on ev'ry hand—
Guide Thou their steps alway.

VI.

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May they rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A family in Heaven!

LX.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.,
MAUCHLINE.

(RECOMMENDING A NOY.)

[Verse seems to have been the natural language of Burns. The Master Tootie whose skill he records, lived in Mauchline, and dealt in cows: he was an artful and contriving person, great in bargaining and intimate with all the professional tricks by which old cows are made to look young, and six-pint hawties pass for those of twelve.]

Monday, May 3, 1786.

I.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty,
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird McGaun,
Was here to hire you land away
'But who be spak the thither day,
An' had he done's off han':
But lest he learn the calkane tricks,
As, faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then, I'd have them,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwise.

II.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enow,
An' bouth a house that's rude an' rough
The boy might learn to swear;
But then wi' you, he'll be sae taught,
An' get sic fair example saught,
I havena ony fear.
Ye'll catechize him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' Hell;
An' gar him follow to the Kirk—
—Ay when ye gang yoursels'.
If ye then, maun be then
Fare hame this comin' Friday;
Then please Sir, to lea'e Sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

III.

My word of honour I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'n,
To meet the Warld's worm;
To try to get the twa to gree,
An' name the airles' an' the fee,
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a snick can draw,

1: The airles—earnest money.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

When simple bodies let him;
An' if a Devil be at 'a,
In faith he's sure to get him.
To phrase you, an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureate scorns:
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful Mindstiel Burns.

LXI.
TO MR. M'ADAM,
OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN.

[It seems that Burns, delighted with the praise which
the Laird of Craigen-Gillian bestowed on his verses,—
probably the Jolly Beggars, then in the hands of Wood-bern, his steward,—poured out this little unpromoted natural acknowledgment.]

Sir, o'er a gill I get your card,
I trow it made me proud;
See wha tak's notice o' the bard
I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now dell-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million:
I'll cock my nose aboon them a—
I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillian!

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursell',
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
Is ay a blest infection.

Tho' by his' banes who in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my sin legs thro' dirt and dub,
I independent stand ay—

And when those legs to gude, warm kail,
Wi' welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybaw-tail,
And barley-scone shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' ma'ly flow'ry simmers!
And bless your bonnie lasses bain,
I'm tauld they're losome kimmers!

And God bess young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

1 Diogenes.

LXII.
ANSWER TO A POETICAL EPISTLE
SENT TO THE AUTHOR BY A TAILOR.

(The person who in the name of a Tailor took the liberty of admonishing Burns about his errors, is generally believed to have been William Simpson, the schoolmaster of Ochiltree: the verses seem about the measure of his capacity, and were attributed at the time to his hand. The natural poet took advantage of the mask in which the crude poet concealed himself, and raised such a merciless storm upon him, as would have extinguished half the Tailors in Ayrshire, and made the amazed dominie

"Strangely sedge and fyke."

It was first printed in 1801, by Stewart.]

What ails ye now, ye lousie b—h,
To throw my back a sic a pitch?
Loosh, man I hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bonkin's baud
I didna suffer ha' sae much
Fae Duddle Auld.

What tho' at times when I grow crouse,
I gie their wames a random pouze,
Is that enough for you to souse
Your servant sae?

Gae mind your seaman, ye prick-the-louse,
An' jagg-the-fae.

King David o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischiefs,
As fill'd his after life wi' grief,
An' bluddy rants,
An' yet he's rank'd among the chief
O' lang-eyne saunta.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes, an' drunken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Cloutie's haunts
An unco' slip yet,
An' enegy sit among the saunta
At Davie's hip get.

But fegs, the Session says I maun
Gae fa' up' another plan,
Than garrin lasses cowp the cran
Clean heels o're body,
And sairly thole their mither's ban
Afore the howdy.

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the Session sort,
Auld Clinkum at the inner port
Cried three times—"Robin!
Come hither, lad, an' answer for't,
Ye're blamed for jobbin'."

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
An' sneer'd away before the Session;
i made an open fair confession—
I scorn'd to lee;
An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell soul o' me.

* * * * *

LXIII.

TO J. RANKINE.

[With the Laird of Adamhill's personal character the reader is already acquainted: the lady about whose frailties the rumour alluded to was about to rise, has not been named, and it would neither be delicate nor polite to guess.]

I AM a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, altho' not a';
Some people tell me gin I fa'
As way or ither,
The breaking of se point, though sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

I has been in for't ance or twice,
And winna say o'er far for thrice,
Yet never met with that surprise
That broke my rest,
But now a rumour's like to rise,
A whaup's l' the nest.

LXIV.

LINES
WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.

[The bank-note on which these characteristic lines were endorsed, came into the hands of the late James Gracie, banker in Dumfries: he knew the handwriting of Burns, and kept it as a curiosity. The concluding lines point to the year 1796, as the date of the composition.]

Was worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,
Fell source o' a' my woes an' grief;

For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, through thy cursed restriction
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile
Amid his hapless victim's spoil:
And for thy potent vainly wished,
To crush the villain in the dust.
For lack o' thee, I leave this much-lov'd shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

R. B.

"Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blam'd with reason;
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason."

On reading, in the public papers, the "Laureate's Ode," with the other praise of June 4, 1796, 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."

[The prudent friends of the poet remonstrated with him about this Poem, which they appeared to think would injure his fortunes and stop the royal bounty to which he was thought entitled. Mrs. Dunlop, and Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, solicited him in vain to omit it in the Edinburgh edition of his poems. I know of no poem for which a claim of being prophetic would be so successfully set up: it is full of poet as well as of the future. The allusions require no comment.]

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My hardship here, at your levees,
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 thang,
By many a lord an' lady;
"God save the king!" 'tis a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;
The poets, too, a' venal gang,
Wi' rhymes well-turn'd an' ready,
Wad gar ye twaw ye ne'er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

For me, before a monarch's face,  
E'en 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 war an' o' the race,  
And aiblins ane been better  
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,  
My skill may weel be doubted:  
But facts are clear that winna ding,  
An' down's been disputed:  
Your royal nest beneath your wing,  
Is 'en right reft an' clouted,  
And now the third part of the string,  
An' less, will gang about it  
Than did se day.

Far be't free 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 ministation  
To chapse, wha, in a barn or byre,  
Wad better fill'd their station  
Than courts you day.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,  
Her broken rhins 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, wi' 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 fellow's get,  
A name not envy spairges,)  
That he intends to pay your debt,  
An' lessen a' your charges;  
But, G-d'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' submission  
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 bonnie balantine, Heav'n has lent,  
Still higher may they heese ye  
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,  
For ever to release ye  
Frase 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 ratt'd dice wi' Charlie,  
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged court's been known  
To mak a noble aiver;  
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,  
For a' their clish-ma-claver:  
There, him at Agincourt wha shott  
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 Osamburg,  
Nane sets the lown-sleeve sweeter,  
Altho' a ribbon at your lug,  
Wad been a dress completer:  
As ye disown you naughty dog  
That bears the keys of Peter,  
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,  
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre  
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Terry Breeks, I learn,  
Ye've lately come athwart her;  
A glorious galley, 't stem an' stern,  
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;  
But first hang out, that she'll discern  
Your hymeneal charter,

1 Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain roya miller's amour
Then heave aboard your grapple airm,  
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 thro',  
It may be bitter saute;  
An' I hae seen their coggie fun,  
That yet hae tarrow's at it;  
But ere the day was done, trow,  
The laggan they hae clautet  
Fu' clean that day.

LXVI.
A BARD'S EPITAPH.

(This beautiful and affecting poem was printed in the 
Kilmarnock edition: Wordsworth writes with his usual 
taste and feeling about it: "Whom did the poet intend 
should be thought of, as occupying that grave, over 
which, after modestly setting forth the moral discourses 
and warm affections of the 'poor inhabitant' it is supposed 
to be inscribed that 
"Thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stained his name!")

Who but himself—himself anticipating the but too 
probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere 
and solemn avowal—a confession at once devout, poeti-
cal, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! 
What more was required of the biographer, than to have 
put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding 
and been realized and that the record was authentic!"

Is there a whim-inspired 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 drop 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, through 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.

LXVII.
THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE.

[Cromek, an anxious and curious inquirer, informed 
me, that the Twa Dogs was in a half-finished state, when 
the poet consulted John Wilson, the printer, about the 
Kilmarnock edition. On looking over the manuscripts, 
the printer, with a meekness common to his profession, 
said, "The Address to the Dell" and "The Holy Fair" 
were grand things, but it would be as well to have a 
calmer and sedater strain, to put at the front of the 
volume. Burns was struck with the remark, and on his 
way home to Mosagiel, completed the Poem, and took it 
next day to Kilmarnock, much to the satisfaction of 
"Wes Johnnie." On the 17th of February Burns says to 
John Richmond, of Mauchline, "I have completed 
my Poem of the Twa Dogs, but have not shown it to the 
world." It is difficult to fix the dates with anything like 
accuracy, to compositions which are not struck off at 
one heat of the fancy. "Lanath was use of the poet's 
dogs, which some person had wantonly killed," says 
Gilbert Burns; "but Cesar was merely the creature of 
the imagination." The Ettrick Shepherd, a judge of 
collies, says that Lanath is true to the life, and that many 
a hundred times he has seen the dogs bark for very joy 
when the cottage children were merry.]

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle  
That bears the name o' A'ld King Coll,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing through the afternoon,
Two dogs that was na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.
The first I'll name, they ca'd him Caesar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his legs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpits some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

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

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Whae for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang, 1
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithful tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonie, baws'n't face,
Ay gat him friends in ilk a place.
His breast was white, his touriie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swiril.

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,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

CEasar.
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 racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents;
He rises when he likes himself;
His funkies 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, through the steaks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frea morn to e'en its nought but tolling,
At baking, roasting, fryin', boilin';
An' though the gentry first are stechin',
Yet even the ha' folk fill their pechan;
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trastrie,
That's little short o' downright wasterie.
Our whisper-in, wee, blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than any 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, Caesar, whyles they're fash't enough
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Daring a quarry, and sic like;
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sawar 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 kenne'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented:
An' bairdly chielis, an' clever hixties,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

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

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 smash:  
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,  
He'll apprehend them, point 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!

LUAH.
They're no see wretched'd ane wad think;  
Th' constantly on poorness's brink:  
They're see a custom'd wi' the sight,  
The view o' gies them little fright.  
Then chance an' fortune are seen guided,  
They're ay in less or mair provided;  
An' tho' fate'gied wi' close employment,  
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,  
Their grushe weans, an' faithfu' wives;  
The prattling things are just their pride,  
That sweetens a' their fire-side;  
An' whyles twalpennies 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 and priests;  
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts;  
Or tell what new taxation's comin',  
And ferlie at the folk in Loun' on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,  
They get the jovial, ranting kins,  
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,  
Unite in common recreation;  
Love blinks, Wit snips, 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' shed a heart-inspiring steam;  
The luntin pipe, an' sneecshin mill,  
Are handed round wi' right guid will;  
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,  
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—  
My heart has been sae fain to see them,  
That I for joy hae bairkit 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 bairth root and branch,  
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,  
Wha thinks to knit himsel' the faster  
In favour wi' some gentle master,  
Wha aiblins, thrang a parliamentin',  
For Britain's guid his soul indemnin'—

CAESAR.
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 paradin',  
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;  
Or may be, in a frollo daft,  
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,  
To mak' 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 takes the rout,  
To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowt;  
Or down Italian vista startles,  
Wh̄e-re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles  
Then houses drumly German water,  
To mak' hime' look fair and fatter,  
An' clear the consequential sorrows,  
Love-gifs of carnival signoras.  
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction  
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUAH.
Hech, man! dear sire! 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 free courts,  
An' please themsel's wi' countra sports,  
It wad for ev'ry ane be better,  
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!  
For these frank, rantin', ramblin' blithes,  
Flent haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;  
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,  
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,  
Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,  
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Caesar,  
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?  
Nae cauld or hunger e'er can stee them,  
The vera thought o'it need na fear them.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I--d, man, were ye but whyles where I am,
The gentle ye was ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they needs nae stave or sweat,
Tho' winter's cauld, or summer's heat;
They're nae sair warke to craze their bames,
An' ill anid age wi' gripes an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak' sowthemselves to vex them.
An' sae the less they has to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the plough,
His acres till'd, he's right enough;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dinsen's done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' warke are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' de'il haes alls them, yet uneasy.
Their days inapaid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' even their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping thro' public places,
There's sic parade, sic pump, an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debanches;
As night they're mad wi' drink and wh-ring,
Niest day their life is past enduring.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o'ither,
They're a' run deils an' jadethgether.
Whyles, o'er the wees bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leaks
O're owre the devil's pictur'd beaks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

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

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowlin' i' the loan;
When up they gat, and shook their hogs,
Rejoic'd they were na men, but dogs;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet someither day.

MEETING WITH LORD DAER.

["The first time I saw Robert Burns," says Dugald Stewart, "was on the 25th of October, 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayrshire, together with our common friend, John MacKenzie, surgeon in Mauchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. My excellent and much-lamented friend, the late Basil, Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Carrine the same day, and, by the kindness and frankness of his manners, left an impression on the mind of the poet which was never affected. The verses which the poet wrote on the occasion are among the most imperfect of his pieces, but a few stanzas may perhaps be a matter of curiosity, both on account of the character to which they relate and the light which they throw on the situation and the feelings of the writer before his name was known to the public."]

Basil, Lord Daer, the uncle of the present Earl of Bel kirk, was born in the year 1706, at the family seat of St. Mary's Isle: he distinguished himself early at school, and at college excelled in literature and science; he had a greater regard for democracy than was then reckoned consistent with his birth and rank. He was, when Burns met him, in his twenty-third year; was very tall, something careless in his dress, and had the taste and talent common to his distinguished family. He died in his thirty-third year.

This wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A n'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I spachled up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bich-fou 'mang godly priests,
Wi' rev'rence be it spoken:
I've even joind the honour'd jorum,
When mighty squireships of the quorum
Their hydra drouth did saken.

But wi' a Lord—stand out, my shin!
A Lord—a Peer— an Earl's son!—
Up higher yet, my bonnet!
And sic a Lord!—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my monnet.

But, oh! for Hogarth's magic pow'r!
To show Sir Bardie's will'gart grow'r,
And how he star'd and stammer'd,
When goovan, as if led wi' braoks,
An' stamp'd on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.
THE POETICAL WORKS

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his lordship steal'st a look,
Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense and social glee,
An' (what surpris'd me) modesty,
I marked nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming;
The flint a pride, sae pride had been,
Nor sance, 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 Deir,
For he but meets a brother.

LXXIX.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

["'I enclose you two poems," said Burns to his friend Chalmers, "which I have carved and spun since I passed Glasgow. One bank in the Address to Edinburgh, 'Fair B—', is the heavenly Miss Burnett, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her, in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve, on the first day of her existence." Lord Monboddo made himself ridiculous by his speculations on human nature, and acceptable by his kindly manners and suppers in the manner of the ancients, where his viands were spread under ambrosial lights, and his Falernian was wreathed with flowers. At these suppers Burns sometimes made his appearance. The "Address" was first printed in the Edinburgh edition: the poet's hopes were then high, and his compliments, both to town and people, were elegant and happy.]

I.

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'r!
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.

II.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour 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.

III.

Thy sons, Edina! social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their liberal 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!

IV.

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,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine!

V.

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.

VI.

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!

VII.

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

There' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bares;
Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
Happy, my aires have left their shed,
And fae'd grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-foll'wing where your fathers led!

VIII.
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 lir'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

LXXX.

EPISTLE TO MAJOR LOGAN.

(Major Logan, of Camlough, lived, when this hasty
Poem was written, with his mother and sister at Park-
house, near ayr. He was a good musician, a joyous
companion, and something of a wit. The Epistle was
printed, for the first time, in my edition of Burns, in 1894,
and since then no other edition has wanted it.)

Hail, chailm-inspirin', rattlin' Willie!
Though fortune's road be rough an' hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But tak' it like the unback'd soldier,
Proud o' her speed.

When idly goavan whyles we saunter
Yirr, fancy barks, awa' we cantor
Uphill, dawn brae, till some mischanter,
Some black bog-hole,
Arrests us, then the scathe an' banter
We're forced to thole.

Hale be your heart! Hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbow jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' this wild warl',
Until you on a crummock driddle
A gray-hair'd carel.

Come wealth, come poorth, late or soon,
Heaven send your heart-strings ay in tune,
And screw your temper pins aboon
A fife or mair,
The melancholious, lazy croon
O' cankrie care.

May still your life from day to day
Nae "lente largo" in the play,
But "allegretto forte" gay
Harmonious flow:
A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey—
Encore! Bravo!

A blessing on the cheery gang
Wha dearly like a jig or song,
An' never think o' right an' wrang
By square an' rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stag
Are wise or fool.

My hand-waled curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-prond race,
Wha counts on poorth a disgrace—
Their tuneless hearts!
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

But come, your hand, my careless brother,
I' th' ither warl', if there's anither,
An' that there is I've little swither
About the matter;
We cheek for chaw shall jog thegither,
I've ne'er bid better.

We've faults and failings—granted clearly,
We're frail backsliding mortals merely,
Eve's bonny squad, priests wyte them cheerly
For our grand fa';
But still, but still, I like them dearly—
God bless them a'!

Ochon! for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' soul o' earthly jinkers,
The witching curb'd delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
And gart me meet my waurknife winkers,
Wi' girnan spite.

But by yon moon!—and that's high swarin'—
An' every star within my hearin'!
An' by her een wha was a dear ane!
I'll ne'er forget;
I hope to gie the jads a clearin'—
In fair play yet.

My loss I mourn, but not repent it,
I'll seek my pursie where I tint it,
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cautralp hour,
By some sweet elf I'll yet be dinted,
That, voce l'amour!
LXXI.

THE BRIGS OF AYR,
A POEM,
INSCRIBED TO J. BALLANTYNE, ESQ., AYR.

[Burns took the hint of this Poem from the Planestanes and Causeway of Ferguson, but all that lends it life and feeling belongs to his own heart and his native Ayr. He wrote it for the second edition of his Poems, and in compliment to the patronus of his genius in the west. Ballantyne, to whom the Poem is inscribed, was generous when the distresses of his farming speculations pressed upon him: others of his friends figure in the scene: Montgomery's courage, the learning of Dogstil Stewart, and condescension and kindness of Mrs. General Stewart, of Stair, are gratefully recorded.]

The simple Brig, rough at the rustic plough, Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough; The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush, Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perchimg red-breast shrill, Or deep-ton'd plovers, gray, wild-whistling o'er the hill; Shall he, burst in the peasant's lowly shed, To hardy independence bravely bred, By early poverty to hardship steed, And train'd to arms in stern misfortune's field— Shall he be guilty of their hirpling crimes, The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes! Or labour hard the panegyric close, With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?

No! though his artless strains he rudely sings, And throws his hand uncountly o'er the strings, He glows with all the spirit of the Bard, Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward! Still, if some patron's gen'rous care he trace, Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace; When Ballantyne befriended his humble name, And hands the rustic stranger up to fame, With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells, The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter hap, And thack and rape secure the toil-won crop; Potato-bings are snuggled up frae saith Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath; The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toil, Unnumber'd buds, an' flow'r'n delicious spoils, Seat'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles, Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak, The death o' devils smoor'd wi' brimstone reek: The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side, The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide; The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie, Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie: (What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds, And exorcises man's savage, ruthless deeds!)

Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs; Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings, Except, perhaps, the robin's whistling glee, Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree: The hoary morns precede the sunny days, Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noon-tide blaze, While thick the gossamer waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season, when a simple bard, Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward, As night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr, By whim inspired, or haply pret'rit care, He left his bed, and took his wayward rout, And down by Simpson's1 wheel'd the left about: (Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate, To witness what I after shall narrate; Or whether, rapt in meditation high, He wander'd out he knew not where nor why) The drowsy Dungeon-clock,2 had number'd two, And Wallace Tow'r had sworn the fact was true: The tide-evolv'n Firth, with sullen sounding roar, Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore.

1 A noted tavern at the said Brig end.
2 The two steapps.
All ills was hush'd as Nature's closed o'er:
The slumber moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crested, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
The clangor sang of whistling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the goe1 drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape upsears,
The other flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock Rhymers instantly descry'd
The Sprites that owre the brigs of Ayr preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the spiritual folk;
Fays, Spankies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And ev'n the vera deils they bravely ken them.)
Auld Brig appears'd of ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warst'd lang,
Yet, toughly dour, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was bukit in a braw new coat,
That he at Lon' on, free ane Adams got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a head,
Wi' virils and whirlygigs at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch:—
It chanc'd his new-come neeboor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thievish sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid-e'en:—

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streakit o'er frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as ald as me,
Tho' faith, that day I doubt ye'll never see;
There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewe scree Chicameeries in your noolde.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
Where two wheel-barrows tremble when they meet—

Your ruin'd formless bulk o' stane an' lime,
Compare wi' bonnie Brigs o' modern time?
There's men's o' taste would tak the Ducait-stream,2
Tho' they should cast the vera rank and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
Of sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride—
This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
And tho' wi' crazy eid I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a Brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But two-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'flow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Logar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garps2 draws his feeble source,
Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spoting thows,
In mony a torrent down the snow-broo rowes;
While crashing ice born on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from Glenbuck,4 down to the Ratton-key,
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea—
Then down ye'll hurl, deli nor ye never rise!
And dash the gummie jaups up to the pouring
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost, [skies.
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, throwth, I needs must say't o'!
The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o'!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghastly-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning just like precipices;
O'er-arching, moidly, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture 1r'es't,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblessed;
Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
The cra'd creations of misguided whim;

1 The goe-hawk or falcon.
2 A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.
3 The beats of Garps Water is one of the new places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring be-
4 The source of the river Ayr.
5 A small landing-place above the large key.
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or
sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building
taste
Of any mason-reptile, bird or beast;
Fit only for a doted monkish race,
Or frosty maidens forsworn the dear embrace;
Or cuifs of later times who held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection!
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrec-
tion!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feel-
ings?
Ye worthy Prosees, an' mony a Baillie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did tell ay;
Ye dainty Deacons and ye dour Conveners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners:
Ye godly Councils wha hae blesst this town;
Ye godly Brethren o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your hardies to the smiers;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly writers;
A' ye dour folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexa-
tion,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And, agonising, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degenerate race!
Nae longer rev'rend men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid
story!
Nae longer thrifty citizens an' dource,
Meet owre a pint, or in the council-house;
But staunmell, corky-headed, graceless gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men, three parts made by tailors and by bar-
ers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d—d new
Brigs and Harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now hauk you there! for faith ye've said
enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through;
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Curevix and Clergy, are a shot right kittle:

But under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd:
To liken them to your auld-world squad,
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, wagt-wits nae mair can have a handle
To mouth 'a citizen,' a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hopes an'
raisins,
Or gather'd lib'ral views in bonds and seisms,
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense for once betray't
them,
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Spirits had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glitt'ring stream they fealty danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glist'n'd:
They footed owre the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet:
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-enhombing bardic heroic ditties sung.—
O had M'Lauclahan, thairm-inspiring Sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When thro' his dear strathpeys they bore with
highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scot's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his highland lug been nobler fr'd,
And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch
inspir'd!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard,
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the
heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable Chief advance'd in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:

1 A well known performer of Scottish music on the violin.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn, LED yellow Autumus, wreath'd with nodding corn; Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show, By Hospitality with cloudless brow. Next follow'd Courage, with his martial stride, From where the Peal wild woody coverts hide; Benevolence, with mild, benignant air, A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair; Learning and Worth in equal measures trode From simple Catrine, their long lov'd abode: Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath, To rustic Agriculture did bequeath The broken iron instruments of death; At sight of whom our Sprites forget their kindling wrath.

Beneath the blasts the leafless forests groan; The hollow caves return a sullen moan. Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests and ye caves, Ye howling winds, and wintry swelling waves! Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye, Sad to your sympathetic scenes I fly; Where to the whistling blast and waters' roar Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.

O heavy loss, thy country ill could bear! A loss these evil days can ne'er repair! Justice, the high vicegerent of her God, Her doubtful balance ey'd, and away'd her rod; Hearing the tidings of the fatal blow She sunk, abandon'd to the wildest woe.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den, Now gay in hope explore the paths of men: See from this cavern grim Oppression rise, And throw on poverty his cruel eyes; Keen on the helpless victim see him fly, And stiffe, dark, the feebly-bursting cry:

Mark ruffian Violence, distain'd with crimes, Bousing elate in these degenerate times; View unsuspecting Innocence a prey, As guileful Fraud points out the erring way: While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong: Hark, injurd' Want recounts th' unlisten'd tale, And much-wrong'd Mis'ry pours th' unpitied wail!

Ye dark waste hills, and brown unsightly plains, To you I sing my grief-inspired strains: Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll! Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul. Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign, Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine, To mourn the woes my country must endure, That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

LXXII.

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT DUNDAES, ESQ., OF ARNISTON,
LATE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF SESSION.

[At the request of Advocate Hay, Burns composed this Poem, in the hope that it might interest the powerful family of Dundas in his fortunes. I found it inserted in the handwriting of the poet, in an interleaved copy of his Poems, which he presented to Dr. Gedden, accompanied by the following surly note:—"The foregoing Poem has some tolerable lines in it, but the incurable wound of my pride will not suffer me to correct, or even peruse it. I sent a copy of it with my best prose lecture to the son of the great man, the theme of the piece, by the hands of one of the noblest men in God's world, Alexander Wood, surgeon: when, behold! his solicitousness took no more notice of my Poem, or of me, than I had been a strolling fiddler who had made free with his lady's name, for a silly new reel. Did the fellow imagine that I looked for any dirty gratuity?" This Robert Dundas was the elder brother of that Lord Melville to whose hands, even after these lines were written, all the government patronage in Scotland was confided, and who, when the name of Burns was mentioned, pushed the wize to Pitt, and said nothing. The poem was first printed by me, in 1804.]

LXXIII.

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER.

THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, ESQ., BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S.

[John M'Leod was of the ancient family of Rams, and brother to that Isabella M'Leod, for whom Burns, in his correspondence, expressed great regard. The little
Again the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv'n,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Hear'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you!

LXXV.
THE AMERICAN WAR.
A FRAGMENT.

[Dr. Blair said that the politics of Burns smelt of the smithy, which, interpreted, means, that they were an statesman-like, and worthy of a country sile-house, and an audience of peasants. The Poem gives us a striking picture of the humorous and familiar way in which the hinds and husbandmen of Scotland handle national topics: the smithy is a favourite resort, during the winter evenings, of rustic politicians; and national affairs and parish scandal are alike discussed. Burns was in those days, and some time after, a vehement Tory: his admiration of "Chatham's Boy," called down on him the dusty in dignation of the republican Ritson.]

I.
When Guildford good our pilot stood,
And did our hellim throw, man,
As night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they got the maskin-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
An' did nae less in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

II.
Then thro' the lakes Montgomery-takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man;
Down Lowrie's burn he took a turn.
And Carleton did ca', man;
But yet, what-reck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man,
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Among his en'mies a', man.
III.
Poor Tammy Gage, within a cage,
Was kept at Boston ha', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian blood to draw, man:
But at New York, wi' knight an' fork,
Sir-loin he hacked sma', man.

IV.
Burgoynes gaed up, like spur an' whip,
Till Fraser bravo did fa', man,
Then lost his way, in misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,
An' did the buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive free rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

V.
Then Montague, an' Guilford, too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sauckville dour, who stood the stoure,
The German Chief to throw, man;
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
An' Charlie Fox throw by the box,
An' lowd his tinklins jaw, man.

VI.
Then Rockingham took up the game,
Till death did on him ca', man;
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man;
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
They did his measures throw, man,
For North an' Fox united stocks,
An' bore him to the wa', man.

VII.
Then clubs an' hearts were Charlie's cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair fous pes, man;
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placada,
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;
An' Scotland drew her pipe, an' blew,
"Up, Willie, warm them a', man!"

VIII.
Behind the throne then Grenville's gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While doe Dundas arous'd the class,
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
An' Chatham's wraith, in heavenly graith,
(Inspired Bardies saw, man)
Wi' kindling eyes cry'd "Willie, rise!"
Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

IX.
But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.,
Gowf'd Willie like a ba', man,
Till Suthron raises, and coast their claise
Behind him in a raw, man;
An' Caledon throw by the drone,
An' did her whittle draw, man;
An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' blood
To make it guid in law, man.

LXXVII.
THE DEAN OF FACULTY.
A NEW BALLAD.
(The Hal and Bob of these satiric lines were Henry Erakine, and Robert Dundas; and their contention was,
as the verses intimate, for the place of Dean of the Faculty of Advocates: Erakine was successful. It is
supposed that in characterizing Dundas, the poet remembered "the incurable wound which his pride had got"
in the affair of the elegiac verses on the death of the elder Dundas. The poem first appeared in the Reliques of
Burns.)

I.
Diss was the hate at old Harlaw,
That Scot to Scot did carry;
And dire the discord Langside saw,
For beauteous, hapless Mary:
But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
Than 'twixt Hal and Bob for the famous job—
Who should be Faculty's Dean, Sir.—

II.
This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,
Among the first was number'd;
But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment tenth remember'd.—
Yet simple Bob the victory got,
And won his heart's desire;
Which shows that heaven can boil the pot,
Though the devil p—a in the fire.—
THE POETICAL WORKS

III.
Squire Hal besides had in this case
Pretensions rather brassy,
For talents to deserve a place
Are qualifications saucy;
So, their worship of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, dy'se see,
• To their gratis grace and goodness.—

IV.
As once on Pisgah pur'd was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind, mental vision:
Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear he has the angel met
That met the Ass of Balaam.

LXXVII.
TO A LADY,
WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING-GASSES.
[To Mrs. McLehose, of Edinburgh, the poet presented
the drinking-glasses alluded to in the verses: they are,
it seems, still preserved, and the lady on occasions of high
festival, indulges in an inebriation of the
blood of Shiraz' scorched wine.]

Fair Empress of the Poet's soul,
And Queen of Poetesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses.

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
"The whole of human kind!"

"To those who love us!"—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we lose those who love not us!—
A third—"to thee and me, love!"

LXXVIII.
TO CLARINDA.
[This is the lady of the drinking-glasses; the Mrs. Mac
of many a toast among the poet's acquaintances. She
was, in those days, young and beautiful, and we fear a
little giddy, since she indulged in that sentimental and
platonick flirtation with the poet, contained in the well-
known letters to Clarinda. The letters, after the poet's
death, appeared in print without her permission; she ob-
tained an injunction against the publication, which still
remains in force, but her anger seems to have been less
a matter of taste than of whim, for the injunction has
been allowed to slumber in the case of some editors
though it has been enforced against others.]

Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
The measure'd time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander lie?
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy.

We part—but, by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet 4x
My worship to its ray!

LXXIX.
VERSES
WRITTEN UNDER YET PORTRAIT OF PEGGASON, THE
POET, IN A COWT OF THAT AUTHOR'S WORKS PRE-
SENTED TO A YOUNG LADY.
[Who the young lady was to whom the poet presented
the portrait and Poems of the ill-fated Ferguson, we
have not been told. The verses are dated Edinburgh,
March 19th, 1757.]

Curses on ungrateful man, that can be pleas'd,
And yet can stave the author of the pleasure!
O thou my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard un pityed by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?
Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire:
May every son be worthy of his sire;
Firm may she rise with generous disdain
At Tyrannies', or dire Pleasure's chain;
Still self-dependent in her native shore,
Bold may she brave grim Danger's lowest roar,
Till Fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no more.

LXXXI.
SKETCH.

[This Sketch is a portion of a long Poem which Burns proposed to call "The Poet's Progress." He communicated the little he had done, for he was a courter of opinions, to Dougald Stewart. "The Fragment forms," said he, "the postulate, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you, merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching." It is probable that the professor's response was not favourable for we hear no more of the Poem.]

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight;
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets:
A man of fashion, too, he made his tour,
Learn'd vivre la bagatelle, et vive l'amour:
So trav'ld monkeys their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy send,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

LXXXII.
TO MRS. SCOTT,
OF WAUCHOPE.

[The lady to whom this epistle is addressed was a painter and a poetess; her pencil sketches are said to have been beautiful; and she had a ready skill in rhyme, as the verses addressed to Burns fully testify. Taste and poetry belonged to her family; she was the niece of Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of a beautiful variation of The Flowers of the Forest.]

I mind it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate,
An' first could thrust the barn;
Or hauk a yokin at the plough;
An' th' forfoughten sair enough,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and laas,
Still shearing, and clearing,
The tither stooked raw,
Wi' claiers, an' havers,
Wearing the day awa.

E'en then, a wish, I mind its pow'r,
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast,
That I for poorauld Scotland's sake
Some useful plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-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 o'er could raise,
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nce higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
'Till on that bar' set I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonnie queen,
That lighted up her jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heart-strings tingle:
I fired, inspired,
At every 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 heaven 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 was men, ye're nac men
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Iik honest birkie swears.

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lye,
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 mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple
Than oye ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Fareweel then, lang heel then,
An' plenty be your fa';
Mae losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan ca'.

LXXXIII.

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM CREECH.

[A storm of rain detained Burns one day, during his border tour, at Selkirk, and he employed his time in writing this characteristic epistle to Creech, his bookseller. Creech was a person of education and taste: he was not only the most popular publisher in the north, but he was intimate with almost all the distinguished men who, in those days, adorned Scottish literature. But though a joyful man, a lover of sociability, and the keeper of a good table, he was close and parsimonious, and loved to hold money to the last moment that the law allowed.]

Selkirk, 18 May, 1787.

Auld chukie Reekie's sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel-burnishht crest,
Nae joy her bonnie buskit nest
Can yield awa,
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie's awa!

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco slight;
Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight,
An' trig an' braw:
But now they'll busk her like a fright,
Willie's awa!

The stiffeet o' them a' he bow'd;
The baunedest o' them a' he cow'd;

Edinburgh.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law;

* We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

Now gawkies, tawpees, gowks, and fools,
Fae colleges and boarding-schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools,
Willie's awa!

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer
May mourn their loss wi' doofu' glamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amanz them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer,
Willie's awa!

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour;
And toothy critics by the score
In bloody raw!

The adjutant o' the core,
Willie's awa!

Now worthy Gregory's Latin face,
Tyller's and Greenfield's modest grace;
Mackenzie, Stewart, sic a brace
As Rome n'er saw;
They a' maun meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken,
Scared frae its minnie and the clockin
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gien his heart an unco kickin',
Willie's awa!

Now ev'ry sour-mou'd girrin' blellum,
And Calvin's fock are fit to tell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawnlie ward their bellum,
Willie's awa!

Up wimping stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure's fled,
Willie's awa!

May I be slander's common speech;
A text for infamy to preach;
And lastly, streakit out to bleach
In winter snow;
When I forget thee! Willie Creech,
Tho' far awa!

May never wicked fortune touzie him!
May never wicked man bamboozle him!
Until a pow as ald's Methuselah
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed New Jerusalem,
Fleet wing awa!

LXXXIV.

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

[The Falls of Bruar in Athole are exceedingly beautiful and picturesque; and their effect, when Burns visited them, was much impaired by want of shrubs and trees. This was in 1789: the poet, accompanied by his future biographer, Professor Walker, went, when close on twilight, to this romantic scene: "he threw himself," said the Professor, "on a heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. In a few days I received a letter from Inverness, for the poet had gone on his way, with the Petition enclosed." His Grace of Athole obeyed the injunction: the picturesque points are now crowned with thriving woods, and the beauty of the Falls is much increased.]

1.

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 Phobus' scorching beams
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide

11.

The lightly-jumpin' glowlin' trouties,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;

1 The Chamber of Commerce in Edinburgh, of which Creech was Secretary.

2 Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. Creech's house at breakfast.
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

III.
Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That to a hard I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyrical rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shor'd me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

IV.
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 myself,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

V.
Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

VI.
The sober lavock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the linwhite clear
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her looks of yellow.

VII.
This, too, a covert shall secure
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukkin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a shel'tring safe retreat
From prone-descending show'rns.

VIII.
And here, by sweet, endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care.
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

IX.
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.

X.
Let lofty sirs, and ahes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadow's waist'ry bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

XI.
So may old 'A'c'tia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like heir fathers, up to prop
Their hono'r'd native land!
So may thro' A'bionf's farthest ken,
To social flow'rg glasses,
The grace be—"A'th'ole's honest men,
And Athole's bennie lasses!"

LXXV.
ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOV'?
IN LOCH-TURIT.

[When Burns wrote these touching lines, he was staying with Sir William Tarry, of Ochtertyre, during one of his Highland tours. Loch-Turit is a wild lake among the recesses of the hill, and was welcome from its one lines to the heart of the poet.]

Why, ye tenant of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunt forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties!—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature’s gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave:
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow’s shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in Freedom’s pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffty brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pitty dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But man, to whom alone is giv’n
A ray direct from pitying heav’n,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand’ring swains,
Where the mousy riv’let strays,
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on Nature you depend,
And life’s poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man’s superior might
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow’rs ye scorn;
Swiftly seek, on clinging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

LXXXVI.
WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,
OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOURS OF THE
INN AT KINMORE, TAMMOUTH.

(The castle of Tammouth is the residence of the Earl
of Breadalbane: it is a magnificent structure, contains
many fine paintings: has some splendid old trees and
romantic scenery.)

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;

O’er many a winding dale and painful steep,
Th’ abodes of cowry’d.grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious I pursue,
’Till fam’d Breadalbane opens to my view.—
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild scatter’d, clothe their ample
sides;
Th’ outstretching lake, embosom’d ’mang the
hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay, meander’d sweet in infant pride,
The palace, rising on its verdant side;
The laws, wood-fringe’d in Nature’s native
taste;
The hillocks, drop’d in Nature’s careless haste;
The arches, striding o’er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the noontide beam—

* * * * *
Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wand’ring by the hermit’s mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
Th’ incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—

* * * * *
Here Poesy might wake her heav’n-taught
lyre,
And look through Nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconcil’d,
Misfortune’s lighten’d steps might wander
wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter—rankling
wounds:
Here heart-struck Grief might heav’nward
stretch her scan,
And injur’d Worth forget and pardon man.

* * * * *

LXXXVII.
WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,
STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS,
NEAR LOCK-NESS.

[This is one of the many fine scenes, in the Celtic
Parishes of Oscaer: but when Burns saw it, the High-
land passion of the stream was abated, for there had
been no rain for some time to swell and send it pouring
down its precipices in a way worthy of the scene. The
descent of the water is about two hundred feet. There
is another fall further up the stream, very wild an’}
savage, on which the Fyers makes three prodigious loops into a deep gulf where nothing can be seen for the whirling foam and agitated mist.)

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, thro’ a shapeless breach, his stream resounds,
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep-recollecting surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless Echo’s ear, astonish’d, rends.
Dim seen, through rising mists and ceaseless show’rs,
The hoary cavern, wide surrounding, low’rs.
Still thro’ the gap the struggling river tolls,
And still below, the horrid cauldron boils—

LXXXVIII.
POETICAL ADDRESS
TO MR. W. TYTLER,
WITH THE PRESENT OF THE LARD’S PICTURE.

[When these verses were written there was much stantly Jacobitism about Edinburgh, and it is likely that Tytler, who laboured to dispel the cloud of calumny which hung over the memory of Queen Mary, had a bearing that way. Taste and talent have now descended in the Tytlers through three generations: an uncommon event in families. The present edition of the Poem has been completed from the original in the poet’s handwriting.]

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,
A name, which to love, was once mark of a true heart,
But now ’tis despis’d and neglected.

Thou something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wand’rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wand’rer were royal.

My fathers that name have rever’d on a throne,
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should be scoffingly slighted.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen and the rest of the gentry,
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title’s avow’d by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
That gave us th’ Electoral stem?
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I’m sure ’twas as lucky for them.

But loyalty trues! we’re on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine, to-day, that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trife, the head of a bard,
A trife scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint’s dying prayer.

Now life’s chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

LXXXIX.
WRITTEN IN FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE,
ON THE BANKS OF NITH.
June, 1789.
[FIRST COPY.]

[The interleaved volumes presented by Burns to Dr. Geddes, has enabled me to present the reader with the rough draught of this truly beautiful Poem, the first-fruits perhaps of his intercourse with the muse of Nith-side.]

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck’d in silken stole,
Grave these maximis on thy soul.
Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost:
Day, how rapid in its flight—
Day, how few must see the night;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.
Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy soul.
Ambition is a meteor gleam;
Fame, a restless idle dream:
Pleasures, insects on the wing
Bound Peace, the tenderest flower of Spring;
Those that sip the dew alone,
Make the butterflies thy own;
Those that would the bloom devour,
Crush the locusts—save the flower.
For the future be prepar'd,
Guard wherever thou canst guard;
But, thy utmost duty done,
Welcome what thou canst not shun.
Follies past, give thou to air,
Make their consequences thy care:
Keep the name of man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence with lowly heart
Him whose wondrous work thou art;
Keep His goodness still in view,
Thy trust—and thy example, too.

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quod the Beadman on Nithside.

Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always pour.
As Youth and Love with sprightly dance
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair:
Let Frudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'nig close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease.
There ruminate, with sober thought,
On all thou'lt seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive young'ners round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.

Say, man's true genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not—Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Wast thou cottager or king?
Peer or peasant—no such thing!
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base

Thus, resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the beadman of Nithside.
XCI.
TO CAPTAIN RIDDLE,
OF GLENRIDDLE.
ELEGY ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.

(Captain Riddle, the Laird of Friars-Carse, was
Burns’s neighbour, at Ellisland: he was a kind, hospitable
man, and a good antiquary. The “News and
Review” which he sent to the poet contained, I have
heard, some sharp strictures on his works: Burns, with
his usual strong sense, set the proper value upon all
contemporary criticism; genius, he knew, had nothing
to fear from the folly or the malice of all such nameless
“chippers and hewers.” He demanded trial by his peers,
and where were such to be found?

Ellisland, Monday Evening.

Your news and review, Sir, I’ve read through
and through, Sir,
With little admiring or blaming;
The papers are barren of home-news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the Naming.

Our friends, the reviewers, those chippers and
hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir,
But of meet or unmeet in a fabric complete,
I’ll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your good-
ness
Bestow’d on your servant, the Poet;
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

XCII.
A MOTHER’S LAMENT
FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.

(“The Mother’s Lament,” says the poet, in a copy of
the verses now before me, “was composed partly
with a view to Mrs. Ferguson of Craigdarroch, and partly to
the worthy patroness of my early unknown muse, Mrs.
Stewart, of Aiton.”)

Fate gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierced my darling’s heart,
And with him all the joys are fled.
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour’d laid;
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age’s future shade.

The mother-lienet in the brake
Bewails her rash’d young;
So I, for my lost darling’s sake,
Lament the live day long.

Death, oft I’ve fear’d thy fatal blow,
Now, fond I bare my breast.
O, do thou kindly lay me low
With him I love, at rest!

XCIII.
FIRST EPISTLE
TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.
OF FINTAY.

(In his manuscript copy of this Epistle the poet says
“accompanying a request.” What the request was the
letter which enclosed it relates. Graham was one of the
leading men of the Excisemen in Scotland, and had promised
Burns a situation as exciseman: for this the poet had
qualified himself; and as he began to dread that farming
would be unprofitable, he wrote to remind his patron of
his promise, and requested to be appointed to a division
in his own neighbourhood. He was appointed in due
time: his division was extensive, and included ten
parishes.)

When Nature her great masterpiece designed,
And fram’d her last, best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the maze plan,
She form’d of various parts the various man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth;
Plain plodding industry, and sober worth:
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
And merchandize’ whole genus take their birth:
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics’ many-sprout’d kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
The lead and buoy are needful to the net;
The caput mortuum of gross desires
Makes a material for mere knights and squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th’ unyielding mass with grave de-
signs,
Law, physic, politics, and deep divines:
Last, she sublimes th’ Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order’d system fair before her stood,
Nature, well pleas’d, prononc’d it very good;
But ere she gave creating labour o’er,
Half jest, she tried one curious labour more.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Some spongy, fiery, ignis fatuus matter,
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
With arch alacrity and conscious glee
(Natur: may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hagar-eth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a Poet.
Creature tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow.
A being form'd t'amuses his graver friends,
Admir'd and praise'd—and there the homage ends
A mortal quite unfit for fortune's strife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
Prose to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live;
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each gash,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.

Pitying the prostrate climer of mankind,
She cast about a standard tree to find;
And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
Attach'd him to the generous truly great,
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the tuneful muses' hapless train,
Weak, timid London on life's stormy main!
Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough;
The little fate allows, they share as soon,
Unlike sage proverb's wisdom's hard-won boon.

The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"

Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son
Whose life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason and who give by rule,
(Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor will to wait upon I should—
We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?

Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,
Heaven's attribute distinguished—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come thou who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.

Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine?
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
Soars on the soaring wing of injur'd merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So to heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,
But groveling on the earth the carol ends.
In all the claimless cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front:
Oblige them, patronize their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horrid fist assume the plough again;
The pie-bald jacket let me patch once more;
On eighteen-pence a week I liv'd before.
Tho', thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift!
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
Where man and nature fairer in her sight,
My muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

XCV.

ON THE DEATH OF

SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

[I found these lines written with a pencil in one of
Burn's memorandum-books: he said he had just com-
pose them, and pencilled them down lest they should
escape from his memory. They differed in nothing from
the printed copy of the first Liverpool edition. That
they are by Burns there cannot be a doubt, though they
were, I know, not for what reason, excluded from several
editions of the Posthumous Works of the poet.]

The lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath the western wave;
Th' inconstant blast howl'd thro' the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.
Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the lov'd haunts of Scotia’s royal train;¹
Or mus'd where limpid streams once hollow’d
Well,²
Or mould'red ruins mark the sacred face.³

Th' increasing blast roared round the beetling rocks,
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

The pale moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclosed a stately form,
In weeds of woe that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
"Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd:
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

Revers'd that spear, reddoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl'd,
That like a deathful gleam'd afar,
And brav'd the mighty monarchs of the world.—

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms—she cried;
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save,
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest pride.

A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The dropping arts surround their patron's bier,
And grateful science heaves the heart-felt sigh!

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair freedom's blossoms richly blow:
But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless fate has laid their guardian low.

"My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name!
No; every muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Thro' future times to make his virtues last;
That distant years may boast of other Blair's!"—
She said, and vanish'd with the sweeping blast.

¹ The King's Park, at Holyrood-house.
² St. Anthony's Well.
³ This little lively, biting epistle was addressed to one of the poet's Kilmarnock companions. Hugh Parker was the brother of William Parker, one of the subscribers to the Edinburgh edition of Burns's Poems: he has been dead many years: the Epistle was recovered, luckily, from his papers, and printed for the first time in 1834.

In this strange land, this uncoath clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er crost the muse's hekcles
Nor limpet in poetic shackles:
A land that prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stachet thro' it,
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum I' the neuk,
I hear it—for in vain I leuk.—
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
Enhusked by a fog infernal:
Here, for my wanton rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians,
I'm dwindled down to mere existence,
Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae kend face but Jenny Geddes.⁴

Jenny, my Pegasusen pride!
Dowie she saunters dow Nithside,
And a' a westlin leuk she throws,
While tears hap o'er her auld brown nose!
Was it for this, wi' canny care,
Thou bane the bard through many a shire!
At hawes or hillocks never stumb'd,
And late or early never grumbl'd—
O had I power like inclination,
I'd heeze thee up a constellation,
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the ecliptic like a bar;
Or turn the pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phoebus bides good-morrow,
Down the zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship's face;
For could I lay my bread and kail
He'd ne'er cast saut upo' th' tail.—
Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
And ema', ema' prospect of relief,
And nought but pest reek I' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?—
Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye'll find me in a better tune;

⁴ St. Anthony's Chapel.
⁵ His mare.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

But till we meet and west our whistle,
Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

ROBERT BURNS.

XCVI.

LINES

INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN UNDER
A NOBLE EARL’S PICTURE.

[Burns placed the portraits of Dr. Blacklock and the Earl of Glencairn, over his parlour chimney-piece at Ellinland; beneath the head of the latter he wrote some verses, which he sent to the Earl, and requested leave to make public. This seems to have been refused; and, as the verses were lost for years, it was believed they were destroyed: a rough copy, however, is preserved, and is now in the safe keeping of the Earl’s name-sun, Major James Glencairn Burns. James Cunningham, Earl of Glencairn, died 29th January, 1791, aged 48 years; he was succeeded by his only and childless brother, with whom ‘his ancient race was closed.’]

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.

Bright as a cloudless summer sun,
With stately port he moves;
His guardian seraph eyes with awe
The noble ward he loves—
Among th’ illustrious Scottish sons
That chief thou may’st discern;
Mark Scotia’s fond returning eye—
It dwells upon Glencairn.

But oh! prodigious to reflect!
A Towmont, Sirs, is gane to wreck!
O Eighty-eight, in thy sma’ space
What dire events he’s taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast ref’t us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire’s tint a-head,
An’ my auld toothless Bawtie’s dead;
The tul’se’s sair ’tween Pitt and Fox,
And our guid wife’s wee birdie cocks;
The tane is game, a bluidie devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil:
The tither’s something dour o’ treadin’,
But better stuff ne’er claw’d a midden—
Ye ministers, come mount the pu’pit,
An’ cry till ye be hearse an’ roupet,
For Eighty-eight he wish’d ye weel,
An’ gied you a’ bairth gear an’ meal;
E’en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little fick!

Ye bonnie lasses, dight your e’en,
For some o’ you he’s tint a frien’;
In Eighty-eight, ye ken, was ta’en,
What ye’ll ne’er he’s to gie again.

Observe the very nowt an’ sheep,
How dowf! and dowie now they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itself! does cry,
For Embro! wells are gritten dry.
O Eighty-nine, thou’s but a bairn,
An’ no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak’ care,
Thou now has got thy daddy’s chair,
Nae hand-cuff’d, misl’d, hap-shack’l’d Regent,
But, like himself! a full free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae war! than he did, honest man!
As muckle better as ye can.

January 1, 1789.

XCVIII.

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

["I had intended," says Burns to Creech, 30th May, 1789, "to have troubled you with a longer letter, but at present the delightful sensation of an omnipotent toothache so engrosses all my inner man, as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense." The poetic Address to the Toothache seems to belong to this period.]

My curse upon thy venom’d stag,
That shoots my tortured gums alang;
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, orague freezes,
Rheumatic gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbours' sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Ay mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavering trickle!
I kick the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the gigglets keckle,
To see me loup;
While, raging mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup.

O' a' the numerous human dools,
Ill ha' sets, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bears't the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadful raw,
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
Among them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of discord squeal,
'Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoo-thick!—
Gle' a' the face o' Scotland's weal
A townmond's Toothache.

XCIIX.

ODE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
MRS. OSWALD,
OF AUCHERGIRVIE.

[The origin of this harsh effusion shows under what feelings Burns sometimes wrote. He was, he says, on his way to Ayrshire, one stormy day in January, and had made himself comfortable, in spite of the snow-drift, over a smoking bow'et, at an inn at the Benquhater, when in wheeled the whole funeral pageantry of Mrs. Oswald.

He was obliged to mount his horse and ride for quarters to New Cumnock, where, over a good fire, he penned, in his very unguiltless indignation, the Ode to the lady's memory. He lived to think better of the name.]

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation, mark!  
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Nooning with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse.

STROPH.  

View the with'er'd beldam's face—  
Can thy keen inspection trace  
Aught of Humanity's sweet melting grace?  
Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose.
See these hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest.

ANTISTROPH.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eye,
(Awhile forbear, ye tort'ring fends:)
Seest thou whose step, unwilling hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies;
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doon'd to share thy fiery fate,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPID.  

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a-year?  
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n!
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

C.  

FRAGMENT INSCRIBED

TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

[It was late in life before Burns began to think very highly of Fox: he had hitherto spoken of him rather as a matter of dice, and a frequenter of soft company, than as a statesman. As his hopes from the Tories vanished]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

be begun to think of the Whigs: the first did nothing, and the latter hold out hopes; and as hope, he said, was the revivals of the human heart, he continued to hope on.]

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite; How virtue and vice blend their black and their white; How genius, th' illustrious father of fiction, Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—

I sing: if these mortals, the critics, should bustle, I care not, not I—let the critics go whistle!

But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wise; Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits; With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong, No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong; With passions so potent, and fancies so bright, No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;—

A sorry, poor misbegot son of the muses, For using thy name offers fifty excuses. Good L—d, what is man? for as simple he looks, Do but try to develope his books and his crooks; With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil, All in all he's a problem must puzzle the devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely labours, That, like th' old Hebrew walking-switch, eats up its neighbours;

Mankind are his show-box—a friend, would you know him? Pull the string, ruling passion the picture will show him.

What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system, One trifling particular, truth, should have miss'd him; For spite of his fine theoretic positions, Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe, And think human nature they truly describe; Have you found this, or t'other? there's more in the wind,

As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll find.

But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan, In the make of that wonderful creature, call'd man,

No two virtues, whatever relation they claim, Nor even two different shades of the same,

Though like as was ever twin brother to brother, Possessing the one shall imply you're the other.

But truce with abstraction; and truce with a muse, Whose rhymes you'll perhaps, Sir, ne'er deign to peruse:

Will you leave your joustings, your jars, and your quarrels, Contending with Billy for proud-nodding laurels. My much-honour'd Patron, believe your poor poet,

Your courage much more than your prudence you show it; In vain with Squire Billy, for laurels you struggle, He'll have them by fair trade, if not, he will smuggle;

Not cabinets even of kings would conceal 'em, He'd up the back-stairs, and by G— he would steal 'em.

Then feast like Squire Billy's, you ne'er can achieve 'em;

It is not, outdo him, the task is, out-thieve him.

—

CL.

ON SEEING

A WOUNDED HARE

LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT.

'This Poem is famous on fact. A young man of the name of Thomson told me—quite unmeaning of the existence of the Poem—that while Burns lived at Ellisland—he shot at and hurt a hare, which in the twilight was feeding on his father's wheat-bread. The poet, on observing the hare come bleeding past him, "was in great wrath," said Thomson, "and cursed me, and cut little hindered him from throwing me into the Nith; and he was able enough to do it, though I was both young and strong." The boast of Nithsdale did not use the hare worse than the critical Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh, used the Poem: when Burns read his remarks he said, "Gregory is a good man, but he crucifies me!"

INHUMAN MAN! curse on thy barbarous art,
And blasted be thy murder-glaiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart.
Go live, poor wanderer 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 half the cheerful dawn;
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

But what dy'e think, my trusty sister,
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, glesomous, dainty damies,
Wha, by Castalia's wimplin' streamies,
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbsies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa weel ladris,
They maun hae broose and brats o' duddies;
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is—
I need na vaunt,
But I'll aned beasons—thraw saugh wooldies,
Before they want.

Lord help me thro' this world o' care!
I'm weary sick o' late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than mony ither;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brotheris?

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 ake the same to honest Lucky,
I wit she is a dainty chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
I'm yours for ay,

Robert Burns.
CIII.

- DELIA.

AN ODE.

[These verses were first printed in the Star newspaper, in May, 1790. It is said that one day a friend read to the poet some verses from the Star, composed on the pattern of Pope's Song, by a Person of Quality. "These lines are beyond you," he added: "the muse of Kyle cannot match the muse of London." Burns amused a moment, and then recited "Delia, an Ode."]

Fair the face of orient day,
Fair the tints of op'ning rose,
But fairer still my Delia dawns,
More lovely far her beauty blows.

Sweet the lark's wild-warbled lay,
Sweet the tinkling rill to hear;
But, Delia, more delightful still
Steal thine accents on mine ear.

The flow'r-enamoured busy bee
The rosy banquet loves to sip;
Sweet the streamlet's limpid laps
To the sun-brown'd Arab's lip:—

But, Delia, on thy balmy lips
Let me, no vagrant insect, rove!
O, let me steal one liquid kiss!
For, oh! my soul is parch'd with love.

CIV.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.

[John M'Murdo, Esq., one of the chamberlains of the Duke of Queensberry, lived at Drumlanrig: he was a high-minded, warm-hearted man, and much the friend of the poet. These lines accompanied a present of books: others were added soon afterwards on a pan of glass in Drumlanrig castle.

"Blest be M'Murdo to his latest day!
No anxious cloud o'ercast his evening ray;
No wrinkle furrowed by the hand of care,
Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair;
O may no son the father's honour stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain."

How fully the poet's wishes were fulfilled need not be said to any one acquainted with the family.

O, could I give thee India's wealth,
As I this trifle send!
Because thy joy in both would be
To share them with a friend.

But golden sands did never grace
The Heliconian stream;
Then take what gold could never buy—
An honest Bard's esteem.

CIV.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES,

1 JAN. 1790.

[This prologue was written in December, 1789, for Mr. Sutherland, who recited it with applause in the little theatre of Dumfries, on new-year's night. Sir Harris Nicolius, however, has given to Ellistand the benefit of a theatre! and to Burns the whole barony of Dalewinton for a farm!]

No song nor dance I bring from you great city
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Tho', by-the-by, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home:
But not for panegyric I appear,
I come to wish you all a good new year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story:
The sage grave ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
"You're one year older this important day."
If wiser too—he hinted some suggestion,
But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question;
And with a would-be roguish leer and wink,
He bade me on you press this one word—
"think!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush'd with hope and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
To you the dotard has a deal to say,
In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way;
He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
That the first blow is ever half the battle:
That tho' some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, tho' not least in love, ye youthful fair
Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care:
To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,  
And humbly begs you'll mind the important now!  
To crown your happiness he asks your leave,  
And offers bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, tho' haply weak endeavours,  
With grateful pride we own your many favours,  
And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,  
Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

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CVI.

SCOTS PROLOGUE

FOR MR. SUTHERLAND'S BENEFIT NIGHT, DUMFRIES.

[Burns did not shine in prologues; he produced some vigorous lines, but they did not come in harmony from the tongue, like the songs in which he recorded the lovefulness of the dames of Caledonia. Sutherland was manager of the theatre, and a writer of rhymes.—Burns said his players were a very decent set: he had seen them an evening or two.]

What needs this din about the town o' Lon'non,  
How this new play an' that new sang is comin'?  
Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted?  
Does nonsense mend like whiskey, when imported?

Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,  
Will try to gie us songs and plays at hame?  
For comedy abroad he need nae toil,  
A fool and knave are plants of every soil;  
Nae need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece  
To gather matter for a serious piece;  
There's themes enough in Caledonian story,  
Would show the tragic muse in a' her glory.

Is there no daring bard will rise, and tell  
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless fell?  
Where are the muses fled that could produce  
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;  
How here, even here, he first unhealth'd the sword,  
'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord,  
And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,  
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin?  
O for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene,  
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!  
Vain all th' omnipotence of female charms  
Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.

She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,  
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman;  
A woman—tho' the phrase may seem uncivil—  
As able and as cruel as the Devil!  
One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,  
But Douglasses were heroes every age:  
And tho' your fathers, prodigal of life,  
A Douglas follow'd to the martial strife,  
Perhaps if bowls row right, and right succeeds,  
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land  
Would take the muses' servants by the hand;  
Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,  
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;

And a' siblins when they winna stand the test,  
Wink hard, and say the folks hae done their best!  
Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution  
Ye'll soon hae poets o' the Scottish nation,  
Will gar fame blow until her trumpet crack,  
And wave time, an' lay him on his back!  
For us and for our stage should any spier,  
"Whase aught thae chiel's makin' a' this bustle here!"  
My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,  
We have the honour to belong to you!  
We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,  
But like good mithers, shore before ye strike.  
And grateful' still I hope ye'll ever find us,  
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness  
We've got frae a' professions, sets, and ranks:  
God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

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CVII.

SKETCH.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[This is a picture of the Dunlop family: it was printed from a braw sketch, which the poet called extempore. The major whom it mentions, was General Andrew Dunlop, who died in 1804: Rachel Dunlop was afterward married to Robert Glasgow, Esq. Another of the Dunlops served with distinction in India, where he rose to the rank of General. They were a gallant race, and all distinguished.]

This day, Time winds th' exhausted chain,  
To run the twelvemonth's length again:
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sorrow,
Adjust the unimpaired machine,
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor hew,
In vain assail him with their prayer;
Deaf as my friend, he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds;
Colla's fair Rachel's care to-day,
And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow—
—That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow—
And join with me a moralizing,
This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year is gone for ever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will time, amuse'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight:
That future life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone;
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woeful night.

Since then, my honour'd, first of friends,
On this poor being all depends,
Let us th' important now employ,
And live as those who never die—

Tho' you, with days and honours crown'd,
Witness that dial circle round,
(A sight, life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight, pale envy to converse.)
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

CVIII.

TO A GENTLEMAN

WHO HAD SENT HIM A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE.

[These sarcastic lines contain a too true picture of the times in which they were written. Though great changes have taken place in court and camp, yet Austria, Russia, and Prussia keep the tuck of Poland: nobody says a word of Denmark: emancipated Italy is still singing operas girls are still dancing; but Chatham Will, glazier Charlie, Daddie Burke, Royal George, and Geordie Wales, have all passed to their account.]

Kind Sir, I've read your paper through,
And, faith, to me 'twas really new!
How guess'd ye, Sir, what maist I wanted?
This many a day I've drank and gaunted,
To ken what French mischief was brewin';
Or what the drumlin Dutch were doin';
That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collieshange works
Atween the Russians and the Turks:
Or if the Swede, before he halts,
Would play another Charles the Twalt:
If Denmark, anyone spak o'?
Or Poland, who had now the tack o';
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hing'in;
How libbet Italy was singin';
If Spaniard, Portuguese, or Swiss
Were sayin' or takin' aught amiss:
Or how our merry lads at home,
In Britain's court kept up the game:
How royal George, the Lord leek o' him!
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit Chatham Will was livin';
Or glazier Charlie got his niece in;
How daddie Burke the pleas was cookin';
If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin;
How censes, stents, and fees were rax'd,
Or if bare a—ay were tax'd;
The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threshin' still at hizzies' tails;
Or if he was grown outhiltons douser,
And no a perfect kintra cooser.—
A' this and maer I never heard of,
And but for you I might despair'd of.
So, grateful, back your news I send you,
And pray, a' guid things may attend you!

Ellisland, Monday morning, 1790.
THE POETICAL WORKS

CIX.

THE KIRK'S ALARM;¹
A SATEIRE.

[FIRST VERSION.]

(The history of this Poem is curious. Mc'Gill, one of the ministers of Ayr, long suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions concerning original sin and the Trinity, published "A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ," which, in the opinion of the more rigid portion of his brethren, involved both Arianism and Socinianism. This essay was denounced as heretical, by a minister of the name of Peebles, in a sermon preached November 9th, 1768, and all the west country was in a flame. The subject was brought before the Synod, and was warmly debated till Mc'Gill expressed his regret for the disquiet he had occasioned, explained away or apologized for the challenged passages in his Essay, and declared his adherence to the standard doctrines of his mother church. Burns was prevailed upon to bring his satire to the aid of Mc'Gill, but he appears to have done so with reluctance.)

Orthodox, orthodox,
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience:
There's a heretic blast
Has been blown in the west,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

Dr. Mac,® Dr. Mac,
You should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense
Upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad. I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf
To the church's relief,
And orator Bob is its ruin.

Dr'rymple mild,® Dr'rymple mild,
Thro' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snow,
Yet that winsa save ye,
Auld Satan must hav ye,
For preaching that three's ans an' twa.

Rumble John,® Rumble John,
Mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adze,
And roar every note of the damn'd.

Simper James,® Simper James,
Leave the fair Killie daines,
There's a holier chase in your view;
I'll lay on your head
That the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawney,® Singet Sawney,
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evil await?
W' a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul,
For the soul thief is just at your gate.

Daddy Auld,® Daddy Auld,
There's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk;
Though ye can do little skaith,
Ye'll be in at the death,
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bairk.

David Bluster,® Davie Bluster,
If for a saint ye do muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits;
Yet to worth let's be just,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

Jamy Goose,® Jany Goose,
Ye ha'me made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark,
For the L—d's holy ark;
He has cooper'd and cawd a wrang pin in't.

Poet Willie,® Poet Willie,
Gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your liberty's chain and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid astride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he ——

¹ This Poem was written a short time after the publication of Mc'Gill's Essay.
² Dr. Mc'Gill.
³ John Ballastyne.
⁴ Robert Aikman.
⁵ Dr. Dalrymple.
⁶ Mr. Russell.
⁷ Mr. M'Kinlay.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

ANDRO GOUK, ANDRO GOUK,
Ye may slander the book,
And the book not the war, let me tell ye;
Ye are rich and look big,
But lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll ha' a call’s head o' sma’ value.

BARR STEENIE, BARR STEENIE;
What mean ye, what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi’ the matter,
Ye may ha’ some pretence
To havins and sense,
Wi’ people wha ken ye nae better.

IRVINE SIDE, IRVINE SIDE,
Wi’ your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma’ is your share,
Ye’ve the figure ’tis true,
Even your face will allow,
And your friends they dae grant you nae mair.

MUIRLAND JOCK, MUIRLAND JOCK,
When the L—d makes a rock
To crush Common sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit,
There’s no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ane.

HOLY WILL, HOLY WILL,
There was wit i’ your skull,
When ye pilfer’d the sma’ o’ the poor;
The timer is scant,
When ye’re ta’en for a saunt,
Wha should swing in a rasp for an hour.

Calvin’s sons, Calvin’s sons,
Seize your spiritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o’ lead.

POET BURNS, POET BURNS,
Wi’ your priest-skelpling turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your muse is a gipsie,
E’en tho’ she were tipse,
She could ca’ us nae warner than we are.

OX.

THE KIRK’S ALARM.
A BALLAD.
SECOND VERSION.

(This version is from the papers of Miss Logan, of Afton. The origin of the Poem is thus related to Graham of Fintry by the poet himself: “Though I dare say you have none of the solemn League and Covenant fire which abounds so conspicuously in Lord George Gordon, and the Kilmanack weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr. McUill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book, God help him, poor man! Though one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out (9th December, 1790) to the mercy of the winter winds. The enclosed ballad on that business, is, I can see, too local: but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.” The Kirk’s Alarm was first printed by Stewart, in 1801. Cromek calls it, “A silly satire, on some worthy ministers of the gospel, in Ayrshire.”)

I.

ORTHODOX, orthodox,
Who believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience—
There’s a heretic blast,
Has been blown i’ the wast,
That what is not sense must be nonsense,
Orthodox,
That what is not sense must be nonsense.

II.

Doctor Mac, Doctor Mac,
Ye should stretch on a rack,
And strike evil doers wi’ terror;
To join faith and sense,
Upon any pretence,
Was heretic damnable error,
Doctor Mac,
Was heretic damnable error.

III.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was rash I declare,
To meddle wi’ mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf,
To the church’s relief,
And orator Bob is its ruin,
Town of Ayr,
And orator Bob is its ruin.

MR. JOHN SHEPHERD, MUIRKIRK.
MR. STEPHEN YOUNG, OF BARR.
MR. GEORGE SMITH, OF GALATON.
IV.
D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild,
Tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven swan,
Yet that winsa save ye,
Old Satan must have ye
For preaching that three's ane an' twa,
D'rymple mild,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

V.
Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your spiritual guns,
Ammunition ye never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff,
Will be powder enough,
And your skulls are a storehouse of lead,
Calvin's sons,
And your skulls are a storehouse of lead.

VI.
Rumble John, Rumble John,
Mount the steps with a groan,
Cry the book is with heresy cram'd;
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like sidle,
And roar every note o' the damn'd,
Rumble John,
And roar every note o' the damn'd.

VII.
Simper James, Simper James,
Leave the fair Killie dames,
There's a holier chase in your view;
I'll lay on your head,
That the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few,
Simper James,
For puppies like you there's but few.

VIII.
Singet Sawnie, Singet Sawnie,
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what danger awaits ?
With a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul,
For Hannibal's just at your gates,
Singet Sawnie,
For Hannibal's just at your gates.

IX.
Andrew Gowk, Andrew Gowk,
Ye may slander the book,
And the book nought the waur—let me tell you;
Tho' ye're rich and look big,
Yet lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll hae a calf's-head o' ama' value,
Andrew Gowk,
And ye'll hae a calf's-head o' ama' value.

X.
Poes Willie, Poet Willie,
Gie the doctor a volley,
Wi' your "liberty's chain" and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side,
Ye ne'er laid a stride
Ye only stood by when he ——,
Poes Willie,
Ye only stood by when he ——.

XI.
Barr Steenie, Barr Steenie,
What mean ye! what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may hae some pretence, man,
To havins and sense, man,
Wi' people that ken ye nae better,
Barr Steenie,
Wi' people that ken ye nae better.

XII.
Jamie Goose, Jamie Goose,
Ye hae made but toon roose,
O' hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the doctor's your mark,
For the L—d's holy ark,
He has cooper'd and ca'd a wrong pin in't,
Jamie Goose,
He has cooper'd and ca'd a wrong pin in't.

XIII.
Davie Bluster, Davie Bluster,
For a saunt if ye must,
It's a sign they're no nice o' recruits,
Yet to worth let's be just,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass were the king o' the brutes,
Davie Bluster,
If the ass were the king o' the brutes.

XIV.
Muirland George, Muirland George,
Whom the Lord made a scourge.
To claw common sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit,
There's no mortal so fit,
OF ROBERT BURNS

To confound the poor doctor at anse,
Muirland George,
To confound the poor doctor at anse.

XV.
Cessnockside, Cessnockside,
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
O' manhood but sma' is your share;
Ye've the figure, it's true,
Even our faces maun allow,
And your friends daurna say ye haes mair,
Cessnockside,
And your friends daurna say ye haes mair.

XVI.
Daddie Auld, Daddie Auld,
There's a tod i' the fauld
A tod meikle waxer than the clerk;²
Tho' ye downa do skailth,
Ye'll be in at the death,
And if ye canna bite ye can bark,
Daddie Auld,
And if ye canna bite ye can bark.

XVII.
Poet Burns, Poet Burns,
Wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Tho' your Muse is a gipsy,
Yet were she even tipay,
She could ca' us nae waxer than we are,
Poet Burns,
She could ca' us nae waxer than we are.

POSTSCRIPT.

Afton's Laird, Afton's Laird,
When your pen can be spar'd,
A copy o' this I bequeath,
On the same stickler score
I mention'd before,
To that trusty auld worthy Clackleith,
Afton's Laird,
To that trusty auld worthy Clackleith.

CXI.

PEG NICHOLSON.

These lines are to be found in a letter addressed to Nicol, of the High School of Edinburgh by the

¹ Govt. Hamilton.

pet, giving him an account of the unlook'd-for death of his mare, Peg Nicholson, the successor of Jenny Godles. She had suffered both in the employ of the jovial priest and the thoughtless poet. She acquired her name from that frantic virago who attempted to murder George the Third.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trode on air;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o' Cairn.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And rode thro' thick an' thin;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And since she bore a priest;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And the priest he rode her sail;
And much oppress'd and bruis'd she was;
As priest-rid cattle are, &c. &c.

CXII.

ON

CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON,
A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS NOBILITY IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

"Should the poor be slandered!!"

SHAKESPEARE.

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!

(Captain Matthew Henderson, a gentleman of very agreeable manners and great propriety of character, usually lived in Edinburgh, dined constantly at Fortune's Tavern, and was a member of the Capillaire Club, which was composed of all who desired to be thought witty or joyous: he died in 1790: Burns, in a note to the Poets, says, "I loved the man much, and have not falsified his memory." Henderson seems indeed to have been universally liked. "In our travelling party," says Sir James Campbell, of Ardkinglass, "was Matthew Henderson, then (1730) and afterwards well known and much esteemed in the town of Edinburgh; at that time an officer in the twenty-fifth regiment of foot, and like myself on his way to join the army; and I may say with truth, that in the course of a long life I have never known a more estimable character, than Matthew Henderson." Memoirs of Campbell, of Ardkinglass, p. 17.)

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
Ane meikle devil wi' a woodle
Haurl thee hame to his black amiddle,
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-dah come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane! he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The se best fellow o'ers was born.
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, pity strays forlorn,
Frase man exil'd!

Ye hills! near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your creasting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,
Where echo slumbers
Come Join, ye Nature's sturdiesst bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, lika grove the cushat kens!
Ye harzily shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, winplinn' down your glens,
Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frase lin to lin!

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnlies,
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 its head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come Join my wall.

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

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teal;
Ye fisher herons, watching cells:
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reeds,
Hair for his sake.

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

Ye hornets, frase your ivy bow'er,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
Sets up her horn,
Wall thro' the dreary midnight hour
'Till waukrife morn!

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

Mourn, spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowalip cup shall keep 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 starries bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
No'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 the as best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.
THE EPITAPH.

Sorrow, passenger!—my story’s brief,
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell thee common tale of grief—
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spur’d at fortune’s door, man,
A look of pity hither cast—
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man,
There moulders here a gallant heart—
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man,
Here lies who well had won thy praise—
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship’s sacred sea
Wad life itself resign, man,
Thy sym pathetic tear maun fa’—
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man,
This was a kinsman o’ thy ain—
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne’er guid wine did fear, man,
This was thy billie, dam and sire—
For Matthew was a queer man.

If any whiggish whining set,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man,
May deil and sorrow be his lot!—
For Matthew was a rare man.

THE FIVE CARLINS.

A SCOTS BALLAD.

Tune—Chevy Chase.

[This is a local and political Poem composed on the contest between Miller, the younger, of Dalstewins, and Johnstone, of Westerhall, for the representation of the Dumfries and Galloway district of Boroughs. Each town or borough speaks and acts in character: Maggy warkmates Dumfries; Marjory, Lochmaben; Bess of Solway-side, Aman; Whiskey Jean, Kirkudbright; and Black Joan, Sanghar. On the part of Miller, all the Whig interest of the Duke of Queensberry was exerted, and all the Tory interest on the side of the Johnstones; the poet’s heart was with the latter. Aman and Lochmaben stood staunch by old names and old affections; after a contest, bitterer than anything of the kind remembered, the Whig interest prevailed.]

There were five carlins in the south,
They fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to London town,
To bring them tidings hame.

Not only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there;
And aiblings gowd and honour baith
Might be that laddie’s share.

There was Maggy by the banks o’ Nith,
A dame wi’ pride enough;
And Marjory o’ the mony lochs,
A carlin saul and teugh.

And blin’ lin’ Bess of Annamdale,
That dwelt near Solway-side;
And whiskey Jean, that took her gill
In Galloway sae wide.

And black Joan, fraw Crichton-peel,
O’ gipsy kith an’ kin;—
Five wighter carlins were na found
The south country within.

To send a lad to London town,
They met upon a day;
And mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fail wad gae.

O mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fail wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O ne’er ane but twae.

The first ane was a belted knight,
Bred of a border band;
And he wad gae to London town,
Might nae man him withstand.

And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say;
And like an about the court
Wad bid to him gude-day.

The nest cam in a sodger youts,
And spak wi’ modest grace,
And he wad gae to London town,
If sae their pleasure was.
He wad na hecht them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend;
But he wad hecht an honest heart,
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

Then wham to chuse, and wham refuse,
At strife thir carlins fell;
For some had gentle folks to please,
And some wad please themsel'.

Then out spak mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith,
And she spak up wi' pride,
And she wad send the sodger youth,
Whate'er might bide.

For the auld guedeman o' London court
She didna care a pin;
But she wad send the sodger youth
To greet his eldest son.

Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs
And wrinkled was her brow;
Her ancient weed was russet gray,
Her auld Scotch heart was true.

"The London court set light by me—
I set as light by them;
And I will send the sodger lad
To shaw that court the same."

Then up sprang Bess of Annandale,
And swore a deadly aith,
Says, "I will send the border-knight
Spite o' you carlins baith."

"For far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
And fools' change are faen;
But I hae try'd this border-knight,
I'll try him yet again."

Then whiskey Jean spak o'er her drink,
"Ye weel ken, kimmersa',
The auld guedeman o' London court,
His back's been at the wa'."

"And mony a friend that kiss'd his caup,
Is now a fremit wight;
But it's ne'er be sae wi' whiskey Jean,—
We'll send the border-knight."

Says black Joan o' Crichton-peat,
A carlin stoor and grim,—
"The auld guedeman, or the young guedeman,
For me may sink or swim.

"For fools will prate o' right and wrang,
While knaves laugh in their sleeve;
But wha blows best the horn shall win,
I'll spier nae courtier's leave."

So how this mighty plea may end
There's naebody can tell:
God grant the king, and ilka man,
May look weel to himsel'!

CXIV.

THE LADDIES BY THE BANKS O' NITH.

[This short Poem was first published by Robert Chambers. It intimates pretty strongly, how much the poet disapproved of the change which came over the Dukes of Queensberry's opinions, when he supported the right of the Prince of Wales to assume the government, without consent of Parliament, during the king's alarming illness, in 1788.]

Turn laddies by the banks o' Nith,
Wad trust his Grace wi' a', Jamie,
But he'll sair them, as he sair'd the King,
Turn tail and rin awa', Jamie.

Up and war a them a', Jamie,
Up and war a them a';
The Johnstones hae the guidin' o'it,
Ye turncoat Whigs awa'.

The day he stode his country's friend,
Or gied her face a claw, Jamie:
Or free puir man a blessin' wan,
That day the Duke ne'er saw, Jamie.

But wha is he, his country's boast?
Like him there is na twa, Jamie;
There's no a callant tente the kye,
But kens o' Westerha', Jamie.

To end the war here's Whistlebirk,¹
Lang may his whistle blew, Jamie;
And Maxwell true o' stellar blue:
And we'll be Johnstones a', Jamie.

¹ Birkwhistle: a Galloway laird, and elector.
EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.

OF FINTRY:
ON THE CLOSE OF THE DISPUTED ELECTION BETWEEN
SIR JAMES JOHNSTON AND CAPTAIN MILLER, FOR THE
BURNFURTH DISTRICT OF BOROUGHS.

"I am too little a man," said Burns, in the note to
Fintray, which accompanied this poem, "to have any
political attachment: I am deeply indebted to, and have
the warmest veneration for individuals of both parties:
but a man who has it in his power to be the father of
a country, and who acts like his Grace of Queensberry,
is a character that one cannot speak of with patience."
This Epistle was first printed in my edition of Burns in
1824: I had the use of the Macmurdus and the Afroes
manuscripts for that purpose: to both families the poet
was much indebted for many acts of courtesy and kindness.

FINTRAY, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra seg,
O'er Pegaus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig bears,
Who left the all-important cares
Of princes and their darlings;
And, bent on winning borough towns,
Came shaking hands wi' webster towns,
And kissing bareft carlins.

Combustion thro' our broughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad
Of mad unmuzzled lions;
As Queensberry buff and blue unfur'd,
And Westerha' and Hopeton hurl'd
To every Whig defiance.

But cautious Queensberry left the war,
Th' unmanner'd dust might soil his star;
Besides, he hated bleeding:
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cassarlean fight,
Or Ciceronian pleading.

Of for a threat like huge Mons-meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banner;
Heroes and heroines commix,
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honour.

M'Murdo¹ and his lovely spouse,
(Th' enamour'd laurel kiss her brows!)  
Led on the loves and graces:
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, all-conquering, play'd his part
Among their wives and lasses.

Craigdarroch² led a light-arm'd corps,
Tropes, metaphors and figures pour,
Like Hecla streaming thunder:
Glenriddel,³ skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bar'd the treason under.

In either wing two champions fought,
Redoubted Staig⁴ who set at nought
The wildest savage Tory:
And Welsh⁵ who ne'er yet flinch'd his ground,
High-wav'd his magnum-bonum round
With Cyclopian fury.

Miller brought up th' artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the Banks,
Resistless desolation!
While Maxwellton, that baron bold,
'Mid Lawson's⁶ fort intrench'd his hold,
And threaten'd worse damnation.

To these what Tory hosts oppos'd,
With these what Tory warriors clos'd.
Surpasses my describing:
Squadrons extended long and large,
With furious speed rush to the charge,
Like raging devils driving.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody fate
Amid this mighty tussle!
Grim Horror grins'd—pale Terror roar'd,
As Murther at his thrapple shord,'
And hell mix'd in the brulzie.

As highland Craig by thunder cleft,
When lightnings are the stormy lift,
Hurl down with crashing rattle:
As flames among a hundred woods;
As headlong foam a hundred floods;
Such is the rage of battle!

The stubborn Tortise dare to die;
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
Before the approaching fellers.

¹ John M'Murdo, Esq., of Drumlanrig.
² Fergusson of Craigdarroch.
³ Riddle of Frieze-Carse.
⁴ Provest Staig of Dumfries.
⁵ Sheriff Welsh.
⁶ A wine-merchant in Dumfries.
The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan Bullers.

Lo, from the shades of Death's deep night,
Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
And think on former daring:
The muffled murthurers1 of Charles
The Magna Charta's flag unfurls;
All deadly gales it's bearing.

Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame,
Bold Seringoour2 follows gallant Graham,3
And Covenanters shiver.
(Forgive, forgive, much-wrong'd Montrose!
Now death and hell engulf thy foes,
Thou livest on high for ever!)

Still o'er the field the combat burns,
The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns;
But fate the word has spoken:
For woman's wit and strength o' man,
Alas! can do but what they can!
The Tory ranks are broken.

O that my ears were flowing burnns,
My voice a lioness that mourns
Her darling cubes' undoing!
That I might grieve, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
And furious Whigs pursuing!

What Whig but melts for good Sir James!
Dear to his country by the names
Friend, patron, benefactor!
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save!
And Hopetown falls, the generous brave!
And Stewart,4 bold as Hector.

Thou, Pitt, shalt kne this overthrow;
And Thurlow grasp a curse of woe;
And Melville melt in wailing!
How Fox and Sheridan rejoice!
And Burke shall sing, O Prince, arise,
Thy power is all prevailing!

For your poor friend, the Bard. afar
He only hears and sees the war,
A cool spectator purely;
So, when the storm the forests rends,
The robin in the hedge descends,
And sober chirps securely.

1 The executioner of Charles I. was masked.
2 Seringoour, Lord Dunclay.
3 Graham, Marquis of Montrose
4 Stewart of Milnside.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

But now he's quait the sparkle-blade,
And dog-skin waistcoat,
And ta'en 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 tacketts,
A towment guid;

And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Afore the flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
Auld Tubal-Cain's fire-shool and fender;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the witch o' Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleig,
The cut of Adam's philibeg:
The knife that nicked Abel's craig
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocoteleg,
Or lang-kail gully.—

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

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

CXVII.

WRITTEN IN A WRAPPER,
ENCLOSING
A LETTER TO CAPTAIN GROSE.

[Burns wrote out some antiquarian and legendary memoranda, respecting certain ruins in Kyle, and enclosed them in a sheet of a paper to Cardonnel, a northern antiquary. As his mind teemed with poetry he could not, as he afterwards said, let the opportunity, pass

of sending a rhyming inquiry after his fat friend, and
Cardonnel spread the condoling inquiry over the North—

"If he be in by Highlan' bodies?
And eaten like a weather-haggie?"

Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?
Igo and ago,
If he's among his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he south or is he north?
Igo and ago,
Or drowned in the river Forth?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he slain by Highlan' bodies?
Igo and ago,
And eaten like a weather-haggie?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abram's bosom gone?
Igo and ago,
Or haudin' Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the L—d be near him!
Igo and ago,
As for the dill, he dauer na steer him!
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit the enclosed letter,
Igo and ago,
Which will oblige your humble debtor,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may he have auld stanes in store,
Igo and ago,
The very stanes that Adam bore,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,
Igo and ago,
The coins o' Satan's coronation!
Iram, coram, dago.

CXVIII.

TAM O' SHANTER
A TALE.

"Of brownsies and of bogies fall is this hue."
GAWIN DOUGLAS.

[This is a West-country legend, embellished by genius. No other Poem in our language displays such variety of power, in the same number of lines. It was
written as an incitement to Grose to admit Alloway-Kirk into his work on the Antiquities of Scotland; and written with such ecstasy, that the poet shed tears in the moments of composition. The walk in which it was conceived, on the banks of Ellistown, is held in remembrance in the vale, and pointed out to poetic inquirers: while the scene where the poem is hid—the crumbling ruins—the place where the chapman perished in the snow—the tree on which the poor mother of Mungo ended her sorrows—the cairn where the murdered child was found by the hunters—and the old bridge over which Maggie bequeathed her astonished master when all hell was in pursuit, are first-rate objects of inspection and inquiry in the "Land of Burns."

"The inimitable tale of Tam o' Shanter," says Scott, "Burns has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakespeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."

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

This truth fond honest Tam O'Shanter,
As he frae Ayr as night did caunter, (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses.)
O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy sin wife Kate's advice!
She taun thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blooie;
That frae November till October,
As market-day thou wassa 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 got roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mire,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife deeploser:

But to our tale:—"Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle bleasing finely,
Wi' reaming sweats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouty cronyn;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou' for weeks thegither!
The night drave on wi' sangs an' claster;
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 droun'd himself among 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 seise 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 boralas race,
That fit 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 dreamy 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're 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 de'il had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg.
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Deep-sleing wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;

\[\text{VARIATION.} \]

The cricket raised its cheerful cry,
The kitten chirped its tail in joy.
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghastis and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the foord,
Where in the swa the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murderer'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd her sel'.
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, gimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Tho' lika 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 see ream'd in Tammie's nookle,
Fair play, he car'd nae deeks a bodle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
'Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She venture'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, strathpeys, and reels,
Put life and motion in their heels:
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towsie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirt,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round, like open presses;
That shaw'd the dead in their last dressers;
And by some devilish cantrip 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 a rape,
Wi' his last gape his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scimitars, wi' murder erusted;
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 glower'd, amaze'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleeikit,
'Till lika carlin swat and reekit,
And coos her dudies to the wark,
And lanket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans
A' plump and strapping, in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' cressie bannel,
Been saw-white seventeen hunder linen,
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were pluh, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gien them o'er my burdies,
For ane blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But wither'd beldams,auld and droll,
Rigwoodie bags, wad spaan a foal,
Loupin' an' flinging on a cummock,
I wonder dinna turm thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
There was a winsome wench and walle,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shiere;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shock 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 kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she soft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots (twas o' her riches),
Wad ever grace'd a dance of witches!

And priests' hearts rotten black as muck,
Lay a stinking vile, in every neuk.
THE POETICAL WORKS

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
 Sic flights are far beyond her pow' r;
 To sing how Nannie lap and flung,
 (A sulpeje jadw she was and strang,)  
 And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
 And thought his very een enrich'd;
 Even Satan glow'd, and fig'd fu' fain,
 And botch'd and blew wi' might and main:
 'Till first ane caper, syne another,
 Tam tinct 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 saliied.  

As bees buzz out wi' angry fyke,
 When plundering herds assail their byeke;
 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 eldrich screech and hallow.

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 wofu' 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 daren' cross!
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fent a tall 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—
 As spring brought o' her master hale,
 But left behind her ain gray tall:
 The carlin claut 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:
 Where'er you drink you are inclin'd,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind.
 Think! ye may buy the joys o' yer dear—
 Remember Tam O'Shaunter's mare.

CXIX.

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

[This Poem made its first appearance, as I was assured by my friend the late Thomas Pringle, in the Scots Magazine, for February, 1818, and was printed from the original in the handwriting of Burns. It was headed thus, "To the Right Honourable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honourable and Honourable the Highland Society, which met on the 21st of May last, at the Shakespeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of four hundred Highlanders, who, as the Society were informed by Mr. , of , were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful masters and masters, whose property they were, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. , of Glengarry, to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—Liberty." The Poem was communicated by Burns to his friend Rankine of Adam Hill, in Ayrshire.]

Long life, my Lord, an' health be yours,
 Unsaitb'd by hunger'd Highland boors;
 Lord grant nae duddee desperate beggar,
 Wi' dirt, claymore, or rusty trigger,
 May twin said Scotland o' a life.
 She likes—as lambkins like a knife.
 Faith, you and ——s were right.
 To keep the Highland hounds in sight;
 I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
 Than let them ance out owre the water;
 Then up amang the lakes and seas
 They'll mak' what rules and laws they please.
 Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin';
 May set their Highland build a ranklin';
 Some Washington again may head them,
 Or some Montgomery fearless lead them,
 Till God knows what may be effected
 When by such heads and hearts directed—
 Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
 May to Patrician rights aspire!
 Nae sage North, now, nor sager Sackville,
 To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,
 An' where will ye get Howes and Clintons
 To bring them to a right repentance,
 To cowe the rebel generation,
 An' save the honour o' the nation?
 They an' be d——d! what right bae they
 To meat or sleep, or light o' day?
 Far less to riches, pow'r, or freedom,
 But what your lordship likes to gie them?

that when he falls in with bogies, whatever danger there
may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard
in turning back.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand's owre light on them, I fear;
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna' say but they do gylees;
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
An' tirl the hallions to the biries;
Yet while they're only point'd and herriet,
They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit;
But smash them! crash them a' to spails!
An' rot the dyvors i' the jails!
The young dogs, swing them to the labour;
Let wark an' hunger mak' them sober;
The hizzies, if they're aughtlings sawsont,
Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd!
An' if the wives an' dirty brats
E'en thigger at your doors an' yetts,
Flisst wi' duds an' grey wi' bessas,
Frightin' awa your deukis an' geese,
Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,
The langest thong, the fercest growler,
An' gar the tattered gypsyes pack
Wi' a' their bastards on their back!
Go on, my Lord! I lang to meet you,
An' in my house at hame to greet you;
Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle,
The benmost neuk beside the ingle,
At my right han' assigned your seat
'Tween Herod's hip an Polycrate,—
Or if you on your station tarrow,
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat I'm sure ye' reel desperrint;
An' t'll ye come—Your humble servant,

BURNS

June 1st, Anno Mundi 1790.

CXX.

TO JOHN TAYLOR.

[Burns, it appears, was, in one of his excursions in the recesses of his mind, likely to be detained at Wanlockhead; the roads were slippery with ice, his mare kept her feet with difficulty, and all the blacksmiths of the village were presaged. To Mr. Taylor, a person of influence in the place, the poet, in despair, addressed this little poem, begging his interference: Taylor spoke to a smith; the smith flew to his tools, sharpened or frosted the arrows, and it is said lived for thirty years to boast that he had "never been well paid but once, and that was by a poet, who paid him in money, paid him in drink, and paid him in verse."]

Wryr Pegasus upon a day,
Apollo weary flying.

Through frosty hills the journey lay,
On foot the way was plying,
Poor slip-shod giddy Pegasus
Was but a sorry walker;
To Vulcan then Apollo goes,
To get a frosty calker.

Obliging Vulcan fell to work,
Throw by his coat and bonnet,
And did Sol's business in a crack;
Sol paid him with a sonnet.

Ye Vulcan's sons of Wanlockhead,
Pity my sad disaster;
My Pegasus is poorly shod—
I'll pay you like my master.

Robert Burns.

Ramages, 5 o'clock, (no date.)

CXXI.

LAMENT

OR

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

[The poet communicated this "Lament" to his friend, Dr. Moore, in February, 1791, but it was composed about the close of the preceding year, at the request of Lady Winifred Maxwell, Constable, of Terregles, the last in direct descent of the noble and ancient house of Maxwell, of Nithsdale. Burns expressed himself more than commonly pleased with this composition; nor was he unrewarded, for Lady Winifred gave him a valuable snuffbox, with the portrait of the unfortunate Mary on the lid. The bed still kept its place in Terregles, on which the queen slept as she was on her way to take refuge with her cruel and treacherous cousin, Elizabeth; and a letter from her, no less unfortunate grandson, Charles the First, calling the Maxwells to arm in his cause, is preserved in the family archives.]

1.
Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets of daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phoebus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

II.
Now lay rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow’r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis wild wi’ mony a note,
Sings drowzy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi’ care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lilly 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 their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a’ Scotland,
Maein lie in prison strang!

I was the Queen o’ bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu’ lightly rise I in the morn,
As blythe lay dawn at e’en:
And I’m the sov’reign o’ 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 foe,
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 drapes 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 was blinck on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother’s face,
Or turn their hearts to thee;
And where thou meet’st thy mother’s friend
Remember him for me!

O! 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!

CXII.
THE WHISTLE.

"As the authentic prose history," says Burns, "of the ‘Whistle’ is curious, I shall here give it. In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony whistle, which at the commencement of the orgies, he laid on the table, and whoever was the last able to blow it, everybody else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories, without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scotch Bacchantes to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority. After many overthrows on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Lowrie, of Maxwellton, ancestor of the present worthy baronet of that name; who, after three days and three nights’ hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

'And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill.'

Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert before mentioned, afterwards lost the whistle to Walter Riddel, of Glenriddle, who had married a sister of Sir Walter’s.—On Friday, the 16th of October, 1700, at Friars-Carse, the whistle was once more contended for, as related in the ballad, by the present Sir Robert of Maxwellton; Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddle, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddel, who won the whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq., of Craigdarroch, likewise descended of the great Sir Robert; which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honours of the field."

The jovial contest took place in the dining-room of Friars-Carse, in the presence of the Bard, who drank bottle and bottle about with them, and seemed quite disposed to take up the conqueror when the day dawned."

I sing of a whistle, a whistle of worth,
I sing of a whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
And long with this whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda," still ruling the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—

1 See Osian’s Cariss-thura.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

"This whistle's your challenge—to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne'er see me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell;
The son of great Lods was conqueror still,
And blew on his whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the Lord of the Cairn and the Scour,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor godship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jocund contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

"By the gods of the ancients!" Glenriddel replies,
"Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,1
And bumber his horn with him twenty times o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or his friend,
Said, toss down the whistle, the prize of the field,
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die or he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame
Than the sense, wit, and taste of a sweet lovely dame.

A bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev'ry new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay Pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phoebus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd find them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well wore out the night.
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight.
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestor did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage.
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high-ruling Elder to wallow in wine!
He left the soul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with fate and quart bumpers contend?
Though fate said—a hero shall perish in light;
So up rose bright Phoebus—and down fell the knight.

Next up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink:—
"Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink;
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!"

"Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce:
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day!"

1 See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides
CXXIII.

ELEGY

ON

MISS BURNET,

OF MONBODDO.

(This beautiful and accomplished lady, the heavenly Burnet, as Burns loved to call her, was daughter to the old and the elegant, the clever and the whimsical Lord Monboddo. "In domestic circumstances," says Robert Chambers, "Monboddo was particularly unfortunate. His wife, a very beautiful woman, died in child-bed. His son, a promising boy, in whose education he took great delight, was likewise snatched from his affections by a premature death; and his second daughter, in personal loveliness one of the first women of the age, was cut off by consumption, when only twenty-five years old." Her name was Elizabeth.)

Lairs ne'er exulted in such a prize
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set?
In thee, high Heaven above was trust'ed shewn,
As by his noblest work, the Godhead best is known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery shore,
Ye woodland choir that chant your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm—Eliza is no more!

Ye heathy wastes, immix't with reedy fens;
Ye money streams, with sedge and rushes stor'd;
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary gles,
To you I fly, ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumb'rous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hall?
And thou, sweet excellence! forsaak our earth,
And not a muse in honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And virtue's light, that beams beyond the spheres;
But like the sun eclipse'd at morning tide,
Thou left'rt us darkling in a world of tears.

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
So lick'd the woodbine sweet yon aged tree;
So from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and bare.

CXXIV.

LAMENT

FOR

JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(Burns lamented the death of this kind and accomplished nobleman with melancholy sincerity; he moreover named one of his sons for him: he went into mourning when he heard of his death, and he sang of his merits in a strain not destined soon to lose the place it has taken among verses which record the names of the noble and the generous. He died January 20, 1791, in the forty-second year of his age. James Cunningham was succeeded in his title by his brother, and with him expired, in 1796, the last of a race, whose name is intimately connected with the History of Scotland, from the days of Malcolm Canmore.)

I.

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 craggy steep, a hard,
Laden with years and meekling pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

II.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he turn'd his doleful song,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes along.

III.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The relics of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged 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.

IV.

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

V.
"I've seen so many changeful years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unrelied,
I bear slane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrow's share.

VI.
"And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The snow's 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 aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

VII.
"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair;
Awake! resound thy latest lay—
Then sleep in silence evermore!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillst an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the bard [gloom.
Though brought from fortune's minkest

VIII.
"In poverty's low barren vale
Thick mistes, obscure, involv'd me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun,
That melts the fog's in limpid air,
The friendless bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

IX.
"O! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen gray with time;
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold mankind'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.

X.
"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 so sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencaisn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

CXXV.
LINES
SENT TO
SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART.,
OF WHITEFOORD.
WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.
[Sir John Whitefoord, a name of old standing in
Ayrshire, inherited the love of his family for literature,
and interested himself early in the fame and fortunes of
Burns.]

Thou, who by honour as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The friend thou valuedst, I, the patron, lov'd;
His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd,
We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world
unknown.

CXCVI.
ADDRESS TO
THE SHADE OF THOMSON,
ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDINBURGH WITH BAYS.
["Lord Buchan has the pleasure to invite Mr. Burns
to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson,
on Edinburgh Hill, on the 23d of September: for which day
perhaps his muse may inspire an ode suited to the occasion.
Suppose Mr. Burns should, leaving the Nith, go
across the country, and meet the Tweed at the nearest
point from his farm, and, wandering along the pastoral
banks of Thomson's pure parent stream, catch inspiration
in the devious walk, till he finds Lord Buchan sitting
on the ruins of Dryburgh. There the Commendator will
give him a hearty welcome, and try to light his lamp at
the pure flame of native genius, upon the altar of Caledonian virtue." Such was the invitation of the Earl of Buchan to Burns. To request the poet to lay down his sickle when his harvest was half reaped, and traverse
THE POETICAL WORKS

one of the wildest and most untrodden ways in Scotland, for the purpose of looking at the fantastic coronation of the bad bust of an excellent poet, was worthy of Lord Buchan. The poor bard made answer, that a week's absence in the middle of his harvest was a step he durst not venture upon—but he sent this Poem.

The poet's manuscript affords the following interesting variations:

"While cold-eyed Spring, a virgin coy,
Unfolds her verdant mantle sweet,
Or pranks the sod in frolick joy,
A carpet for her youthful feet:

"While Summer, with a matron's grace,
Wals stately in the cooling shade,
And oft delighted loves to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

"While Autumn, benefactor kind,
With age's hoary honours cind,
Surveys, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed."

While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolick mood,
Or tunes Æolian 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 aged 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,
Bousing 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.

CXXVII.

ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.,
OF FINTRAY.

By this Poem Burns prepared the way for his humble request to be removed to a district more moderate in its bounds than one which extended over ten country parishes, and exposed him both to fatigue and expense.

This wish was expressed in prose, and was in due time attended to, for Fintray was a gentleman at once kind and considerate.

Latz cripp'd of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg:
Dull, listless, tea'd, dejected, and deprest,
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest.)
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?
(It soothes poor misery, hearkening to her tale.)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature, partial Nature! I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain:
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground:

Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wisp, victorious, guards his cell;
Thy minions, kings, defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power;
Foxes and statesmen, subtle wiles insinare;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug;
The priest and hedgehog in their robes are snug;
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts;—

But, oh! thou bitter stepmother and hard,
To thy poor feneless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still;
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich dullness' comfortable fur;—
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears the unbroken blast from every side;
Vampyre book-sellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics curseless venom dart.

Critics!—appall'd I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame.
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes!
He hacks to teach, they mangie to expose.

His heart by careless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-ron bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear:
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CXXVIII.

TO

ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.,

OF FINTRAY.

ON RECEIVING A FAVOUR.

[Graham of Fintray not only obtained for the poet the appointment in the Frixias, which, while he lived in Edinburgh, he desired, but he also removed him as he wished, to a better district; and when impetations were thrown out against his loyalty, he defended him with obstinate and successful eloquence. Fintray did all that was done to raise Burns out of the toiling humility of his condition, and enable him to serve the muse without fear of want.]

I call no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver, you,

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me, along your wandering spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years!

CXXIX.

A VISION.

[This Vision of Liberty descended on Burns among the magnificent ruins of the College of Linslade, which stand on the junction of the Clyde and the Nith, a short mile above Dumfries. He gave us the Vision; perhaps, he dared not in those easy times venture on the song, which his secret visitsant poured from her lips. The scene is chiefly copied from nature: the swallows of the Nith, the howlings of the fox on the hill, and the cry of the owl, unite at times with the natural beauty of the spot, and give it life and voice. These ruins were a favourite haunt of the poet.]

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where th' howlet mourns in her ivy bower
And tells the midnight moon her care;

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant echoing gies reply.

Not so the idle muse's mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring head'n or vaulted hell
I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears.)
Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r.—
Fintray, my other stay, long bless and spare!
Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown;
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!
The stream, adown its hazel's path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,¹
Whose distant roaring swells and fa's.

The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din;
Aberl the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tant as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghast arise,
Attir'd as ministrals went to be.²

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin' look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grey'd was plain,
The sacred poesy—Libertie!

And free his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rouse'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 the former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play,—
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

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CXXX.

TO

JOHN MAXWELL OF TERRAUGHTY,
ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

[John Maxwell of Terrauthy and Munaines, to whom these verses are addressed, though descended from the Earl of Nithsdale, cared little about lineage, and claimed meritoriously from a judgment sound and clear—a knowledge of business which penetrated into all the concerns of life, and a skill in handling the most difficult subjects, which was considered unvalued. Under an accurate manner, he had much kindness of heart, and was in a fair way of doing an act of gentleness when giving a refusal. He loved to meet Burns: not that he either cared for or comprehended poetry; but he was pleased with his knowledge of human nature, and with the keen and

piercing remarks in which he indulged. He was seventy-one years old when these verses were written, and survived the poet twenty years.]

Health to the Maxwell's vet'ran chief!
Health, ay unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sybil leaf
This natal morn;
I see thy life is stuff o' grief,
Scarce quite half worn

This day thou metest three score eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilda Poets)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckles view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoures—

But for thy friends, and they are many,
Baith honest men and lasses bonnie,
May couthie fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe and evenings funny
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the Deil he daur na steer ye;
Your friends ay love, your foes ay fear ye;
For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye
While Burns they ca' me!

Dunfricx, 18 Feb. 1792.

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CXXXI.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE
ON HER BRIEFY NIGHT,
Nov. 28, 1792.

[Miss Fontenelle was one of the actresses whom Williammen, the manager, brought for several scenes to Dunfricx: she was young and pretty, indulged in little levities of speech, and rumour added, perhaps in fictitious levities of action. The Rights of Man had been advocated by Paine; the Rights of Woman by Mary Woll...}

VARIATIONS.

¹ To join your river on the Strath.
² Now looking over forth and fauld,
Her horn the pale-fac'd Cynthia rear'd;
When, lo, in form of minstrel said,
A stern and stalwart ghastl appear'd.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CXXXII.

MONODY,

ON A LADY FAMOUS FOR HER CAPRICE.

[The heroine of this rough lampoon was Mrs. Riddel of Woodleigh Park: a lady young and gay, much of a wit, and something of a poetess, and till the hour of his death the friend of Burns himself. She pulled his displeasure on her, it is said, by smiling more sweetly than he liked on some "equesstial outcrome," for she sometimes designated commissioned officers: the lady soon laughed him out of his mood. We owe to her pen an account of her last interview with the poet, written with great beauty and feeling.]

How cold is that bosom which folly once fired,
How pale is that cheek where the rougue lately glistered?
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection remov'd;
How doubly severer, Maria, thy fate,
Thou diest unwept as thou livdest unlov'd

Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of folly so true,
And flowers let us call for Maria's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam through the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
There keen indignation shall dart on her prey,
Which spurring Contempt shall redeem from his ire.

THE EPIGRAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's beam.
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.
OXXXIII.

EPISTLE

FROM

ESOPUS TO MARIA.

[Williamson, the actor, Colonel Macdouall, Captain Gillespie, and Mrs. Riddel, are the characters which pass
over the stage in this strange composition: it is printed
from the Poet's own manuscript, and seems a sort of
outpouring of wrath and contempt, on persons who, in his
eyes, gave themselves airs beyond their condition, or
their merits. The verse of the lady is held up to con-
tempt and laughter: the artist celebrates her
"Motley foundling fancies, stolen or stray'd;"
and has a passing hit at her
"Still matchless tongue that conquers all reply."

From those drear solitudes and frowzy cells,
Where infamy with sad repentance dwells;
Where turnkeys make the jealous portal fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare repast;
Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
Blush at the curious stranger peeping in;
Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
Resolve to drink, nay, half to whore, no more;
Where tiny thieves not destined yet to swing,
Beat hemp for others, riper for the string:
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

"Alas! I feel I am no actor here!"
'Tis real hangmen, real scourges bear!
Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
Will turn thy very rouges to deadly pale;
Will make thy hair, thy 'est from gipsy polled,
By barber woven, and by barber sold,
Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare.
The hero of the mimic scene, no more
I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar;
Or naughty Chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
In Highland bonnet woo Malvina's charms;
While sans culottes stoop up the mountain high,
And steal from me Maria's plying eye.
Best Highland bonnet! Once my proudest dress,
Now prouder still, Maria's temples press.
I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
And call each coxcomb to the wordy war.
I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,
And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze.
The crafty colonel leaves the tartan'd lines,
For other wars, where he a hero shines;

The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head;
Comes, 'mid a string of coxcombs to display
That veni, vidi, vici, is his way;
The shrinking bard adown the alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich skulks;
Though there, his heroics in church and state
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate:
Still she un daunted deets and rattles on,
And dares the public like a noontide sun.
(What scandal call'd Maria's janty stagger
The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger,
Whose spleen e'en worse than Burns' venom when
He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,—
And pours his vengeance in the burning line,
Who christ'en'd thus Maria's lyre divine;
The idiot strum of vanity hummed,
And even th' abuse of poesy abused!
Who call'd her verse, a parish workhouse made
For motley foundling fancies, stolen or stray'd?)

A workhouse! ah, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowzy couch in sorrow steep;
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsey litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour?
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure?
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of hell?
Thou knowst, the virtues cannot hate thee worse,
The vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?

Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares;
In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares.
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one satire's vengeance hurst?
Who calls thee, pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit?
Who says, that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treachery to prove it true?
Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born;
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that deciphering defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply.

1 Captain Gillespie.

2 Col. Macdouall.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CXXXIV.

POEM

ON PASTORAL POETRY.

(Though Gilbert Burns says there is some doubt of this Poem being by his brother, and though Robert Chambers declares that he "has scarcely a doubt that it is not by the Ayrshire Bard," I must print it as his, for I have no doubt on the subject. It was found among the papers of the poet, in his own handwriting: the second, the fourth, and the concluding verses bear the Burns' stamp, which no one has been successful in counterfeiting: they resemble the verses of Beattie, to which Chambers has compared them, as little as the cry of the eagle resembles the chirp of the wren.)

Hail Poesie! thou Nymph reserved!
In chase o' thee, what crowds has awry'd
Fare common sense, or sunk enerv'd
'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And och! o'er aft thy joes has starr'd
Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or huskin skelp alang.
To death or marriage;
Searce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriages?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Echylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, 'till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's fame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballate, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but buaks his skinklin patches
O' heathen tatters;
I pass by bunder, nameless wretches,
That ape their better's.

In this braw age o' wit and leer,
Will none 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 forit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jokk be'hind the hallan,
A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tantallan,
But thon's for ever!

Thou paints auld nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtle's twines,
Where Philemon,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lasses bleach their classes;
Or trots by hazely shaws and brases,
Wit' 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

CXXXV.

SONNET.

WRITTEN ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF JANUARY, 1783,
THE BIRTHDAY OF THE AUTHOR, ON HEARING A
THRUNE SING IN A MORNING WALK.

[Burns was fond of a saunter in a leafless wood, when the winter storm howled among the branches. These characteristic lines were composed on the morning of his birthday, with the Nith at his feet, and the ruins of Lincluden at his side: he is willing to accept the unlooked-for song of the thrush as a fortunate omen.]

Sino on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain;
See, aged 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 unconscious 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 yon 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 Heaven bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.
CXXXVI.
SONNET,
OF THE
DEATH OF ROBERT RIDDEL, ESQ.
of Glenriddel,
April, 1704.

[The death of Glenriddel, who was his patron, and the death of Glenriddel, who was his friend, and had, while he lived at Killiecrankie, been his neighbour, weighed hard on the mind of Burns, who, about this time, began to regard his own future fortune with more of dismay than of hope. Riddell, united antiquarian pursuits with those of literature, and experienced all the vulgar prejudices entertained by the peasantry against those who indulge in such researches. His collection of what the rustics of the vale called "queer quirals and swine-troughs," is now scattered or neglected: I have heard a competent judge say, that they throw light on both the public and domestic history of Scotland.]

No more, ye warblers of the wood—no more!
Nor pour your descent, grating, on my soul;
Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy verdant stole,
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flow'rs, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend:
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round th' untimely tomb where Riddell lies.

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe!
And soothe the Virtues weeping on this bier:
The Man of Worth, who has not left his peer,
Is in his "narrow house" for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet,
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

CXXXVII.
IMPROPTU,
ON MRS. B.'S BIRTHDAY.

[By compliments such as these lines contain, Burns soothed the smart which his verses "On a lady famed for her cognos" inflicted on the accomplished Mrs. Riddell.]

Old Winter, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferred—

What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom so severe?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags, dreary, slow;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English, hanging, drowning.

Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me;
'Tis done! says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoic'd in glory.

CXXXVIII.
LIBERTY.
A FRAGMENT.

[Fragments of verse were numerous, Dr. Currie said, among the loose papers of the poet. These lines formed the commencement of an ode commemorating the achievement of liberty for America, under the directing genius of Washington and Franklin.]

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, fam'd for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!

Beneath the hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.

Is this the power in freedom's war,
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing!

CXXXIX.
VERSES
TO A YOUNG LADY.

[This young lady was the daughter of the poet's friend, Graham of Fintray; and the gift alluded to was a
OF ROBERT BURNS.

COPY OF GEORGE THOMSON'S SELECT SCOTTISH SONGS: A WORK WHICH OWNS MANY ATTRACTIONS TO THE LYRIC GENIUS OF BURNS.

Here, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift;—the humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no Russian feeling in thy breast,
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love sacret wake his seraph song.

Or pity's notes in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born plente her sanction seals.

And next the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.
The cobweb'd gothic dome resounded Y!
In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground.

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art,
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew I

As trembling U stood staring all agast,
The pedant in his left hand clutched him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptis'd him so, and kick'd him from his sight.

CXL.

THE VOWELS.

A TALE.

[Burns admired genius adorned by learning; but more learning without genius he always regarded as pedantry.
These critics who scrupled too much about words he called sounders of literature, and to one, who taxed him with writing obscure language in questionable grammar, he said, "Thou art but a Greas-greem match-maker between vowels and consonants!!"]

'Twas where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where ignorance her darkening vapour throws,
And cruelty directs the thickening blows;
Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling vowels to account.—

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on the way,
And flagrant from the scourge he grunted, ai/

Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The justling tears ran down his honest face!
That name! that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;

CXLII.

VERSES

TO JOHN RANKINE.

[With the "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine," of Adam-hill, in Ayrshire, Burns kept up a will o'-wispish sort of a correspondence in rhyme, till the day of his death: these communications, of which this is one, were sometimes graceless, but always witty. It is supposed that these lines were suggested by Falstaff's account of his ragged recruits—

"I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat!"

As day, as Death, that gruesome carl,
Was driving to the tither warl!
A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that winifles in a halter:
Ah! him! his own! to see the wretches,
He mutters, glarin' at the bitches,
"By G—d, I'll not be seen behind them,
Nor 'mang the spiritual core present them,
Without, at least, as honest man,
To grace this d—d infernal clan."

By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"L—d G—d!" quoth he, "I have it now,
There's just the man I want, I' faith!"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.
CXLII.

ON SENSIBILITY.

TO

MY DEAR AND MUCH HONOURED FRIEND, MRS. DUNLOP,
OF DUNLOP.

[These verses were occasioned, it is said, by some sentiments contained in a communication from Mrs. Dunlop. That excellent lady was sorely tried with domestic afflictions for a time, and to these he appears to allude; but he deścoped the effect of his sympathy, when he printed the stanzas in the Museum, changing the fourth line to,

"Dearest Nancy, thou canst not tell!"

and so transferring the whole to another heroine.]

Sensibility how charming,

Thou, my friend, canst truly tell:

But distress with horrors arming,

Thou hast also known too well.

Fairest flower, behold the lily,

Blooming in the sunny ray:

Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,

See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,

Telling o'er his little joys:

Pathless bird! a prey the surest,

To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought, the hidden treasure,

Finer feeling can bestow;

Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,

Thro' the deepest notes of woe.

CXLIII.

LINES,

SENT TO A GENTLEMAN WHOM HE HAD OFFENDED.

[The too hospitable board of Mrs. Riddel occasioned these repentant strains: they were accepted as they were meant by the party. The poet had, it seems, not only spoke of mere titles and rank with disrespect, but had allowed his tongue unbridled license of speech, on the claim of political importance, and domestic equality, which Mary Wollstonecraft and her followers patronized, at which Mrs. Riddel affected to be grievously offended.]

The friend whom wild from wisdom's way,

The fumes of wine infuriate send;

(Not moony madness more astray)

Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part,

Ah, why should I such scenes outlive

Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!

'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

CXLIV.

ADDRESS,

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT.

[This address was spoken by Miss Fontenelle, at the Dymock's theatre, on the 4th of December, 1769.]

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,

And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,

A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,

'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;

So sought a Poet, roosted near the skies,

Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;

Said nothing like his works was ever printed;

And last, my Prologue-business slyly hinted!

"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,

"I know your bent—these are no laughing times:

Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears,

Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears;

With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,

Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance;

Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,

Waving on high the desolating brand,

Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land!"

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,

D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying?

I'll laugh, that's pos—nay more, the world shall know it;

And so your servant! gloomy Master Poet!

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,

That Misery's another word for Grief;

I also think—so may I be a bride!

That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,

Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;

Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—

To make three guineas do the work of five:
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch! Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love, Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove; Who, as the boughs all temptingly project, Measurest in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—

Or, where the beastling cliff o'erhangs the deep, Pearest to meditate the healing leap: Wouldst thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf? Laugh at their follies—laugh e'en at thyself: Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific, And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise; And as we're merry, may we still be wise.

CXLV.
ON SEEING MISS FONTENELLE IN A FAVOURITE CHARACTER.

(The good looks and the natural acting of Miss Fontenelle pleased others as well as Burns. I know not to what character in the range of her personations he alludes: she was a favourite on the Dumfries boards.)

Sweet naïveté of feature, Simple, wild, enchanting elf, Not to thee, but thanks to nature, Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected, Spurning nature, torturing art; Loves and graces all rejected, Then indeed thou'dst act a part.

R.B.

CXLVI.
TO CHLORIS.

[Chloris was a Nithsdale beauty. Love and sorrow were strongly mingled in her early history: that she did not look so lovely in other eyes as she did in those of Burns is well known: but he had much of the taste of an artist, and admired the elegance of her form, and the harmony of her motion, as much as he did her blooming face and sweet voice.]

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend, Nor thou the gift refuse,
XLVIII.
THE HERON BALLADS.
[BALLAD FIRST.]
(This is the first of several party ballads which Burns wrote to serve Patrick Heron, of Kerroughtree, in two elections for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, in which he was opposed, first, by Gordon of Balnagoule, and secondly, by the Hon. Montgomery Stewart. There is a personal bitterness in these lampoons, which did not mingle with the strains in which the poet recorded the contest between Miller and Johnstone. They are printed here as matters of poetry, and I feel sure that none will be displeased, and some will smile.)

I.
Whom will you send to London town,
To Parliament and a' that?
Or wha in a' the country round
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Thro' Galloway and a' that;
Where is the laird or belted knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

II.
Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yet,
And wha is't never saw that?
Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree meets
And has a doubt of a' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that,
The independent patriot,
The honest man, an' a' that.

III.
Tho' wit and worth in either sex,
St. Mary's Isle can shaw that;
Wi' dukes and lords let Selkirk mix,
And weil does Selkirk fa' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent commoner
Shall be the man for a' that.

IV.
But why should we to nobles jouk,
And it's against the law that;
For why, a lord may be a gowk,
Wi' ribbon, star, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
A lord may be a lousy loun,
Wi' ribbon, star, an' a' that.

V.
A beardless boy comes o'er the hills,
Wi' uncle's purse an' a' that;
But we'll has ane frae 'mang oursels,
A man we ken, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
For we're not to be bought an' sold
Like naigs, an' nowt, an' a' that.

VI.
Then let us drink the Stewartry,
Kerroughtree's laird, an' a' that,
Our representative to be,
For weel he's worthy a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that.
A House of Commons such as he,
They would be blest that saw that.

XLIX.
THE HERON BALLADS.
[BALLAD SECOND.]
(In this ballad the poet gathers together, after the manner of "Fy! let us a' to the bridal," all the leading electors of the Stewartry, who befriended Heron, or opposed him; and draws their portraits in the colours of light or darkness, according to the complexion of their politics. He is too severe in most instances, and in some he is venomous. On the Earl of Galloway's family, and on the Murrays of Broughton and Caillie, as well as on Bushby of Tunswaldauns, he pours his hottest satire. But words which are unjust, or undeserved, fail of their victims like rain-drops from a wild-duck's wing. The Murrays of Broughton and Caillie have long borne, from the vulgar, the stigma of treachery to the cause of Prince Charles Stewart: from such infamy the family is wholly free: the traitor, Murray, was of a race now extinct; and while he was betraying the cause in which so much noble and gallant blood was shed, Murray of Broughton and Caillie was performing the duties of an honourable and loyal man: he was, like his great-grandson now, representing his native district in parliament.)

THE ELECTION.
I.
Fy, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickerin' there;
For Murray's light horse are to muster,
And O, how the heroes will swear!

1 Murray, of Broughton and Caillie.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

An' there will be Murray commander,
And Gordon the battle to win;
Like brothers they'll stand by each other,
See knit in alliance an' kin.

II.
An' there will be black-lippit Johnnie, 6
The tongue o' the trump to them a';
And he get na hell for his haddin'
The dell gets na justice ava';
And there will Kempletoun's birkie,
A boy no sae black at the bane,
But, as for his fine nabob fortune,
We'll e'en let the subject alone.

III.
An' there will be Wigton's new sheriff,
Dame Justice fu' brawlie has spied,
She's gotten the heart of a Bushby,
But, Lord, what's become o' the head?
An' there will be Cardones, 8 Esquire,
Sae mighty in Cardones' eyes;
A wicht that will weather damnation,
For the devil the prey will despise.

IV.
An' there will be Douglases' 4 doughty,
New christ'ning towns far and near;
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissing the — o' a peer;
An' there will be Kenmore's gene'rous,
Whose honour is proof to the storm,
To save them from stark reprobation,
He leant them his name to the firm.

V.
But we winna mention Redcastle, 6
The body, e'en let him escape!
He'd venture the gallows for siller,
An' twere na the cost o' the rape.
An' where is our king's lord lieutenant,
Sae fam'd for his grateful return?
The billie is gettin' his questions,
To say in St. Stephen's the morn.

VI.
An' there will be lads o' the gospel,
Muirhead, 7 wha's as guide as he's true;
An' there will be Buittle's 9 apostle,
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue;
An' there will be folk from St. Mary's, 5
A house o' great merit and note,
The dell ane but honours them highly,—
The dell ane will gie them his vote!

VII.
An' there will be wealthy young Richard, 9
Dame Fortune should hing by the neck;
For prodigal, thriftless, bestowing,
His merit had won him respect:
An' there will be rich brother nabobs,
Tho' nabobs, yet men of the first,
An' there will be Collieson's 11 whiskers,
An' Quintin, o' lads not the worst.

VIII.
An' there will be stamp-office Johnnie, 12
Tak' tent how ye purchase a dram;
An' there will be gay Cassencarrie,
An' there will be gieg Colonel Tam;
An' there will be trusty Kerrouchtree, 13
Whose honour was ever his law,
If the virtues were pack'd in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'.

IX.
An' can we forget the auld major,
Wha'll never be forgot in the Greens,
Our flat't'ry we'll keep for some other,
Him only 'tis justice to praise.
An' there will be maiden Kilkerran,
And also Barakinnine's guile knight,
An' there will roarin' Birtwhistle,
Wha lucky roars in the right.

X.
An' there, frae the Niddsdale orders,
Will mingle the Maxwell in droves;
Teugh Johnnie, staunch Geordie, an' Wallis,
That grieves for the fishes an' loaves;
An' there will be Logan MacDouall, 14
Souldudd'ry an' he will be there,
An' also the wild Scot of Galloway,
Sodgerin', gunpower Blair.

1 Gordon of Balmaghie.
2 Bussb., of Tiwall-downs.
3 Maxwell, of Cardones.
4 The Douglases, of Orchardtown and Castle-Douglas.
5 Gordon, afterwards Viscount Kenmore.
6 Laurie, of Redcastle.
7 Morehead, Minister of Urr.
8 The Minister of Buittle.
9 Earl of Selkirk's family.
10 Oswald, of Ancharuncrue.
11 Copland, of Collieson and Blackwood.
12 John Syme, of the Stamp-office.
13 Heron, of Kerrouchtree.
14 Colonel Macdonald, of Logan.
Then hey the chast e interest o' Broughton,
An' hey for the blessings 'twill bring?
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons,
In Sodom 'twould make him a king;
An' hey for the sanctified M——y,
Our land who wi' chapels has stor'd;
He founder'd his horse among harlots,
But gied the auld naig to the Lord.

---

AN EXCELLENT NEW SONG.

Tune.—"Buy broum besome."

Wha will buy my troggin,
Fine election ware;
Broken trade o' Broughton,
A' in high repair.

Buy braw troggin,
Frase the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

There's a noble Earl's
Fame and high renown
For an auld sang—
It's thought the gudes were stown.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth o' Broughton
In a needle's ee;
Here's a reputation
Tint by Balmaghie.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's an honest conscience
Might a prince adorn;
Frase the downs o' Tinwald——
So was never worn.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's its stuff and lining,
Cardeness' head;
Fine for a sodger
A' the wale o' lead.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's a little wadsset
Buitle's scrap o' truth,
Pawn'd in a gin-shop
Quenching holy drouth.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's armorial bearings
Frase the manse o' Urr;
The crest, an auld crab-apple
Rotten at the core.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Satan's picture,
Like a bizzard gled,
Pouncing poor Redcastle,
Sprawlin' as a taed.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here's the worth and wisdom
Collieston can boast;
By a thievish midge
They had been nearly lost.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Murray's fragments
O' the ten commands;
Gifted by black Jock
To get them aff his hands.

Buy braw troggin, &c.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin?
If to buy ye're slack,
Hornie's turnin' chapman,
He'll buy a' the pack.

Buy braw troggin,
Frase the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

1 The Earl of Galloway.
2 Murray, of Broughton and Callie.
3 Bussby, of Tinwald-downs.
4 Maxwell, of Cardeness.
The Minister of Buitle.
5 Morebeam, of Urr.
6 Lauren, of Redcastle.
7 Copland, of Collieston and Blackwood.
8 John Bussby, of Tinwald-downs.
CLI.

POEM.

ADDRESSED TO
MR. MITCHELL, COLLECTOR OF EXCISE.
DUMFRIES, 1796.

[The gentlemen to whom this very modest, and, under the circumstances, most affecting application for his salary was made, filled the office of Collector of Excise for the district, and was of a kind and generous nature; but few were aware that the post was suffering both from ill-health and poverty.]

Friend of the Poet, tried and Neal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin' jig and reel,
In my poor pouches!

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one, I sairly want it,
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dusted
I'd bear in mind.

So may the auld year gang out meaning
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loamin
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket;
Grim loon! he got me by the fecket,
And sair me shewk,
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promised mair o't,
My hale and weel I'll tak a care o't,
A tender way:
Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
For ance and aye!

CLII.

TO
MISS JESSY LEWARS,
DUMFRIES.

WITH JOHNSON'S 'MUSICAL MUSEUM.'

[Miss Jessy Lewars watched over the declining days of the poet, with the affectionate reverence of a daughter; for this she has the silent gratitude of all who admire the genius of Burns; she has received more, than thanks or the poet himself, expressed in verses not destined soon to die.]

Thin be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the Poet's prayer;
That fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindliest, best pressage
Of future bliss, enrol thy name:
With native worth and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare;
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prayst thy faithful friend, The Bard.
June 26, 1796.

CLIII.

POEM ON LIFE,
ADDRESSED TO
COLONEL DE PEYSTER.
DUMFRIES, 1796.

[This is supposed to be the last Poem written by the hand, or conceived by the muse of Burns. The person to whom it is addressed was Colonel of the gentlemen Volunteers of Dumfries, in whose ranks Burns was a private; he was a Canadian by birth, and prided himself on having defended Detroit, against the united efforts of the French and Americans. He was rough and austere, and thought the science of war the noblest of all sciences: he affected a taste for literature, and wrote verses.

My honoured colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal;
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus, pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty world were it,
Would pain and care and sickness spare it;
And fortune favour worth and merit,
As they deserve!

(And aye a rowth, roast beef and claret;
Syne, wha wad starve?)
Epitaphs, EpiGrams, Fragments,
Etc., Etc.

I.
On the Author’s Father.
[William Burness merited his son’s eulogiums: he was an example of piety, patience, and fortitude.]
Oh ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious reverence and attend!
Here lie the loving husband’s dear remains,
The tender father and the gen’rous friend.
The pitting heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that feared no human
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe; [pride;—
“For ev’n his failings lean’d to virtue’s side.”]

II.
On R. A., Esq.
[Robert Aiken, Esq., to whom “The Cotter’s Saturday Night” is addressed: a kind and generous man.]
Know thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much lov’d, much honour’d name!
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart death ne’er made void.

III.
On a Friend.
[The name of this friend is neither mentioned nor alluded to in any of the poet’s productions.]
An honest man here lies at rest
As e’er God with his image blest!
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth;
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm’d,
Few heads with knowledge so inform’d;
If there’s another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

IV.
For Gavin Hamilton.
[These lines allude to the persecution which Hamilton endured for presuming to ride on Sunday, and say, “damn it,” in the presence of the minister of Manchline.]
The poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam’d:
But with such as he, where’er he be,
May I be sav’d or damn’d!
V.

ON WEE JOHNNY.

Whom'ker thou art, O reader, know,
That death has murder'd Johnny!
An' here his body lies far low—
For saul he ne'er had ony.

VI.

ON JOHN DOVE,

INKEEPER, MAUCHLINE.

[John Dove kept the Whitehoof Arms in Mauchline: his religion is made to consist of a comparative appreciation of the liquors he kept.]

Here lies Johnny Pidgeon;
What was his religion?
Wha e'er desires to ken,
To some other war?
Maun follow the carl,
For here Johnny Pidgeon had none!

Strong ale was abolution—
Small beer, persecution,
A dram was memoria morti;
But a full flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
And port was celestial glory.

VII.

ON A WAG IN MAUCHLINE.

[This lascivious and useful wag was the "Dear Smith, bonnie aelast pweatie thief," of one of the poet's finest spotties: he died in the West Indies.]

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

VIII.

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.

[Scouter Hood obtained the distinction of this Epigram by his impertinent inquiries into what he called the moral delinquencies of Burns.]

Here scouter Hood in death does sleep:—
To h—ll, if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,
He'll hae it weel thegither.

IX.

ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

[This noisy polemic was a mason of the name of James Humphrey: he astonished Gromek by an eloquent dissertation on free grace, affectual-calling, and predestination.]

Below thir stanies lies Jamie's banes:
O Death, it's my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a blethrin' b—ch
Into thy dark dominion!

X.

ON MISS JEAN SCOTT.

[The heroine of these complimentary lines lived in Ayr, and cheered the poet with her sweet voice, as well as her sweet looks.]

On I had each Scot of ancient times,
Been Jeany Scott, as thou art,
The bravest heart on English ground
Had yielded like a coward.

XI.

ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY SQUIRE.

[Though satisfied with the severe satire of these lines, the poet made a second attempt.]

As father Adam first was fool'd,
A case that's still too common,
Here lies a man a woman rul'd,
The devil rul'd the woman.
XII.
ON THE SAME.
(The second attempt did not in Burns's fancy exhaust
this fruitful subject: he tried his hand again.)

O Death, hadst thou but spared his life,
Whom we this day lament,
We freely wad exchang'd the wife,
And a' been weel content!

Ev'n as he is, cauld in his grace,
The swap we yet will do't;
Take thou the carlin's carcass aff,
Thou' se get the soul to boot.

XIII.
ON THE SAME.
(In these lines he bade farewell to the sordid dame,
who lived, it is said, in Netherplace, near Mauchline.)

One Queen Artemisia, an old stories tell,
When depriv'd of her husband she loved so well,
In respect for the love and affection he'd show'd her,
She reduc'd him to dust and she drank up the powder.
But Queen Netherplace, of a different complexion,
When call'd on to order the fun'ral direction,
Would have eat her dear lord, on a slender pretence,
Not to show her respect, but to save the expense.

XIV.
THE HIGHLAND WELCOME.
(Burns took farewell of the hospitabilities of the Scot-
sh Highlands in these happy lines.)

When Death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come;
In Heaven itself I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.

XV.
ON WILLIAM SMELLIE.
(Smelie, author of the Philosophy of History; a sin-
gular person, of ready wit, and negligent in nothing save
his dress.)

Shrank Willie Smellie to Crochallan came,
The old cock'd hat, the gray surcoat, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night:
His uncomb'd grizzly locks wild staring, thatch'd
A head for thought profound and c'eart, un-
match'd:
Yet tho' his caustic wit was biting, rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

XVI.
VERSES
WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE ITH AT CATRON.
(These lines were written on receiving what the poet
considered an uncivil refusal to look at the works of the
celebrated Catron foundry.)

We came na here to view your warks
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only, lest we gang to hell,
It may be nae surprise:

For when we tirl'd at your door,
Your porter dought na hear us;
Sae may, shou'd we to hell's yetts come
Your billy Satan sair us!

XVII.
THE BOOK-WORMS.
(Burns wrote this reproof in a Shakspeare, which he
found splendidly bound and gilt, but unread and worm-
eaten, in a noble person's library.)

Through and through the inspir'd leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But oh! respect his lordship's taste,
And spare his golden bindings.
XVIII.

LINES ON STIRLING.

[On visiting Stirling, Burns was struck at beholding nothing but decaying in the palace of our princes and our halls of legislation, and vested his indignation in these unlyric lines: some one has said that they were written by his companion, Nicoll, but this want confirmation.]

Here Stuarts once in glory reign’d,
And laws for Scotland’s weal ordain’d;
But now unroof’d their palace stands,
Their sceptre’s sway’d by other hands;
The injured Stuart line is gone,
A race outlawish fills their throne;
An idiot race, to honour lost;
Who know them best despise them most.

XIX.

THE REPROOF.

[The imprudence of making the lines written at Stirling public was hinted to Burns by a friend; he said, "Oh, but I mean to reprove myself for it," which he did in these words.]

Rash mortal, and slanderous Poet, thy name
Shall no longer appear in the records of fame;
Dost not know that old Mansfield, who writes
Like the Bible,
Says the more ‘tis a truth, Sir, the more ‘tis a libel?

XX.

THE REPLY.

[The minister of Gladsmuir wrote a cannon on the Stirling lines, intimating, as a priest, that Burns’s race
was in full run, and as a prophet, that oblivion awaited his muse. The poet replied to the reproval.]

Like Esop’s lion, Burns says, sore I feel
All others’ scorn—but damn that ass’s heel.

XXI.

LINES
WRITTEN UNDER THE PICTURE OF THE CELEBRATED MISS BURNS.

[The Miss Burns of these lines was well known in those days to the poets of the Scottish metropolis: there is still a letter by the poet, claiming from the magis-

XIII.

EXTEMPORE IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

[These portraits are strongly coloured with the part-

tialities of the poet: Dundas had offended his pride,

Eskine had pleased his vanity; and as he felt he spoke.]

LORD ADVOCATE.

His clench’d his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
’Till in a declamation-mist
His argument he tint it:
He gaped for’t, he grasped for’t,
He fand it was awa, man;
But what his common sense came short
He eked out wi’ law, man.

MR. ESKINE.

Collected Harry stood swee,
Then open’d out his arm, man:
His lordship sat wi’ rueful e’e,
And ey’d the gathering storm, man;
Like wind-driv’n hail it did assail,
Or torrents owre a linn, man;
The Bench ane wise lift up their eyes,
Half-wauken’d wi’ the din, man.

XXII.

THE HENPECKED HUSBAND.

[A lady who expressed herself with incivility about her husband’s potatoes with Burns, was rewarded by these sharp lines.]

Cuss’d be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife!
Who has no will but by her high permission;
Who has not sixpence but in her possession;
Who must to her his dear friend’s secret tell;
Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than hell!
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I’d break her spirit, or I’d break her heart;
I’d charm her with the magic of a switch,
I’d kiss her maids, and kick the perverse b—h
XXIV.

WRITTEN AT INVERARY.

[Neglected at the inn of Inverary, on account of the presence of some northern chiefs, and overlooked by his Grace of Argyll, the poet let loose his wrath and his rhyme: tradition speaks of a pursuit which took place on the part of the Campbell, when he was told of his mistake, and of a resolution not to be soothed on the part of the bard.]

When

he be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he's come to wait upon
The Lord their God, his Grace.

There's naething here but Highland pride
And Highland cauld and hunger;
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in his anger.

XXV.

ON ELPHINSTON'S TRANSLATIONS
OF MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS.

[Here relates the origin of this sonnet:—
"Stopping at a merchant's shop in Edinburgh, a friend of mine one day put Elphinston's Translation of Martial into my hand, and desired my opinion of it. I asked permission to write my opinion on a blank leaf of the book; which being granted, I wrote this epigram.

O Thou, whom poetry abhors,
Whom prose has turned out of doors,
Heard'st thou that groan? proceed no further;
'Twas laurell'd Martial roaring mutter!

XXVI.

INSCRIPTION,
ON THE HEADSTONE OF FERGUSON.

[Some social friends, whose good feelings were better than their taste, have ornamented with supplemental iron-work the headstone which Burns erected, with this inscription to the memory of his brother bard, Ferguson.

Here lies
ROBERT FERGUSON, Poet.
Born, September 2, 1731;
Died, Oct. 15, 1776.

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

XXVII.

ON A SCHOOLMASTER.

[The Willie Michie of this epigram was, it is said, schoolmaster of the parish of Cleish, in Fife-shire; he met Burns during his first visit to Edinburgh.]

Here lie Willie Michie's banes;
O, Satan! when ye tak' him,
G' him the schoolin' o' your weans,
For clever de'il he'll mak' them.

XXVIII.

A GRAACE BEFORE DINNER.

[This was an extemporary grace, pronounced by the poet at a dinner-table, in Dunfermline: he was ever ready to contribute the small change of rhyme, for either the use or amusement of a company.]

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want;
We bless thee, God of Nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent;
And if it please thee, Heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But, whether granted or denied,
Lord bless us with content! Amen.

XXIX.

A GRAACE BEFORE MEAT.

[Pronounced, tradition says, at the table of Mrs. Middel, of Woodleigh-Park.]

O Thou in whom we live and move,
Who mad'st the sea and shore,
Thy goodness constantly we prove,
And grateful would adore.
And if it please thee, Power above,
Still grant us with such store,
The friend we trust, the fair we love,
And we desire no more.

XXX.

ON WAT.

[The name of the object of this fierce epigram might be found, but in gratifying curiosity, some pain would be inflicted.]

Sto a reptile was Wat,
Sto a miscreant slave,
That the very worms damn’d him
When laid in his grave.
"In his flesh there’s a famine,"
A star’d reptile cries;
"An’ his heart is rack poison,"
Another replies.

XXXI.
ON CAPTAIN FRANCIS GROSE.

This was a festive sally: it is said that Grose, who was very fat, though he joined in the laugh, did not relish it.

The devil got notice that Grose was a-dying, So whip! at the summons, old Satan came flying; But when he approach’d where poor Francis lay moaning, And saw each bed-post with its burden a-groaning, Astonish’d! confound’d! cry’d Satan, “By — I’ll want him, ere I take such a damnable load!”

XXXII.
IMPROPTU,
TO MISS AINSLIE.

These lines were occasioned by a sermon on sin, to which the poet and Miss Ainslie of Barrywell had listened, during his visit to the border.

Fair maid, you need not take the hint, Nor idle texts pursue:—
’Twas guilty sinners that he meant, Not angels such as you!

XXXIII.
THE KIRK OF LAMINGTON.

One rough, cold day, Burns listened to a sermon, so little to his liking, in the kirk of Lamington, in Clydesdale, that he left this protest on the seat where he sat.

As could a wind as ever blow,
As eauder kirk, and isn’t but few;
As could a minister’s e’er spak,
Ye’re a’ be het ere I come back.

XXXIV.
THE LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

[In answer to a gentleman, who called the solemn League and Covenant ridiculous and fanatical.]

The solemn League and Covenant
Cost Scotland blood — cost Scotland tears;
But it sealed freedom’s sacred cause —
If thou’rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.

XXXV.
WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS,
IN THE INN AT MOFFAT.

[A friend asked the poet why God made Miss Davies so little, and a lady who was with her, so large: before the ladies, who had just passed the window, were out of sight, the following answer was recorded on a pane of glass.]

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because God meant mankind should set
The higher value on it.

XXXVI.
SPOKEN,
ON BEING APPOINTED TO THE EXCISE.

Burns took no pleasure in the name of excise; a situation was unworthy of him, and he seldom hesitated to say so.

Searching auld wives’ barrels,
Och — hon! the day!
That clarty barn should stain my laurels;
But — what’ll ye say!
These movin’ things ca’d wives and weans
Wad move the very hearts o’ stanes!

XXXVII.
LINES ON MRS. KEMBLE.

[The poet wrote these lines in Mrs. Riddell’s box in the Dumfries Theatre, in the winter of 1794; he was much moved by Mrs. Kemble’s noble and pathetic acting.]

KEMBLE, thou curst my unbelief
Of Moses and his rod;
At Yarico’s sweet notes of grief
The rock with tears had flow’d.
XXXVIII.
TO MR. SYME.
[John Syme, of Ryedale, a rhymmer, a wit, and a gentle-
man of education and intelligence, was, while Burns
resided in Dumfries, his chief companion: he was bred
to the law.
No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
And cook'ry the first in the nation;
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
Is proof to all other temptation.

XXXIX.
TO MR. SYME.
WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER.
[The tavern where these lines were written was kept
by a wandering mortal of the name of Smith; who,
having visited in some capacity or other the Holy Land,
paid on his sign, "John Smith, from Jerusalem." He
was commonly known by the name of Jerusalem John.]
O, had the mait thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
'Twere drink for first of human kind,
A gift that e'en for Syme were st.
Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries.

XL.
A GRACE.
[This Grace was spoken at the table of Ryedale, where
the best cookery was added the richest wines, as well
as the rarest wit: Hydlop was a distiller.]
Lord, we thank thee adored,
For temp'ral gifts we little merit;
At present we will ask no more,
Let William Hydlop give the spirit.

XL.
INSCRIPTION ON A GOBLET.
[Written on a dinner-goblet by the hand of Burns.
Syme, exasperated at having his set of crystal defaced,
threw the goblet under the grate: it was taken up by his
clerk, and it is still preserved as a curiosity.]
There's death in the cup—sae beware!
Nay, more—there is danger in touching;
But who can avoid the fell snare?
The man and his wine's sae bewitching!

XLII.
THE INVITATION.
[Burns had a happy knack in acknowledging civilies;
these lines were written with a pencil on the paper in
which Mrs. Hydlop, of Lochbroom, enclosed an invitation
to dinner.]
The King's most humble servant I,
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I am yours at dinner-time,
Or else the devil's in it.

XLIII.
THE CREED OF POVERTY.
[When the commissioners of Excise told Burns that
he was to set, and not to think; he took out his pencil
and wrote "The Creed of Poverty."]
In politics if thou would'st mix,
And mean thy fortunes be;
Bear this in mind—be deaf and blind;
Let great folks hear and see.

XLIV.
WRITTEN IN A LADY'S POCKET-BOOK.
[That Burns loved liberty and sympathized with those
who were warring in its cause, these lines, and hundreds
more, sufficiently testify.]
Grant me, indulgent Heav'n, that I may live
to see the miscreants feel the pains they give,
Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till slave and despot be but things which were.

XLV.
THE PARSON'S LOOKS.
[Some sarcastic person said, in Burns's hearing, that
there was falsehood in the Reverend Dr. Burns's looks: the poet
mused for a moment, and replied in lines which have less of truth
than point.]
That there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny;
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.
XLVI.

THE TOAD-EATER.

(This reproof was administered extempore to one of the guests at the table of Maxwell, of Turrailty, whose whole talk was of Dukes with whom he had dined, and of earls with whom he had supped.)

What of earls with whom you have sup't,
And of dukes that you dined with yestreen?
Lord! a loose, Sir, is still but a loose.
Though it crawl on the curl of a queen.

XLVII.

ON ROBERT RIDDLE.

[If copied these lines from a pane of glass in the Prior's Carte, Hermitage, on which they had been traced with the diamond of Burns.]

To Riddle, much-lamented man,
This ivied cot was dear;
Reader, dost value matchless worth?
This ivied cot reverse.

XLVIII.

THE TOAST.

[Burns being called on for a song, by his brother volunters, on a festive occasion, gave the following Toast.]

In stead of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast—
Here's the memory of those on the twelfth that we lost!—
That we lost, did I say? may, by Heav'n, that we found;
For their fame it shall last while the world goes round.
The next in succession, I'll give you—the King!
Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing;
And here's the grand fabric, our free Constitution,
As built on the base of the great Revolution;
And longer with politics not to be cra. am'd,
Be Anarchy cure'd, and be Tyanny damn'd;
And who would to Liberty e. or prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman, and he his first s'd.

XLIX.

ON A PERSON NICKNAMED THE MARQUIS.

[As a moment when vanity prevailed against prudence, this person, who kept a respectable public-house in Dumfries, desired Burns to write his epitaph.]

Here lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were shamm'd;
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd.

L.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW.

[Burns traced these words with a diamond, on the window of the King's Arms Tavern, Dumfries, as a reply, or reproof, to one who had been witty on excise men.]

Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
'Gainst poor Excisemen? give the cause a hearing;
What are you, landlords' rent-rolls? teasing ledgers;
What premiers—what? even monarchs' mighty gaugers:
Nay, what are priests, those seeming godly wise men?
What are they, pray, but spiritual Excisemen?

LI.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE GLOBE TAVERN, DUMFRIES.

[The Globe Tavern was Burns's favourite "Rowff," as he called it. It had other attractions than good liquor; there lived "Anna, with the golden locks."]

The greybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures,
Give me with gay Folly to live;
I grant him his calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
But Folly has raptures to give.
LII.

THE SELKIRK GRACE.

[On a visit to St. Mary's Isle, Burns was requested by the noble owner to say grace to dinner; he obeyed in these lines, now known in Galloway by the name of "The Selkirk Grace."]

Some hae meat and canna eat,
    And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
    And see the Lord be thanket.

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LIII.

TO DR. MAXWELL,
ON JESSIE STAIRS'S RECOVERY.

[Maxwell was a skilful physician; and Jessie Stair, the Provost's eldest daughter, was a young lady of great beauty: she died early.]

Maxwell, if merit here you crave
    That merit I deny,
You save fair Jessie from the grave—
    An angel could not die.

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LIV.

EPI T A P H.

[These lines were traced by the hand of Burns on a goblet belonging to Gabriel Richardson, brewer, in Dumfries; it is carefully preserved in the family.]

Here brewer Gabriel's fire's extinct,
    And empty all his barrels;
He's blest—if, as he brew'd, he drink—
    In upright virtuous morals.

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LV.

EPI T A P H
ON WILLIAM NICOL.

[Nico. was a scholar, of ready and rough wit, who saved a joke and a gill.]

Ye maggots, feast on Nicol's brain,
    For few aic feast ye've gotten;
And fix your claws in Nicol's heart,
    For dell a bit o't's rotten.

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LVI.

ON THE DEATH OF A LAP-DOG,
NAMED ECHO.

[When visiting with Syme at Kenmore Castle, Burns wrote this Epitaph, rather reluctantly, it is said, at the request of the lady of the house, in honour of her lap dog.]

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
New half extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
New half your din of tuneless sound
With Echo silent lies.

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LVII.

ON A NOTED COXCOMB.

[Neither Ayr, Edinburgh, nor Dumfries have contested the honour of producing the person on whom these lines were written—coxcombs are the growth of all districts.]

Light lay the earth on Willy's breast,
    His chicken-heart so tender;
But build a castle on his head,
    His skull will prop it under.

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LVIII.

ON SEEING THE BEAUTIFUL SEAT OF
LORD GALLOWAY.

[This, and the three succeeding Epigrams, are hasty squibs thrown amid the tumult of a contested election, and must not be taken as the fixed and deliberate sentiments of the poet, regarding an ancient and noble house.]

What dost thou in that mansion fair?
    Fli, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
    The picture of thy mind!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

LIX.
ON THE SAME.

Ne Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

LX.
ON THE SAME.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
Thro' many a far-fam'd sire!
So ran the far-fam'd Roman way,
So ended in a mire.

LXI.
TO THE SAME,
ON THE AUTHOR BEING THREATENED WITH HIS RESENTMENT.

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway,
In quiet let me live:
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

LXII.
ON A COUNTRY LAIRD.

[Mr. Maxwell, of Cardoness, afterwards Sir David, exposed himself to the thorny wrath of Burns, by his activity in the contested elections of Hexham.]

Bliss be Jesus Christ, O Cardoness,
With grateful lifted eyes,
Who said that not the soul alone
But body too, must rise:
For had he said, "the soul alone
From death I will deliver;"
Alas! alas! O Cardoness,
Then thou hadst slept for ever.

LXIII.
ON JOHN BUSHBY.

[Burns, in his hardest lampoons, always admitted the sallies of Bushby: the peasantry, who hate all clever attorneys, loved to handle his character with unspiring severity.]

Here lies John Bushby, honest man!
Cheat him, Devil, gin ye can.

LXIV.
THE TRUE LOYAL NATIVES.

[At a dinner-party, where politics ran high, lines signed by men who called themselves the true loyal natives of Dumfries, were handed to Burns: he took a pencil, and at once wrote this reply.]

Ye true "Loyal Natives," attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From envy or hatred your corps is exempt,
But where is your shield from the darts of contempt?

LXV.
ON A SUICIDE.

[Burns was observed by my friend, Dr. Copland Hutchison, to fix, one morning, a bit of paper on the grave of a person who had committed suicide: on the paper these lines were pencilled.]

Earth'n u up here lies an imp o' hell,
Planted by Satan's dibble—
Poor silly wretch, he's damn'd himsel'!
To save the Lord the trouble.

LXVI.
EXTEMPORE
PINNED ON A LADY'S COACH.

["Printed," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "from a copy in Burns's handwriting," a slight alteration in the last line is made from an oral version.]

If you rattle along like your mistress's tongue,
Your speed will outrival the dart:
But, a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road
If your stuff has the rot, like her heart.
THE POETICAL WORKS

LXVII.
LINES
TO JOHN RANKINE.
[These lines were said to have been written by the poet to Rankine, of Adamhill, with orders to forward them when he died.]
He who of Rankine sang lies still and dead,
And a green grassy hillock hides his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed.

LXVIII.
JESSY LEWARS.
[Written on the blank side of a list of wild beasts, exhibiting in Dumfries. "Now," said the poet, who was then very ill, "it is fit to be presented to a lady."]
Talk not to me of savages
From Africa's burning sun,
No savage e'er could rend my heart
As Jessy, thou hast done.
But Jessy's lovely hand in mine,
A mutual faith to plight,
Not even to view the heavenly choir
Would be so blest a sight.

LXIX.
THE TOAST.
[One day, when Burns was ill and seemed in slumber, he observed Jessy Lewars moving about the house with a light step lest she should disturb him. He took a crystal goblet containing wine and water for moistening his lips, wrote these words upon it with a diamond, and presented it to her.
Fill me with the rosy wine,
Call a toast—a toast divine;
Give the Poet's darling flame,
Lovely Jessy be the name;
Then thou mayest freely boast,
Thou hast given a peerless toast.

LXX.
ON MISS JESSY LEWARS.
[The constancy of her attendance on the poet's sickbed and anxiety of mind brought a slight illness upon Jessy Lewars. "You must not die yet," said the poet.
"Give me that goblet, and I shall prepare you for the worst." He traced these lines with his diamond, and said, "That will be a companion to 'The Toast.'"
Say, sages, what's the charm on earth
Can turn Death's dart aside?
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessy had not died.
B. B.

LXXI.
ON THE
RECOVERY OF JESSY LEWARS.
[A little repose brought health to the young lady. "I knew you would not die," observed the poet, with a smile: "there is a poetic reason for your recovery," he wrote, and with a feeble hand, the following lines.
But rarely seen since Nature's birth,
The natives of the sky;
Yet still one seraph's left on earth,
For Jessy did not die.
B. B.

LXXII.
TAM, THE CHAPMAN.
[Tam, the chapman, is said by the late William Cobbett, who knew him, to have been a Thomas Kennedy, a native of Ayreshire, agent to a mercantile house in the west of Scotland. Sir Harris Nichols confounds him with the Kennedy to whom Burns addressed several letters and verses, which I printed in my edition of the poet in 1831: it is perhaps enough to say that the name of the one was Thomas and the name of the other John.
As Tam the Chapman on a day,
W' Death forgather'd by the way,
Well pleas'd he greets a wight so famous,
And Death was nac less pleas'd w' Thomas,
Wha cheerfully lays down the pack,
And there blows up a hearty crack;
His social, friendly, honest heart,
Sae tickled Death they could na part;
Sae after viewing knives and garters,
Death takes him home to gie him quarters.]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

LXXIII.
[These lines seem to owe their origin to the precept of Mickle.
"The present moment is our aim,
The next we never saw."
]

Him's a bottle and an honest friend!
What wad you wish for mair, man?
Wha kens before his life may end,
What his share may be o' care, man?
Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man!
Believe me, happiness is shy,
And comes not ay when sought, man.

LXXIV.
[The sentiment which these lines express, was one familiar to Burns, in the early, as well as concluding days of his life.]

Though sickle Fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistresses, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.—

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

LXXV.
TO JOHN KENNEDY.
[The John Kennedy to whom these verses and the succeeding lines were addressed, lived, in 1796, at Dumfries-house, and his taste was so much esteemed by the poet, that he submitted his "Cotter's Saturday Night" and the "Mountain Daisy" to his judgment: he seems to have been of a social disposition.]

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline Cross,
L-d, man, there's lasses there wad force
A hermit's fancy,
And down the gate in faith they're worse
And mair unchancy.

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

It's no I like to sit an' swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow,
But gie me just a true good fallow,
Wi' right ingine,
And spunklie ances to make us mellow,
And then we'll shine

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

But if, as I'm informed weel,
Ye hate as ill's the very deil
The flinty heart that canna feel—

Come, Sir, here's tae you!
Hae, there's my haun, I wiss ye weel,
And gude be wi' you!

ROBERT BURNS.

Musseliel, 3 March, 1786.

LXXVI.
TO JOHN KENNEDY.

Farewell, dear friend! may guid luck hit you,
And 'mang her favourites admit you!
If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
May none believe him!
And ony dell that thinks to get you,
Good Lord deceive him!

Kilmarnock, August, 1786.

LXXVII.
[Cronek found these characteristic lines among the poet's papers.]

There's naethin like the honest nappy!
Whaur'll ye e'er see men sae nappy,
Or women, sonlie, saft an' sappy,
'Tween morn an' morn
As them wha like to taste the drappie
In glass or horn?

I've seen me daest upon a time;
I scarce could wink or see a styme;
LXXVIII.
ON THE BLANK LEAF
OF A
WORK BY HANNAH MORE.
PRESENTED BY MRS. O——.

Twas flattering work of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear, the beauteous donor;
Though sweetly female every part,
Yet such a head, and more the heart,
Does both the sexes honour.
She showed her taste refined and just,
When she selected thee,
Yet deeming, own I must,
For so approving me!
But kind still, I'll mind still
The giver in the gift;
I'll bless her, and wish her
A friend above the lift.
Mosagti, April, 1786.

LXXIX.
TO THE MEN AND BRETHREN
OF THE
MASONIC LODGE AT TARBOLOTON.

Within your dear mansion may wayward contention,
Or withering envy never enter:
May secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And brotherly love be the centre.
Edinburgh, 23 August, 1787.

LXXX.
IMPROMPTU.
(The tumbler on which these verses are inscribed by
the diamond of Burns, found its way to the hands of Sir
Walter Scott, and is now among the treasures of Abbotsford.)
You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart;
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half as welcome as welcome's thy art.

Come busters high, express your joy,
The bowl we maun renew it;
The tappit-hen, gae bring her ben,
To welcome Willie Stewart.

My foes be strang, and friends be slack,
Ilk action may be rue it,
May woman on him turn her back,
That wrongs thee, Willie Stewart.

LXXXI.
PRAYER FOR ADAM ARMOUR.
(The origin of this prayer is curious. In 1785, the
maid-servant of an innkeeper at Mauchline, having been
cought in what old ballad-makers delicately call "the
deed of shame," Adam Armour, the brother of the poet's
bonnie Jean, with one or two more of his comrades, exe-
cuted a rustic act of justice upon her, by parading her
perforce through the village, placed on a rough, un-
pruned piece of wood: an unpleasant ceremony, vulgarly
called "Riding the Stang." This was resented by
Geordie and Nannie, the girl's master and mistress: law
was resorted to, and as Adam had to hide till the matter
was settled, he dared not venture home till late on the
Saturday nights. In one of these home-comings he met
Burns, who laughed when he heard the story, and said,
"You have need of some one to pray for you." "No
one can do that better than yourself," was the reply, and
this humorous interpolation was made on the instant, and,
as it is said, "clean off loof." From Adam Armour I
obtained the verses, and when he wrote them out, he
told the story in which the prayer originated.)

Lord, pity me, for I am little,
An elf of mischief and of mettle,
That can like any weaver's shuttle,
Jink there or here,
Though scarce as lang's a guid kale-whistle,
I'm unor queer.
OF ROBERT BURNS

Lord pity now our weaefu' case,
For Geordie's Jurk we're in disgrace,
Because we stang'd her through the place,
'Mang hundreeds laughin',
For which we daurna show our face
Within the claohan.

And now we're dern'd in glens and hallows,
And hunted as was William Wallace,
By constables, those blackguard fellows,
And ballies bairth,
O Lord, preserve us frae the gallows!
That cursed death.

Auld, grim, black-bearded Geordie's sel',
O shake him ewre the mouth o' hell,
And let him hing and roar and yell,
Wi' hideous din,
And if he offers to rebel
Just heave him in.

When Death comes in wi' glimmering blink,
And tips auld drunken Nancy the wink'
Gaur Satan gie her a-e a clink
Behind his yett,
And fill her up wi' brimstone drink,
Red reeking hell.

There's Jockie and the hawrel Jenny,
Some devil seize them in a hurry,
And waft them in th' infernal wherry,
Straught through the lake,
And gie their hides a noble currie,
Wi' oil of aik.

As for the lass, lascivious body,
She's had mischief enough already,
Weel stang'd by market, mill, and smiddie,
She's suffer'd sair;
But may she wintle in a widdle,
If she wh-re mair.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

I.

HANDSOME NELL.

Tune.—"I am a man unmarried."

1. This composition," says Burns in his "Common-

pence Book," "was the first of my performances, and

done at an early period in life, when my heart glowed

with honest, warm simplicity; unacquainted and uncor-

rupted with the ways of a wicked world. The subject

of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises

I have bestowed on her."

II.

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still;
And whilst that honour warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell.

III.

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

IV.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e'e,

But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
II.
LUCKLESS FORTUNE.

[These lines, as Burns informs us, were written to a
tune of his own composing, consisting of three parts,
and the words were the echo of the air.]

O RAGING fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow, O;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow, O.
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O;
But luckless fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

III.
I DREAM'D I LAY.

[These melancholy verses were written when the poet
was some seventeen years old: his early days were typi-
cal of his latter.]

I.
I DREAM'd I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam;
Listening to the wild birds singing,
By a falling crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling drumlike wave.

II.
Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasure I enjoy'd:
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flowery bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

IV.
TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

Tune—"Invercauld's Reel."

[The Tibbie who "spak na, but gaed by like stoure," was, it is said, the daughter of a man who was laird of
three acres of pentimes, and thought it became her to
put on airs in consequence.]

CHORUS.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the' day,
Ye wad na been sae shy;
For lack o' gear ye lightly me,
But, trouth, I care na by.

I.
YESTREEN I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fent a hair care I.

II.
I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whe'er ye like to try.

III.
But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy queen,
That looks sae proud and high.

IV.
Altho' a lad were o'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu' dry.

V.
But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or l seized,
Be better than the kye.

VI.
But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear mak's you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

VII.
There lives a lass in yonder park,
I wad na gie her in her sark,
For thee, wi' a' thy thussan' mark;
Ye need na look sae high.
V.
MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

Tune—‘The Weaver and his Shuttle, O.’

["The following song," says the poet, "is a wild
rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification, but as the
sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that
reason I have a particular pleasure in coming it over."]

V.
My father was a farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me,
In decency and order, O;
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.

V.
Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O:
My talents they were not the worst,
Nor yet my education, O;
Resolv'd was I, at least to try,
To mend my situation, O.

V.
In many a way, and vain essay,
I courted fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between,
To frustrate each endeavour, O;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd,
Sometimes by friends forsaken, O,
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

V.
Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last,
With fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams,
And came to this conclusion, O:
The past was bad, and the future hid;
Its good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour, was in my pow'r
And so I would enjoy it, O.

V.
No help, nor hope, nor view had I,
Nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat and broll,
And labour to sustain me, O:
VI.

JOHN BARLEYCORN:
A BALLAD.

[Composed on the plan of an old song, of which David
Leing has given an authentic version in his very curious
volume of Metrical Tales.]

I.

There were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high;
And they have sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

II.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head;
And they have sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

III.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And show're began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

IV.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head and arm'd wi' pointed spears
That no one should him wrong.

V.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His head and joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fall.

VI.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rags.

VII.

They've ta'en a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

VIII.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and yer.

IX.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

X.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

XI.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all—
He crush'd him 'tween two stones.

XII.

And they have ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

XIII.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

XIV.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

XV.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fall in old Scotland!

VII.

THE BIGS O' BARLEY.

Tune—"Corn rigs are bonnie."

[Two young women of the west, Anne Ronald and
Anne Blair, have each, by the district traditions, been
claimed as the heroine of this early song.]

I.

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

VII.

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' am' persuasion she agreed,
To see me through the barley.

II.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down wi' right good will,
Aman gro the riggs o' barley:
I knew her heart was a' my ain;
I loved her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
Aman gro the riggs o' barley.

III.

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

IV.

I have been blithe wi' comrades dear;
I have been merry drinkin';
I have been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I have been happy thinkin';
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Aman gro the riggs o' barley.

CHORUS.

Corn riggs, an' barley riggs,
An' corn riggs are bonnie:
I'll never forget that happy night,
Aman gro the riggs wi' Annie.

VIII.

MONTGOMERY'S PEGGY.

Tune—"Gallant Water."

["My Montgomery's Peggy," says Burns, "was my deity for six or eight months: she had been bred in a style of life rather elegant; it cost me some heart-aches to get rid of the affair." The young lady listened to the eloquence of the poem, poured out in many an interview, and then quietly told him that she stood unalterably engaged to another.]

I.

Athy' my bed were in yon muir,
Aman gro the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomery's Peggy.

II.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomery's Peggy.

III.

Were I a baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin' with Montgomery's Peggy.

IX.

THE MAUCHLINE LADY.

Tune—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

[The Mauchline lady who won the poet's heart was Jean Armour: she loved to relate how the bard made her acquaintance: his dog ran across some linen webs which she was bleaching among Mauchline gowans, and he apologised so handsomely that she took another look at him. To this interview the world owes some of our most impassioned strains.]

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was nae steady;
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
A mistress still I had ay:
But when I came roun' by Mauchline town,
Not dreadin' any body,
My heart was caught before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

X.

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE.

Tune—"The deeds d'ar o'er my daddy!"

["The Highland Lassie" was Mary Campbell, whose too early death the poet sung in strains that will endure}
While the language lasts. "She was," says Burns, "a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever I knew a man with generous love."

I.
Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my muse's care;
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plains sae rushi, O,
I set me down wi' right good-will,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

II.
Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
Your palace and your gardens—fine,
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.

III.
But sickle fortunes frowns on me,
And I must cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.

IV.
Altho' thru' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

V.
For her I'll dare the billows' roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

VI.
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.
Farewell the glen sae bushy, O!
Farewell the plain sae rushi, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

XI
PEGGY.
[The heroine of this song is said to have been "Mum's own Peggy."]
Tune—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

I.
Now westlin' winds and slaughtering 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.

II.
The partridge loves the fruitful fields;
The plowman loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring heron 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.

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

IV.
But Peggy, dear, the evening'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 every happy creature.

V.
We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly press,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Not vernal show'res to budding flow'rs,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

XII.
THE RANTIN' DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.

Tune—"East nook o' Fife."

("The heroine of this humorous ditty was the mother of "Bonnie, smirking, dear-bought Bess," a person whom the poet regarded, as he says, both for her form and her grace.

I.
O wha my babie-clouts will buy?
O wha will tent me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me where I lie?—
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't.

II.
O wha will own he did the fa'ut?  
O wha will buy the groanin' maust?  
O wha will tell me how to ca'?
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't.

III.
When I mount the creepie chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Bob, I'll seek n'ae mair,
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't.

IV.
Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will make me hidgin' fain?
Wha will kiss me o'er again?—
The rantin' dog, the daddie o't.

XIII.
MY HEART WAS ANCE.

Tune—"To the weavers gin ye go."

["The heroines of this song," says Burns, in his note to the "Museum," "is old, the rest is mine." The "bonnie, westlin weaver lad!" is said to have been one of the "trials of the poet in the affections of a westland lady.

I.
My heart was ance as blythe and free
As simmer days were lang,

But a bonnie, westlin weaver lad
Has gart me change my sang.
To the weavers gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weavers gin ye go;
I rede you right gang ne'er at night,
To the weavers gin ye go.

II.
My mither sent me to the town,
To warp a plaiden wab;
But the weary, weary warpin' o't
Has gart me sigh and sob.

III.
A bonnie westlin weaver lad,
Sat working at his loom;
He took my heart as wi' a net,
In every knot and thrum.

IV.
I sat beside my warpin-wheel,
And ay I ca'd it roun';
But every shot and every knock,
My heart it gae a stoun.

V.
The moon was sinking in the west
Wi' visage pale and wan,
As my bonnie westlin weaver lad
Convo'yd me thro' the glen.

VI.
But what was said, or what was done,
Shame fa' me gin I tell;
But, oh! I fear the kintra soon
Will ken as weil's myself.
To the weavers gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weavers gin ye go;
I rede you right gang ne'er at night,
To the weavers gin ye go.

XIV.

NANNIE.

Tune—"My Nannie, O."

[Agnes Fleming, servant at Calloochill, inspired this fine song; she died at an advanced age, and was more remarkable for the beauty of her form than face. When questioned about the love of Burns, she smiled and said,
"Aye, atweel he made a great wark about me."

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

II.
The westlin wind blows loud an' shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hills to Nannie, O.

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

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

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

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

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

VIII.
Come weel, come wey, I care na by,
I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O:
Naeither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.

A FRAGMENT.
Tune—"John Anderson my Jo."
(This verse, written early, and probably intended for
the starting verses of a song, was found among the papers of the poet.)

XVII.
THERE'S NOTHING BUT CARE.
Tune—"Green grow the rushes."

["Man was made when nature was but an apprentice;
but woman is the last and most perfect work of na-
ture," says an old writer, in a rare old book: a passage
OF ROBERT BURNS.

which expresses the sentiment of Burns; yet it is all but certain, that the Fledgling Bard was acquainted with "Cupid’s Whirligig," where these words are to be found

CHORUS.
Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e’er I spend
Are spent among the rashes, O.

I.
There’s nought but care on ev’ry han’,
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o’ man,
An’ ’twere na for the rashes, O.

II.
The warly race may richer chase,
An’ richer still may fly them, O;
An’ tho’ at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne’er enjoy them, O.

III.
But gie me a canny hour at e’en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An’ warly cares, an’ warly men,
May a’ gae tapestrie, O.

IV.
For you see dukes, ye sneer at this,
Ye’re nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl’ e’er saw,
He dearly lov’d the rashes, O.

V.
Auld Nature swears the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her ’prentice han’ she try’d on man,
An’ then she made the rashes, O.
Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e’er I spend
Are spent among the rashes, O.

XVIII.
MY JEAN!
Tune—"The Northern Lass."
[The lady on whom this passionate verse was written was Jean Armour.
Though cruel fate should bid us part,
Far as the pole and line,

Her dear idea round my heart,
Should tenderly entwine.
Though mountains rise, and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

XIX.
ROBIN.
Tune—"Daintia Daius."
[Sotard painted a clever little picture from this characteristic ditty; the nameless wife, it was evident, saw in Robin’s palm something which tickled her, and a curious intelligence sparkled in the eyes of her gossips.]

I.
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!

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

III.
The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo’ she, who lives will see the proof,
This warly boy will be nae coof,
I think we’ll ca’ him Robin.

IV.
He’ll hae misfortunes great and sma’,
But ay a heart aboon them a’;
He’ll be a credit to us a’,
We’ll a’ be proud o’ Robin.

V.
But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by lika score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin’.
So leese me on thee, Robin.

VI.
Guid faith, quo’ she, I doubt you gas,
The bonnie rashes lie aspar,
XX.
HER FLOWING LOCKS.
Tune—(unknown.)

[Here the text is a bit unclear, but it seems to describe the flowing locks of a woman, adorned with raven's wing, and the beauty of her lips.]

XXI.
O LEAVE NOVELS.
Tune—"Mauschline belles."

[Here the text seems to reminisce about novels and the past, perhaps suggesting a moral lesson or reflection on the value of literature.]

XXII.
YOUNG PEGGY.
Tune—"Last time I cam' o'er the muir."

[The text seems to be a lament or a reflection on the passing of time, perhaps lamenting the fleeting nature of beauty or love.]

...
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom,
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

———

XXIII.

THE CURE FOR ALL CARE.

Tune—"Prepare, my dear brethren, to the tavern let's fly."

[Tarbolton Lodge, of which the post was a member, was noted for its socialities. Masonic lyrics are all of a dark and mystic order; and those of Burns are scarce an exception.]

I.
No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business, contriving to snare—
For a big-bellied bottle's the whole of my care.

II.
The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

III.
Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you The Crown, how it waves in the air!
There a big-bellied bottle still eases my care.

IV.
The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon proved it fair,
That a big-bellied bottle's a cure for all care.

V.
I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;
But the purry old landlord just waddled up stairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

VI.
"Life's cares they are comforts,"—a maxim laid down
By the bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the black gown;

And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair;
For a big-bellied bottle's a heav'n of care.

VII.

ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
The honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May every true brother of the compass and square
Have a big-bellied bottle when harass'd with care!

———

XXIV.

ELIZA.

Tune—"Gudroan."

[My late excellent friend, John Galt, informed me that the Eliza of this song was his relative, and that her name was Elizabeth Barbour.]

I.
From thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore;
The cruel Fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar:
But boundless oceans roaring wide
Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee!

II.
Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A bidding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no more!
The latest throb that leaves my heart,
While death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!

———

XXV.

THE SONS OF OLD KILLIE.

Tune—"Shawmboy."

["This song, wrote by Mr. Burns, was sung by him in the Kilmermack-Kilwinning Lodge, in 1796, and given by him to Mr. Parker, who was Master of the Lodge."]
III.
The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wilt joy the tentile seedman stalks;
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of one that never wanders.

IV.
The wanton coot the water skims,
Amidst the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And every thing is blest but I.

V.
The sheep-herd steeks his faulting slat,
And owes the moorland whistles shrill;
Wilt wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

VI.
And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on fluttering wings,
A woo-worn ghast I homeward glide.

VII.
Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree:
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When nature all is sad like me!
And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet black, an' it's like a hawk,
An' it winna let a body be.

XXVI.
MENIE.
Tune.—"Johnny's grey breeks."

[Of the lady who inspired this song no one has given any account: It first appeared in the second edition of the poet's works, and as the chorus was written by an Edinburgh gentleman, it has been supposed that the song was a matter of friendship rather than of the heart.]

I.
Again rejoicing nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues,
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steep'd in morning dews.
And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet black, an' it's like a hawk,
An' it winna let a body be.

II.
In vain to me the cowlips blow,
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me, in gien or shaw,
The mavis and the lithwhite sing.

XXVII.
THE FAREWELL
TO THE
BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE,
TARBOLTON.

Tune—"Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'."

[Burns, it is said, sang this song in the St. James's Lodge of Tarbolton, when his chest was on the way to Greenock: men are yet living who had the honour of hearing him—the concluding verse affected the whole lodge.]

I.
Adieu! a heart-warm fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Tho' I to foreign lands must go,
Pursuing Fortune's sliddy'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, tho' far awa'.

II.
Oft have I met your social hand,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light:
And by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsmen ever saw!
Strong mem'ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa'.

III.
May freedom, harmony, and love
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious Architect divine!
That you may keep th' unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till order bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray'r when far awa'.

IV.
And you farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that highest badge to wear!
Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble name,
To masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round—I ask it with a tear,—
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

XXVIII.

ON CESSNOCK BANKS.

Tune—"If he be a butcher neat and trim."

[There are many variations of this song, which was first printed by Cromek from the oral communication of a Glasgow lady, on whose charms the poet, in early life, composed it.]

I.
On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells;
Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lasses a' she far excels,
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

II.
She's sweeter than the morning dawn
When rising Phoebus first is seen,
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

III.
She's stately like you youthful ash,
That grows the cowlip brace between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

IV.
She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn,
With flow'res so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

V.
Her looks are like the vernal May,
When evening Phoebus shines serene,
While birds rejoice on every spray—
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

VI.
Her hair is like the curling mist
That climbs the mountain-sides at s'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

VII.
Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When gleaming sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

VIII.
Her cheeks are like you crimson gem,
The pride of all the flow'r's scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

IX.
Her teeth are like the nightly snow
When pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murmuring streamlets flow
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

X.
Her lips are like you cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen—
They tempt the taste and charm the sight,
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.
THE POETICAL WORKS

XI.
Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washed clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep;
An' she has twa glancin' roguish een.

XII.
Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phoebus sinks behind the seas;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

XIII.
Her voice is like the evening breath
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

XIV.
But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,
An' chiefly in her roguish een.

XXIX.
MARY!
Tune—"Blue Bonnae."

[In the original manuscript Burns calls this song "A Prayer for Mary;" his Highland Mary is supposed to be too insipid.]

I.
Pownes celestial! whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care:

Let her form be fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own,
Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down.

II.
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.

XXX.
THE LASS OF BALLOCHMYLE.
Tune—"Miss Forbes's Farewell to Banff."

[Miss Alexander, of Ballochmyle, as the poet tells her in a letter, dated November, 1785, inspired this popular song. He chanced to meet her in one of his favourite walks on the banks of the Ayr, and the fine accent and the lovely lady set the muse to work. Miss Alexander perhaps uncustomed to this forward wooing of the muse, allowed the offering to remain unnoticed for a time: it is now in a costly frame, and hung in her chamber—as it deserves to be.]

I.
'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang,
The sylphs wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets a'ang:
In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seem'd the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle!

II.
With careless step I onward strayed,
My heart rejoiced in nature's joy,
When musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanced to spy;
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whisper'd passing by,
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!

III.
Fair is the morn in flow'ry May,
And sweet is night in autumn mild
When roving thro' the garden gay,
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild:
But woman, nature's darling child!
There all her charms she does compile;
Even there her other works are foil'd
By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

IV.
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 toll;
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.
V.
Then pride might climb the slippery 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 pines,
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,
And every day have joys divine
With the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

XXXI.
THE GLOOMY NIGHT.
Tune—"Roslin Castle."
("I had taken," says Burns, "the last farewell of my friends, my chest was on the road to Greenock, and I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—
The gloomy night is gathering fast."
)

I.
The gloomy night is gathering fast,
Loud roars the wild incessant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveries meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

II.
The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn,
By early Winter's rage se 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.

III.
'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal deadly shore;
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpire'd with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

IV.
Farewell old Caille'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!

XXXII.
O WHAR DID YE GET
Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."
(This is one of the first songs which Burns committed to Johnson's Musical Museum: the starting verse is partly old and partly new: the song is wholly by his hand.)

I.
O, whar did ye get that ha'wer meal bannock?
O silly blind body, O dinna ye see?
I gat it frae a young brisk sodger laddie,
Between Saint Johnston and bonnie Dundee.
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me't!
Aft has he doun'd me up on his knee;
May Heaven protect my bonnie Scots laddie,
And send him safe hame to his babbie and me!

II.
My blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippe,
My blessin's upon thy bonnie e'e brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou's ay the dearer and dearer to me!
But I'll big a bower on yon bonnie banks,
Where Tay rins wimpin' by sae clear;
And I'll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine,
And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear.

XXXIII.
THE JOYFUL WIDOWER
Tune—"Maggy Lauder."
(Most of this song is by Burns: his fancy was a, se with images of matrimonial joy or infidelity, and he 'set them ever ready at the call of the muse.' It was first printed in the Musical Museum.)

I.
I MARRIED with a scolding wife
The fourteenth of November,
She made me weary of my life,
By one unruly member.
XXXV.

I AM MY MAMMY'S AE BAIRN.

Tune—"I'm o'er young to marry yet."

[The title, and part of the chorus only of this song, are old; the rest is by Burns, and was written for Johnson.]

I.

I am my mammy's ae bairn,
Wi' unco folk I weary, Sir;
And lying in a man's bed,
I'm fay'd it make me seer, Sir.
I am o' er young to marry yet;
I'm o' er young to marry yet;
I'm o' er young—'twad be a sin
To tak' me frae my mammy yet.

II.

Halloween's come and gane,
The nights are long in winter, Sir;
And you an' I in bed,
In truth, I dare na venture, Sir.

III.

Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind,
Blows through the leafless timmer, Sir;
But, if ye come this gate again,
I'll aulder be gin simmer, Sir.
I am o' er young to marry yet;
I'm o' er young to marry yet;
I'm o' er young, 'twad be a sin
To tak' me frae my mammy yet.

XXXVI.

BONNIE LASSIE, WILL YE GO.

Tune—"The birks of Aberfeldy."

[An old strain, called "The Birks of Aberfeldie," was the forerunner of this sweet song: it was written, the poet says, standing under the Falls of Aberfeldy, near Moosaa, in Perthshire, during one of the tours which he made to the north, in the year 1797.]

CHORUS.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

I.

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
OF ROBERT BURNS

XXXVII.
MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Tune——"M'Pherson's Rant."

[This vehement and daring song had its origin in an older and inferior strain, recording the feelings of a noted freebooter when brought to "justify his deeds on the gallowtree" at Inverness.]

I.
FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wreath's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On wunder gallow-tree.
Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntlingly gae he;
He play'd a spring, and danch'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

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

III.
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.

IV.
I've liv'd a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treachery;
It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avenged be.

V.
Now farewell light—tho' sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!
Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntlingly gae he;
He play'd a spring, and danch'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

XXXVIII.
BRAW LADS OF GALLA WATER.

[Burns found this song in the collection of Hurd, added the first verse, made other but not material emendations, and published it in Johnson: in 1793 he wrote another version for Thomson.]

CHORUS.
Braw, braw lads of Galla Water;
O braw lads of Galla Water:
I'll kilt my coats afoon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

I.
Sae fair her hair, sae bent her brow,
Sae bonny blue her een, my dearie;
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
The mair I kiss she's ay my dearie.

II.
O'er yon bank and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather;
THE POETICAL WORKS

I'll kilt my coats aoon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

III.
Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost a silken snood,
That cost her mony a blirt and bleary.
Braw, braw lads of Galla Water;
O braw lads of Galla-Water:
I'll kilt my coats aoon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

XXXIX.
STAY, MY CHARMER.
Tune—"An Gille dubb ciar d'dubb."

[The air of this song was picked up by the poet in one of his northern tours: his Highland excursions coloured many of his lyric compositions.]

I.
Stay, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel, to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me;
Cruel charmer, can you go?
Cruel charmer, can you go?

II.
By my love so ill required;
By the faith you fondly plighted;
By the pangs of lovers slighted;
Do not, do not leave me so!
Do not, do not leave me so!

XL.
THICKEST NIGHT, O'ERHANG MY DWELLING.
Tune—"Strathallan's Lament."

[The Viscount Strathallan, whom this song commemorates, was William Drummond: he was slain at the carnage of Culloden. It was long believed that he escaped to France and died in exile.]

I.
Thickest night, surround my dwelling!
Howling tempests, o'er me rove!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Roaring by my lonely cave!

XL.
Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

III.
In the cause of Right engaged,
Wronges injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly waged,
But the heavens denied success.

IV.
Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend,
The wild world is all before us—
But a world without a friend.

XLII.
MY HOGGIE.
Tune—"What will I do gin my Hoggie die?"

[Burns was struck with the pastoral wildness of this Liddesdale air, and wrote these words to it for the Museum: the first line only is old.]

What will I do gin my Hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my Hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And vow but I was vogie!
The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,
Me and my faithfu' doggie;
We heard nought but the roaring linns,
Amang the bracs sae scroggie;
But the houlet cry'd frae the castle wa',
The blitter frae the boggie,
The tod reply'd upon the hill,
I trembled for my Hoggie.
When day did daw, and cocks did craw,
The morning it was foggie;
An' unco tyke lap o'er the dyke,
And maist has kill'd my Hoggie.

XLIII.
HER DADDIE FORBAD.
Tune—"Jumpin' John."

[This is one of the old songs which Ritson accuses Burns of sending for the Museum: little of it, how-
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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L.

a daddie forbade, her minnie forbade;
Forbidden she wadna be:
Wadna trow't, the browst she brew'd
Vad taste sax bitterlie.

The lang lad they ca’ jumpin’ John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie,
The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin’ John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie.

II.

ow and a canf, a yewe and a hauf,
And thrett yude shillin’s and three;
‘Tis gude tocher, a cotter-man’s dochter,
The laes wi’ the bonnie black e’e.

The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin’ John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie,
The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin’ John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie.

XLIII.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY

Tune—“Cold blows the wind.”

“The chorus of this song,” says the poet, in his notes
the Scottish Lyrics, “is old, the two stanzas are
The air is ancient, and was a favourite
by Stuart, the queen of William the Thre’d.

CHORUS.

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

I.

Cauld blows the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shill I hear the blast,
I’m sure it’s winter fairly.

II.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A’ day they fare but sparsely;
And lang’s the night frae oun to morn—
I’m sure it’s winter fairly.

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

XLIV.

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.

Tune—“Morag.”

[The Young Highland Rover of this strain is supposed
by some to be the Chevalier, and with more probability
by others, to be a Gordon, as the song was composed in
consequence of the poet’s visit to “bonnie Castle-Gordon,” in September, 1787.]

I.

Loud blow the frosty breezes,
The snows the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland rover
Fare wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden:
Return him safe to fair Strathpey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon!

II.

The trees now naked groaning,
Shall soon wi’ leaves be hinging,
The birdsie dowie moaning,
Shall a’ be blichtly singing,
And every flower be springing.
Sae I’ll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty Warden
My youth’s returned to fair Strathpey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon.

XLV.

HEY, THE DUSTY MILLER.

Tune—“The Dusty Miller.”

[The Dusty Miller is an old strain, modified for the
Museum by Burns: it is a happy specimen of his taste
and skill in making the new look like the old.]

I.

Hey, the dusty miller,
And his dusty coat;
He will win a shilling,
Or be spend a groat.

Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
That I got frae the miller.
XLVI.

THERE WAS A LASS.
Tune—"Duncan Davison."

There was a laes, they ca'd her Meg,
And she held o'er the moors to spin;
There was a lad that follow'd her,
They ca'd him Duncan Davison.
The moor was driegh, and Meg was skiegh,
Her favour Duncan could na win;
For wi' the roke she wad him knock,
And ay she shook the temper-pin.

I.

As o'er the moor they lightly foor,
A burn was clear, a glen was green,
Upon the banks they caasd their shanks,
And ay she set the wheel between:
But Duncan swore a haly aith,
That Meg should be a bride the morn,
Then Meg took up her spinnin' graith,
And flung them s' out o'er the burn.

III.

We'll dig a house,—a wee, wee house,
And we will live like king and queen,
Sae blythe and merry we will be
When ye set by the wheel at o'en.
A man may drink and no be drunk;
A man may fight and no be slain;
A man may kiss a bonnie laes,
And ay be welcome back again.

XLVII.

THENIEL MENZIES' BONNIE MARY.
Tune—"The Ruffian's Rant."

[Burns, it is believed, wrote this song during his first Highland tour, when he danced among the northern dames, to the tune of "Bab at the Buvwater," till the morning sun rose and reproofed them from the top of Ben Lomond.]

I.

In coming by the brig o' Dye,
At Darliew eae blink did tarry;
As day was dawn in the sky,
We drank a health to bonnie Mary.

Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary;
Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary;
Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie,
Kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

II.

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
Her haffet locks as brown's a berry;
And ay, they dimpl'd wi' a smile,
The rosy cheeks o' bonnie Mary.

III.

We lap and danced the lee lang day,
Till piper lads were wae and weary:
But Charlie got the spring to pay,
For kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary;
Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary;
Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie,
Kissin' Theniel's bonnie Mary.

XLVIII.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.
Tune—"Bhannerach dhon na cht."

[These verses were composed on a charming young lady, Charlotte Hamilton, sister to the poet's friend, Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, residing, when the song was written, at Harviston, on the banks of the Devon in the county of Clackmannan.]

I.

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.

III.
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.

THE PLOUGHMAN.
Tune—"Up wi' the ploughman."
[The old words, of which these in the Museum are an altered and amended version, are in the collection of Herd.]

I.
The ploughman he's a bonnie lad,
His mind is ever true, jo,
His garters knit below his knee,
His bonnet it is blue, jo.
Then up wi' him my ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman!
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman.

II.
My ploughman he comes home at o'en,
He's aften wat and weary;
Cast off the wat, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my dearie!

III.
I will wash my ploughman's hose,
And I will dress his o'erlay;
I will mak my ploughman's bed,
And cheer him late and early.

IV.
I hae been east, I hae been west,
I hae been at Saint Johnston;
The bonniest sight that e'er I saw
Was the ploughman laddie dancin'.

V.
Snae-white stockings on his legs,
And sillner buckles glancin',
A gude blue bonnet on his head—
And O, but he was handsome!
V.

**THE POETICAL WORKS**

VL.

**Command me to the barn-yard,**
And the corn-mou, man;
I never got my gogge fou,
Till I met wi' the ploughman.
Up wi' him my ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman!
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Command me to the ploughman.

---

**LXXI.**

**LANDLADY, COUNT THE LAWIN.**

Tune—"*Hey tuiti, tuiti.*" [Of this song, the first and second verses are by Burns: the closing verse belongs to a strain threatening Britain with an invasion from the iron-handed Charles XII. of Sweden, to avenge his own wrongs and restore the line of the Stuarts.]

L.

**Landlady, count the lawin,**
The day is near the dawning;
Ye're a' blind drunk, boys,
And I'm but jolly fou,
Hey tuiti, tuiti,
How tuiti, tuiti—
Wha's fou now?

---

LII.

**Cog an' ye were ay fou,**
Cog an' ye were ay fou,
I wad sit and sing to you
If ye were ay fou.

---

LIII.

**WEEL MAY YE A BE!**

Ill may we never see,
God bless the king,
And the company!
Hey tuiti, tuiti,
How tuiti, tuiti—
Wha's fou now?

---

LIV.

**RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.**

Tune—"*Macgregor of Eura's Lament.*" ["I composed these verses," says Burns, "on Miss Isabella McLeod, of Ranz, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon, in 1790."]

L.

**Raving winds around her blowing,**
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella's straying,-
"Farewell hours that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow,
Cheerless night that knows no morrow!"

---

LII.

**O'er the past too fondly wandering,**
On the hopeless future pondering;
Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to misery most distressing,
Gladly how would I resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!"

---

LII.

**HOW LONG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.**

To a _Gaelic air._ [Composed for the Museum: the air of this affecting strain is true Highland: Burns, though not a musician, had a fine natural taste in the matter of national melodic.

L.

**How long and dreary is the night**
When I am free my dearie!
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er so weary.
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er so weary.

---

LII.

**When I think on the happy days**
I spent wi' you, my dearie,
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I but be eerie!
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I but be eerie!

---

LII.

**How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,**
As ye were wae and weary!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

LIV.
MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.
Tune—"Druimion dhuibh."

[The air of this song is from the Highlands: the verses were written in compliment to the feelings of Mrs. M'Lauchlan, whose husband was an officer serving in the East Indies.]

I.
Musing on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me;
Wearying heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

II.
Hope and fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to nature's law,
Whisp'ring spirits round my pillow
Talk of him that's far awa.

III.
Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

IV.
Gentle night, do thou befriend me;
Downy sleep, the curtain draw;
 Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa!

LV.
BLITHE WAS SHE.
Tune—"Andro and his cutty gyn."

[The heroine of this song, Euphemia Murray, of Linn-
troune was jestly called the "Flower of Strathmore;" she is now widow of Lord Methven, one of the Scottish
judges, and mother of a fine family. The song was
written at Auchtertyre, in June 1767.]

CHORUS.
Blithe, blithe and merry was she,
Blithe was she but and ben:
Blithe by the banks of Ern,
And blithe in Glentuirit glen.

L.
Br Auchtertyre grows the silk,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than brans of Yarrow ever saw.

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

III.
Her bonnie face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er seen sweet,
As was the blink 'o Phemie's ee

IV.
The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I have been;
But Phemie was the blitheest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.
Blithe, blithe and merry was she,
Blithe was she but and ben:
Blithe by the banks of Ern,
And blithe in Glentuirit glen.

LVI.
THE BLUDE RED ROSE AT YULE
MAY BLAW.
Tune—"To daunton me."

[The Jacobite strain of "To daunton me," must have been in the mind of the poet when he wrote this pithy
lyric for the Museurn.]

I.
The blude red rose at Yule may blaw,
The simmer lilies bloom in saw,
The frost may freeze the deepest sea;
But an auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, and me so young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue
That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

II.
For a' his meal and a' his maut,
For a' his fresh beef and his saut,
For a' his gold and white monie,
An auld man shall never daunton me.
III.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,
His gear may buy him glens and knowes;
But me he shall not buy nor fee,
For an auld man shall never dauntun me.

IV.

He hirple twa fauld as he dow,
Wi' his teethless gab and his auld beld pow,
And the rain rains down frae his red bleer'd ce—
That auld man shall never dauntun me.

To dauntun me, and me see young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
For an auld man shall never dauntun me.

LVII.

COME BOAT ME O'ER TO CHARLIE.

Tune—" O'er the water to Charlie."

[The second stanzas of this song, and nearly all the third, are by Burns. Many songs, some of merit, on the same subject, and to the same air, were in other days current in Scotland.]

I.

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 weel, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

II.

I lo'e well my Charlie's name,
Tho' some there be abhor him:
But O, to see auld Nick gann name,
And Charlie's face before him!

III.

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

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

LVIII.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

Tune—"The Rose-bud."

[The "Rose-bud" of these sweet verses was Miss Jean Cruikshank, afterwards Mrs. Henderson, daughter of William Cruikshank, of St. James's Square, one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh: she is also the subject of a poem equally sweet.]

I.

A rose-bud by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosed 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.

II.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chillly 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.

III.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tends thy early morning.

So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beantuous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.

LIX.

RATTLIN', ROARIN' WILLIE.

Tune—"Rattlin', roarin' Willie."

["The hero of this chant," says Burns, "was one of the worthiest fellows in the world—William Damer, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel o. the Crochallan corps—a club of wits, who took that title at the time of raising the feasible regiments."]

I.

O RATTLIN', roarin' Willie,
O, he held to the fair,
An' for to sell his fiddle,
An' buy some other ware;
OF ROBERT BURNS.  231

But parting wi' his fiddle,
The saut tear blint his ee;
And rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me!

I.
O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
O sell your fiddle sae fine;
O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
And buy a plint o' wine!
If I should sell my fiddle,
The warl' would think I was mad;
For mony a rantin' day
My fiddle and I hae had.

II.
As I cam by Crochallan,
I canny keekit ben—
Rattlin', roarin' Willie
Was sittin' at youn board en';
Sitting at youn board en',
And amang good companie;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me.

LXII.

BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.

Tune—"Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercairny."

["This song," says the poet, "I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh." She now lives at Peu, in the south of France.]

I.
Where, braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochels rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes;
As one who by some savage stream,
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd, doubly marks its beam,
With art's most polish'd blaze.

II.
Blest be the wild, sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their power!
The tyrant Death, with grim control,
May seize my fleeting breath;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

STREAMS THAT GLIDE IN OCEAN PLAINS.

Tune—"Moray."

[We owe these verses to the too brief visit which the poet, in 1787, made to Gordon Castle: he was hurried away, much against his will, by his moody and obstinate friend William Nicoll.]

I.
Streams that glide in ocean plains,
Never bound by winter's chains;
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled bands;
These, their richly gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle-Gordon.

II.
Spay forests, ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray,
Hapless wretches sold to tell,
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.

III.
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.

LXIII.
MY HARRY WAS A GALLANT GAY.

Tune—"Highlander's Lament."

["The chorus," says Burns, "I picked up from an old
woman in Dumbclaise: the rest of the song is mine." His
composed it for Johnson; the tune is Jacobitical.]

I.
My Harry was a gallant gay,
Fus' stately strode he on the plain;
But now he's banish'd far away,
I'll never see him back again.
O for him back again!
O for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaaspie's land
For Highland Harry back again.

III.
When a' the lave gae to their bed,
I wander doowie up the glen;
I set me down and greet my fill,
And ay I wish him back again.

III.
O were some villains hangit high,
And lika body had their sin!
Then I might see the joyfu' sight,
My Highland Harry back again.
O for him back again!
O for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaaspie's land
For Highland Harry back again.

LXIV.
THE TAILOR.
Tune—"The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles
an' a'."

[The second and fourth verses are by Burns; the rest
is very old, the air is also very old, and is played at trade
festivals and processions by the Corporation of Tailors.]

I.
The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a',
The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a';
The blankets were thin, and the sheets they
were sma';
The Tailor fell thro' the bed, thimbles an' a'

II.
The sleepy bit lastie, she dreaded nae ill,
The sleepy bit lastie, she dreaded nae ill;
The weather was cauld, and the lastie lay still,
She thought that a tailor could do her nae ill.

III.
Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
The day it is short, and the night it is lang,
The dearest ailler that ever I wan!

IV.
There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There's some that are doowie, I trow would be
fain
To see the bit tailor come skippin' again.

LXV.
SIMMER'S A PLEASANT TIME.

Tune—"Ay waukin' o'."

[Tytler and Ritson unite in considering the air of these
words as one of our most ancient melodies. The first
verse of the song is from the hand of Burns; the rest had
the benefit of his emendations: it is to be found in the
Museum.]

L.
Simmer's a pleasant time,
Flowers of every colour;
The water runs o'er the heugh,
And I long for my true lover.
Ay waukin' O,
Waukin' still and weariest
Sleep I can get none
For thinking on my dearie.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

IL.
When I sleep I dream,
When I waak I'm eerie;
Sleep I can get none
For thinking on my dearie.

III.
Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave are sleeping;
I think on my bonnie lad
And I bleer my een with grettin'.
Ay waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie;
Sleep I can get none
For thinking on my dearie.

LXVI.
BEWARE O' BONNIE ANN.
Tune—"Ye gallants bright."
[Burns wrote this song in honour of Ann Masterton, daughter of Allan Masterton, author of the air of Strathallen's Lament: she is now Mrs. Derbishire, and resides in London.]

I.
Ye gallants bright, I red ye right,
Beware o' bonnie Ann;
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimp'y las'd her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

II.
Youth, grace, and love attendant move,
And pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonnie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I red you a',
Beware o' bonnie Ann!

LXVII.
WHEN ROSEY MAY.
Tune—"The gardner wi' his paidele."
[The air of this song is played annually at the procession of the Gardiners: the title only is old; the rest is

the work of Burns. Every trade had, in other days, an air of its own, and songs to correspond; but toil and sweat came in harder measure, and drove melodies out of working-men's heads.]

I.
When rosey May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay green-spreading towers,
Then busy, busy are his hours—
The gardner wi' his paidele.
The crystal waters gently fa';
The merry birds are lovers a';
The scented breezes round him blow—
The gardner wi' his paidele.

II.
When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews he moun repair—
The gardner wi' his paidele.
When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of nature's rest,
He flies to her arms he lo'es best—
The gardner wi' his paidele.

LXVIII.
BLOOMING NELLY.
Tune—"On a bank of flowers."
[One of the lyrics of Allan Ramsey's collection seems to have been in the mind of Burns when he wrote this: the words and air are in the Museum.]

I.
On a bank of flowers, in a summer day,
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful bloomg Nelly lay,
With love and sleep opprest;
When Willie wand'ring thro' the wood,
Who for her favour oft had sued,
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he bluish'e,
And trembled where he stood.

II.
Her closed eyes like weapons sheath'd,
Were seal'd in soft repose;
Her lips still as she fragrant breath'd,
It richer dy'd the rose.
The springing lilies sweetly presst,
Wild—wan'ton, kiss'd her rival breast;
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he bluish'd—
His bosom ill at rest.
THE POETICAL WORKS

III.
Her robes light waving in the breeze
Her tender limbs embrace;
Her lovely form, her native ease,
All harmony and grace:
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering, ardent kiss he stole;
He gaz'd, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd,
And sigh'd his very soul.

IV.
As flies the partridge from the brake,
On fear-inspired wings,
So Nelly, starting, half awake,
Away affrighted springs:
But Willie follow'd, as he should,
He overtook her in a wood;
He vow'd, he pray'd, he found the maid
Forgiving all and good.

LXIX.
THE DAY RETURNS.
Tune—"Seventh of November."
[The seventh of November was the anniversary of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Riddel, of Friars-Carse, and these verses were composed in compliment to the day.]

I.
The day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,
Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer-sun was half so sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more—it made thee mine!

II.
While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature sought of pleasure give,
While joys above my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone I live.
When that grim foe of life below,
Comes in between to make us part,
The iron hand that breaks our band,
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

LXX.
MY LOVE SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.
Tune—"Lady Bannock's Reel."
[These verses had their origin in an old strain, equally lively and less delicate; some of the old lines keep their place: the title is old. Both words and air are in the Musical Museum.]

I.
My love she's but a lassie yet,
My love she's but a lassie yet,
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be half so saucy yet.
I rue the day I sought her, O;
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her need na say be's woo'd,
But he may say he's bought her, O!

II.
Come, draw a dram o' the best o'it yet;
Come, draw a dram o' the best o'it yet;
Gae seek for pleasure where ye will,
But here I never miss'd it yet.
We're a' dry wi' drinking o'it;
We're a' dry wi' drinking o'it;
The minister kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
An' could na preach for thinkin' o'it.

LXXXI.
JAMIE, COME TRY ME.
Tune—"Jamy, come try me."
[Burns in these verses caught up the starting note of an old song, of which little more than the starting words deserve to be remembered: the words and air are in the Musical Museum.]

CHORUS.
Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

I.
Is thou should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

II.
If thou should kiss me, love,
Wha could espy thee?
If thou wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me.

L.
Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.
LXXII.
MY BONNIE MARY.

Tune—"Go fetch to me a pint o' wine."

[Concerning this fine song, Burns in his notes says, "This air is Oswald's: the first half-strains of the song is old, the rest is mine." It is believed, however, that the whole of the song is from his hand: in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns, the starting lines are supplied from an old strain: but some of the old strains in that work are to be regarded with suspicion.]

1.
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 blows free the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

II.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
It's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar—
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

LXXIII.
THE LAZY MIST.

Tune—"The lazy mist."

[All that Burns says about the authorship of The Lazy Mist is, "This song is mine." The air, which is by Oswald, together with the words, is in the Musical Museum.]

1.
The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear!
As Autumn to Winter resigns the pale year,
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick Time is flying, how keen Fate pursues!

LXXIV.
THE CAPTAIN'S LADY.

Tune—"O mount and go."

[Part of this song belongs to an old maritime strain, with the same title: it was communicated, along with many other songs, made or amended by Burns, to the Musical Museum.]

CHORUS.
O mount and go,
Mount and make you ready;
O mount and go,
And be the Captain's Lady.

WHEN the drums do beat,
And the cannons rattle,
Thou shall sit in state,
And see thy love in battle.

II.

When the vanquish'd foe
Sues for peace and quiet,
To the shades we'll go,
And in love enjoy it.
O mount and go,
Mount and make you ready;
O mount and go,
And be the Captain's Lady.

LXXV.
OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW.

Tune—"Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathpey."

[Burns wrote this charming song in honour of Jean Armour; he archly says in his notes, "P. B. it was darin]
THE POETICAL WORKS

1.
Or 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 mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy’s flight
Is ever wi’ my Jean.

II.
I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tuneful 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.

III.
O blaw, ye westlin winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees,
Wi’ balmy gale, frae hill and dale.
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That’s aye sae neat and clean;
As smile o’ her wad banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean.

IV.
What sighs and vows amang the knowes
Hae passed awem we twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part,
That night she gaed awa!
The powers aboon can only ken,
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean!

LXXVI.
FIRST WHEN MAGGY WAS MY CARE.
Tune—“Whistle o’er the lave o’.

LXXVII.
O WERE I ON PARNASSUS HI:
Tune—“My love is lost to me.”

[The poet welcomed with this exquisite song has to Nithdale: the air is one of Oswald’s.]

I.
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 Corrincon I’ll glow’r and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

II.
Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a’ the lee-lang simmer’s day
I coudna sing, I coudna 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 lips, thy roguish cen
—By heaven and earth I love thee!

III.
By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o’ thee my breast inflame,
JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

But now your brow is bled John,
Your locks are like the snow,
But blessings on your bony paw
John Anderson my Jo.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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And aye I muse and sing thy name—
I only live to love thee.
Thou! I were doom’d to wander on
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I love thee.

LXXXVIII.
THERE’S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY.
To a Gaelic Air.

("This air," says Burns, "is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it a Lament for his Brother. The first half-stanza of the song is old; the rest is mine." They are both in the Museum.

I.
There’s a youth in this city,
It were a great pity
That he frae our lasses shou’d wander awa:
For he’s bonnie an’ braw,
Weel-favour’d an’ a;
And his hair has a natural buckle an’ a.
His coat is the hue
Of his bonnet sae blue;
His feck it is white as the new-driven snow;
His hose they are blue,
And his shoon like the slesa,
And his clear siller buckles they dazle us a.

II.
For beauty and fortune
The laddie’s been courtein’;
Weel-featured, weel-tocher’d, weel-mounted and braw;
But chiefly the siller,
That gars him gang till her,
The pennie’s the jewel that beautifies a.
There’s Meg wi’ the mailen
That fain wad a haen him;
And Susie, whose daddy was laird o’ the ha’;
There’s lang-tocher’d Nancy
Maist fitters his fancy—
But the laddie’s dear sel’ he lo’es dearest of a.

LXXXIX.
MY HEART’S IN THE HIGHLANDS.
Tune—"Fuite na Mhoag."

(The words and the air are in the Museum, to which they were contributed by Burns. He says, in his notes on that collection, "The first half-stanza of this song is old; the rest mine." Of the old strain no one has recorded any remembrance.

I.
My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart’s in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart’s in the Highlands wherever I go.
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.

II.
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 Highlands wherever I go.

JOHN ANDERSON.

Tune—"John Anderson, my jo."

[Soon after the death of Burns, the very handsomeMiscellanies of Brash and Reid, of Glasgow, contained what was called an improved John Anderson, from the pen of the Ayrshire bard; but, save the second stanza, none of the new matter looked like his hand.

"John Anderson, my jo, John,
When nature first began
To try her cannie hand, John,
Her master-piece was man;
And you among them a’, John,
See trig free tap to tow,
She proved to be me journeywork,
John Anderson, my jo.

I.
John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first a-cast,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was birent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.
II.
John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty 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.

LXXXI.
OUR THRISSLES FLOURISHED FRESH AND FAIR.
Tune—"Awa Whigs, awa!"

[Bars trimmed up this old Jacobite ditty for the Museum, and added some of the bitterest bits: the second and fourth verses are wholly his.]

CHORUS.
Awa Whigs, awa!
Awa Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor lounes.
Ye'll do nae good at a'.

I.
Our thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonne bloom'd our roses;
But Whigs came like a frost in June,
And wither'd a' our posies.

II.
Our ancient crown's sa'n in the dust—
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o'it;
And write their names in his black beuk,
Wha gae the Whigs the power o'it.

III.
Our sad decay in Church and State
Surpasses my describing:
The Whigs came o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

IV.
Grim vengeance lang ha's taen a nap,
But we may see him wauken;
Gude help the day when royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin.
Awa Whigs, awa!
Awa Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor lounes,
Ye'll do nae gude at a'.

LXXXII.
CA' THE EWES.
Tune—"Ca' the ewes to the knowes."

[Most of this sweet pastoral is of other days: Burns made several emendations, and added the concluding verses. He afterwards, it will be observed, wrote for Thomson a second version of the subject and the air.]

CHORUS.
Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rowses,
My bonnie dearie!

L.
As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
An' he ca'd me his dearie.

II.
Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide,
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The moon it shines fa' clearly.

III.
I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.

IV.
Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye'ese lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.

V.
If ye'ell but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad,
And ye may rowe me in your plaid,
And I shall be your dearie.

VI.
While waters wimpie to the sea;
While day blinks in the lift sae his;
'Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my e'e,
Ye sall be my dearie.
Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows
Ca' them where the burnie rowses,
My bonnie dearie.
LXXXIII.
MERRY HAE I BEEN TEETHIN' A HECKLE.

Tune—"Lord Breadalbone's March."

[Part of this song is old: Sir Harris Nicolas says it does not appear to be in the Museum; let him look again.]

1.
O merry has I been teetin' a heckle,
And merry has I been shapin' a spoon;
O merry has I been cloutin' a kettle,
And kissin' my Katie when a' was done.
O a' the lang day I os' at my hammer,
An' a' the lang day I whistle and sing,
A' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,
An' a' the lang night as happy a' king.

11.
Bitter in dool I liekt my winnins,
O' marrying Bees to gie her a slave:
Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
And bythe be the bird that sings on her grav.
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
An' come to my arms and kiss me again!
Drunk'en or sober, here's to thee, Katie!
And bless be the day I did it again.

LXXXIV.
THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

Tune—"The Braes o' Ballochmyle."

[Mary Whitefoord, eldest daughter of Sir John Whitefoord, was the heroine of this song: it was written when that ancient family left their ancient inheritance. It is in the Museum, with an air by Allan Masterton.]

1.
The Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lea,
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the e'e.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel' in beauty's bloom the while,
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang,
Farewell the Braes o' Ballochmyle!

11.
Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bower,
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!

LXXXV.
TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

Tune—"Death of Captain Cook."

[This sublime and affecting ode was composed by Burns in one of his fits of melancholy, on the anniversary of Highland Mary's death. All the day he had been thoughtful, and at evening he went out, threw himself down by the side of one of his corn-ricks, and with his eyes fixed on "a bright, particular star," was found by his wife, who with difficulty brought him in from the chill midnight air. The song was already composed, and he had only to commit it to paper. It first appeared in the Museum.]

1.
Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lovt' to greet the early morn,
Again thou unhast 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?
Hearst thou the groans that rend his breast?

II.
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!

III.
Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thicket'ning green
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn, hoar,
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene;
The flow'r's sprang wanton to be press'd,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

IV.
Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
THE POETICAL WORKS

Time ont th' 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?

LXXXVI.
EPPIE ADAIR.
Tune—"My Eppie."

["This song," says Sir Harris Nicolais, "which has been ascribed to Burns by some of his editors, is in the Musical Museum without any name." It is partly an old strain, corrected by Burns: he communicated it to the Museum.]

I.
An' O! my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wba wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
By love, and by beauty,
By law, and by duty,
I swear to be true to
My Eppie Adair!

II.
An' O! my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wba wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
A' pleasure excile me,
Dishonour defile me,
If e'er I beguile thee,
My Eppie Adair!

LXXXVII.
THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR.
Tune—"Cameronian Rant."

[One Barclay, a dissenting clergyman in Edinburgh, wrote a rhyming dialogue on the battle of Sheriff-muir: Burns was in wise pleased with the way in which the reverend rhymier handled the Highland clans, and wrote this modified and improved version.]

I.
"O cam' ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or were ye at the Sherra-muir,
And did the battle see, man?"

III.
I saw the battle, sair and tough,
And reekin' red ran mony a shoon.
My heart, for fear, gaed sough for sough,
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds,
O' clans free woods, in tartan duds,
Wha giasm'd at kingdoms three, man.

IV.
The red-coat lads, wi' black cockades,
To meet them were na slaw, man;
They rush'd and push'd, and blude outgush'd,
And mony a bok' did fa', man:
The great Argyll led on his fies;
I wat they gians'd for twenty miles:
They hough'd the clans like nine-pin kyles,
They hack'd and hash'd, while broad-swords clash'd,
And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd, and smaah'd,
'Till fey men died awa, man.

V.
But had you seen the philibegs,
And skyrin tartan trews, man;
When in the teeth they dar'd our Whigs
And cov'rant true blues, man;
In lines extend'd lang and large,
When bayonets opposed the targe,
And thousands huss'nd to the charge,
Wi' Highland wrath they fiaus the sheath,
Drew blades o' death, 'till, out o' breath,
They fled like frighted doos, man.

VI.
"O how deil, Tam, can that be true?
The chase gaed frae the north, man;
I saw myself, they did pursue
The horemen back to Forth, man;
And at Dumbline, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straight to Stirling winged their flight;
But, cursed lot! the gates were shut;
And mony a hunit, poor red-coat,
For fear amaist did swarf, man!"
VI.
They've lost some gallant gentlemen,
Amang the Highland clans, man!
I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,
Or fallen in Whiggah hands, man:
Now wad ye sing this double fight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
And mony bade the world guid-night;
Then ye may tell, how bell and merr,
By red claymores, and muskets' knell,
Wi' dying yells, the Torries fell,
And Whigs to hell did flee, man.

LXXXVIII.
YOUNG JOCKEY.
Tune—"Young Jockey."

[With the exception of three or four lines, this song, though marked in the Museum as an old song with additions, is the work of Burns. He often seems to have sat down to amend or modify old verses, and found it easier to make verses wholly new.]

I.
Young Jockey was the blithest lad
In a' our town or here a' saw;
Fu' blythe he whistled at the gaud,
Fu' lightly danced he in the ha'.
He roosed my een, sae bonnie blue,
He roo'd my waist sae gently sma',
And ay my heart came to my mou'
When se'er a body heard or saw.

II.
My Jockey toils upon the plain,
Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snow;
And o'er the lea I leak fu' fain,
When Jockey's owen hameward ca'.
An' ay the night comes round again,
When in his arms he takes me a',
An' ay he vows he'll be my ain,
As lang's he has a breath to draw.

LXXXIX.
O WILLIE BREW'D.
Tune—"Willie brew'd a peck o' maut."

[The scene of this song is Laggan, in Nithsdale, a small estate which Nicol bought by the advice of the poet. It was composed in memory of the house-heating.
"We had such a joyous meeting," says Burns, "that

Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, to celebrate the business." The Willie who made the browet was, therefore, William Nicol; the Allan who composed the air, Allan Masterton; and he who wrote this choicest of convivial songs, Robert Burns.]

I.
O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan came to see:
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night
Ye wad na find in Christendom.
We are na fou, we're no that fou,
But just a drapple in our s'e;
The cock may crow, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

II.
Here we are met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we're merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

III.
It is the moon—I ken her horn,
That's blin'kin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But, by my sooth, she'll wait a wee!

IV.
Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold, coward loon is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!
We are na fou, we're no that fou,
But just a drapple in our s'e;
The cock may crow, the day may daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

XCO.
WHARE HAE YE BEEN.
Tune—Killicrankie."

["This song," says Sir Harris Nicol, "is in the Museum without Burn's name." It was composed by Burns on the battle of Killicrankie, and sent in his own handwriting to Johnson: he puts it into the mouth of a Whig.]

I.
Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Whare hae ye been sae brankie, O?
O, whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killicrankie, O?
THE POETICAL WORKS

An' ye had been where I has been,
Ye wad na been so cantie, O;
An' ye had seen what I has seen,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

I.
I fought at land, I fought at sea;
At hame I fought my auntie, O;
But I met the Devil an' Dundee,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
The bauld Piteur fell in a furr,
An' Clavers got a clankie, O;
Or I had fed on Athole gied,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

XCI.

I GAED A WAEFU' GATE YESTREEN.

Air—"The blue-eyed lass."

[This blue-eyed lass was Jean Jeffery, daughter to the minister of Lochmaben: she was then a rosy girl of seventeen, with winning manners and laughing blue eyes. She is now Mrs. Renwick, and lives in New York.]

I.
I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearlie rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet sein,
Twa lovely sein o' bonnie blue.
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright;
Her lips, like roses, wat wi' dew,
Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
It was her sein sae bonnie blue.

Il.
She talk'ld, she smil'ld, my heart she wyl'd;
She charm'd my soul—I wist na how:
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her sein sae bonnie blue.
But spare to speak, and spare to speed;
She'll aiblin' listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
To her twa sein sae bonnie blue.

XCVII.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

Tune—"Robie donna Gorach."

[The command which the Comyns held on the Nith was lost to the Douglases: the Nithsdale power, on the downfall of that proud name, was divided; part went to the Charteris's and the better portion to the Maxwells; the Johnstones afterwards came in for a share, and now the Scotts prevail.]

I.
The Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith, to me,
Where Comyns 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?

Il.
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!

XCVIII.

MY HEART IS A-BREAKING, DEAR TITTI.

Tune—"Tam Glen."

[Tam Glen is the title of an old Scottish song, and oldest air: of the former all that remains is a portion of the chorus, Burns when he wrote it sent it to the Museum.]

I.
My heart is a-breaking, dear Tottie!
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

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

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

IV.
My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But who can think so o' Tam Glen?
V.
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?

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

VII.
The last Halloween I was waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam up the house staikin,
And the very grey breaks o' Tam Glen!

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

XCV.
WRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.
Air—"Carron Side."

[Burns says: "I added the four last lines, by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is."
The rest of the song is supposed to be from the same hand: the lines are not to be found in earlier collections.]

I.
Fräe the friends and land I love,
Driv'n by fortune's felly spite,
Fräe my best belov'd I rove,
Never mair to taste delight;
Never mair maun hope to find,
Ease frae toil, relief frae care:
When remembrance wracks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

II.
Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
Desert ilks blooming shore,
Till the Fates, nac mair severe,
Friendship, love, and peace restore;
Till Revenge, wi' laurell'd head,
Bring our banish'd hame again;
And ilks loyal bonnie lad
Cross the sea, and win his sin.

XCV.
SWEET CLOSES THE EVENING.
Tune—"Craigie-burn-wood."

[This is one of several fine songs in honour of Jean Lorimer, of Kemmis-hall, Kirkmahoe, who for some time lived on the lands of Craigie-burn, near Moffat. It was composed in aid of the eloquence of a Mr. G. Logan, who was in love with her; but it did not prevail, for she married an officer of the name of Whelpdale, lived with him for a month or so: reasons arose on both sides which rendered separation necessary; she then took up her residence in Dumfries, where she had many opportunities of seeing the poet. She lived till lately.]

CHORUS.
Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O, to be lying beyond thee;
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

I.
Sweat closes the evening 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.

II.
I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But pleasure they have nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.

III.
I canna tell, I maunna tell,
I daren for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it longer.

IV.
I see thee graceful, straight, and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonnie;
But oh! what will my torments be,
If thou refuse thy Johnnie!

V.
To see thee in another's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'Twad be my dead, that will be seen,
My heart wad burst wi' anguish.

VI.
But, Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say, thou lo'es nane before me;
And a' my days o' life to come
I'll gratefully adore thee.
Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O, to be lying beyond thee;
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

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XCVI.

COCK UP YOUR BEAVER.

Tune—"Cock up your beaver."

("Printed," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "in the Musical Museum, but not with Burns's name."
It is an old song, sked out and amended by the poet: all the last verse, save the last line, is his; several of the lines too of the first verse, have felt his amending hand: he communicated it to the Museum.)

I.

When first my brave Johnnie lad
Came to this town,
He had a blue bonnet
That wanted the crown;
But now he has gotten
A hat and a feather,—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

II.

Cock up your beaver,
And cock it fu' sprush,
We'll over the border
And gie them a brush;
There's somebody there
We'll teach better behaviour—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

---

XCVII.

MEIKLE THINKS MY LUVE.

Tune—"My tocher's the jewel."

[These verses were written by Burns for the Museum, to an air by Oswald; but he wished them to be sung to a tune called "Lord Etch's favourite," of which he was an admirer.]

I.

O meikle thinks my luve o' my beauty,
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie
My tocher's the jewel has charms for him.

---

It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee;
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller,
He kann a luve to spare for me.

II.

Your proffer o' luve's an airt-penny,
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin',
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune maun try.
Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack your credit wi' ma' nor me.

---

XCVIII.

GANE IS THE DAY.

Tune—"Gudewife count the lawin."

[The air as well as words of this song were furnished to the Museum by Burns. "The chorus," he says, "is part of an old song."

I.

Gane is the day, and mirk's the night,
But we'll ne'er stray for fawt o' light,
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,
And blude-red wine's the rising sun.
Then gudewife count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin;
Then gudewife count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!

II.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
And simple folk maun fight and fain;
But here we're a' in se accord,
For lika man that's drunk's a lord.

III.

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An' ye drink but deep ye'll find him out.
Then gudewife count the lawin;
The lawin, the lawin,
Then gudewife count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

XCVIII.

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE.
Tune—"There are few gods-fellow when Willie's awa."

[The bard was in one of his Jacobitical moods when he wrote this song. The air is a well known one, called "There's few gods-fellow when Willie's awa." But of the old words none, it is supposed, are preserved.]

I.
By yon castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, though his head it was gray;
And as he was singing the tears down came,
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
The church is in ruins, the state is in jaws;
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars;
We dare not weel say'th, though we ken who's to blame,
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

II.
My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
And now I greet round their green beds in the yard.
It brak the sweet heart of my faithfu' auld dame—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
Now life is a burthen that bows me down,
Since I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

III.
My father put me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a';
But I hae ane will tak' my part,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

IV.
A pair o' gloves he gae to me,
And silken snoods he gae me twa;
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

V.
O weary Winter soon will pass,
And spring will cloed the birken shaw;
And my young babie will be born,
And he'll be hame that's far awa.

VI.

I DO CONFESSION THOU ART SAE FAIR.
Tune—"I do confess thou art sae fair."

["I do think," says Burns, in allusion to this song, "that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scottish dress." The original song is of great elegance and beauty: it was written by Sir Robert Ayton, secretary to Anne of Denmark, Queen of James I.]

I.
I do confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in love,
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could move.
I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art sae thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favours are the silly wind,
That kisses like thing it meets.

II.
See yonder rose-bud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy;
How sure it times its scent and hue
When pou'd and worn a common toy!
Sic fate, ere lang, shall thee bede,
The' thou may gaily bloom awhile;
Yet sure thou shalt be thrown aside
Like any common weed and vile.

CII.

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.

Tune—"Yon wild mossy mountains."

["This song alludes to a part of my private history, which is of no consequence to the world to know." These are the words of Burns: he sent the song to the Musical Museum; the heroine is supposed to be the "Nannie," who dwelt near the Lugar.]

I.

Yon wild mossy mountains are lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth of the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coverts thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed.
Where the grouse lead their coverts thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed.

II.

Not Gowrie's rich valleys, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me has the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors;
For there, by a lonely and sequester'd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.
For there, by a lonely and sequester'd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

III.

Among these wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath;
For there, wi' my lassie, the day lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded flee the swift hours o' love.
For there wi' my lassie, the day lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded flee the swift hours o' love.

IV.

She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair;
O' nice education but small is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.

To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs?
And when wit and refinement has polish'd her darts,
They dazle our een as they fly to our hearts.
And when wit and refinement has polish'd her darts,
They dazle our een, as they fly to our hearts.

V.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling e'e,
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me:
And the heart beating love as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!
And the heart beating love as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!

CIII.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONNIE FACE.

Tune—"The Maid's Complaint."

[Burns found this song in English attire, bestowed a Scottish dress upon it, and published it in the Museum, together with the air by Oswald, which is one of her best.]

IV.

Ir is na, Jean, thy bonnie face,
Nor shape that I admire,
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awake desire.
Something in ilk part o' thee,
To praise, to love, I find;
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.
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II.
Nae mair ungen'rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee:
And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

---

CVI.

WHEN I THINK ON THE HAPPY DAYS.

[These verses were in latter years expanded by Burns into a song, for the collection of Thomson: the song will be found in its place: the variations are worthy of preservation.]

I.
When I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie;
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie!

II.
How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

---

CV.

WHEN I SLEEP I DREAM.

[This presents another version of song LXV. Variations are to a poet what changes are in the thoughts of a painter, and speak of fertility of sentiment in both.]

I.
When I sleep I dream,
When I waak I'm eerie;
Sleep I canna get,
For thinkin' o' my dearie.

II.
Lanely night comes on,
A' the house are sleeping,
I think on the bonnie lad
That has my heart a keeping.
Ay waakin O, waakin ay and weariest,
Sleep I canna get, for thinkin' o' my dearie.

III.
Lanely nights come on,
A' the house are sleeping,
I think on my bonnie lad,
An' I hear my een wi' greetin'
Ay waakin, &c.

---

GVII.

I MURDER HATE.

[These verses are to be found in a volume which may be alluded to without being named, in which many of Burns's strains, some looser than these, are to be found.]

I.
I murder hate by field or flood,
Tho' glory's name may screen us:
In wars at home I'll spend my blood,
Life-giving wars of Venus.

II.
The deities that I adore
Are social Peace and Plenty,
I'm better pleas'd to make one more,
Than be the death of twenty.

---

OG UDE ALE COMES.

[These verses are in the Museum: the first two a old, the concluding one is by Burns.]

I.
O gude ale comes, and gude ale goes,
Gude ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.

II.
I had sax owsen in a plough,
They drew a' weel enough,
I sell'd them a' just ane by ane;
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.

III.
Gude ale a' hands me bare and busy,
Gars me moop wi' the servant bixie;
Stand i' the stool when I hae done,
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon.
O gude ale comes, &c.
THE POETICAL WORKS

CVIII.

ROBIN SHURE IN HAIRST.

[This is an old chant, out of which Burns brushed some loose expressions, added the third and fourth verses, and sent it to the Museum.]

I.

Robin shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him,
Fient a heuk had I,
Yet I stack by him.

II.

I gae up to Dunse,
To warp a wab o' plaiden,
At his daddie's yett,
Wha met me but Robin.

III.

Was na Robin baud,
Tho' I was a cotter,
Play'd me sio a trick,
And me the elder's dochter!
Robin shure in hairst, &c.

IV.

Robin promis'd me
A' my winter vittle;
Fient ha' he had but three
Goose feathers and a whistle.
Robin shure in hairst, &c.

CIX.

BONNIE PEG.

[A fourth verse makes the moon a witness to the amusements of these lovers; but that planet sees more indiscreet matters than it is right to describe.]

I.

As I came in by our gate end,
As day was waxin' weary,
O wha came tripping down the street,
But Bonnie Peg my dearie!

II.

Her air sae sweet, and shape complete,
Wi' nate proportion wanting;
The Queen of Love did never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

III.

Wi' linked hands, we took the sands
A-down yon winding river;
And, oh! that hour and broomly bower,
Can I forget it ever?

CX.

GUDEEN TO YOU, KIMMER.

[This song in other days was a controversial one, and contained some sarcastic allusions to Mother Rome and her brood of seven sacraments, five of whom were illegitimate. Burns changed the meaning, and published his altered version in the Museum.]

I.

Gudeen to you, Kimmer,
And how do ye do?
Hiccup, quo' Kimmer,
The better that I'm bon.
We're a' noddin', aid aid noddin',
We're a' noddin', at our house at hame.

II.

Kate sits i' the neuk,
Suppin hen broc;
Dell tak Kate
An' she be na noddin too!
We're a' noddin', &c.

III.

How's a' wi' you, Kimmer,
And how do ye faire?
A pint o' the best o',
And twa pints mair.
We're a' noddin', &c.

IV.

How's a' wi' you, Kimmer,
And how do ye thrive;
How many bairns hae ye?
Quo' Kimmer, I hae five.
We're a' noddin', &c.

V.

Are they a' Johnie's?
Eh! atweel no:
Twa o' them were gotten
When Johnie was awa.
We're a noddin', &c.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

VI.

Cats like milk,
And dogs like broe;
Lads like lasses weel,
And lasses lads too.
We're a' noddin', &c.

OXI.

AH, CHLORIS, SINCE IT MAY NA BE.

Tune—"Major Graham."

[Sir Harris Nicolson found these lines on Chloris among
the papers of Burns, and printed them in his late edition
of the poet's works.]

I.

Ah, Chloris, since it may na be,
That thou of love will hear;
If from the lover thou maun see,
Yet let the friend be dear.

II.

Altho' I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell;
My passion I will ne'er declare,
I'll say, I wish thee well.

III.

Tho' a' my daily care thou art,
And a' my nightly dream,
I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
And say it in esteem.

OXII.

O SAW YE MY DEARIE.

Tune—"Eppie Macnab."

["Published in the Museum," says Sir Harris Nicolson,
"without any name." Burns corrected some lines in the
old song, which had more wit, he said, than decency,
and added others, and sent his amended version to John-
son.]

I.

O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab!
O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She's down in the yard, she's kisin' the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
O come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
What'er thou hast done, be it late, be it soon,
Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

II.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She lets thee to wit, that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

OXIII.

WHa IS THAT AT MY BOWER-DOOR.

Tune—"Loose as I come near thee."

[The "Auld man and the Widow," in Ramsay's col-
lection is said, by Gilbert Burns, to have suggested this
song to his brother: it first appeared in the Museum.]

I.

Whe is that at my bower-door?
O, whe is it but Findlay?
Then gas ye gate, ye'se nae be here!—
Indeed, maun I, quo' Findlay.
What mak ye sae like a thief?
O come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye'll work mischief;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

II.

Gif I rise and let you in?
Let me in, quo' Findlay;
Ye'll keep me waakin wi' your din;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower if you should stay?
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;
I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

III.

Here this night if ye remain;—
I'll remain, quo' Findlay;
I dread ye'll learn the gate again;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
What may pass within this bower,—
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;
Ye maun conceal till your last hour;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
CXIV.

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE.

Tune—"What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man."

[In the old strain, which partly suggested this song, the
heroine threatens only to adorn her husband's brows;
Burns proposes a system of domestic annoyance to break
his heart.]

I.

What can a young lassie, what shall a young
lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the pennis that tempted my minnie
To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan'!
Bad luck on the pennis that tempted my minnie
To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan'!

II.

He's always compleasin' frae mornin' to e'enin',
He hosts us and he hisples the weary day lang;
He's doy't and he's dozin', his bluid it is frozen,
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!
He's doy't and he's dozin', his bluid it is frozen,
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!

III.

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he
cankers,
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows:
O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man!
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows:
O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man!

IV.

My auld auntie Katie upon me takes pity,
I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan;
I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-
break him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new
pan.
I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-
break him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new
pan.

CXV.

THE BONNIE WEE THING.

Tune—"Bonnit wee thing."

["Composed," says the poet, "on my little idol, the
charming, lovely Davie."

I.

Bonnit wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should lose.
Wishfully I look and langeish
In that bonnie face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

II.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty
In as constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonnit wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should lose.

CXVI.

THE TITHER MORN.

To a Highland Air.

["The tune of this song," says Burns, "is originally
from the Highlands. I have heard a Gaelic song to it,
which was not by any means a lady's song." "It oc-
curs," says Sir Harris Nicolson, "in the Museum, without
the name of Burns." It was sent in the poet's own hand-
writing to Johnson, and is believed to be his com-positi

I.

Tae the tither morn,
When I forlorn,
Aneath an oak sat meaning,
I did na trow
I'd see my Jo,
Beside me, gain the gloaming.
But he see trigg,
Lap o'er the rig,
And dawingly dy did cheer me,
When I, what reck,
Did least expect',
To see my lad so near me.
II.

His bonnet he,
A thought a'joe,
Cock'd sprush when first he clasp'd me;
And I, I wat,
Wi' fainness grat,
While in his grips he press'd me.
Dell tak' the war!
I late and air
Hae wish'd since Jock departed;
But now as glad
I'm wi' my lad,
As short syne broken-hearted.

III.

Fu' a'ft at o'c'n
Wi' dancing keen,
When a' were blythe and merry,
I care'd na by,
Sae sad was I
In absence o' my dearie.
But praise be blest,
My mind's at rest,
I'm happy wi' my Johnny:
At kirk and fair,
I'se sy be there,
And be as canty's ony.

CXVIII.

LOVELY DAVIES.

Tune—"Miss Mair."

(Written for the Museum, in honour of the witty, the handsome, the lovely, and unfortunate Miss Davies.)

I.

O now shall I, unskift, try
The poet's occupation,
The tuneful powers, in happy hours,
That whispers inspiration?
Even they maun dare an effort mair,
Than aught they ever gave us,
Or they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.
Each eye it cheers, when she appears,
Like Phoebus in the morning,
When past the shower, and ev'ry flower
The garden is adorning,
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is;
Sae droops our heart when we maun part
Fae charming lovely Davies.

II.

Her smile's a gift, fae b'oon the lift,
That makes us mair than princes;
A sceptre'd hand, a king's command,
Is in her daring glance:
The man in arms, 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is;
He hogs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.
My muse to dream of such a theme,
Her feeble pow'r's surrender:
THE POETICAL WORKS

The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendour:
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is!
I'll droop the lyre, and mute admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

CXX.

NAEBODY.

Tune—"Naebody."

[Burns had built his house at Ellistand, sowed his first
crop, the woman he loved was at his side, and hope was
high; so wonder that he indulged in this independent
strain.]

I.

I hae a wife o' my ain—
I'll partake wi' naebody;
I'll tak cuckold free nane,
I'll gie cuckold to naebody.
I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to naebody;
I hae nathing to lend,
I'll borrow free naebody.

II.

I am naebody's lord—
I'll be slave to naebody;
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunta free naebody.
I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for naebody;
Naebody cares for me,
I'll care for naebody.

CXXI.

O, FOR ANE-AND-TWENTY, TAM!

Tune—"The Moudiscoord."

[In his memoranda on this song in the Museum, Burns
says simply, "This song is mine." The air for a century
before had to bear the burden of very ordinary words.]

CHORUS.

An O, for ane-and-twenty, Tam,
An' hey, sweet ane-and-twenty, Tam,
I'll learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.

I.

They snool me sair, and hae me down,
And gar me look like bluntie, Tam!
But three short years will soon wheel roun'—
And then comes ane-and-twenty, Tam.

II.

A gleib o' lan', a clout o' gear,
Was left me by my auntie, Tam,
At kith or kin I need na spier,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I

O' Kenmure's on and awa, Willie!
O Kenmure's on and awa!
O Kenmure's lord the bravest lord,
That ever Galloway saw.

II

See you not yon hills and dales,
The sun shines on sae brawlie;
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

III

Ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit up sae gaudy;
And ans to wait on every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

IV

Tho' ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly;
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.

V

I can win my five pennies a day,
And spen't at night sae brawlie;
And make my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.

VI

Love for love is the bargain for me,
Tho' the wee cot-house should hand me;
And the world before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.

CXXII.

O KENMURE'S ON AND AWA.
Tune—"O Kenmure's on and awa, Willie!"

The second and third, and concluding verses of this obile strain, were written by Burns: the whole was in his own handwriting to the Museum.

I

Kenmure's on and awa, Willie!
O Kenmure's on and awa!
O Kenmure's lord, the bravest lord,
That ever Galloway saw.

II

Access to Kenmure's band, Willie!
Success to Kenmure's band;
Here's a heart that fears a Whig,
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

III

Here's Kenmure's health in wine,
Here's Kenmure's health in wine;
Here's a man of Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

IV

Kenmure's lads are men, Willie!
Kenmure's lads are men;
E'er hearts and swords are metal true—
And that their faces shall ken.

V

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie!
They'll live or die wi' fame;
Soon wi' sounding victorie,
May Kenmure's lord come hame.

VI

Here's a man that's far awa, Willie,
Here's a man that's far awa;
Here's the flower that I love best—
The rose that's like the snow.

CXXIII.

MY COLLIER LADDIE.
Tune—"The Collier Laddie."

[The Collier Laddie was communicated by Burns, and in his handwriting, to the Museum: it is chiefly his own composition, though coloured by an older strain.]

I

Where lives ye, my bonnie lass?
An' tell me what they ca' ye;
My name, she says, is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.

My name she says is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.

II

See you not yon hills and dales,
The sun shines on sae brawlie;
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

III

Ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit up sae gaudy;
And ans to wait on every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

And ans to wait on every hand,
Gin ye'll leave your Collier Laddie.

IV

Tho' ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly;
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.

I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.

V

I can win my five pennies a day,
And spen't at night sae brawlie;
And make my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.

And make my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.

VI

Love for love is the bargain for me,
Tho' the wee cot-house should hand me;
And the world before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.

And the world before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.
CXXIV.
NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME.

[These verses were written by Burns for the Museum;
the Maxwells of 'Terreagles are the lineal descendants
of the Earls of Nithsdale.]

I.
The noble Maxwells and their powers
Are coming o'er the border,
And they'll gae bigg Terreagle's towers,
An' set them a' in order.
And they declare Terreagles fair,
For their abode they choose it;
There's no a heart in a' the land,
But's lighter at the news o' it.

II.
Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather;
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather:
The weary night o' care and grief
May hae a joyful morrow;
So dawning day has brought relief—
Farewell our night o' sorrow!

CXXV.
AS I WAS A-WAND'RING.

Tune—"Rinn Meadhail mo Mhaoladh."

[The original song in the Gaelic language was transcribed
for Burns by an Inverness-shire lady; he turned it
into verse, and sent it to the Museum.]

I.
As I was a-wand'reng as midsummer e'enin',
The pipers and youngsters were making their game;
Amang them I spied my faithless false lover,
Which bled a' the wound o' my dour again.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I flatter my fancy I may get another,
My heart it shall never be broken for aye.

II.
I could na get sleeping till dawn for greein',
The tears trickled down like the hail and the rain:
Had I na gae greein', my heart was a broken,
For, oh! love forsaken's a tormenting pain.

III.
Although he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win;
I rather wad bear a' the lade o' my sorrow
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.
Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae w' him,
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain;
I flatter my fancy I may get another,
My heart it shall never be broken for aye.

CXXVI.
BESS AND HER SPINNING-WHEEL.

Tune—"The sweet lass that I'oe ma.

[There are several variations of this song, but the
neither affect the sentiment, nor afford matter for quota

tion.]

I.
O LEESE me on my spinning-wheel,
O leese me on the rock and reek;
Fais tap to taes that cleeds me bien,
And haps me feel 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 leese me on my spinning-wheel!

II.
On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below the 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 blithe I turn my spinning-wheel.

III.
On lofty alks the cushat's call,
And Echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik amang the clover hay,
The patrick whirrin' o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinning-wheel.

IV.
Wi' ems' 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 flaring, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Beesy at her spinning-wheel?

CXXVII.
O LUVE WILL VENTURE IN.
Tune—"The Posee."
["The Posee is my composition," says Burns, in a letter to Thomson. "The air was taken down from Mrs. Burns's voice." It was first printed in the Museum.]

I.
O luve will venture in
Where it daurns weel be seen;
O luve will venture in
Where wisdom ance has been.
But I will down yon river rove,
Among the wood sae green—
And a' to put a posie
To my ain dear May.

II.
The primrose I will pu',
The firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink,
The emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind,
And blooms without a peer—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

III.
I'll pu' the budding rose,
When Phoebus peeps in view,
For it's like a bauny kiss
O' her sweet bonnie mou';
The hyacinth's for constancy,
Wi' its unchanging blue—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

IV.
The lily it is pure,
And the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom
I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity,
And unaffected air—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

V.
The hawthorn I will pu'
Wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man,
It stands at break of day.
But the songster's nest within the bush
I winna tak away—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

VI.
The woodbine I will pu'
When the e'enin star is near,
And the diamond drops o' dew
Shall be her e'en sae clear;
The violet's for modesty,
Which weel she fa's to wear,
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

VII.
I'll tie the posie round,
Wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast,
And I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught of life
The band shall ne'er remove.
And this will be a posie
To my ain dear May.

CXXXVIII.
COUNTRY LASSIE.
Tune—"The Country Lassie."
[A manuscript copy before me, in the poet's handwriting, presents two or three immaterial variations of this dramatic song.]

I.
In simmer, when the hay was mawn,
And corn wav'd green in ilk a field,
While claver blooms white o'er the lea,
And roes blaw in ilk a bield;
Blithe Beassie in the milking shiel,
Says—I'll be wed, come o't what will;
Out spak a dame in wrinkled eild—
O' guid advisement comes nae ill

II.
It's ye hae woors mony aye,
And, lassie, ye're but young ye ken;
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,
A roothie butt, a roothie ben:
THE POETICAL WORKS

There's Johnie o' the Bussie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonnie hein,
It's plenty beats the luvur's fire.

III.
For Johnie o' the Bussie-glen,
I dinna care a single file;
He lo'es meel his craps and kye,
He has nae luve to spare for me;
But blithe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
And weel I wad he lo'es me dear:
As blink o' him I wad nae gie
For Bussie-glen and a' his gear.

IV.
O thoughtless lassie, life's a saint;
The canniest gate, the strife is sair;
But ay fu' han't is fechtin best,
An hungry care's an unc care:
But some will spend, and some will spare,
An' wif' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill.

V.
O, gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome luve,
The gowd and siller cannna buy; We may be poor—Robie and I,
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and luve brings peace and joy— What mair hae queens upon a throne?

CXXXIX.
FAIR ELIZA.
A GASTIC AIR.

[The name of the heroine of this song was at first Rabina: but Johnson, the publisher, alarmed at admitting something new into verse, caused Eliza to be substituted; which was a positive fraud; for Rabina was a real lady, and a lovely one, and Eliza one of air.]

I.
Turn again, thou fair Eliza,
As kind blink before we part, Rue on thy despairing lover! Canst thou break his faithfu' heart? Turn again, thou fair Eliza; If to love thy heart denies, For pity hide the cruel sentence Under friendship's kind disguise!

II.
Thee, dear maid, has I offended? The offence is loving thee:
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever, Wha for time wad gladly die? While the life beats in my bosom, Thou shalt mix in ilk three; Turn again, thou lovely maiden. As sweet smile on me bestow.

III.
Not the bee upon the blossom, In the pride o' sunny noon; Not the little sporting fairy, All beneath the simmer moon; Not the poet, in the moment Fancy lightens in his e'e, Kene the pleasure, feels the rapture, That thy presence gies to me.

CXXX.
YE JACOBITES BY NAME.

Tune—"Ye Jacobites by name."
["Ye Jacobites by name," appeared for the first time in the Museum: it was sent in the hand-writing of Burns.]

I.
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear; Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear; Ye Jacobites by name, Your fauteys I will proclaim, Your doctrines I maun blame. You shall hear.

II.
What is right, and what is wrang, by the law, by the law? What is right and what is wrang, by the law? What is right and what is wrang? A short sword, and a lang, A weak arm, and a strang For to draw.

III.
What makes herculean strife, fam'd afar, fam'd afar? What makes herculean strife, fam'd afar? What makes herculean strife? To whet th' assassin's knife, Or hunt a parent's life Wi' bluidie war.
IV.
Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the state;
Then let your schemes alone in the state;
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone
To his fate.

CXXXI.
THE BANKS OF DOON.
FIRST VERSION.

[An Ay shire legend says the heroine of this affecting song was Miss Kennedy, of Dalgarrock, a young creature, bee stiful and accomplished, who fell a victim to her love for her kinsman, McDoual, of Logan.]

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

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

III.
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.

IV.
Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And lika bird sang o' its love;
And sae did I o' mine.

V.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fras aff its thorny tree;
And my fause lover staw the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

CXXXII.
THE BANKS O' DOON.
SECOND VERSION.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

[Burns injured somewhat the simplicity of the song by adapting it to a new air, accidentally composed by an amateur who was directed, if he desired to create a Scottish air, to keep his fingers to the black keys of the harpsichord and preserve rhythm.]

I.
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'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wants thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return!

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

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause lover staw my rose,
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

CXXXIII.
WILLIE WASTLE.

Tune—"The eight men of Moirdart."

[The person who is raised to the disagreeable elevation of heroine of this song, was, it is said, a farmer's wife of the old school of domestic care and uncleanliness, who lived nigh the poet, at Ellisland.]

I.
WILLIE Wastle dwalt on Tweed,
The spot they call'd it Linkum-doddie,
WILLIE was a webster guid,
Cou'd stown a clue wi' onie bodie;
He had a wife was dour and din,
O Tinkler Madgic was her mither;
Sic a wife as WILLIE had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

II.
She has an e'e—she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour:
THE POETICAL WORKS

Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,
A clapper-tongue wad deave a miller:
A whiskin' beard about her mou',
Her nose and chin they threaten ither—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

III.
She's bow hough'd, she's hem shinn'd,
A limpin' leg a hand-breed shorter;
She's twisted right, she's twisted left,
To balance fair in like quarter:
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

IV.
Auld bandrans by the ingle sits,
An' wi' her loof her face a-washin';
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion.
Her waist nests like midden-creils,
Her face was fyle the Logan-Water—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad nae gie a button for her.

CXXXIV.
LADY MARY ANN.
Tune—"Craigtoun's growing."

[The poet sent this song to the Museum, in his own handwriting: yet part of it is believed to be old; how much cannot be well known, with such skill has he made his interpolations and changes.]

I.
O, LADY Mary Ann
Looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonnie boys
Playing at the ba';
The youngest he was
The flower among them a—
My bonnie laddie's young
But he's growin' yet.

II.
O father! O father!
An' ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year
To the college yet:

We'll sew a green ribbon
Round about his hat,
And that will let them ken
He's to marry yet.

III.
Lady Mary Ann
Was a flower i' the dew,
Sweet was its smell,
And bonnie was its hue;
And the longer it blossom'd
The sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud
Will be bonnier yet.

IV.
Young Charlie Coohra
Was the sprout of an ilk;
Bonnie and bloomin'
And straight was its make:
The sun took delight
To shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag
O' the forest yet.

V.
The simmer is gane,
When the leaves they were greer
And the days are awa,
That we hae seen;
But far better days
I trust will come again,
For my bonnie laddie's young,
But he's growin' yet.

CXXXV.
SUCH A PARCEL OF ROGUES IN A NATION
Tune.—"A parcel of rogues in a nation."

[This song was written by Burns in a moment of honest indignation at the northern scoonists who sold to those of the south the independence of Scotland, at the time of the Union.]

I.
Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory,
Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
Sae fan'd in martial story.
Now Sark runs o'er the Solway sands,
And Tweed runs to the ocean,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

To mark where England's province stands—
   Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

II.
What force or guile could not subdue,
   Thro' many warlike ages,
   Is wrought now by a coward few
   For hiring traitor's wages.
The English steel we could disdain;
   Secure in valour's station;
   But English gold has been our base—
   Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

III.
O would, or I had seen the day
   That treason thus could sell us,
   My said gray head had lien in clay
   Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
   But pith and power, till my last hour,
   I'll mak' this declaration;
   We're bought and sold for English gold—
   Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

CXXXVI.
THE CARLE OF KELLYBURN BRAES.

Tune—"Kellyburn Braes."

[Of this song Mrs. Burns said to Cromek, when running her finger over the long list of lyrics which her husband had written or amended for the Museum, "Robert gae this on a terrible brushing." A considerable portion of the old still remains.]

I.
There lived a carle on Kellyburn braes,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   And he had a wife was the plague o' his days;
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

II.
A day as the carle gaed up the lang glen,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   He met wi' the devil; says, "How do you fain?"
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

III.
"I've got a bad wife, sir; that's a' my complaint;
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint;
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

IV.
"It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

V.
"O welcome, most kindly," the blythe carle said,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   "But if ye can match her, ye're war or ye're ca'd,
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

VI.
The devil has got the said wife on his back;
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   And, like a poor pedlar, he's carried his pack;
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

VII.
He's carried her home to his ain hallan-doer;
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme).
   Syne bade her gae in, for a b—h and a w—e,
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

VIII.
Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   Turn out on her guard in the clap of a hand;
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

IX.
The carlin gaed thro' them like ony wud bear,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   Whate'er she gat hands on cam near her nae mair;
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

X.
A reekit wee devil looks over the wa';
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
   "O, help, master, help, or she'll ruin us a',
   And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

XI.
The devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
   (Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

XII.
The devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
He was not inwedlock, thank heaven, but in hell;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

XIII.
Then Satan has travelled again wi' his pack;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
And to her auld husband he's carried her back:
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

XIV.
"I have been a devil the feck o' my life;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme),
But not i' hell, till I met wi' a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

CXXXVII.
Jockey's ta'en the parting kiss.
Tune—" Jockey's ta'en the parting kiss."
[Burns, when he sent this song to the Museum, and nothing of its origin: and he is silent about it in his memoranda.]

Jockey's ta'en the parting kiss,
O'er the mountains he is gone;
And with him is a' my bliss,
Nought but grieves with me remain.
Spare my love, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets and beating rain!
Spare my love, thou feathery swaw,
Drifting o'er the frozen plain.

II.
When the shades of evening creep
O'er the day's fair, gladsome o'le,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly-bli'the his wakening be!
He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he'll repeat her name;
For where'er he distant roves,
Jockey's heart is still at hame.

CXXXVIII.
LADY ONLIE.
Tune—" The Ruffian's Lament."
[Communicated to the Museum in the handwriting of Burns: part, but not much, is believed to be old.]

I.
A' the lads o' Thornie-bank,
When they gae to the shore o' Bucky,
They'll step in an' tak' a pint
Wi' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!
Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!
Brews good ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her gude ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

II.
Her house sae bie, her curch sae clean,
I wad she is a dainty chucky;
And cheerlie blinks the ingle-gleed
Of Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!
Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Brews good ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her gude ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

CXXXIX.
THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.
Tune—" Captain O'Kean."
["Composer," says Burns to M'Derrius, "at the desire of a friend who had an equal enthusiasm for the air and the subject." The friend alluded to is supposed to be Robert Cleghorn: he loved the air much, and he was much of a Jacobite.]

I.
The small birds rejoices in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds clear thro' the vale;
The hawthorn trees blow in the dew of the morning,
And wild scatter'd cowslips bedeck the green dale:
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
While the lingering moments are number'd by care?
No flow'res gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.
II.
The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice,  
A king and a father to place on his throne?  
His right are these hills, and his right are these  
valleys,  
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can  
find none;  
But 'tis not my sufferings thus wretched, for-  
lorn;  
My brave gallant friends! 'tis your ruin I  
mourn;  
Your deeds proved so loyal in hot-bloody trial—  
Alas! I can make you no sweeter return!

CXL.
SONG OF DEATH.
Air—"Ovum an Aéis."

["I have just finished the following song," says Burns  
to Mrs. Dunlop, "which to a lady, the descendant of  
Wallace, and herself the mother of several soldiers,  
needs neither preface nor apology."]

Scene—A field of battle. Time of the day, evening. The  
wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed  
to join in the following song:

I.
FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and  
ye skies,  
Now gay with the bright setting sun;  
Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender  
ties—  
Our race of existence is run!

II.
Thou grim king of terrors, thou life's gloomy  
foe!  
Go frighten the coward and slave;  
Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but know,  
No terrors hast thou to the brave!

III.
Thou strik'st the dull peasant—he sinks in the  
dark,  
Nor saves even the wreck of a name;  
Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark!  
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

IV.
In the field of proud honour—our swords in our  
hands,  
Our king and our country to save—  
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,  
Oh! who would not die with the brave!

CXL.
FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON.
Tune—"Afton Water."

[The scenes on Afton Water are beautiful, and the  
poet felt them, as well as the generous kindness of his  
earliest patroness, Mrs. General Stewart, of Afton-Haigs,  
when he wrote this sweet pastoral.]

I.
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.

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

III.
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 flock's and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

IV.
How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,  
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses  
blow!  
There, oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,  
The sweet-scented birch shades my Mary and me.

V.
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.

VI.
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.
CXLII.

THE SMILING SPRING.

Tune—"The Bonnie Bell."

["Bonnie Bell," was first printed in the Museum; who the heroine was the poet has neglected to tell us, and it is a pity.]

I.

The smiling Spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly Winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonnie blue are the sunny skies;
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The evening gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

II.

The bowery Spring leads sunny Summer,
And yellow Autumn presses near,
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,
Till smiling Spring again appear.
Thus Seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell,
But never ranging, still unchanging,
I adore my bonnie Bell.

CXLIII.

THE CARLES OF DYSART.

Tune—"Hey ca' thro'."

[Communicated to the Museum by Burns in his own handwriting; part of it is his composition, and some believe the whole.]

I.

Up wi' the carles o' Dysart,
And the lads o' Buckhaven,
And the kimmers o' Largo,
And the lasses o' Leven.
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickie ado;
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickie ado.

II.

We hae tales to tell,
And we hae sung to sing;
We hae pennies to spend,
And we hae plente to bring.

I.

We'll live a' our days,
And them that come behin',
Let them do the like,
And spend the gear they win.
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickie ado,
Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
For we hae mickie ado.

CXLIV.

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

Tune—"The Weavers' March."

[Sent by the poet to the Museum. Neither tradition nor criticism has noticed it, but the song is popular among the looms, in the west of Scotland.]

I.

When Cart rins rowin' to the sea,
By mony a flow'r and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant weaver.
Oh, I had woosers sought or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart would tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

II.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,
To gie the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And gie it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;
While bees delight in op'ning flowers;
While corn grows green in simmer showers,
I'll love my gallant weaver.

CXLV.

THE BAINNS GAT OUT.

Tune—"The deeks dang o'er my daddie."

[Burns found some of the sentiments and a few of the words of this song in a strain, rather rough and homespun, of Scotland's elder day. He communicated it to the Museum.]

I.

The bairns gat out wi' an unco shout,
The deeks dang o'er my daddie, O!
The fiend-ma-care, quo' the feirrie auld wife,
He was but a paidlin body, O!
He paides out, an' he paides in,
An' he paides late an' early, O!
This seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
An' he is but a fusionless carlie, O!

II.
O, haud your tongue, my feirrie auld wife,
O, haud your tongue, now Nansie, O!
I've seen the day, and sae hae ye,
Ye wadna been sae dosnie, O!
I've seen the day ye butter'd my brose,
And cuddled me late and early, O!
But downs dous come o'er me now,
And, oh! I feel it sairley, O!

CXLVI.
SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.

Tune—"She's fair and fause."
[One of the happiest as well as the most sarcastic of the songs of the North: the air is almost as happy as the words.]

I.
She's fair and fause that causes my smart,
I loed her meikle and lang;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may o'en gae hang.
A coof' cam in wi' rooth o' gear,
And I hae tint my dearest deor;
But woman is but ward's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lass gang.

II.
Whae'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae fertile 'tis tho' fickle she prove,
A woman has't by kind.
O woman, lovely woman fair!
An angel form's a'na to thy share,
'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair—
I mean an angel mind.

CXLVII.
THE EXCISEMAN.

Tune—The Deil cam' fiddling through the town.  [Composed and sung by the poet at a festive meeting of the excisemen of the Dumfries district.]

I.
The deil cam' fiddling through the town,
And danced awa wi' the Exciseman,
And lika wife cries—"Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the price, man!"
The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' the Exciseman;
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman!

II.
We'll mak our munt, we'll brew our drink,
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony braw thanks to the meikle black dea.
That danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.

III.
There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the as best dance e'or cam to the land
Was—the deil's awa wi' the Exciseman.
The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' the Exciseman:
He's danc'd awa, he's danc'd awa,
He's danc'd awa wi' the Exciseman.

CXLVIII.
THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

Tune—"Lass of Inverness."
[As Burns passed slowly over the moor of Culloden in one of his Highland tours, the lament of the Lass of Inverness, it is said, rose on his fancy: the first four lines are partly old.]

I.
The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn, she cries, alas!
And ay the saut tear blin's her e'e:
Drumossie moor—Drumossie day—
A waeful' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.
Their winding sheet the bluddy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see:
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blast a woman's e'e!
Now was to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluddy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrong to thine or thee.

Dyver, beggar loons to me—
I reign in Jeannie's bosom.

O, my love's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my love's like the melody,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I:
'And I will love 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 love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only love!
And fare thee well a-while;
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Sae craftlie she took me ben,
And bade me make nae clatter;
"For our ramgunahoch gum gude man
Is ou't and owre the water:"
Who'er shall say I wanted grace
When I did kiss and dawse her,
Let him be planted in my place,
Syne say I was the fautor.

Could I for shame, could I for shame,
Could I for shame refused her?
And wadna manhood been to blame,
Had I unkindly used her?
He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame,
And blue and bluddy bruised her;
When sic a husband was frue hame,
What wife but had excused her?

I dight'd ay her e'en sae blue,
And bann'd the cruel randy;
And weel I wat her willing mou',
Was 'en like sugar-candy.
A gloamin'-shot it was I wot,
I lighted on the Monday;
But I cam through the Tysday's dew,
To wanton Willie's brandy.

CLII.
COMING THROUGH THE RYE.
Tune—"Coming through the rye."
[The poet in this song removed some of the coarse
shuff, from the old chant, and staid it for the Museum,
where it was first printed.]

I.
Coming through the rye, poor body,
Coming through the rye,
She draiglet a' her petticoa'tis,
Coming through the rye.
Jenny's a' wat, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoa'tis,
Coming through the rye.

II.
Gin a body meet a body—
Coming through the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need a body cry?

III.
Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need the world ken?
Jenny's a' wat, poor body;
Jenny's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoa'tis,
Coming through the rye.

CLIII.
YOUNG JAMIE, PRIDE OF A' THE PLAIN.
Tune—"The carlin o' the glen."
[Sent to the Museum by Burns in his own handwriting:
not only is thought to be his.]

I.
Young Jamie, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain;
Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
And reigned a restless king of love:

But now wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays among the woods and briers;
Or in the glens and rocky caves
His sad complaining dovie raves.

II.
I wha sae late did range and rove,
And chang'd with every moon my love,
I little thought the time was near,
Repentance I should buy sae dear:
The slighted maids my torment see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree;
While she, my cruel, scornful' fair,
Forbids me ever to see her mair!

CLIV.
OUT OVER THE FORTH.
Tune—"Charlie Gordon's welcome bams."
[In one of his letters to Cunningham, dated 11th March
1791, Burns quoted the four last lines of this tender and
gentle lyric, and inquires how he likes them.]

I.
Our over the Forth I look to the north,
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wild rolling sea.

II.
But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

CLV.
THE LASS OF ECCLEFECHAN.
Tune—"Jacky Latin."
[Burns in one of his professional visits to Ecclefechan
was amused with a rough old distirict song, which some
one sang: he rendered, at a leisure moment, the language
more delicate and the sentiments less warm, and sent it
to the Museum.]

I.
 Gat ye me, O gat ye me,
O gat ye me wi' naething?
Rock and reel, and spinnin' wheel,
A mickle quarter basin.
Bye attour, my gutcher has
A hich house and a laigh ane,
A' for bye, my bonnie sel',
The tons of Ecclefechan.

II.
O haud your tongue now, Luckie Laing,
O haud your tongue and sauner;
I held the gate till you I met,
Sync I began to wander:
I tint my whistle and my sang,
I tint my peace and pleasure:
But your green graff, now, Luckies Laing,
Wad airt me to my treasure.

CLVII.
SOME BODY.
Tune—"For the sake of somebody."
[Burns seems to have borrowed two or three lines of
this lyric from Ramsey: he sent it to the Museum.]

I.
My heart is sair—I dare na tell—
My heart is sair for somebody;
I could ake a winter night
For the sake o' somebody,
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!
I could range the world around,
For the sake o' somebody!

II.
Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,
O, sweetly smile on somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not?
For the sake o' somebody!

CLVIII.
THE CARDIN' O'T.
Tune—"Salt-fish and dumplings."
["This song," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "is in the Mu-
sical Museum, but not with Burns's name to it." It was
given by Burns to Johnson in his own handwriting.]

I.
I corr a stane o' haeslock woo',
To make a wat to Johnny o't;
For Johnny is my only jo,
I lo's him best of ony yet.
The cardin' o't, the spinnin' o't,
The warpin' o't, the winnin' o't;
When ilka eel cost me a great,
The tailor staw the lynin' o't.

II.
For though his locks be lyart gray,
And tho' his brow be beld aboon;
Yet I has seen him on a day,
The pride of a' the parishen.
The cardin' o't, the spinnin' o't,
The warpin' o't, the winnin' o't;
When ilka eel cost me a great,
The tailor staw the lynin' o't.
CLIX.

WHEN JANUAR' WIND.

Tune—"The laes athat made the bed for me."

[Burns found an old, clever, but not very decorous strain, recording an adventure which Charles the Second, while under Presbyterian rule in Scotland, had with a young lady of the house of Port Letham, and exercised his taste and skill upon it, produced the present—still too free song for the Museum.]

L.

When Januar' wind was blawing cauld,
As to the north I took my way,
The mirksome night did me ensafed,
I knew na where to lodge till day.

II.

By my good luck a maid I met,
Just in the middle o' my care;
And kindly she did me invite
To walk into a chamber fair.

III.

I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And thank'd her for her courtesy;
I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And bade her mak a bed to me.

IV.

She made the bed baith large and wide,
Wi' twa white hands she spread it down;
She put the cup to her rosy lips,
And drank, "Young man, now sleep ye sound.'"

V.

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And frée my chamber went wi' speed;
But I call'd her quickly back again
To lay some mair below my head.

VI.

A cod she laid below my head,
And serv'd me wi' due respect;
And to sa'ute her wi' a kis,
I put my arms about her neck.

VII.

"Haud aff your hands, young man," she says,
"And dinnae sae uncivil be:
If ye hae onle love for me,
O wrang na my virginitie!"

VIII.

Her hair was like the links o' gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie;
Her cheeks like lilies dip't in wine,
The laes that made the bed to me.

IX.

Her bosom was the driven snow,
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,
The laes that made the bed to me.

X.

I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
And ay she wist na what to say;
I laid her between me and the wa'—
The laisie thought na lang till day.

XI.

Upon the morrow when we rose,
I thank'd her for her courtesy;
But aye she blush'd, and aye she sigh'd,
And said, "Alas! ye've ruin'd me."

XII.

I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her synge,
While the tear stood twinklein' in her o'ë;
I said, "My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye ay shall mak the bed to me."

XIII.

She took her mither's Holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me:
Blythe and merry may she be,
The laes that made the bed to me.

XIV.

The bonnie laes made the bed to me,
The braw laes made the bed to me:
I'll ne'er forget till the day I die,
The laes that made the bed to me!

CLX.

SAE FAR AWA.

Tune—"Dolichich Maiden Bridge."

[This song was sent to the Museum by Burns, in his own handwriting.]

I.

O, sad and heavy should I part,
But for her sake sae far awa;
Unknowing what my way may thwart,
My native land sae far awa.

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Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That form'd this fair sae far awa,
Gie body strength, then I'll ne'er start
At this my way sae far awa.

II.
How true is love to pure desert,
So love to her, sae far awa:
And nocht can heal my bosom's smart,
While, oh! she is sae far awa.
None other love, none other dart,
I feel but hers, sae far awa;
But fairer never touch'd a heart
Than hers, the fair sae far awa.

---

CLXI.
I'LL AY CA' IN BY YON TOWN.
Tune—"I' ll gae nas maire to yon town."

[Jean Armour inspired this very sweet song. Sir Harris Nicolas says it is printed in Crumock's Reliques; I was first printed in the Museum.]

I.
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonnie Jean again.
There's nae sall ken, there's nae sall guess,
What brings me back the gate again;
But she my fairest faithful lass,
And stownlins we sall meet again.

II.
She'll wander by the aiken tree,
When trystin-time draws near again;
And when her lovely form I see,
O haith, she's doubly dear again!
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonnie Jean again.

---

CLXII.
O, WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN.
Tune—"I' ll ay ca' in by yon town."

[The beautiful Lucy Johnston, married to Oswald, of Auchencruive, was the heroine of this song: it was not, however, composed expressly in honour of her charms. "As I was a good deal pleased," he says in a letter to Syme, "with my performance, I, in my first flavour, thought of sending it to Mrs. Oswald." He sent it to the Museum, perhaps also to the lady.]

CHORUS.
O, wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon?
The fairest dame's in yon town,
That e'enin sun is shining on.

I.
Now haply down yon gay green shaw,
She wanders 'by yon spreading tree;
How blest ye flowers that round her blaw,
Ye catch the glances o' her e'e!

II.
How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year!
And doubly welcome be the spring,
The season to my Lucy dear.

III.
The sun blinks blithe on yon town,
And on yon bonnie braes of Ayr;
But my delight in yon town,
And dearest bliss, is Lucy fair.

IV.
Without my love, not a' the charms
O' Paradise could yield me joy;
But gie me Lucy in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky!

V.
My cave wad be a lover's bower,
The raging winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.

VI.
O sweet is she in yon town,
Yon sinkin sun's gane down upon;
A fairer than's in yon town
His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

VII.
If angry fate is sworn my foe,
And suffering I am doom'd to bear;
I careless quit aught else below,
But spare me—spare me, Lucy dear!

VIII.
For while life's dearest blood is warm,
As thought free her shall ne'er depart,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

And she—as fairest is her form!
She has the truest, kindest heart!
O, wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the c'enin sun upon?
The fairest dame's in yon town
That c'enin sun is shining on.

CLXIII.

O MAY, THY MORN.

Tune—"May, thy morn."

[Our lyrical legends assign the inspiration of this strain to the accomplished Clarinda. It has been omitted by Chambers in his "People's Edition" of Burns.]

I.

O May, thy morn was ne'er soe sweet
As the mirk night o' December;
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember.
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember.

II.

And here's to them, that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum;
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's guid watch o'er them,
And here's to them we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.
And here's to them we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!

CLXIV.

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.

Tune—"Ye're welcome, Charlie Stewart."

[The poet's eye was on Polly Stewart, but his mind seems to have been with Charlie Stewart, and the Jacobite ballads, when he penned these words;—they are in the Museum.]

I.

O LOVELY Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's not a flower that blooms in May
That's half so fair as thou art.
The flower it blows, it fades and fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth eternal youth
Will give to Polly Stewart.

II.

May he whose arms shall fault thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart;
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart.
O lovely Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That's half so sweet as thou art.

CLXV.

THE HIGHLAND LADDIE.

Tune—"If thou'll play me fair play."

[A long and wearisome ditty, called "The Highland Lad and Lowland Lassie," which Burns compressed into these stanzas, for Johnson's Museum.]

I.

The bonniest lad that e'er I saw,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Wore a plaid, and was fu' braw,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
On his head a bonnet blue,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
His royal heart was firm and true,
Bonnie Highland laddie.

II.

Trumpets sound, and cannons roar,
Bonnie lassie, Lowland lassie;
And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
Bonnie Lowland lassie.
Glory, honour, now invite,
Bonnie lassie, Lowland lassie,
For freedom and my king to fight,
Bonnie Lowland lassie.

III.

The sun a backward course shall take,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,
Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
Go, for yourself procure renown,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
And for your lawful king, his crown,
Bonnie Highland laddie.
CLXVI.

ANNA, THY CHARMS.

Tune—"Bonnie Mary."

[The heroine of this short, sweet song is unknown: it was inserted in the third edition of his Poems.]

Anna, thy charms my bosom fire, And waste my soul with care; But ah! how bootless to admire, When fated to despair! Yet in thy presence, lovely fair, To hope may be forgiv'n; For sure 'twere impious to despair, So much in sight of Heav'n.

CLXVII.

CASILLIS' BANKS.

Tune—[unknown.]

[It is supposed that "Highland Mary," who lived sometime on Cassillis's banks, is the heroine of these verses.]

I.

Now bank an' brae are claith'd in green, An' scatter'd cowalips sweetly spring; By Girvan's fairy-haunted stream, The birdies flit on wanton wing. To Cassillis's banks when e'enig fa's, There wi' my Mary let me flee, There catch her ilk glance of love, The bonne blink o' Mary's e'e!

II.

The shield wha boasts o' world's wealth Is aften laird o' meikle care; But Mary she is a' my ain— Ah! fortune canna gie me mair. Then let me range by Cassillis's banks, Wi' her, the lassie dear to me, And catch her ilk glance o' love, The bonne blink o' Mary's e'e!

CLXVIII.

TO THEE, LOVED NITH.

Tune—[unknown.]

[There are several variations extant of these verses, and among others one which transfers the praise from the Nith to the Dee: but to the Dee, if the poet speaks in his own person, no such influences could belong.]

I.

To thee, lov'd Nith, thy gladsome plains, Where late wi' careless thought I roseg'd, Though prest wi' care and sunk in woe, To thee I bring a heart unchang'd.

II.

I love thee, Nith, thy banks and braes, Tho' mem'ry there my bosom tear; For there he rov'd that brake my heart, Yet to that heart, ah! still how dear!

CLXIX.

BANNOCKS O' BARLEY.

Tune—"The Killogie."

["This song is in the Museum," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "but without Burns's name." Burns took up an old song, and letting some of the old words stand, infused a Jacobite spirit into it, wrote it out, and sent it to the Museum.]

I.

Bannocks o' bear meal, Bannocks o' barley; Here's to the Highlandman's Bannocks o' barley. Wha in a brulzie Will first cry a parley? Never the lads wi' The bannocks o' barley.

II.

Bannocks o' bear meal, Bannocks o' barley; Here's to the lads wi' The bannocks o' barley. Wha in his wae-days Were loyal to Charlie? Wha but the lads wi' The bannocks o' barley?

CLXX.

HEE BALOU.

Tune—"The Highland Balou."

["Published in the Musical Museum," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "but without the name of the author." It is an
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CLXXII.
HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

Tune—"The job of journey-work."
[Burns took the hint of this song from an older and less decorous strain, and wrote these words, it has been said in humorous allusion to the condition in which Jean Ar moir found herself before marriage; as if Burns could be capable of anything so insulting. The words are in the Museum.]

ALTHO' my back be at the wa',
An' tho' be the fautor;
ALTHO' my back be at the wa',
Yet here's his health in water!
O! was gae by his wanton sides,
Sae brawlie he could flatter;
Till for his sake I'm slighted sair,
And dree the kintra clatter.
But tho' my back be at the wa',
And tho' be the fautor;
But tho' my back be at the wa',
Yet here's his health in water!

CLXXI.
WAE IS MY HEART.

Tune—"Wae is my heart."
[Composed, it is said, at the request of Clarke, the musician, who felt, or imagined he felt, some pang of heart for one of the loveliest young ladies in Nithsdale, Phillis M'Leod.]

I.
Wae is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e;
Lang, lang, joy's been a stranger to me;
Forsaken and friendless, my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice of pity ne'er sounds in my ear.

II.
Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep ha'e I loved;
Love, thou hast sorrow, and sair ha'e I proved;
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbings will soon be at rest.

III.
O, if I were happy, where happy I have been,
Down by your stream, and your bonnie castle green;
For there he is wand'rering, and musing on me,
Wha wed soon dry the tear frae his Phillis's e'e.

CLXXXIII.
MY PEGGY'S FACE.

Tune—"My Peggy's Face."
[Composed in honour of Miss Margaret Chalmers, after wards Mrs. Lewis Hay, one of the wisest, and, it is said, the wittest of all the poet's lady correspondents. Burns, in the note in which he communicated it to Johnson, said he had a strong private reason for wishing it to appear in the second volume of the Museum.]

I.
My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heav'ly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

II.
The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway?
Who but knows they all decay?
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The gen'rous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms—
These are all immortal charms.
THE POETICAL WORKS

CLXXXIV.
GLOOMY DECEMBER.

Tune—"Wandering Willie."

[These verses were, it is said, inspired by Clarinda, and must be taken as a record of his feelings at parting with one dear to him to the latest moments of existence—the Mrs. Mac of many a toast, both in serious and festive hours.]

I.
Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care:
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.
Fond lovers' parting is sweet painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, O farewell for ever!
Is anguish unmingled, and agony pure.

II.
Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
'Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest that shaks my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone!
Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.

CLXXXV.
MY LADY'S GOWN, THERE'S GAIRS UP'ONT.

Tune—"Gregg's Pipes."

[Most of this song is from the pen of Burns: he corrected the improprieties, and infused some of his own lyric genius into the old strain, and printed the result in the Museum.]

I.
My lady's gown, there's gairs up'ont,
And gowden flowers sae rare up'ont;
But Jenny's jims and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair up'ont.
My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are none;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

II.
My lady's white, my lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassillis' blude;

But her ten-pund lands o' tocher guild
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

III.
Out o'er you muir, out o'er you moos,
Where gor-cocks thro' the heather pass,
There was auld Colin's bonnie lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

IV.
Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music notes o' lovers' hymns:
The diamond dew is her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

V.
My lady's dink, my lady's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
O that's the lass to make him blest.
My lady's gown, there's gairs up'ont,
And gowden flowers sae rare up'ont;
But Jenny's jims and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair up'ont.

CLXXXVI.
AMONG THE TREES.

Tune—"The King of France, he rode a race.

[Burns wrote these verses in scorn of those, and they are many, who prefer
"The capon craws and queer ha ha's!"
of emasculated Italy to the original and delicious airs, Highland and Lowland, of old Caledonia: the song is a fragment—the more's the pity.]

I.
Among the trees, where humming bees
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing, O;
'Twas pibroch, sang, strathpey, or reels,
She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O,
When there cam a yell o' foreign squeals,
That dang her tasaalteerie, O.

II.
Their capon craws and queer ha ha's,
They made our lug's grow eerie, O;
The hungry bike did scrape and pike,
'Till we were wae and weary, O;
But a royal ghastie wha ance was cas'd
A prisoner aughteen year awa,
He fir'd a fiddler in the north
That dang them tasaalteerie, O
CLXXVII.

THE GOWDEN LOCKS OF ANNA.

Tune—"Banks of Bannan."

["Anne with the golden locks," one of the attendants among the followers of Burns’s poem, in Dumfries, was very fair and very tractable, and, as may be surmised from the song, had other ways to render herself agreeable to the customers than the serving of wine. Burns recommended this song to Thomson; and one of his editors makes him say, "I think this is one of the best love-songs I ever composed," but these are not the words of Burns; this contradiction is more openly, lest it should be thought that the bard had the bad taste to prefer this strain to dozens of others more simple, more impassioned, and more natural.]

1.

Yestreen I had a pint o’ wine,
A place where body saw na’;
Yestreen lay on this breast o’ mine
The gowden locks of Anna.
The hungry Jew in wilderness
Rejoicing o’er his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss
Upon the lips of Anna.

II.

Ye monarchs tak the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah!
Gie me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna.
There’ll despire imperial charms,
An empress or sultana,
While dying raptures in her arms
I give and take with Anna!

III.

Awa, thou flaunting god o’ day!
Awa, thou pale Diana!
Ik star gae hide thy twinkling ray,
When I’m to meet my Anna.
Come, in thy raven plumage, night!
Sun, moon, and stars withdrawn a’;
And bring an angel pen to write
My transports wi’ my Anna!

IV.

The kirk an’ state may join and tell—
To do sic things I manna:
The kirk and state may gang to hell,
And I’ll gae to my Anna.
She is the sunshine of my e’e,
To live but her I canna:
Had I on earth but wishes three,
The first should be my Anna.

CLXXVIII.

MY AIN KIND DEARIE O.

[This is the first song composed by Burns for the national collection of Thomson: it was written in October, 1792. "On reading over the Lea-rig," he says, "I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following."

The first and second verses were only seat: Burns added the third and last verses in December.]

I.

When o’er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsew frae the furrow’d field
Return sauw dow’ and weary, O!
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi’ dew are hanging clear, my jo;
I’ll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O!

II.

In mirstkest glen, at midnight hour,
I’d rove, and ne’er be eerie, O;
If thro’ that glen I gae to thee,
My ain kind dearie O!
Altho’ the night were ne’er sae wild,
And I were ne’er sae wearable, O,
I’d meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O!

III.

The hunter lo’es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Alang the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o’ gloamin gray,
It makes my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O!

CLXXIX.

TO MARY CAMPBELL.

["In my very early years," says Burns to Thomson, "when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. You must know that all my earlier love-songs were the 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, would have defaced the lodges of my heart, so ..."

1 For "scented birks," in some copies, "balken bade."
THE POETICAL WORKS

faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their race." The heroine of this early composition was Highland Mary.)

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

II.
O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pike;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

III.
I have sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I have sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me
When I forget my vow!

IV.
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.

V.
We have plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And cursed be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!

GLXXXI.

BONNIE LESLEY.

["I have just," says Burns to Thomson, "been looking over the 'Collier's bonnie Daughter,' and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss Leslie Baillie, as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the Collier Leslee, fall on and welcome." This lady was soon afterwards married to Mr. Cuming, of Logie.]

I.
O saw ye bonnie Leslee
As she ga'ed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

II.
To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made another!

III.
Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

IV.
The de'il he could na scalith thee,
Or aught that was belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

V.
The powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune shan' na steer thee:
Thou'rt like themselves so lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.
VI.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonia;
That we may brag, we have a lass.
There's nae again sae bonnie.

CLXXXII.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune—"Katherine Ogilvie."

[Mary Campbell, of whose worth and beauty Burns sang in a song called "Ye Banks and Braes," was the daughter of a mariner, who lived in Greenock. She became acquainted with the poet while on service at the castle of Montgomery, and their love was only served to deepen and settle their affections. Their love had much of the solemn as well as of the romantic: on the day of their separation, they pledged their mutual faith by the exchange of Bibles: they stood with a running-stream between them, and lifting up water in their hands vowed love while waters grew and waters ran. The Bible which the poet gave was elegantly bound: 'Ye shall not swear by your name falsely,' was written in the bold Maschiné hand of Burns, and underneath was his name, and his mark as a Freemason. They parted to meet no more: Mary Campbell was carried off suddenly by a burning fever, and the first intimation which the poet had of her fate, was when, it is said, he visited her friends to meet her on her return from Cowal, when she had gone to make arrangements for her marriage. The Bible is in the keeping of her relations: we have seen a lock of her hair; it was very long and very bright, and of a hue deeper than the flaxen. The song was written for Thomson's work.]

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 unfault her robes,
And there the langest tarry
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

CLXXXIII.

AUD ROB MORRIS.

[The starting lines of this song are from one of the most meritorious works of the great Jacobite poet, the old strain is sarcastic; the new strain is tender; it was written for Thomson.]

1.

Turnes's auld Rob Morris that won in ye glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows and wae of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owen and kine,
And ae bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

11.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May.
She's sweet as the evening among the new hay;
As blyth and as artless as the lamb on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

III.

But oh! she's an heiress,—auld Robin's a laird.
And my daddie has nought but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed;
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.
IV.
The day comes to me, but delight brings me none;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gone:
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghost,
And I sigh as my heart it was burst in my breast.

V.
O had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might have hop'd she was snall'd upon me!
O, how past describing had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express!

CLXXXIV.
DUNCAN GRAY.

[This Duncan Gray of Burns, has nothing in common with the wild old song of that name, save the first line, and a part of the third, neither has it any share in the sentiments of an earlier strain, with the same title, by the same hand. It was written for the work of Thomson.]

I.
Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
On blythe the yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coosht her head fu' high,
Lock'd axient and unce skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

II.
Duncan sheech'd, and Duncan pray'd,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Meg was deaf as Alisa 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.

III.
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 gas to—France for me!
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

IV.
How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't;
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal,
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.

V.
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 could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty baith,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

CLXXXV.
O POOR'TH CAULD.

Tune—*I had a horse.*

[Jean Lorimer, the Chloria and the *Lassie with the limt-white locks* of Burns, was the heroine of this exquisite lyric: she was at that time very young; her shape was fine, and her *"dimpled cheek and cherry mou* will be long remembered in Nithsdale.]

I.
O POOR'TH CAULD, and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet poor'th a' I could forgive,
An' twere na' for my Jeanie.
O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on fortune's shining?

II.
This world's wealth when I think on,
It's pride, and a' the lave o't—
Pie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't!

III.
Her een sae bonnie blue betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'word ay,
She talks of rank and fashion.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

IV.
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?

V.
How blest the humble cottier's fate!
He woes his simple dearie;
The silly bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make them rare.

O why should Fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?

CLXXXVI.
GALLA WATER.

["Galla Water" is an improved version of an earlier song by Burns; but both songs owe some of their attractions to an older strain, which the exquisite air has made popular over the world. It was written for Thomson.]

I.
Turn's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes nor Etrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

II.
But there's aye, a secret aye,
Aboon them a' I lo'te him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Galla Water.

III.
'Tho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tochter;
I'm rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our roacks by Galla Water.

IV.
If ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That soft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest world's treasure!

CLXXXVII.
LORD GREGORY.

[Dr. Wolcot wrote a Lord Gregory for Thomson's collection, in imitation of which Burns wrote his, and the Englishman complained, with an oath, that the Scotchman sought to rob him of the merit of his composition. Wolcot's song was, indeed, written first, but they are both but imitations of that most exquisite old ballad, "Far Annie of Lochryna," which neither Wolcot nor Burns valued as it deserved; for surpasses both their songs.]

I.
O MIRE, mire is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar;
A wanfu' wanderer seeks thy tow'r,
Lord Gregory, ope thy door!

II.
An exile free her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some pity on me shaw
If love it may na be.

III.
Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove
By bonnie Irwin-side,
Where first I ownd that virgin-love
I lang, lang had denied?

IV.
How often didst thou pledge and vow
Thou wad for ay be mine;
And my fond heart, itsel' sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

V.
Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast—
Thou dart of heaven that flashest by,
O wilt thou give me rest?

VI.
Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see!
But spare and pardon my false love,
His wrange to heaven and me!

CLXXXVIII.
MARY MORISON.

Tune—"Bide ye yet."

["The song prefixed," observes Burns to Thomson, "is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands.
I do not think it very remarkable either for its merits or its demerits." "Of all the productions of Burns," says Hazlitt, "the pathetic and serious love-songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of the old ballads, are, perhaps, those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison." The song is supposed to have been written on one of a family of Morisons at Mauchline.

I.

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trusted hour!
Those smiles and glances let my see
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I ride the stoure,
A weary slave free sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

II.

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 you the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

III.

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whose only fault 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.

CLXXXIX.

WANDERING WILLIE.

[First Version.]

[The idea of this song is taken from verses of the same same published by Herd: the heroine is supposed to have been the accomplished Mrs. Riddell. Erskine and Thomson set in judgment upon it, and, like true critics, squeezed much of the natural and original spirit out of it. Burns approved of their alterations; but he approved, no doubt, in bitterness of spirit.]

I.

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
III.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ane mair to my arms.

IV.

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.

CXCl.

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

[Written for Thomson's collection: the first version which he wrote was not happy in its harmony: Burns altered and corrected it as it now stands, and then said, "I do not know if this song be really meadled."

I.

Oh, open the door, some pity to show,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!!
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!

II.

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But cauldter thy love for me, Oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, Oh!

III.

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting with me, Oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, Oh!

IV.

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
She sees his pale corse on the plain, Oh!
My true love! she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, Oh!

CXClII.

JESSIE.

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

[Jessie Stag, the eldest daughter of the provost of Dumfries, was the heroine of this song. She became a wife and a mother, but died early in life: she is still affectionately remembered in her native place.]

I.

Twa 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, and elegance fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain

II.

O, fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
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 ear he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger—
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'!

CXClIII.

THE POOR AND HONEST SODGIE.

Air—"The Mill, Mill, O."

[Burns, it is said, composed this song, once very popular, on hearing a maimed soldier relate his adventures, at Brownhill, in Nithsdale: it was published by Thomson, after suggesting some alterations, which were properly rejected.]

I.

When wild war's deadly blast was blown
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 sodgier.

II.

A leaf, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder;
And for fair Scottie, 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.

III.
At length I reach'd the bonny glen,
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy a'it I courted:
Wha spied I but my sin dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my e'en was swelling.

IV.
Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy, may he be
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fa'm wid be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang—
Take pity on a sodger.

V.
Sae wistfully she gas'd on me,
And lovelier was then ever;
Quo' she, a sodger ans I lo'd,
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.

VI.
She gas'd—she redder like a rose—
Synne pale like onie lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my sin 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!

VII.
The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
The poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we're 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!

VIII.
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 despises,
Nor count him as a stranger;
Remember he's his country's stay,
In day and hour of danger.

CXCIV.
MEG O' THE MILL
Air—"'Hey! bonnie lass, will you lie in a barrack?"

("Do you know a fine air," Burns says Thomson, April, 1793, "called 'Jackie Hanna's Lament,' I have a song of considerable merit to that air: I'll enclose you both song and tune, as I have them ready to send to the Museum." It is probable that Thomson liked these verses too well to let them go willingly from his hands: Burns touched up the old song with the same starting line, but a less delicate conclusion, and published it in the Museum.)

I.
O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a clautie o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

II.
The Miller was strappin', the Miller was ruddy;
A heart like a lord and a hue like a lady:
The Laird was a widdifae, bleeit knurl;
She's left the guid-fellow and ta'en the church.

III.
The Miller he hecht her a heart steadfast and loving;
The Laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing horse wi' a clear chained bridle,
A whip by her side and a bonnie side-saddle.

IV.
O wae on the siller, it is sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that is fixed on a mailen 'A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parl',
But gie me my love, and a fig for the warl!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CXCV.

BLYTHE HAE I BEEN.

Tune—"Liegerram Cock."

[Burns, who seldom praised his own compositions, told
Thomson, for which work he wrote it, that "Blythe hae
I been on you hill," was one of the finest songs he had
ever made in his life, and composed on one of the most
lovely women in the world. The heroine was Miss Les-
ley Baillie.]

I.

Blythe hae I been on you hill
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free
As the breeze flew o’er me.
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

II.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring;
Trembling, I dow nocht but glow’r,
Sighing, dumb, despairing!
If she winna ease the thraws
In my bosom swelling,
Underneath the grass-green sod
Soon maun be my dwelling.

CXCVI.

LOGAN WATER.

["Have you ever, my dear sir," says Barnes to Thom-
son, 25th June, 1795, "felt your bosom ready to burst
with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who
divide kingdoms against kingdoms, despise the 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 meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some
merit." The poet had in mind, too, during this poetic
effort, the beautiful song of Logan-braes, by my friend John
Mayne, a Nithsdale poet.]

I.

O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide,
That day was my Willie’s bride!
And years synsayne hae o’er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flow’ry banks appear
Like drunlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his fates,
Far, far free me and Logan braes!

II.

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, delightful, a’ surveys,
While Willie’s far free Logan braes.

III.

Within you milk-white hawthorn bush,
Aman’ 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 free Logan braes.

IV.

O was upon you, men o’ state,
That brethren roose to deadly hate!
As ye make mony 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!

CXCVII.

THE RED, RED ROSE.

Air—"Haugie Graham."

[There are snatches of old song so exquisitely fine
that, like fractured crystal, they cannot be mended or
knocked out, without showing where the hand of the re-
structor has been. This seems the case with the first verse
of this song, which the poet found in Witherspoon,
and completed by the addition of the second verse, which he
felt to be inferior, by desiring Thomson to make his own
the first verse, and let the other follow, whick would
conclude the strain with a thought as beautiful as it was
original.]

I.

O was my love you lillie fair,
Wi’ purple blossoms to the spring;
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing!

1 Originally—
"Ye mind me, midst your cruel joys,
The widow’s tears, the orphan’s cries."

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How I was morn’d, when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude;
But I was sing on wan’t o’ wing,
When youthfu’ May its bloom renewed.

II.
O gin my love were you red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa’;
And I mysel’ a drap o’ dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa’!
Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I’d feast on beauty a’ the night;
Seal’d on her silk-saft Saula to rest,
Till they’d awa by Phoebus’ light.

CXCVIII.
BONNIE JEAN.

[Jean M’Murdoch, the heroine of this song, the eldest daughter of John M’Murdoch of Drumsaig, was, both in merit and look, very worthy of so sweet a strain, and justified the poet from the charge made against him in the West, that his beauties were not other men’s beauties. In the M’Murdoch manuscript, in Burns’s handwriting, there is a well-merited compliment which has slip out of the printed copy in Thomson—

"Thy handsome foot thou shalt na set
In barn or byre to trouble thee.”]

I.
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.

II.
And aye she wrought her mamnie’s wark,
And ay she sang so merrillie:
The blithest bird upon the bush
Had n’er a lighter heart than she.

III.
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.

IV.
Young Robie was the brarest lad,
The flower and pride of a’ the glen;
And he had owen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigles nine or ten.

V.
He gaed wi’ Jeanie to the tryests,
He danc’d wi’ Jeanie on the down;
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

VI.
As in the beem o’ the stream,
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e’en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast o’ bonnie Jean.

VII.
And now she works her mamnie’s wark,
And ay she sighs wi’ care and pain;
Yet wist na what her all might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

VIII.
But did na Jeanie’s heart loop light,
And did na joy blink in her e’e,
As Robie tauld a tale of love,
Ae o’en’ on the lily lea?

IX.
The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to her he fondly press,
And whisper’d thus his tale o’ love:

X.
O Jeanie fair, I lo’e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me!
Or witt thou leave thy mamnie’s cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi’ me?

XI.
At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi’ me.

XII.
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’.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CXCIX.

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

Tune—"Robin Adair." 

[The ladies of the M'Murdo family were grateful and beautiful, and lucky in finding a poet capable of recording their charms in lasting strains. The heroine of this song was Phillis M'Murdo; a favourite of the poet. The verses were composed at the request of Clarke, the musician, who believed himself in love with her "charming pupil." She laughed at the presumptuous fiddler.]

I.

While larks with little wing
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare:
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

II.

In each bird's careless song,
Glad I did share;
While you wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
Phillis the fair.

III.

Down in a shady walk
Doves cooing were,
I mark'd the cruel hawk,
Caught in a snare:
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny!
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair.

CC.

HAD I A CAVE.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

[Alexander Cunningham, on whose unfortunate love-adventure Burns composed this song for Thomson, was a jeweller in Edinburgh, well connected, and of agreeable and polished manners. The story of his faithless mistress was the talk of Edinburgh, in 1793, when these

words were written: the hero of the lay has been long dead; the heroine resides, a widow, in Edinburgh.]

I.

Had I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

II.

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare,
All thy fond plighted vows—fleeing as air!
To thy new lover he,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

CCX.

BY ALLAN STREAM.

["Bravo! say I," exclaimed Burns, when he wrote these verses for Thomson. "It is a good song. Should you think so too, not else, you can put the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses. Autumn is my propitious season; I make more verses in it than all the year else." The old song of "O my love Annie's very bonnie," helped the muse of Burns with this lyric.]

I.

By Allan stream I chanced to rove
While Phoebus sank beyond Benled;
The winds were whispering through the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready;
I listened to a lover's song,
And thought on youth's pleasures gay:
And aye the wild wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I love thee, Annie!

II.

O happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;
Nor over sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking, said, "I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal impress,
The sacred vow.—we ne'er should sever.
III.
The haunt o' Spring's the primrose brae,
The Simmer joyes the flocks to follow;
How cheery, thro' her shortening day,
Is Autumn, in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

OCIII.
O WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME TO YOU.

[In one of the variations of this song the name of the heroine is Jenny: the song itself owes some of the sentiments as well as words to an old favourite Nithsdale chant of the same name. "I Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," Burnes inquires of Thomson, "one of your aires? I admire it much, and passently I set the following verses to it." The poet, two years afterwards, altered the fourth line thus:

"Thy Jenny will venture wi' ye, my lad,"

and assigned this reason: "In fact, a fair dame at whose shrine I, the priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus: a dame whom the Graces he a retir'd in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have arm'd with lightning; a fair one, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment, and dispute her commands if you dare."

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Th'o' father and mother and we should go mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily t'art, when you come to court me,
And come na unless the back-yett be a-jee;
Synge up the back-stile and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me.
And come as ye were na comin' to me.

I.
At kirk, or at market, where'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye can'd na a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.
Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.

II.
Ay vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wea;
But court na anither, tho' jokin' ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy fye me.
For fear that she wyle your fancy fye me.

O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Th'o' father and mother and we should go mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

ADOWN WINDING NITH.

["Mr. Clarke," says Burns to Thomson, "begs you to give Miss Phillips a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss Phillips M'Murdo, sister to 'Bonnie Jean'; they are both pupils of his."

This lady afterwards became Mrs. Norman Lockhart, of Caruan.

I.
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillips to muse and to sing.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whatever has met wi' my Phillips,
Hae met wi' the queen o' the fair.

II.
The daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillips,
For she is simplicity's child.

III.
The rose-bud's the blushing o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest:
How fair and how pure is the lily,
But fairer and purer her breast.

IV.
Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillips can vie:
Her breath is the breath o' the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.

V.
Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreadin' grove,
When Phoebus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.

VI.
But beauty how frail and how fleeting,
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind o' my Phillips
Will flourish without a decay.
Of Robert Burns.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whatever has met wi' my Phillis
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

OEIV.

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE.

Air—"Could Keal."

[Burns composed this lyric in August, 1795, and tradition says it was produced by the charms of Jean Lorimer.
"That tune, Could Keal," he says to Thomson, "is such a favourite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloaming-shot at the Muse; when the Muse that presides over the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring, dearest nymph, Colly, whispered me the following.
"

I.

Come, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge us ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The world's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone,
That I may live to love her.

II.

Thus in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never.

OEV.

DAINTY DAVIE.

[From the old song of "Dainty Davie" Burns has borrowed only the title and the measure. The ancient strain records how the Rev. David Williamson, to escape the pursuit of the dragons, in the time of the persecution, was hid, by the devout Lady of Cherityrees, in the same bed with her dying daughter. The divine lived to have six wives beside the daughter of the Lady of Cherityrees and other children besides the one which his

hiding from the dragons produced. When Charles the Second was told of the adventure and its upshot, he is said to have exclaimed, "God's fish! that beets me and the oak: the man ought to be made a bishop."

I.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

II.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.

III.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fere,
Then thro' the dew I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.

IV.

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 on the warlock knowe,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

OCV.

BRUCE TO HIS MEN AT BANNOCKBURN.

[First version.]

Tune—"Hey, tuttie tuttie."

[Syme of Ryedale states that this fine ode was composed during a storm of rain and fire, among the wilds of Gleasen in Galloway : the poet himself gives an account much less romantic. In speaking of the air to Thomson, he says, "There is a tradition which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, 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
resistance; but when Thomson, having succeeded this, proposed a change in the expression, no warrior Bruce’s day ever resisted more sternly the march Southron over the border. “The only line,” says the Sicilian, “which I dislike in the whole song is, ‘Welcome to your gory bed:’

gory presents a disagreeable image to the mind, as prudent generals would avoid saying anything to his dier which might tend to make death more frightful than it is.” “My ode,” replied Burns, “pleases me so much that I cannot alter it; your proposed alterations would in my opinion, make it tame.” Thomson cries out, the timid wife of Coriolanus, “Oh, God, no blood while Burns excels in, like that Roman’s heroic mot 286 I. Scors, wha has wi’ Wallace bled, Scots, whan Bruce has o’erled; Welcome to your gory bed, Or to victorious:

II. Now’s the day, and now’s the hour; See the front o’ battle lour; See approach proud Edward’s pow’r— Chains and slaverie!

III. Wha will be a traitor-knave? Wha can fill a coward’s grave? Wha see base as a slave? Let him turn and flee!

IV. Wha for Scotland’s king and law Freedom’s sword will strongly draw, Freeman stand, or freeman fa’, Let him follow me!

V. By oppression’s woes and pains! By our sons in servile chains! We will drain our dearest veins, But they shall be free!

VI. Lay the proud usurpers low! Tyrants fall in every foe! Liberty’s in every blow— Let us do or die!

OCXLII.
BANNOCKBURN.
ROBERT BRUCE’S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.
[SECOND VERSION.]

[Thomson acknowledged the charm which this martial and national ode had for him, but he disliked the air, and proposed to substitute that of Lewis Gordon in its place. But Lewis Gordon required a couple of syllables more in every fourth line, which loaded the verse with explosive words, and weakened the simple energy of the original: Burns consented to the proper alterations, after a slight dialogue]
AULD LANG SYNE.

And here's a hand, my sauny ber,
And give a hand o' thine
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne.
SOLD LONDON 1800.

The image depicts a group of people gathered around a table, possibly engaged in a conversation or a game. The style of the drawing suggests it is from the 18th or 19th century.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

OCVIII.

BEHOLD THE HOUR.

Tune—"Oran-gaud."

["The following song I have composed for the Highland air that you tell me in your last you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint." These are the words of Burns to Thomas: he might have added that the song was written on the meditated voyage of Clarinda to the West Indies, to join her husband.]

I.

Behold the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart!
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
You distant isle will often hall:
"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There, latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."  

II.

Along the solitary shore
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
'I'll westward turn my wistful eye:
Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While thro' thy sweet's she loves to stray,
O tell me, does she muse on me?

OCIX.

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER.

Tune—"For him, father."

["I do not give these verses," says Burns to Thomson, "for any merit they have. I composed them at the dine in which "Patie Allan's" mither died, about the back o' midnight, and by the lee side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every morta in company, except the sautoir and the muse." To the poet's intercourse with musicians we owe some fine songs.]

I.

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie!
Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever;
Now thou's left thy lass for ay—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never!

I.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou canst love another jo,
While my heart is breaking:
Soon my weary een I'll close,
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Ne'er mair to waken!

OCX.

AULD LANG SYNE.

["Is not the Scotch phrase," Burns writes to Mrs. Denlop, "Auld lang syne, exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul: I shall give you the verses on the other sheet. Light be the turf on the breast of the heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment."

"The following song," says the poet, when he communicated it to George Thomson, "an old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air." These are strong words, but there can be no doubt that, save for a line or two, we owe the song to no other minstrel than "minstrel Burns."]

I.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

II.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,
Sin' auld lang syne.

III.

We twa hae paid't i' the burn,
Fae mornin' sun till dine:
But seas between us braid has roard,
Sin' auld lang syne.

IV.

And here's a hand, my trusty bairn,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll take a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.
THE POETICAL WORKS

V.
And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
Forauld lang syne.
Forauld lang syne, my dear,
Forauld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
Forauld lang syne!

OCX.

FAIR JEANY.

Tune—"Saw ye my father?"

[In September, 1793, this song, as well as several others, was communicated to Thomson by Burns. "Of the poetry," he says, "I speak with confidence: but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence."

I.
Where are the joys I have met in the morning,
That dance'd to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At evening the wild woods among?

II.
No more a-winding the course of your river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair:
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

III.
Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim, surly winter is near?
No, no, the bees' humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

IV.
Fain would I hide, what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known,
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jeany, fair Jeany alone.

V.
Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

OCXII.

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

[To the air of the "Collier's dochter," Burns bids Thomson add the following old Bacchanal: it is slightly altered from a rather stiff original.]

I.
Deluded swain, the pleasure
The fickle fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure—
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

II.
The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds uncertain motion—
They are but types of woman.

III.
O! art thou not ashamed
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou wouldst be named,
Despise the silly creature.

IV.
Go find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

OCXIII.

NANCY.

[This song was inspired by the charms of Clarinda. In one of the poet's manuscripts the song commences thus: Thine am I, my lovely Kate, Well thou mayest discover Every pulse along my veins Tell the ardent lover. This change was tried out of compliment, it is believed, to Mrs. Thomson; but Nancy ran more smoothly on the even road of lyrical verse than Kate.]

I.
Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

II.
To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
of Robert Burns.

Th' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

III.
Take away those rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

IV.
What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

OCXIV.
Husband, Husband.
Tune—"Jo Janet."

["My Jo Janet," in the collection of Allan Ramsay,
was in the poet's eye when he composed this song, as
surely as the matrimonial bickerings recorded by the old
minstrels were in his mind. He desires Thomson briefly
to tell him how he likes these verses: the response of
the musician was, "Inimitable."]

I.
Husband, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, sir.
"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it man or woman, say,
My spouse, Nancy?"

II.
If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my so'v'reign lord,
And so, good bye, allegiance!
"Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy."

III.
My poor heart then break it woe,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think, how you will bear it.

OCXV.
Wilt thou be my dearie?
Air—"The Sutor's Dochter."

(Composed, it is said, in honour of Janet Miller, of
Dalraviston, mother to the present Earl of Marr, and
then, and long after, one of the lovliest women in the
south of Scotland.)

I.
Wilt thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

II.
Lassie, say thou lo'esi me;
Or if thou wilt no be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou, for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'esi me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'esi me.
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OCXVI.

BUT LATELY SEEN.

Tune—"The winter of life."

(This song was written for Johnson's Museum, in 1794: the air is East Indian: it was brought from Hindostan by a particular friend of the poet. Thomson set the words to the air of Gil Moretice: they are elsewhere set to the tune of the Death of the Lusent.)

I.

But lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoiced the day;
Thro' gentle showers and laughing flowers,
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled
On winter blasts sss:
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

II.

But my white pow, nse kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eldd, but buss or blad,
Sink's in Time's wintry rage.
Oh! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthful prime,
Why comes thou not again?

OCXVII.

TO MARY.

Tune—"Could aught of song."

(These verses, inspired partly by Hamilton's very tender and elegant song,
"Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate," and some unrecorded "Mary" of the poet's heart, is in the latter volumes of Johnson. "It is inserted in Johnson's Museum," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "with the name of Burns attached." He might have added that it was sent by Burns, written with his own hand.)

I.

Could aught of song declare my pains,
Could artful numbers move thee,
The muse should tell, in labour'd strains,
O Mary, how I love thee!
They who but feign a wounded heart
May teach the lyre to languish;
But what avails the pride of art,
When wastes the soul with anguish?

II.

Then let the sudden bursting sigh
The heart-felt pang discover;
And in the keen, yet tender eye,
O read th' imploring lover.
For well I know thy gentle mind
Disdains art's gay disguising;
Beyond what Fancy e'er refin'd,
The voice of nature prizing.

OCXVIII.

HERE'S TO THY HEALTH, MY BONNIE LASS.

Tune—"Laggan Burn."

("This song is in the Musical Museum, with Burns's name to it," says Sir Harris Nicolas. It is a song of the poet's early days, which he trimmed up, and sent to Johnson.)

I.

Hzaa's to thy health, my bonnie lass,
Gude night, and joy be wi' thee;
I'll come na mair to thy bow'rdoor,
To tell thee that I loo thee.
O dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear I dinna care
How lang ye look about ye.

II.

Thou'rt ay nse free informing me
Thou hast na mind to marry;
I'll be as free informing thee
Nae time hae I to tarry.
I ken thy friends try ilka means,
Froe wedlock to delay thee;
Depending on some higher chance—
But fortune may betray thee.

III.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me;
But I'm as free as any he,
Sms' siller will relieve me.
I count my health my greatest wealth,
Sae long as I'll enjoy it:
I'll fear na scant, I'll boole nae want,
As lang's I get employment.

IV.

But far off fowlis hae feathers fair,
And aye until ye try them:
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Tho' they seem fair, still have a care,
They may prove worse than I am. [bright,
But at twal at night, when the moon shines
My dear, I'll come and see thee;
For the man that lo'es his mistress weel,
Nae travel makes him weary.

OCXIX.

THE FAREWELL.

Tune—"It was a' for our rightful king."

["It seems very doubtful," says Sir Harris Nicolas,
"how much, even if any part of this song was written by
Burns: it occurs in the Musical Museum, but not with
his name." Burns, it is believed, rather pruned and
beautified an old Scottish lyric, than composed this strain
entirely. Johnson received it from him in his own hand-
writing.]

I.
It was a' for our rightful king,
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightful king
We e'er saw Irish land,
My dear;
We e'er saw Irish land.

II.
Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My love and native land farewell,
For I maun cross the main,
My dear;
For I maun cross the main.

III.
He turn'd him right, and round about
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear;
With adieu for evermore.

IV.
The sodger from the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again,
My dear;
Never to meet again.

V.
When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that's far awa',
The lee-lang night, and weep,
My dear;
The lee-lang night, and weep.

OCXXX.

O STEER HER UP.

Tune—"O steer her up, and haud her gau'n."

[Burns, in composing these verses, took the introdo-
tory lines of an older lyric, set them out in his own
way, and sent them to the Museum.]

I.
O steer her up and haud her gau'n—
Her mother's at the mill, jo;
And gin she winna take a man,
E'en let her take her will, jo:
First shore her wi' a kindly kiss,
And ca' another gill, jo,
And gin she take the thing amiss,
E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.

II.
O steer her up, and be na blate,
An' gin she take it ills, jo,
Then lea' the lassie till her fate,
And time nae longer spil, jo:
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,
But think upon it still, jo,
That gin the lassie winna do't,
Y'll fin' anither will, jo.

OCXXXI.

O AY MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.

Tune—"My wife she dang me."

[Other verses to the same air, belonging to the oldest
times, are still remembered in Scotland: but they are
only sung when the wine is in, and the sense of felicity
out. This song is in the Museum.]

I.
O ay my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me.
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OCXXXII.

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Tune——"Lass o' Livistons."

[Tradition says this song was composed in honour of Jessie Lewara, the Jessie of the poet's death-bed strains. It is inserted in Thomson's collection: variations occur in several manuscripts, but they are neither important nor curious.]

I.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry ait,
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'.

II.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert was 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 brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

OCXXXIII.

HERE IS THE GLEN.

Tune——"Banks of Cree."

[Of the origin of this song the poet gives the following account. "I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls 'The Banks of Cree.' Cree is a beautiful romantic stream: and as her ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it."

I.

Henz is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village-bell has told the hour—
O what can stay my lovely maid?

II.

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mix'd with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

III.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little, faithful mate to cheer,
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

IV.

And art thou come? and art thou true?
O welcome, dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew
Along the flow'ry banks of Cree.

OCXXXIV.

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

Tune——"O'er the hills," &c.

["The last evening," 29th of August, 1794, "as I was strolling out," says Burns, "and thinking of 'O'er the hills and far away,' I spun the following stanza for it. I was pleased with several lines at first, but I own now that it appears rather a flimsy business. I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness."

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad?
How can I the thought forego,
He's on the seas to meet the foe?
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love:
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are with him that's far away.
On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are ay with him that's far away.

II.
When in summer's noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in this scorching sun
My sail—r's thund'ring at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate, do with me what you may—
Spare but him that's far away!

III.
At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power:
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.

IV.
Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his savage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet:
Then may heaven with prosprous gales,
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey—
My dear lad that's far away.
On the seas and far away
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are ay with him that's far away.

CCXXV.

CA' THE YOWES.

[Burns formed this song upon an old lyric, an amended version of which he had previously communicated to the Museum: he was fond of musing in the shadow of Lanarken tower, and on the banks of Cluden Water.]  

I.
Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather growes,
Ca' them where the burnie rowes—
My bonnie dearsie!
Hark the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Cluden's woods amang!
Then a fauling let us gang,
My bonnie dearsie.

II.
We'll gae down by Cluden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.

III.
Yonder Cluden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance so cheery.

IV.
Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nacht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearsie.

V.
Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can dis—but canna part—
My bonnie dearsie!
Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather growes;
Ca' them where the burnie rowes—
My bonnie dearsie!

CCXXVI.

SHE SAYS SHE LOVES ME BEST OF A'.

Tune—"Onagh's Waterfall."

[The lady of the flaxen ringlets has already been noticed: she is described in this song with the accuracy of a painter, and more than the usual elegance of one; it is needless to add her name, or to say how fine her form and how resistless her smiles.]  

I.
Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughin' een o' bonnie blue.
Her smiling sae stylish,
Wad make a wretch forget his woes;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow:
THE POETICAL WORKS

Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
When first her bonnie face I saw;
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'ee me best of a'.

III.
Like harmony her motion;
Her pretty ankle is a spy,
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad mak a saint forget the sky.
Sae warning, sae charming,
Her faultless form and graceful' air;
Ik feature—said Nature
Declard that she could do nae mair:
Hers are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'ee me best of a'.

OCXXVIII.

HOW LANG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT

Tune—"Could Keal in Aberdeen."

[On comparing this lyric, corrected for Thomson, with that in the Museum, it will be seen that the former has more of elegance and order; the latter quite as much nature and truth: but there is less of the saw than of the old in both.]

I.
How lang and dreary is the night,
When I am free my dearie;
I restless lie free e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.
For oh! her lonely nights are lang;
And oh! her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent free her dearie.

II.
When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar—
How can I be but eerie?

III.
How slow ye move, ye heavy hours;
The joyless day how dreary!
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
For oh! her lonely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent free her dearie.

OCXXIX.

LET NOT WOMAN E'ER COMPLAIN

Tune—"Duncan Gray."

["These English songs," thus completes the post, in the letter which conveyed this lyric to Thomson, "I gave me to death: I have not that command of the lan-
OF ROBERT BURNS.

When absent fare my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With starless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when, in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart—
'Tis then I wake to life, to light, and joy.

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OCXXX.

CHLORIS.

Air—"My lodging is on the cold ground."

[The origin of this song is thus told by Burns to Thomson. "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." The poet's elevation of Chloris is great: she lived, when her charm faded, in want, and died all but destitute.]

I.

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair:
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

II.

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.

III.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe, in the birken shaw.

IV.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours,
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

V.

The shepherd, in the flow'ry glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo:
The courtier tells a finer tale—
But is his heart as true?
VI.
These wild-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.

OCXXXII.
CHLOE.
Air—"Dainty Davie."

[Burns, despairing to fit some of the airs with such verses of original manufacture as Thomson required, for the English part of his collection, took the liberty of bestowing a Souther man dress on some genuine Caledonian lyrics. The origin of this song may be found in Ramsey's miscellaneous: the bombast is abated, and the whole much improved.]

I.
In was the charming month of May,
When all the flour's 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.
Loved was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful charming Chloe.

II.
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-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Loved was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

OCXXXIII.
LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.
Tune—"Rothemucke's Rant."

["Oonrigal love," as the poet, is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate: but somehow it does not make such a figure in poetry as that other species of the passion, where love is liberty and nature law. Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gambut is scanty and confined, but the tones expressively sweet, while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul." It must be owned that the bard could render very pretty reasons for his rapture about Jean Lorimer.]

I.
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 clads the flowery lea,
And a's young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?

II.
And when the welcome simmer showes
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine lower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

III.
When Cynthia lights wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's homeward way;
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

IV.
And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclasp'd to my faithful breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.
Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

OCXXXIV.
FAREWELL, THOU STREAM.
Air—"Nancy's to the greenwood gone."

[This song was written in November, 1794: Thomson pronounced it excellent.]

I.
Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish,
To feel a fire in ev'ry vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

II.
Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover;
The bursting sigh, th' unwept groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou dost me despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But oh, Eliza, hear one prayer—
For pity's sake forgive me!

III.
The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it ensaw'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
'Till fear no more had sav'd me.
The unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

O XXXV.
O PHILLY, HAPPY BE THAT DAY.

Tune—"The Sow's Tail."

["This morning" (19th November, 1794), "though a keen blowing frost," Burns writes to Thomson, "in my walk before breakfast I finished my duet: whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say: but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old."]

O Philly, happy be that day,
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

O Wilf, ay I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou diest pledge the powers above,
To be my ain dear Willy.

As songsters of the early year
Are like day mair sweet to hear,
So like day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

The milder sun and bluer sky
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight o' Philly.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
As meeting o' my Willy.

The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compr'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

The woodbine in the dewy west
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kis o' Willy.

Let Fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools say tyne, and knaves may win.
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

What's a' joys that godw can gie?
I care nae wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

O XXXVI.
CONTENTED W' LITTLE.

Tune—"Lumps o' Pudding."

[Burns was an admirer of many songs which the more critical and fastidious regarded as rude and coarse.
"Tudin Hame" he called an unequalled composition for wit and humour, and "Andro w' his eauty Gae," the
work of a master. In the same letter, where he records
these sentiments, he writes his own imitable song,
"Contented wi' Little."

I.

Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgeth wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creepin' alang,
Wi' a cog o' guid swats, and an auld Scottish
sang.

II.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a sodger, and life is a fught;
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch
dare touch.

III.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' guid fellowship sowtheres it a':
When at the bithie end o' our journey at last,
Wha the dell ever thinks o' the road he has past?

IV.

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her
way:
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jude gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure or
pain;
My warst word is—"Welcome, and welcome
again!"

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CCXXXVII.

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS.

Tune—"Roy's Wife."

[When Burns transcribed the following song for Thom-
son, on the 28th of November, 1794, he noted, "Well! I
think this, to be done in two or three turns across my
room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard,
is not so far amiss. You see I am resolved to have my
quantum of applause from somebody." The poet in this
song commemorates the coldness of Mrs. Reid's: the lady
espied in a straw equally tender and forgiving.]

I.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?
In this thy plighthed, fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy!
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
A' aching, broken heart, my Katy!

II.

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That sickle heat of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy!
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

---

CCXXXVIII.

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

Tune—"There'll never be peace."

[Clarinda, tradition avers, was the inspirer of this
song, which the poet composed in December, 1794, for
the work of Thomson. His thoughts were often in Edin-
burgh: on festive occasions, when, as Campbell beauti-
fully says, "The wine-cup shines in light," he seldom
forgot to toast Mrs. Mac.]

I.

Now in her green mantle blythe the nature arrays,
AndListens the lambkins that bleat o'er the
braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilk green shaw;
But to me it's delightful—my Nannie's awa!

II.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands
adorn,
And violet bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nanny's awa!

III.

Thou lae'rock that springs frae the dews of the
lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the gray-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hailes the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa!

IV.

Come autumn sae pensive, in yellow an' gray,
And soothe me with tidings o' nature's decay:
The dark dreary winter, and wild driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie's awa!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

OCXXXIX.

O WHA IS SHE THAT LOVES ME.

Tune—"Morag."

["This song," says Sir Harris Nicolas, "is said, in Thomson's collection, to have been written for that work by Burns: but it is not included in Mr. Cunningham's edition." If Sir Harris would be so good as to look at page 343, vol. V., of Cunningham's edition of Burns, he will find the song; and if he will look at page 38, and page 113 of vol. III. of his own edition, he will find that he has not committed the error of which he accuses his fellow-editor, for he has inserted the same song twice. The same may be said of the song to Chloris, which Sir Harris has printed at page 312, vol. II., and at page 136, vol. III., and of "As day a braw ween came down the lang gien," which appears both at page 334 of vol. II., and 1 page 153 of vol. III.]

I.

O wha is she that loe's me,
And has my heart a-keeping?
O sweet is she that loe's me,
As dews of simmer weeping,
In tears the rose-buds steeping!
O that's the lassie of my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen of womankind,
And ne'er a sune to peer her.

II.

If thou shalt meet a lassie
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming
Had ne'er sic powers alarming.

III.

If thou hast heard her talking,
And thry attentions plighted,
That ilka body thinking,
But her by thee is slighted,
And thou art all delighted.

IV.

If thou hast met this fair one;
When free her thou hast parted,
If every other fair one,
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted;
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a sune to peer her.

OCXLI.

CALEDONIA.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

[There is both knowledge of history and elegance of allegory in this singular lyric: it was first printed by Currie.]

I.

There was once a day—but old Time then was young—
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would:
Her heavily relations there fixed her reign,
And pleiad her their godheads to warrant it good.

II.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred the heroine grew;
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore
"Who'er shall provoke thee, th'encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To seed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were her favorite resort,
Her darling amusement, the hounds and the horn.

III.

Long quiet she reign'd; till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand:
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land:
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They'd conquer'd and rule'd a world beside;
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly—
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

IV.

The fell harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore;
The wild Scandinavian bear issu'd forth
To wanton in carnage, and wallow in gore;
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, no arms could repel;
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Large well can witness, and Loncartie tell.

V.
The Cameleon-savage disturbed her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hope and his life:
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, unsanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood:
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learned to fear in his own native wood.

VI.
Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run:
For brave Caledonia immortal must be;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:
Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base;
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse;
Then ergo, she'll match them, and match them always.

CCXLII.
O LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS.
Tune—""Cordwainer's March."

[The air to which these verses were written, is commonly played at the Saturnalia of the shoemakers on King Crispin's day. Burns sent it to the Museum.]

I.
O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.
A slave to love's unbounded sway,
He stert has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly sace,
Unless thou be my ain.

II.
There's monie a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'd best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

CCXLI.
THE FETE CHAMPETRE.

Tune—"Kiltiecrankie."

[Written to introduce the name of Cunningham, of Enterkin, to the public. Teats were erected on the banks of Ayre, decorated with shrubs, and strewn with flowers, most of the names of note in the district were invited, and a splendid entertainment took place; but no dissolution of parliament followed as was expected, and the Lord of Enterkin, who was desirous of a seat among the "Commons," poured out his wine in vain.]

I.
O wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
To do our errands there, man?
O wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
O' th' merry lads of Ayre, man?
Or will we send a man-o'-law?
Or will we send a sod er?
Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
The meikle Urse-Major?

II.
Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
For worth and honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencairn's, man?
Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter;
Anbank, wha gues'st the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champêtre.

III.
When Love and Beauty heard the news,
The gay green-woods amang, man;
Where gathering flowers and busking bowers,
They heard the blackbird's sang, man;
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
Sir Politicks to fetter,
As theirs alone, the patent-bless
To hold a Fête Champêtre.

IV.
Then mounted Mirth, on gleesome wing,
O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man:
OF ROBERT BURNS.

She summon'd every social sprite
That sports by wood or water,
On th' bonny banks of Ayr to meet,
And keep this Fête Champêtre.

V.
Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
Were bound to stakes like yre, man;
And Cynthia’s car, o’ silver fu’,
Clamb up the starry sky, man:
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
Or down the current shatter;
The western breeze steals thro’ the trees,
To view this Fête Champêtre.

VI.
How many a robe one gaily floats!
What sparkling jewels glance, man!
To Harmony’s enchanting notes,
As moves the mazy dance, man.
She echoing wood, the winding flood,
Like Paradise did glister,
When angels met, at Adam’s yet,
To hold their Fête Champêtre.

VII.
When Politics came there, to mix
And make his ether-stane, man!
He circled round the magic ground,
But entrance found he nane, man;
He blush’d for shame, he quart his name,
Forewarned it, every letter,
Wi’ humble prayer to join and share
This festive Fête Champêtre.

CCXLIII.
HERE’S A HEALTH.

Tune—"Here’s a health to them that’s awa."

(The Charlots of this song was Charles Fox; Tammie was Lord Erskine; and M’Leod, the maiden name of the Countess of Loudon, was then, as now, a name of influence both in the Highlands and Lowlands. The buff and blue of the Whigs had triumphed over the white rose of Jacobitism in the heart of Burns, when he wrote these verses.)

I.
Here’s a health to them that’s awa,
Here’s a health to them that’s awa;
And wha wins a wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa’!

II.
Here’s a health to them that’s awa,
Here’s a health to them that’s awa;
Here’s a health to Charlie the chief of the clain,
Altho’ that his band be sme’.
May liberty meet wi’ success!
May prudence protect her frae evil!
May tyrants and tyranny tine in the mist,
And wander their way to the devil!

III.
Here’s a health to them that’s awa,
Here’s a health to them that’s awa;
Here’s a health to Tammas, the Norland laddie,
That lives at the log o’ the law!
Here’s freedom to him that wis read,
Here’s freedom to him that wis write!
There’s nane ever fear’d that the truth shou’d be heard,
But they wham the truth wis indite.

IV.
Here’s a health to them that’s awa,
Here’s a health to them that’s awa;
Here’s Chiefain M’Leod, a chiefain worth gowd,
Tho’ bred amang mountains o’ smaw!
Here’s a health to them that’s awa,
Here’s a health to them that’s awa;
And wha wins a wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa’!

CCXLIV.
IS THERE, FOR HONEST POVERTY.

Tune—"For o’ that, and o’ that"

(In this noble lyric Burns has vindicated the natural right of his species. He modestly says to Thomson, "I do not give you this song for your book, but merely by way of view is bannait; for the piece is really not poetry, but will be allowed to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme." Thomson took the song, but hazarded no praise.)

I.
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, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that!

I.
What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoolin gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man, for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that!

II.
Ye see yon birkie, ca'd—a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

IV.
A king can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that,
But an honest man's ahoon his might,
Guid faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks 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, and a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

OCXLVI.
O LASSIE, ART THOU SLEEPING YET.
Tune—"Let me in this as night."
[The thoughts of Burns, it is said, wandered to the fair Mrs. Riddel, at Woodleigh Park, while he composed this song for Thomson. The idea is taken from an old 'lyrie, of more spirit than decorum.]

O Lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou wak'ing, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O raise and let me in, jo!

O Lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou wak'ing, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo!

OCXLV.
CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.
[Craigie-burn Wood was written for George Thomson: the heroine was Jean Lorimer. How o'ten the blooming looks and elegant forms of very indifferent characters lend a lasting lustre to painting and poetry.]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

III.
The bitter blast that round me blows,
Unheed bow'ls, unheed sa's;
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.
O let me in this sa night,
This sa, sa, sa night;
For pity's sake this sa night,
O rise and let me in, jo!

OCXLVII.

O TELL NA ME O' WIND AND RAIN.

[T'he poet's thoughts, as rendered in the lady's answer, are, at all events, not borrowed from the sentiments expressed by Mrs. Riddell, alluded to in song CCXXXVII.; there she is tender and forgiving; here she is stern and cold.]

1.
O tell na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain!
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
I winna let you in, jo.
I tell you now this sa night,
This sa, sa, sa night,
And ance for a' this sa night,
I winna let you in, jo!

II.
The smallest blast, at mornest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures,
That's trusted faithless man, jo.

III.
The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed:
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her a'm, jo.

IV.
The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
Is now the cruel fowler's prey;
Let witless, trusting woman say,
How aftar her fate's the same, jo.
I tell you now this sa night,
This sa, sa, sa night;
And ance for a' this sa night,
I winna let you in jo!

OCXLVIII.

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

Tune—"Push about the jorum."

[This national song was composed in April, 1796. The poet had been at a public meeting, where he was less joyous than usual: as something had been expected from him, he made these verses, when he went home, and sent them, with his compliments, to Mr. Jackson, editor of the Dumfries Journal. The original, through the kindness of my friend, James Milligan, Esq., is now before me.]

I.
Doze haughty Gaul invasion threat,
Then let the loons beware, Sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir.
The Nith shall run to Corsinook,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!

II.
O let us not, like snarling tykes,
In wrangling be divided;
Till slap come in an unco loon
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Mann British wrangs be righted!

III.
The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
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.

IV.
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.
COXLIX.
ADDRESS TO THE WOOD-LARK.
Tune—"Where’s bonnie Ann lIE."

[The song sung to the same air is yet remembered: but
the humour is richer than the delicacy; the same is
said of many of the fine hea er lyrics of the elder days
of Caledonia. These verses were composed in May,
1796, for Thomson.]

I.
O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay!
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

II.
Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that would touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi’ disclaiming.

III.
Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join’d,
Sic notes o’ woe could wauken.

IV.
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!

CCL.
ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.
Tune—"Ay wakin’, O."

[An old and once popular lyric suggested this brief and
sappy song for Thomson: some of the verses deserve to
be bai in remembrance.]

AY wakin’, oh,
Waking ay and weary;
Sleep I canna get
For thinking o’ my dearie.

I.
Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul’s delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Can I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish?
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?

III.
Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror;
Slumber even I dread,
Every dream is horror.

III.
Hear me, Pow’rs divine!
Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!
Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul’s delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

CCLI.
CALEDONIA.
Tune—"Humours of Glen."

[Love of country often mingles in the lyric strains of
Burns with his personal attachments, and in few more
beautifully than in the following, written for Thomson
the heroine was Mrs. Burns.]

I.
Their groves o’ sweet myrtle let foreign lands
reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the
perfume;
Far dearer to me you lone glen o’ green brookan,
With the burn stealing under the lang yellow
broom:
Far dearer to me are you humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly
unseen;
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild
flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

II.
Th’ rich is the breeze in their gay sunny valleys,
And cauld Caledonia’s blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the
proud palace,
What are they—The haunt of the tyrant
and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling
fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his moun-
tains,
Save fove's willing settlers, the chains o' his
Jean.

OCILII.
'TWAS NA HER BONNIE BLUE EEN.
Tune—"Laddie, lie near me."
[Though the lady who inspired these verses is called
Mary by the poet, such, says tradition, was not her
name; yet tradition, even in this, wavers, when it aver-
one while that Mrs. Reidel, and at another time that
Jean Lortimer was the heroine.]

I.
'Twas na her bonnie blue een was my ruin;
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing:
'Twas the dear smile when nobody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet stown glance o' kindness.

II.
Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me!
But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

III.
Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
And thou'r't the angel that never can alter—
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

OCILVIII.
HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS.
Tune—"John Anderson, my jo."
["I am at this moment," says Burns to Thomson,
when he sent him this song, "holding high converse with
the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on a pro-
saic dog, such as you are." Yet there is less than the
poet's usual inspiration in this lyric, for it is altered from
an English one.]

I.
How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,

II.
And, to the wealthy booby,
Poor woman sacrifice!
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife;
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

CILIV.
MARK YONDER POMP.
Tune—"Deil tak the wark."
[Burns tells Thomson, in the letter enclosing this song,
that he is in a high fit of postizing, provided he is not
cured by the strictest estreet of criticism. "You see," he
said, "how I answer your orders; your tailor could
not be more punctual." This strain in honour of Chloris
is original in conception, but wants the fine lyrical flow
of some of his other compositions.]

I.
MARK yonder pomp of costly fashion
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compar'd with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.
What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay gaudy glare of vanity and art.
The polish'd jewel's blaze
May draw the word's ring gaze,
And courteously grandeur bright
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.

II.
But, did you see my dearest Chloris
In simplicity's array;
Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day;
O then the heart alarming;
And all restless charming,
THE POETICAL WORKS

In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Avarice would deny
His worship'd deity,
And feel thro' every vein Love's raptures roll.

OCLV.

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.
Tune—"This is no my ain hause."

[Though composed to the order of Thomson, and therefore less likely to be the offspring of asocialized inspiration, this is one of the happiest of modern songs. When the poet wrote it, he seems to have been beside the "fair dame at whose shrine," he said, "I, the priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus."]

I.
O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.
I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place:
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.

II.
She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And say it charms my very soul,
The kind love that's in her e'e.

III.
A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg as light are lovers' e'en,
When kind love is in the e'e.

IV.
It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

OCLVI.

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVE IN GREEN.
TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[Composed in reference to the love disappointment of the poet's friend, Alexander Cunningham, which also occasioned the song beginning, "Had I a cave on some wild distant shore."]

I.
Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers:
The surrow'd waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While like thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mines
The weary steps of woe!

II.
The trout within you wimping 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 scorched my fountains dry.

III.
The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Na ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the with'ring blast
My youth and joy consume.

IV.
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 flow'ry snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrill o' care.

V.
O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagued my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
OF ROBERT BURNS.

The wretch whose doom is, "hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whose bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

O Wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sights with mine, love.

C L V I I .

C BONNIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER.
[To Jean Lorimer, the heroine of this song, Burns presented a copy of the last edition of his poems, that of 1793, with a dedicatory inscription, in which he moralizes upon her youth, her beauty, and steadfast friendship, and signs himself Colia.]

I.
O bonnie was yon rosy brier,
That blooms see far free haunt o' man,
And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

II.
Yon rosebuds in the morning daw
How pure, among the leaves see green:
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

III.
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.

IV.
The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wf! Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

C L V I I I .

F O R L O R N , MY LOVE, NO COMFORT NEAR.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

["How do you like the foregoing?" Burns asks Thomson, after having copied this song for his collection.
"I have written it within this hour: so much for the speed of my Pegasus: but what say you to his bottom??]

I.
Forlorn, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I must repine, love.

C L C L X I .

L A S T M A Y A B R A W WOOLER.

Tune—"The Lothian Lassie."

["Gateslack," says Burns to Thomson, "is the name of a particular place, a kind of passage among the Lowther Hills, on the confines of Dumfriesshire: Dalgarrock, is also the name of a romantic spot near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and burial-ground." To this, it may be added that Dalgarock kirkyard is the scene where the author of Waverley finds Old Mortality repairing the Cameronian grave-stones.]

I.
Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was nothing I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me!

II.
He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black e'en,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked for Jean,
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!
THE POETICAL WORKS

III.

A weel-stocked mailen—himself' for the laird—
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenu'd it, or car'd,
But thought I may hae war her offers, war her offers,
But thought I might hae war her offers.

IV.

But what wad ye think? In a fortnight or less—
The dell tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the Gateslack to my black cousin Bess,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her,
could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

V.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gae to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,
And was but my fine fickle lover was there?
I glow'r'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glow'r'd as I'd seen a warlock.

VI.

But owre my left atheros I gae him a blink,
Lest neebors might say I was saucy;
My woeer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

VII.

I spier'd for my cousin fo' courtly and sweet,
Gin she had recovered her hearin',
And how my auld shoon suited her shaundered feel.
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin',
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin'.

VIII.

He begg'd, for Gudessake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
So, e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

Col. L.

CHLORIS.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

("I am at present," says Burns to Thomson, when he
communicated these verses, "quite occupied with the
charming sensations of the toothache, so have not a word
to spare—such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air
that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it."
This is the last of his strains in honour of Chloris.

I.

Wyt, why tell thy lover,
Bliis he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

II.

O why, while fancy raptured, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?

Col. LXI.

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.

[This song is said to be Burns's version of a Gaelic
lament for the ruin which followed the rebellion of the
year 1745: he sent it to the Museum.]

I.

Or! I am come to the low countries,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Without a penny in my purse,
To buy a meal to me.

II.

It was na see in the Highland hills,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the country wide
Sae happy was as me.

III.

For then I had a score o' kye,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Feeding on yon hills so high,
And giving milk to me.

IV.

And there I had three score o' yowes,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Skipping on yon bonnie knowes,
And casting woor to me.

V.

I was the happiest of a' the clan,
Sair, sair, may I repine;
For Donald was the brawest lad,
And Donald he was mine.

VI.

Till Charlie Stewart cam' at last,
Sae far to set us free;
My Donald's arm was wanted then,
For Scotland and for me.

VII.
Their wae'sfu' fate what need I tell,
Right to the wrang did yield:
My Donald and his country fell
Upon Culloden's field.

VIII.
Oh! I am come to the low countrie,
Och-on, och-on, och-ris!
Nae woman in the world wide
Sae wretched now as me.

OCLXII.
TO GENERAL DUMOURIER.
PARODY ON ROBIN ADAM.
[Burns wrote this "Welcome" on the unexpected de-
[ector of General Dumourier.]

You're welcome to despots, Dumourier;
You're welcome to despots, Dumourier;
How does Dampierre do?
Aye, and Bourmontville, too?
Why did they not come along with you, Du-

mou rier?

I.
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul I'll dance a dance with you, Dumou-

rier.

II.
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Till freedom's spark is out,
Then we'll be damn'd, no doubt, Dumourier.

OCLXIII.
PEG-A-RAMSEY.
Tune—"Cauld is the o'enin' blast."
[Most of this song is old: Burns gave it a brushing for
the Museum.]

I.
Cauld is the o'enin' blast
O' Boroca o'er the pool,

And davin' it is dreary
When birks are bare at Yule.

II.
O bitter blaws the o'enin' blast
When bitter bites the frost,
And in the mirk and dreary drift
The hills and glens are lost

III.
Ne'er sae murky blew the night
That drifted o'er the hill,
But a bonnie Peg-a-Ramsay
Gat grait to her mill.

OCLXIV.
THERE WAS A BONNIE LASS.
[A snatch of an old strain, trimmed up a little for the
Museum.]

I.
There was a bonnie lass,
And a bonnie, bonnie lass,
And she lo'ed her bonnie laddie dear;
Till war's loud alarms
Tore her laddie frae her arms,
Wi' mony a sigh and tear.

II.
Over sea, over shore,
Where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear;
And nocht could him quell,
Or his bosom assail,
But the bonnie lass he lo'ed sae dear.

OCLXV.
O MALLEY'S MEIK, MALLEY'S SWEEP.
[Burns, it is said, composed these verses, on meeting a
country girl, with her shoes and stockings in her ap-
walking homewards from a Dumfries fair. He was
struck with her beauty, and as beautifully has he rec-
ited it. This was his last communication to the MUSEUM.]

I.
O Malley's meek, Malley's sweet,
Malley's modest and discreet,
Malley's rare, Malley's fair,
Malley's every way complete.
HE Y FOR A LASS W 1' A TOCHER.

Tune—“Ballad of the Ora.”

[Communicated to Thomson, 17th of February, 1798, to be printed as part of the poet's contribution to the Irish melodies: he calls it “a kind of rhapsody.”]

I.

Awa w' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:
O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass w' the weal-stickit farms.
Then hey for a lass w' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass w' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass w' a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me.

II.

You'r beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knows,
Ilk spring they're new deckit w' bonnie white yowes.

III.

And s'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy when possesst;
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CCLXVIII.

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.

Tune—"Rothemurche."

[On the 19th of July, 1798, as Burns lay dying at Brow, on the 8th way, his thoughts wandered to early days, and this song, the last he was to measure in this world, was dedicated to Charlotte Hamilton, the maid of the Devon.]

I.

FAIREST maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that brow aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do?

II.

Full well thou know'st I love thee, dear!
Could'st thou to malice lend an ear?
O! did not love exclaim "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so."

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wondrous smiles, O let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear,
No love but thine my heart shall know.

FAIREST maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that brow aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do?

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

TO WILLIAM BURNESS.

[This was written by Burns in his twenty-third year, when learning sax-dressing in Irvine, and is the earliest of his letters which has reached us. It has much of the scriptural deference to paternal authority, and none of the complete letter writer than we look for in the original mind.]

Irvine, Dec. 27, 1781.

Honoured Sir,

I have purposely delayed writing in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-Year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are lightened, I glimpse a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasing employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way; I am quite trans-
ments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and with wishing you a merry New-Year's day, I shall conclude.
I am, honoured sir, your dutiful son,
Robert Burns.
P.S. My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.

II.

TO MR. JOHN MURDOCH,
SCHOOLMASTER,
STABLES-INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.

[John Murdoch, one of the poet's early teachers, removed from the west of Scotland to London, where he lived to a good old age, and loved to talk of the pious William Burns and his eminent son.]

Lochlea, 15th January, 1788.

Dear Sir,
As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and, in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have got; but, as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient. One would have thought that, bred as I have been, under a father, who has figured pretty well as un homme des affaires, I might have been, what the world calls, a pushing, active fellow; but to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly anything more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world to see and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be anything original about him, which shows me human nature in a different light from anything I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling subject, I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to anything further. Even the last, worst shift of the unfortunate and the wretched, does not much terrify me: I know that even then, my talent for what country folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem, that even then—I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for though indolent, yet so far as an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not, indeed, for the sake of the money; but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach; and I scorn to fear the face of any man living: above everything, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me. In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse. My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his "Elegies;" Thomson; "Man of Feeling"—a book I prize next to the Bible; "Man of the World;" Sterne, especially his "Sentimental Journey;" Macpherson's "Osian," &c.; these are the glorious models after which I endeavour 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 contends 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 terrefial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves! O 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 manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side, as an idle encumbrance in their way.—But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common-place story; but my warmest, kindest

1 The last shift alluded to here must be the condition of an itinerant beggar.—Crasie.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from,  

Dear Sir, yours.—R. B.

III.

TO ME. JAMES BURNESS,  
WRITER, MONTROSE.  

[James Burnsess, son of the poet's uncle, lives at Mont- 
rose, and, as may be surmised, is now very old: fame has 
come to his house through his eminent cousin Robert, and 
dearer still through his own grandson, Sir Alexander 
Burnes, with whose talents and intrepidity the world is 
well acquainted.]

Lochin, 21st June, 1788.

Dear Sir,

My father received your favour of the 10th current, and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is in his own opinion (and indeed, in almost everybody’s else) in a dying condition, he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father’s correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high; oatmeal 17d. and 18d. per peck, and not to be gotten even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere, but that resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, and Co.’s bank, which no doubt you heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and poperries, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, how ever destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese, 'tis but a very little one, as our last year’s stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs. Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

1 This gentleman (the son of an elder brother of my father’s), when he was very young, lost his father, and having discovered in his father’s repositories some of his father’s letters, he requested that the correspondence might be renewed. My father continued till the last year of his life to correspond with his nephew, and it was afterwards kept up by my brother. Extracts from some of my brother’s letters to his cousin are introduced, for the purpose of exhibiting the poet before he had attracted the notice of the public, and in his domestic family relations afterwards.—Gilbert Burns.
TO MISS E.

My dear E.,

I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love, amongst people of our station of life: I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves: some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greater part of us; and I must own, dear E., it is a hard game, such a one as you have to play when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet though you use him ever so favourably, per-

 Lochlea, 1788.

R. B.
happens in a few months, or at farthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the marriage state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please, and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree. If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest periods of life, I can look forward and see that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age; even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me, I will regard my E. with the tenderest affection, and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

1 O! happy state when souls each other draw, When love is liberty and nature law."

I know were I to speak in such a style to many a girl, who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is, my dear E., the only courtship I shall ever use to you. When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship, but I shall make no apology—I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

R. B.
rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to
love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour
to promote your happiness; if these are quali-
ties you would wish in a friend, in a husband, I
hope you shall ever find them in your real friend,
and sincere lover.

R. B.

VII.

TO MISS E.

Lochlea, 1783.

I OUGHT, in good manners, to have acknow-
ledged the receipt of your letter before this
time, but my heart was so shocked, with the
contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my
thoughts so as to write you on the subject. I
will not attempt to describe what I felt on re-
ceiving your letter. I read it over and over, again
and again, and though it was in the politest lan-
guage of refusal, still it was peremptory; "you
were sorry you could not make me a return, but
you wish me," what without you I never can
obtain, "you wish me all kind of happiness."
It would be weak and unmanly to say that, with-
out you I never can be happy; but sure I am,
that sharing life with you would have given it
a relish, that, wanting you, I can never taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and
your superior good sense, do not so much strike
me; these, possibly, in a few instances may be
met with in others; but that amiable goodness,
that tender feminine softness, that enchanting
sweetness of disposition, with all the charming
offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never
again expect to meet with, in such a degree, in
this world. All these charming qualities, height-
ened by an education much beyond anything I
have ever met in any woman I ever dared to
approach, have made an impression on my heart
that I do not think the world can ever efface.
My imagination had fondly flattered myself
with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a
hope, that possibly I might one day call you
mine. I had formed the most delightful images,
and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but
now I am wrecked for the loss of what I really
had no right to expect. I must now think no
more of you as a mistress; still I presume to
ask to be admitted as a friend. As much I wish
to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to
remove in a few days a little further off, and
you, I suppose, will perhaps soon leave this
place, I wish to see or hear from you soon; and
if an expression should perhaps escape me,
rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will
pardon it in, my dear Miss—(pardon me the
dear expression for once) 

R. B.

VIII.

TO ROBERT RIDDLE, ESQ.

OF GLENRIDDLE.

[These memoranda throw much light on the early days
of Burns, and on the history of his mind and composi-
tions. Robert Riddel, of the Friars-Carse, to whom
these fragments were sent, was a good man as well as a
distinguished antiquary.]

My Dear Sir,

On rummaging over some old papers I lighted
on a MS. of my early years, in which I had de-
termined to write myself out; as I was placed
by fortune among a class of men to whom my
ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant
that the book should have lain by me, in the
fond hope that some time or other, even after I
was no more, my thoughts would fall into the
hands of somebody capable of appreciating their
value. It sets off thus:—

"Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of
Poetry, &c., by Robert Burns: a man who
had little art in making money, and still less in
keeping it; but was, however, a man of some
sense, a great deal of honesty, and unbounded
good-will to every creature, rational and irra-
tional.—As he was but little indebted to scho-
lastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his
performances must be strongly tinctured with
his unpolished, rustic way of life; but as I be-
lieve they are really his own, 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, anxi-
ety, grief, with the like cares and passions,
which, however diversified by the modes and
manners of life, operate pretty much alike, I
believe, on all the species."

"There are numbers in the world who do not want
sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of
their own abilities to put them upon recording their observa-
tions, and allowing them the same importance which
they do to those which appear in print."—Sheraton
OF ROBERT BURNS.

"Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil, or our pen designed;
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind."—Ibid.

April, 1788.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed upon it. If anything on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

August.

There is certainly some connexion 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 towards her cot she 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, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed on her. I not only had this opinion of her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end.

O once I lov'd a bonnie lass! 1

Lest my works should be thought below criticism: or meet with a critic, who, perhaps, will not look on them with so candid and favourable an eye, I am determined to criticise them myself.

The first distich of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads: and, on the other hand, the second distich is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious. Stanzas the second I am well pleased with; and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the sex—the agreeables; or what in our Scotch dialect we call a sweet sonzie lass. The third stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it; and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line, is, indeed, all in the strain of the second stanza, but the rest is most expletive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favourite idea—a sweet sonzie lass: the last line, however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza, but the second and fourth lines ending with short syllables hurt the whole. The seventh stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance.

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies, or crimes, have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitent sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace, That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish, Beyond comparison the worst are those That to our folly or our guilt we owe.

In every other circumstance, the mind Has this to say, 'It was no deed of mine;' But when to all the evil of misfortune This sting is added—'Blame thy foolish self!' Or worse far, the pangs of keen remorse;— The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;—The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us, Nay, more, that every love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell; in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace!
O happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

March, 1784.

I have often observed, 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, of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for 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, what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know 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.

I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind, commonly known by the ordinary phrase of blackguards, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay sometimes, stained with guilt, I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

April.

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, peculiar to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. 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: but there is something even in the—

"Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste
Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,"—
which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to everything great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. 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 misfortunes, I composed the following:—

The wintry west extends his blast.

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verses, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether the following song 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:—

Behind you hills, where Lugar flows.

March, 1784.

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched
OF ROBERT BURNS.

state, the recollection of which makes me shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following:—

O thou Great Being! what Thou art.  

April.

The following song is a wild rhapsody, miscelaneously deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.

My father was a farmer  
Upon the Carrick border, O.

April.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the grave and the merry; though, by the bye, these terms do not with propriety enough express my ideas. The grave shall cast into the usual division of those who are gossed on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are the men of pleasure of all denominations: the jovial lads, who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but, without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature: the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent—in particular &c., who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity: but poverty and obscurity are only evils to him who can sit gravely down and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly, to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those whose heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling.

August.

The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men; but as I cannot please myself in the arrangement of my ideas, I must wait till farther experience and nearer observation throw more light on the subject.—In the mean time I shall set down the following fragment, which, as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable anybody to determine which of the classes I belong to.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',  
In ev'ry hour that passes, O.

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that Burns to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that renders life delightful; and to maintain an integrative conduct toward our fellow-creatures; that so, by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the priests and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave, I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of such a one as the above verses describe—one who spends the hours and thoughts which the vocations of the day can spare with Osian, Shakespeare, Thomson, Shenstone, Sterne, &c.; or, as the maggot takes him, a gun, a fiddle, or a song to make or mend; and at all times some heart's-dear bonnie laes in view—I say I do not see that the turn of mind and pursuits of such an one are in the least more inimical to the sacred interests of piety and virtue, than the even lawful, bustling and straining after the world's riches and honours: and I do not see but he may gain heaven as well—which, by the bye, is no mean consideration—who steals through the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way, as he, who straining straight forward, and perhaps spattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminencies, where, after all, he can only see and be seen a little more conspicuously than what, in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor, indolent devil he has left behind him.

August.

A Prayer, when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm:

O thou unknown, Almighty Cause  
Of all my hope and fear!

August.

Misgivings in the hour of despondency and prospect of death.—

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene.

1 Poem IX.  2 Song V.  4 Song XVII.  4 Poem X.  4 Poem XI.
EGOTISMS FROM MY OWN SENSATIONS.

May.
I don’t well know what is the reason of it, but somehow or other, though I am when I have a mind pretty generally beloved, yet I never could get the art of commanding respect. — I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what Sterne calls “that understapping virtue of discretion.” — I am so apt to a leprous lingue, that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man I have read of somewhere is very much apropos to myself—that he was a compound of great talents and great folly.—N. B. To try if I can discover the causes of this wretched infirmity, and, if possible, to mend it.

August.
However I am pleased with the works of our Scotch poets, particularly the excellent Ramsay, and the still more excellent Ferguson, yet I am hurt to see other places of Scotland, their towns, rivers, woods, haughs, &c., immortalized in such celebrated performances, while my dear native country, the ancient bailieries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, famous both in ancient and modern times for a gallant and warlike race of inhabitants; a country where civil, and particularly religious liberty have ever found their first support, and their last asylum; a country, the birth-place of many famous philosophers, soldiers, statesman, and the scene of many important events recorded in Scottish history, particularly a great many of the actions of the glorious Wallace, the Saviour of his country; yet, we have never had one Scotch poet of any eminence, to make the fertile banks of Irvine, the romantic woodlands and sequestered scenes on Ayr, and the heathy mountainous source and winding sweep of Doon, emulate Tay, Forth, Etrick, Tweed, &c. This is a complaint I would gladly remedy, but, alas! I am far unequal to the task, both in native genius and education. Obscure I am, and obscure I must be, though no young poet, nor young soldier’s heart, ever beat more fondly for fame than mine.

1 "If there is no other scene of being
Where my insatiate wish may have its fill,—
This something at my heart that heaves for room,
My best, my dearest part, was made in vain.”

September.
There is a great irregularity in the old Scotch songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent and measure that the English poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously, with the respective tunes to which they are set. For instance, the fine old song of "The Mill, Mill, O," to give it a plain prosaic reading, it halts prodigiously out of measure; on the other hand, the song set to the same tune in Bremer’s collection of Scotch songs, which begins "To Fanny fair could I impart," &c., it is most exact measure, and yet, let them both be sung before a real critic, one above the biases of prejudice, but a thorough judge of nature,—how flat and spiritless will the last appear, how trite, and namely methodical, compared with the wild warbling cadence, the heart-moving melody of the first!

This is particularly the case with all those airs which end with a hypermetrical syllable. There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions and fragments which are daily sung to them by my compere, the common people—a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllables, and yet, very frequently, nothing, not even like rhyme or sameness of jingle, at the ends of the lines. This has made me sometimes imagine that perhaps it might be possible for a Scotch poet, with a nice judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which show them to be the work of a masterly hand: and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard’s vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were.”

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well: the last, the meanest of the muse’s train—one who, though far inferior to your lights, yet eye—

1 "The Mill, Mill, O," is by Allan Ramsay.
your path, and with trembling wing would
sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard
unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your
memory! Some of you tell us, with all the
charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate
in the world—unfortunate in love: he, too, has
felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of
friends, and, worse than all, the loss of the
woman he adored. Like you, all his consola-
tion was his muse: she taught him in rustic
measures to complain. Happy could he have
done it with your strength of imagination and
flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your
bones: and may you now enjoy that solace and
rest which this world rarely gives to the heart
tuned to all the feelings of poesy and love!

September.

The following fragment is done something in
imitation of the manner of a noble old Scottish
piece, called McMillan's Peggy, and sings to the
tune of Galli Water.—My Montgomery's Peggy
was my deity for six or eight months. She had
been bred (though, as the world says, without
any pretence for it) in a style of life rather
elegant; but, as Vanbrugh says in one of his
comedies, my "d — d star found me out" there
too: for though I began the affair merely in a
gaieté de cœur, or, to tell the truth, which will
scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my
parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a
billet-doux, which I always piqued myself upon,
made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always
do in my foolish gallantries, I had fettered my-
self into a very warm affection for her, she told
me one day, in a flag of truce, that her fortress
had been for some time before the rightful pro-
erty of another; but, with the greatest friend-
ship and politeness, she offered me every alliance
except actual possession. I found out after-
wards that what she told me of a pre-engagement
was really true; but it cost me some
heartaches to get rid of the affair.

I have even tried to imitate in this extempore
thing that irregularity in the rhymes, which,
when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on
the ear.

"Altho' my bed were in yon muir."

1 Song VIII.

September.

There is another fragment in imitation of an
old Scotch song, well known among the country
ingle-sides. I cannot tell the name, neither of
the song nor the tune, but they are in fine unison
with one another. — By the way, these old Scot-
tish airs are so nobly sentimental, that when one
would compose to them, to "south the tune," as
our Scotch phrase is, over and over, is the readi-
est way to catch the inspiration, and raise the
bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly
characteristic of our old Scotch poetry. I shall
here set down one verse of the piece mentioned
above, both to mark the song and tune I mean,
and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as
the repeating of that verse has lighted up my
flame a thousand times:

When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their storms are past and gone

Though fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistresses, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still

I'll act with prudence as far as I'm able
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

The above was an extempore, under the pres-
sure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, in-
deed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was
just at the close of that dreadfull period men-
tioned already, and though the weather has
brightened up a little with me, yet there has
always been since a tempest brewing round me
in the grim sky of futurity, which I pretty plainly
see will some time or other, perhaps ere long,
overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful
dell, to pine in solitary, squallid wretchedness.

However, as I hope my poor country muse, wha,
all rustic, awkward, and unpolished as she is,
has more charms for me than any other of the
pleasures of life beside—as I hope she will not
then desert me, I may even then learn to be, if
not happy, at least easy, and south a sang to
sooth my misery.

'Twas at the same time I set about composing
an air in the old Scotch style. — I am not musi-
cal scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps 'tis no great matter; but the following were the verses I composed to suit it:

O raging fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!

The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole air.

October, 1785.

If ever any young man, in the vestibule of the world, chance to throw his eye over these pages, let him pay a warm attention to the following observations, as I assure him they are the fruit of a poor devil's dear-bought experience. I have literally, like that great poet and great gallant, and by consequence, that great fool, Solomon, "turned my eyes to behold madness and folly." Nay, I have, with all the ardour of a lively, fanciful, and whimsical imagination, accompanied with a warm, feeling, poetic heart, shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the first place, let my pupil, as he tends his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity. *

This is all worth quoting in my MSS., and more than all. R. B.

IX.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES, MONTROSE.

[The elder Burns, whose death this letter intimates, lies buried in the kirkyard of Alloway, with a tombstone recording his worth.]

Lochlea, 17th Feb. 1784.

Dear Cousin,

I would have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th of December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event, which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though, to be sure, we had had long warning of the impending stroke; still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender enlaments and parental lessons of...}

1 Song II.

the best of friends and ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connexion in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure—with pride, acknowledge my connexion with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honour and revere.

I expect, therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblige.

My dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

R. B.

X.

TO JAMES BURNES, MONTROSE.

[Mrs. Buchan, the forerunner in extravagance and absurdity of Joanna Southcott, after attempting to fix her tent among the hills of the west and the vales of the Nith, finally set up her stall at Auchengibber-Hill, in Galloway, where she lectured her followers, and held out hopes of their reaching the stars, even in this life. She died early; one or two of her people, as she called them, survived till within these half-dozen years.]

Mossgiel, August, 1784.

We have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this half century. We have had a party of Presbytery relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago, a Mrs. Buchan from Glasgow came among them, and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts; and, among others, their preacher, Mr. Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he and their spiritual mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed Mrs. Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their
doors beh nd them; one left a washing on the
green, another a cow bellowing at the crib with-
out food, or anybody to mind her, and after
several stages, they are fixed at present in the
neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are
a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among
others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost
by breathing on them, which she does with pos-
tures and practices that are scandalously inde-
sent; they have likewise disposed of all their
effects, and hold a community of goods, and
live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great
farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods,
where they lodge and lie all together, and hold
likewise a community of women, as it is another
of their tenets that they can commit no moral
sin. I am personally acquainted with most of
them, and I can assure you the above mentioned
are facts.

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many in-
stances of the folly of leaving the guidance of
sound reason and common sense in matters of
religion.

Whenever we neglect or despise these sacred
monitors, the whimsical notions of a perturbated
brain are taken for the immediate influences
of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the
most inconstant absurdities, will meet with
abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought,
that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous the
fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the
sacred name of religion, the unhappy mistaken
votaries are the more firmly glued to them.

R. B.

XI.

TO MISS —-

(This has generally been printed among the early letters
of Burns. Comrie thinks that the person addressed was
the "Peggy" of the Common-place Book. This is ques-
tioned by Robert Chambers, who, however, leaves both
name and date unsettled.)

My dear Countr ywoman,
I am so impatient to show you that I am once
more at peace with you, that I send you the book
I mentioned directly, rather than wait the un-
certain time of my seeing you. I am afraid I
have mislaid or lost Collins' Poems, which I
promised to Miss Irvin. If I can find them, I
will forward them by you; if not, you must
apologize for me.

I know you will laugh at it when I tell you
that your piano and you together have played

the deuce somehow about my heart. My breast
has been widowed these many months, and I
thought myself proof against the fascinating
witchcraft; but I am afraid you will "feelingly
convince me what I am." I say, I am afraid,
because I am not sure what is the matter with
me. I have one miserable bad symptom; when
you whisper, or look kindly to another, it gives
me a draught of damnation. I have a kind of
wayward wish to be with you ten minutes by
yourself, though what I would say, Heaven
above knows, for I am sure I know not. I have
no formed design in all this; but just, in the
nakedness of my heart, write you down a mere
matter-of-fact story. You may perhaps give
yourself airs of distance on this, and that will
completely cure me; but I wish you would not:
just let us meet, if you please, in the old besten
way of friendship.

I will not subscribe myself your humble ser-
vant, for that is a phrase, I think at least fifty
miles off from the heart; but I will conclude
with sincerely wishing that the Great Protecor
of innocence may shield you from the barbed
dart of calumny, and hand you by the covert
snare of deceit.

R. B.

XII.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND,
OF EDINBURGH.

[John Richmond, writer, one of the poet's Mauchline
friends, to whom we are indebted for much valuable in-
formation concerning Burns and his productions—Consul
was the Mauchline carrier.]

Mostgift, Feb. 17, 1789.

My dear Sir,
I have not time at present to upbraid you
for your silence and neglect; I shall only say I
received yours with great pleasure. I have
enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your
perusal. I have been very busy with the muse
since I saw you, and have composed, among
several others, "The Ordination," a poem on
Mr. M'Kinnay's being called to Kilmarnock;
"Scotch Drink," a poem; "The Cotter's Satur-
day Night"; "An Address to the Devil," &c. I
have likewise completed my poem on the
"Dogs," but have not shown it to the world.
My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken, in Ayr, who
is pleased to express great approbation of my
works. Be so good as send me Ferguson, by
Connel, and I will remit you the money. I have
no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline,
they are just going on in the old way. I have
some very important news with respect to my-
self, not the most agreeable—news that I am
sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the
particulars another time. I am extremely
happy with Smith; he is the only friend I
have now in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive
your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let
me hear from you regularly by Connel. If
you would act your part as a friend, I am sure
neither good nor bad fortune should strange or
alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but
yesterday.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours,
R. B.

XIII.
TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY,
DUMFRIES HOUSE.

[Who the John Kennedy was to whom Burns addressed
this note, enclosing "The Cotter's Saturday night," it is
now, perhaps, vain to inquire: the Kennedy to whom
Mr. Cobbett introduces us was a Thomas—perhaps a re-
lation.]

Mosgiel, 3d March, 1786.

Sir,
I have done myself the pleasure of comply-
ing with your request in sending you my Cot-
tager.—If you have a leisure minute, I should
be glad you would copy it, and return me either
the original or the transcript, as I have not a
copy of it by me, and I have a friend who wishes
to see it.

"Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse."  
Robt. Burness.

XIV.
TO MR. ROBERT MUIR,
KILMARNOCK.

[The Muirs—there were two brothers—were kind and
generous patrons of the poet. They subscribed for half-
hundred copies of the Kilmarnock edition of his works,
and befriended him when friends were few.]

Mosgiel, 20th March, 1786.

Dear Sir,
I am heartily sorry I had not the pleasure of

seeing you as you returned through Mauchline;
but as I was engaged, I could not be in town
before the evening.

I here enclose you my "Scotch Drink," and
"may the —— follow with a blessing for your
edification." I hope, some time before we hear
the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at
Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill
between us, in a mustchkin-stoup; which will be
a great comfort and consolation to,

Dear Sir,
Your humble servant,

Robt. Burness.

XV.
TO MR. AIKEN.

[Robert Aiken, the gentleman to whom the "Cotter's
Saturday Night" is inscribed, is also introduced in the
"Brigs of Ayr." This is the last letter to which Burns
seems to have subscribed his name in the spelling of his
ancestors.]

Mosgiel, 3d April, 1786.

Dear Sir,
I received your kind letter with double plea-
sure, on account of the second flattering in-
stance of Mrs. C.'s notice and approbation, I
assure you I

"Turn out the burnt side o' my shin,"
as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory,
says, at such a patroness. Present her my
most grateful acknowledgment in your very
best manner of telling truth. I have inscribed
the following stanza on the blank leaf of Miss
More's Work:—

My proposals for publishing I am just going
to send to press. I expect to hear from you by
the first opportunity.

I am ever, dear Sir,
Yours,

Robt. Burness.

XVI.
TO MR. M'WHINNIE,
WRITEH, AT.

[Mr. M'Whinnie obtained for Burns several subscrip-
tions for the first edition of his Poems, of which this note
enclosed the proposals.]

1 Poem LXXV.
2 See Poem LXXVIII.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Mosgiel, 17th April, 1786.

It is injuring some hearts, those hearts that elegantly bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my own feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the enclosed, because I know it will gratify yours to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment which stamps the die with—with—with, perhaps, the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,
Your humble,
afflicted, tormented,
ROBERT BURNS.

Mosgiel, 20th April, 1786.

Sir,

By some neglect in Mr. Hamilton, I did not hear of your kind request for a subscription paper till this day. I will not attempt any acknowledgment for this, nor the manner in which I see your name in Mr. Hamilton’s subscription list. Allow me only to say, Sir, I feel the weight of the debt.

I have here like wise enclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions. I am a good deal pleased with some sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart, which, as the elegantly melting Gray says, “melancholy has marked for her own.”

Our race comes on apace; that much-expected scene of revelry and mirth; but to me it brings no joy equal to that meeting with which your last letterer the expectation of,

Sir,
Your indebted humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

XVIII.

TO MON. JAMES SMITH,
MAUCHLINE.

[James Smith, of whom Burns said he was small of stature, but large of soul, kept at that time a draper’s shop in Mauchline, and was cousin to the poet in many a wild adventure.]

Monday Morning, Mosgiel, 1786.

My dear Sir,

I went to Dr. Douglas yesterday, fully resolved to take the opportunity of Captain Smith: but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah to Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleurisy or fever, in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith, but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of September, right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate friend of Mr. Gavin Hamilton’s, and as good a fellow as heart could wish: with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter, I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it;—

“I’ll laugh an’ sing, an’ shake my leg,
As lang’s I daw.”

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o’clock, I shall see you, as I ride through to Greenock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them:

“O woman, lovely woman! Heaven design’d you
To temper man—we had been brutes without you.”

R. B.

XIX.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

[Burns was busy in a two-fold sense at present: as he was seeking patrons in every quarter for his contemplated volumes, and he was composing for it some of his most exquisite poetry.]

Mosgiel, 16 May, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have sent you the above hasty copy as I promised. In about three or four weeks I shall

R. B.

1 Otway. -Venice Preserved.
probably set the press a-going. I am much hurried at present, otherwise your diligence, so very friendly in my subscription, should have a more lengthened acknowledgment from,

Dear Sir,
Your obliged servant,

R. B.

XX.
TO MR. DAVID BRICE.

[David Brice was a shoemaker, and shared with Smith the confidence of the poet in his love affair. He was working in Glasgow when this letter was written.]

Montpelier, June 12, 1786.

Dear Brice,
I received your message by G. Patterson, and as I am not very strong at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention, or you to hear.

Poor ill-advised ungrateful Armour came home on Friday last. You have heard all the particulars of that affair, and a black affair it is. What she thinks of her conduct now, I don't know; one thing I do know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her, which I don't want to do. My poor dear unfortunate Jean! how happy have I been in thy arms! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely: I foresee she is in the road to, I am afraid, eternal ruin. * * * *

May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her: and may his grace be with her and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her; I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure: the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewell dear old Scotland!

and farewell dear ungrateful Jean! for never never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence poet in print; and to morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as fast as possible.

Believe me to be, dear Brice,
Your friend and well-wisher,

R. B.

XXI.
TO MR. ROBERT AIKEN.

[This letter was written under great distress of mind. That separation which Burns records in "The Lament," had, unhappily, taken place between him and Jean Armour, and it would appear, that for a time at least a coldness ensued between the poet and the patron, occasioned, it is conjectured, by that fruitful subject of sorrow and disquiet. The letter, I regret to say, is not wholly here.]

[Arayshire, 1786.]

Sir,
I was with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the first and readiest, which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper, but this, you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition till I grow richer! an epocha which I think will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely anything hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantyne, by publishing my poem of "The Brig of Ayr." I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable in a very long life of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection; but sheerly the instinctive emotion of my heart, too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.
I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business; the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gayety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad, and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be laid in the scale against it. **

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical in some points of our current belief, yet, I think, I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stinated bourne of our present existence; if so, then, how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling infancy of helpless infancy? O, thou great unknown Power!—thou almighty God! who has lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality!—I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me nor forsaken me! **

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storm of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power, in that way, to reap the fruit of your frienly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages, is the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should iminical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or enjoying it only threaten to entail farther misery—**

To tell the truth, I have little reason for complaint; as the world, in general, has been kind to me fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining, distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while all defenceless I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man, a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast); still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my schoolfellows and youthful compatries (those misguided few excepted who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the "hallachores" of the human race) were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent, in some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the marketplace," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim. **

You see, Sir, that if to know one's errors were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance: but according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it. **

B. B

XXII.

TO JOHN RICHMOND,
EDINBURGH.

[The minister who took him to pronounce Burns a single man, as he intimates in this letter, was the Rev. Mr. Auld, of Mauchline: that the law of the land and the law of the church were at variance on the subject no one can deny.]

Monasal, 9th July, 1786.

My dear Friend,

With the sincerest grief I read your letter. You are truly a son of misfortune. I shall be extremely anxious to hear from you how your health goes on; if it is in any way re-establishing, or if Leith promises well; in short, how you feel in the inner man.

No news worth anything: only godly Bryan was in the inquisition yesterday, and half the country-side as witnesses against him. He still stands out steady and denying: but proof was led yesternight of circumstances Lighly susp-
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO MR. DAVID BRICE.

SHOEMAKER, GLASGOW.

[The letters of Burns at this time and period of his life are full of his private sorrows. Had Jean Armour been left to the guidance of her own heart, the story of her early years would have been brighter.]

Monsgid, 17th July, 1786.

I have been so throng printing my Poems, that I could scarcely find as much time as to write to you. Poor Armour is come back again to Mauchline, and I went to call for her, and her mother forbade me the house, nor did she herself express much sorrow for what she has done. I have already appeared publicly in church, and was indulged in the liberty of standing in my own seat. I do this to get a certificate as a bachelor, which Mr. Auld has promised me. I am now fixed to go for the West Indies in October. Jean and her friends insisted much that she should stand along with me in the kirk, but the minister would not allow it, which bred a great trouble I assure you, and I am blamed as the cause of it, though I am sure I am innocent; but I am very much pleased, for all that, not to have had her company. I have no news to tell you that I remember. I am really happy to hear of your welfare, and that you are so well in Glasgow. I must certainly see you before I leave the country. I shall expect to hear from you soon, and am,

Dear Brice,

Yours,—R. B.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND.

[When this letter was written the poet was under sentence from place to place: the merciless pack of the law had been unoccupied at his heels. Mr. Armour did not wish to imprison, but to drive him from the country.]

Old Rome Forest, 30th July, 1786.

My dear Richmond,

My hour is now come—you and I will never meet in Britain more. I have orders within three weeks at farthest, to repair aboard the Nancy, Captain Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica, and call at Antigua. This, except to our friend Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchline. Would you believe it? An
mour has got a warrant to throw me in jail till I find security for an enormous sum. This they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the gospel, "have nowhere to lay my head." I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake; though may all the furies that rend the injured, enraged lover's bosom, await her mother until her latest hour! I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation—exiled, abandoned, forlorn. I can write no more—let me hear from you by the return of coach. I will write you ere I go.

I am dear Sir,

Yours, here and hereafter,

R. B.

XXVI.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR,
KILMARNOCK.

[Burns never tried to conceal either his joys or his sorrows: he sent copies of his favourite pieces, and intimations of much that befell him to his chief friends and comrades—this brief note was made to carry double.]

My Friend, My Brother,

Warm recollection of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle (the Calf), pleased with the thought that it will greet the man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and a girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles and Mr. W. Parker, and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive. but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from,

My dear Sir,

Your most devoted,

R. B.

XXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
OF DUNLOP.

[Mrs. Dunlop was a poetess, and had the blood of the Wallaces in her veins: though she disliked the irregularities of the poet, she scorned to get into a fine moral passion about follies which could not be helped, and conformed her friendship to the last of his life.]

Ayrshire, 1786.

MADAM,

I am truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus: nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those, whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the Saviour of his Country.

"Great patriot here! ill-reqisted chieft!"!

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was, "The Life of Hannibal:" the next was, "The History of Sir William Wallace:" for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious, but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

"Syne to the Logien wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen

Thomson.
of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loreto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymer) that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits.

R. B.

XXXVIII.

TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

[It is a curious chapter in the life of Burns to count the number of letters which he wrote, the number of fine poems he composed, and the number of places which he visited in the unhappy summer and autumn of 1796.]

Kilmarnock, August, 1786.

My dear Sir,

Your truly facetious epistle of the 8d inst. gave me much entertainment. I was sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as I passed your way, but we shall bring up all our lee way on Wednesday, the 16th current, when I hope to have it in my power to call on you and take a kind, very probably a last adieu, before I go for Jamaica; and I expect orders to repair to Greenock every day.—I have at last made my public appearance, and am solemnly inaugurated into the numerous class.—Could I have got a carrier, you should have had a score of vouchers for my authorship; but now you have them, let them speak for themselves.—

Farewell, my dear friend! may guid luck hit you,
And 'mang her favourites admit you!
If e'er Detraction shore to smit you,
May nane believe him!
And ony de'il that thinks to get you,
Good Lord deceive him.

R. B.

XXXIX.

TO MR. JAMES BURNES,
MONTROSE.

[The kind and generous James Burness, of Montrose, was ever ready to rejoice with his cousin's success or sympathize with his misfortunes, but he did not like the change which came over the old northern surname of Burns, when the bard modified it into Burns: the name, now a rising one in India, is spelt Burnes.]

Mousgie, Tuesday noon, Sept. 26, 1786

My dear Sir,

I this moment receive yours—receive it with the honest hospitable warmth of a friend's welcome. Whatever comes from you wakens always up the better blood about my heart, which your kind little recollections of my parent's friends carries as far as it will go. 'Tis there that man is blest! 'Tis there, my friend, man feels a consciousness of something within him above the trodden clod! The grateful reverence to the hoary (earthly) author of his being—the burning glow when he clasps the woman of his soul to his bosom—the tender yearnings of heart for the little angels to whom he has given existence—these nature has poured in milky streams about the human heart; and the man who never rouses them to action, by the inspiring influences of their proper objects, loses by far the most pleasurable part of his existence.

My departure is uncertain, but I do not think it will be till after harvest. I will be on very short allowance of time indeed, if I do not comply with your friendly invitation. When it will be I don't know, but if I can make my wish good, I will endeavour to drop you a line some time before. My best compliments to Mrs. ———; I should [be] equally mortified should I drop in when she is abroad, but of that I suppose there is little chance.

What I have wrote heaven knows; I have not time to review it; so accept of it in the beaten way of friendship. With the ordinary phrase—perhaps rather more than the ordinary sincerity,

I am, dear Sir,

Ever yours,

R. B.

XXX.

TO MISS ALEXANDER.

[This letter, Robert Chambers says, concluded with requesting Miss Alexander to allow the poet to print the song which it enclosed, in a second edition of his Poems. Her neglect in not replying to this request is a very good poetic reason for his wrath. Many of Burns's letters have been printed, it is right to say, from the rough drafts found among the poet's papers at his death. This is one.]
MADAM,

Poets are such outré beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the enclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best that can produce; and what to a good heart will, perhaps, be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic revoir as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed, in the favourite 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 poet's heart. I listened to the feather'd warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you—your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn twig that shot across the way, what heart 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, those visionary bards excepted, who hold commerce with aerial beings! Had Calumny and Villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain dull historic prose into Metaphor measure.

XXXI.

TO MRS. STEWART,
OF STAIR AND AFON.

[Mrs. Stewart, of Stair and Afon, was the first person of note in the West who had the taste to see and feel the genius of Burns. He used to relate how his heart fluttered when he first walked into the park of the towers of Stair, to hear that lady's opinion of some of his songs.]

MADAM,

The hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c., which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you, but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of "Etrick Banks" [The bonnie lass of Ballochmyle] you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much, even in manuscript. I think, myself, it has some merit: both as a tolerable description of one of nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening, and one of the finest pieces of nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know anything of, an amiable, beautiful young woman; but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and god-like qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connexions in life, and have no access to where

1 Miss Alexander
your real character is to be found—the company of your companions: and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember;—the reception I got when I had the honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness, but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart. Surely did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.

R. B.

XXXII.

IN THE NAME OF THE NINE. AMEN.

[The song on ballad which one of the "Deil's yed Nowtie" was commanded to burn, was "Holy Willie's Prayer," it is believed. Carrie interprets the "Deil's yed Nowtie," to mean old bachelors, which, if right, points to some other of his compositions, for sake of fire. Gilbert Burns says it is a scoffing appellation sometimes given to sheriffs' officers and other executors of the law.]

We, Robert Burns, by virtue of a warrant from Nature, bearing date the twenty-fifth day of January, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, 1 Poet Laureat, and Bard in Chief, in and over the districts and countries of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick, of old extent, To our trusty and well-beloved William Chalmers and John M'Adam, students and practitioners in the ancient and mysterious science of confounding right and wrong.

Right Trusty:

Be it known unto you that whereas in the course of our care and watchings over the order and police of all and sundry the manufacturers, retainers, and venders of poesy; bards, poets, poetasters, rhymerie, jinglers, songsters, ballad-singers, &c. &c. &c. &c., male and female—We have discovered a certain nefarious, abominable, and wicked song or ballad, a copy whereof We have here enclosed; Our Will therefore is, that Ye pitch upon and appoint the most execrable individual of that most execrable species, known by the appellation, phrase, and nick-name of The Deil's Yed Nowtie: and

after having caused him to kindle a fire at the Cross of Ayr, ye shall, at noontide of the day, put into the said wretch's merciless hands the said copy of the said nefarious and wicked song, to be consumed by fire in the presence of all beholders, in abhorrence of, and terror to, all such compositions and composers. And this in nowise leave ye undone, but have it executed in every point as this our mandate bears, before the twenty-fourth current, when in person We hope to applaud your faithfulness and zeal.

Given at Mauchline this twentieth day of November, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six.

God save the Bard!

R. B.

XXXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

[The expedition to Edinburgh, to which this short letter alludes, was undertaken, it is needless to say, in consequence of a warm and generous commendation of the genius of Burns written by Dr. Blacklock, to the Rev. Mr. Lawrie, and communicated by Gavin Hamilton to the poet, when he was on the wing for the West Indies.]

Mossgie, 18th Nov., 1786.

My dear Sir,

Enclosed you have "Tam Samson," as I intend to print him. I am thinking for my Edinburgh expedition on Monday or Tuesday, come se'ennight, for pos. I will see you on Tuesday first.

I am ever,

Your much indebted,

R. B.

XXXIV.

TO DR. MACKENZIE,

MAUCHLINE;

ENCLOSING THE VERSES ON DINING WITH LORD DARD.

[To the kind and venerable Dr. Mackenzie, the poet was indebted for some valuable friendships, and his biographer for some valuable information respecting the early days of Burns.]

Wednesday Morning.

Dear Sir,

I never spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honour of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the
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professor. [Dugald Stewart.] I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus—for parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakespeare's Brutus.

The foregoing verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with that partiality with which you are so good as to favour the performances of,

Dear Sir,
Your very humble servant,
R. B.

XXXV.
TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.
MAUCHLINE.

[From Gavin Hamilton Burns and his brother took the farm of Mauchline: the landlord was not slow in perceiving the genius of Robert: he had him frequently at his table, and the poet repaid this notice by verse not likely soon to die.]

Edinburgh, Dec. 7th, 1786.

Honoured Sir,

I have paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muir-kirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W. S., but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh, Miln, &c., by a Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyl Laird, and Adamhill and Shawood were bought for Oswald's folks. This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the Poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell bridge.—My Lord Glaicairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man in the world. Through my lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian Hunt, that they universally,

one and all, subscribe for the second edition.—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met, in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days, showed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but you both in prose and verse.

May could ne'er catch you but a hap,
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!

Amen!

R. B.

XXXVI.
TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ.
BANKER, AYR.

[This is the second letter which Burns wrote, after his arrival in Edinburgh, and it is remarkable because it distinctly imputes his introduction to the Earl of Glaicairn, to Dalrymple, of Orangefield: though he elsewhere says this was done by Mr. Dalzell; perhaps both those gentlemen had a hand in this good deed.]

Edinburgh, 13th Dec. 1786.

My honoured Friend,

I would not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which, by the by, is often no easy task. I arrived here on Tuesday was so unkind, and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable headache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better.—I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glaicairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me, I shall remember when time shall be no more.—By his interest it is passed in the "Caledonian Hunt," and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.—I have been introduced to a good many of the noblesse, but my avowed patrons and patronsesses are the Duchess of Gordon—the Countess of Glaicairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty—the Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord—

1 Lady Betty Cunningham.
have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. MacKenzie—the Man of Feeling.—An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got.—I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq., brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him, by invitation, at his own house, yesternight. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to-day, and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper, called The Lounger, a copy of which I here enclose you.—I was, Sir, when I was first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of politeness and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever honoured patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter-of-fact epistle.

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir,
Your ever grateful humble servant,
R. B.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr. Creech, bookseller.

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XXXVII.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

("Muir, thy weaknesses," says Burns, writing of this gentleman to Mrs. Dunlop, "thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature; but thy heart glowed with everything generous, manly, and noble; and if ever admiration from the All-good Being animated a human form, this was thine.

Edinburgh, Dec. 20th, 1786.

My dear Friend,

I have just time for the carrier, to tell you that I received your letter; of which I shall say no more but what a loss of my acquaintance said of her bastard wean; she said she "did

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XXXVIII.

TO MR. WILLIAM CHALMERS,

WRITER, ABD.

[William Chalmers drew out the assignment of the copyright of Burns's Poems, in favour of his brother Gilbert, and for the maintenance of his natural child, when engaged to go to the West Indies, in the autumn of 1786.]

Edinburgh, Dec. 27, 1786.

My dear Friend,

I confess I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to have sent you an entertaining letter; and by all the glooding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—a heavily solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and raised the second or third persecution, I forgot which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the Greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the Less—after throwing him into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedeo to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not
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very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered, I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I past Glenbuck.

One blank in the address to Edinburgh — "Fair B——", is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is — care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-street.

R. B.

XXXIX.

TO THE EARL OF EGLINTOUN.

[Archibald Montgomery, eleventh Earl of Eglinton, and Colonel Hugh Montgomery, of Collafirth, who succeeded his brother in his titles and estates, were patrons, and kind ones, of Burns.]

Edinburgh, January 1787.

My Lord,

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world, but have all those national prejudices, which I believe glow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely anything to which I am so feelingly alive as the honour and welfare of my country: and as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished; though, till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy then to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know, whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks, but my heart whispered me to do it.

From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it.

Selfish ingratitude I hope I am incapable of, and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to desert.

R. B.

XL.

TO MR. GAVIN HAMILTON.

[This letter was first published by Robert Chambers, who considered it as closing the inquiry, "was Burns a married man?" No doubt Burns thought himself un-married, and the Rev. Mr. Auld was of the same opinion, since he offered him a certificate that he was single: but no opinion of priest or lawyer, including the disclaimers of Jean Armour, and the belief of Burns, could have, in my opinion, altered the claim of the children to full legitimacy, according to the law of Scotland.]

Edinburgh, Jan. 7, 1787.

To tell the truth among friends, I feel a miserable blank in my heart, with the want of her, and I don't think I shall ever meet with so delicious an armful again. She has her faults; and so have you and I; and so has everybody:

Their tricks and craft have put me daft;

They've ta'en me in and a' that;

But clear your decks, and here's the sex,

I like the jads for a' that.

For a' that and a' that,

And twice as muckle a' that.

I have met with a very pretty girl, a Lothian farmer's daughter, whom I have almost persuaded to accompany me to the west country, should I ever return to settle there. By the bye, a Lothian farmer is about an Ayrshire squire of the lower kind; and I had a most delicious ride from Leith to her house yesternight, in a hackney-coach with her brother and two sisters, and brother's wife. We had dined altogether at a common friend's house in Leith, and danced, drank, and sang till late enough. The night was dark, the claret had been good, and I thirsty. *. * *. * *. R. B.

XLI.

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ.

[This letter contains the first intimation that the poet desired to resume the labours of the farmer. The old
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Edinburgh, Jan. 14, 1787.

My Honored Friend,

It gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw’s Skate, “past redemption;” for I have still this favourable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teases me eternally till I do it.

I am still “dark as was Chaos” in respect to futurity. My generous friend, Mr. Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought, near Dumfries. Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper to me that I will be happier anywhere than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favour me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

I went to a mason-lodge yesternight, where the most Worshipful Grand Master Charters, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honour to himself as a gentleman and master, among other general toasts, gave “Caledonia, and Caledonia’s Bard, Brother Burns,” which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck, and, trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, “Very well indeed!” which set me something to rights again.

I have to-day corrected my 162d page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken.

I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Your much indebted humble servant,

R. B.

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE.

[The friendship of Mrs. Dunlop purged, while it strengthened the national prejudices of Burns.]

Edinburgh, 16th January, 1787.

MADAM,

Yours of the 9th current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib — I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you; but though every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of “the sons of little men.” To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant’s order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of “The View of Society and Manners” a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas, by

XLII.

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?

XLIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[See Blair’s Grave. This was a favourite quotation with Burns.]

XLIII.

SONG CXXXI.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.
The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed anything on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print; and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition. You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my "Vision" long ago, I had attempted a description of Koyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the "Saviour of his Country," which sooner or later I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet; alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserve some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice which has borne me to a height, where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth. I do not say this in the ridiculous affectation of self-abasement and modesty. I have studied myself, and know what ground I occupy; and, however a friend or the world may differ from me in that particular, I stand for my own opinion, in silent resolve, with all the tenaciousness of property. I mention this to you once for all to disburthen my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say more about it.—But,

"When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,"
you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood un intoxicated with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rufel resolve to the hastening time, when the blow of Calumny should dash it to the ground with all the eagerness of vengeful triumph.

Your patronizing me and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace?

R. B.

XLIV.

TO DR. MOORE.

[Dr. Moore, the accomplished author of Zeloco and father of Sir John Moore, interested himself in the fame and fortune of Burns, as soon as the publication of his Poems made his name known to the world.]

Sir,

Mrs. Dunlop has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honour of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solicitudes of authorship, can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner, by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence: only I am sorry they mostly came too late: a peccant passage or two that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages, is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compatriot, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any, writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind
among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had; and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray draw the tear; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttleton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

XLV.

TO THE REV. G. LAURIE,
NEWMILLS, NEAR KILMARNOCK.

[It has been said in the Life of Burns, that for some time after he went to Edinburgh, he did not visit Dr. Blacklock, whose high opinion of his genius induced him to try his fortunes in that city: it will be seen by this letter that he had neglected also, for a time, at least, to write to Dr. Laurie, who introduced him to the Doctor.]

Edinburgh, Feb. 5th, 1787.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

When I look at the date of your kind letter, my heart reproaches me severely with ingratitude in neglecting so long to answer it. I will not trouble you with any account, by way of apology, of my hurried life and distracted attention: do me the justice to believe that my delay by no means proceeded from want of respect. I feel, and ever shall feel for you the mingled sentiments of esteem for a friend and reverence for a father.

I thank you, Sir, with all my soul for your friendly hints, though I do not need them so much as my friends are apt to imagine. You are dazzled with newspaper accounts and distant reports; but, in reality, I have no great temptation to be intoxicated with the cup of prosperity. Noveltly may attract the attention of mankind awhile; to it I owe my present éclat; but I see the time not far distant when the popular tide which has borne me to a height of which I am, perhaps, unworthy, shall recede with silent celerity, and leave me a barren waste of sand, to descend at my leisure to my former station. I do not say this in the affectionate modesty; I see the consequence is unavoidable, and am prepared for it. I had been at a good deal of pains to form a just, impartial estimate of my intellectual powers before I came here; I have not added, since I came to Edinburgh, anything to the account; and I trust I shall take every atom of it back to my shades, the coverts of my unnoticed, early years.

In Dr. Blacklock, whom I see very often, I have found what I would have expected in our friend, a clear head and an excellent heart.

By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edinburgh must be placed to the account of Miss Laurie and her piano-forte. I cannot help repeating to you and Mrs. Laurie a compliment that Mr. Mackenzie, the celebrated "Man of Feeling," paid to Miss Laurie, the other night, at the concert. I had come in at the interlude, and sat down by him till I saw Miss Laurie in a seat not very distant, and went up to pay my respects to her. On my return to Mr. Mackenzie he asked me who she was; I told him 'twas the daughter of a reverend friend of mine in the west country. He returned, there was something very striking, to his idea, in her appearance. On my desiring to know what it was, he was pleased to say, "She has a great deal of the elegance of a well-bred lady about her, with all the sweet simplicity of a country girl."

My compliments to all the happy inmates of St. Margaret's.

R. B.

XLVI.

TO DR. MOORE.

[In the answer to this letter, Dr. Moore says that the poet was a great favourite in his family, and that his youngest son, at Winchester school, had translated part of "Halloween" into Latin verse, for the benefit of his comraces.]

Edinburgh, 15th February, 1787.

SIR,

PARDON my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast anything higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment: but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and
tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss Williams has done me, y'ease, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore; there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous sombre tenderness of "time-settled sorrow."

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why. R. B.

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XLVII.

TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ.

(The picture from which Bewick engraved the portrait attired to in this letter, was painted by the now venerable Alexander Nasmyth—the eldest of living British artists:—it is, with the exception of a profile by Missen, the only portrait for which we are quite sure that the poet sat.)

Edinburgh, Feb. 24th, 1787.

MY HONORED FRIEND,

I will soon be with you now, in guid black prent;—in a week or ten days at farthest. I am obliged, against my own wish, to print subscribers' names; so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent in to Creech directly. I am getting my phis done by an eminent engraver, and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book, looking like all other fools to my title-page. R. B.

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XLVIII.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

(The Earl of Glencairn seems to have refused, from motives of delicacy, the request of the poet: the verses, long lost, were at last found, and are now, through the kindness of my friend, Major James Glencain Burnes, printed with the rest of his eminent father's works.)

Edinburgh, 1787.

MY LORD,

I WANTED to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with anything of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, there is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship, by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition. I owe much to your lordship: and, what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust I have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more; and I would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character, are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favoured sons of fortune. Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons particularly when they were names dear to fame and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's highly indebted,
And ever grateful humble servant,

R. B.

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XLIX.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

(The Earl of Buchan, a man of talent, but more than tolerably vain, advised Burns to visit the battle-fields and scenes celebrated in song on the Scottish border, with the hope, perhaps, that he would drop a few of his
happy verses in Dryburgh Abbey, the residence of his
lordship.

My Lord,
The honour your lordship has done me, by
your notice and advice in yours of the 1st in-
stant, I shall ever gratefully remember:

"Praise from thy lips, how mine with joy to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it most."

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my
heart when you advise me to fire my muse at
Scottish story and Scotch scenes. I need noth-
ing more than to make a leisurely pilgrim-
age through my native country; to sit and muse
on those once hard-contended fields, where Cae-
donia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne
through broken racks to victory and fame; and,
catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless
names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of
these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry,
moral-looking phantom strides across my
imagination, and pronounces these emphatic
words:

"I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence. Friend,
I do not come to open the ill-closed wounds of
your follies and misfortunes, merely to give you
pain; I wish through these wounds to imprint a
lasting lesson on your heart. I will not mention
how many of my salutary advices you have de-
spised: I have given you line upon line and
precept upon precept; and while I was chalking
out to you the straight way to wealth and char-
acter, with audacious effrontery you have zig-
zagged across the path, contaminating me to my
face: you know the consequences. It is not
yet three months since home was so hot for you
that you were on the wing for the western shore
of the Atlantic, not to make a fortune, but to
hide your misfortune.

"Now that your dear-loved Scotia puts it in
your power to return to the situation of your
forefathers, will you follow these will-o'-wisp
meteors of fancy and whim, till they bring you
once more to the brink of ruin? I grant that
the utmost ground you can occupy is but half a
step from the veriest poverty; but still it is half
a step from it. If all that I can urge be ineffec-
tual, let her who seldom calls to you in vain,
let the call of pride prevail with you. You know
how you feel at the iron grip of ruthless op-
pression: you know how you bear the galling
snare of contumelious greatness. I hold you
out the conveniences, the comforts of life, in-

1 Imitated from Pope's Eloisa to Abelard.

dependence, and character, on the one hand; I
tender you civility, dependence, and wretched-
ness, on the other. I will not insult your un-
derstanding by bidding you make a choice."

This, my lord, is answerless. I must re-
turn to my humble station, and woo my rusti-
muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail.
Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my
heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in
which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those
her distinguished sons who have honoured me
so much with their patronage and approbation,
shall, while stealing through my humble shades,
ever distend my bosom, and at times, as now,
draw forth the swelling tear.

R. B.

L.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH.

[James Candlish, a student of medicine, was well ac-
quainted with the poetry of Lowe, author of that sublime
lyric, "Mary's Dream," and at the request of Burns was
Lowe's classic song of "Pompey's Ghost," to the Mu-
ciscal Museum.]

Edinburgh, March 21, 1787.

My ever dear old acquaintance,
I was equally surprised and pleased at your
letter, though I dare say you will think by my
delaying so long to write to you that I am so
drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as
to be indifferent to old, and once dear con-
nexions. The truth is, I was determined to
write a good letter, full of argument, amplifi-
cation, erudition, and, as Bayes says, all that.
I thought of it, and thought of it, and, by my
soul, I could not; and, lest you should mistake
the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell
you so. Don't give yourself credit, though, that
the strength of your logic scares me: the truth
is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at
all. You have shown me one thing which was
to be demonstrated: that strong pride of rea-
soning, with a little affection of singularity,
may mislead the best of hearts. I likewise,
since you and I were first acquainted, in the
pride of despising old woman's stories, ventured
in "the daring path Spinoza trod;" but experi-
ence of the weakness, not the strength of human
powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed
religion.

I am still, in the Apost's Paul's phrase,
"The old man with his deeds," as when we
OF ROBERT BURNS.  

were sporting about the "Lady Thorn." I shall be four weeks here yet at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you; welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,

R. B.

LI.

TO —

[The name of the friend to whom this letter was addressed is still unknown, though known to Dr. Currie. The Escuralsian Club of Edinburgh have, since the death of Burns, added some iron-work, with an inscription in honour of the Ayrshire poet, to the original headstone. The cost to the poet was £3 10s.]

Edinburgh, March, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

You may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish, ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the bye, there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to be so accountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use; but at the beginning of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the damned.

I have enclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that, if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract is literally as Mr. Sprott sent it me.

The inscription on the stone is as follows:

"HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSON, POET.
Born, September 5th, 1751—Died, 16th October, 1776.

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

On the other side of the stone is as follows:

"By special grant of the managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Ferguson."

Session-house, within the Kirk of Canongate, the twenty-second day of February, one thousand seven hundred eighty-seven years.

Sederunt of the Managers of the Kirk and Kirk-Yard funds of Canongate.

Which day, the treasurer to the said funds produced a letter from Mr. Robert Burns, of date the 6th current, which was read and appointed to be engrossed in their sederunt book, and of which letter the tenor follows:—

"To the honourable bailies of Canongate, Edinburgh.—Gentlemen, I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Ferguson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents for ages to come will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

"Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the 'narrow house' of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Ferguson's memory: a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

"I petition you then, gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your very humble servant (sic subscriptur),

ROBERT BURNS."

Thereafter the said managers, in consideration of the laudable and disinterested motion of Mr. Burns, and the propriety of his request, did, and hereby do, unanimously, grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Ferguson, and to keep up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming. Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by

WILLIAM SPROTT, Clerk.

LII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The poet alludes in this letter to the profits of the Edinburgh edition of his Poems: the exact sum is no
where stated, but it could not have been less than seven
hundred pounds.]  

Edinburgh, March 22d, 1787.

MADAM,

I read your letter with watery eyes. A little,
very little while ago, I had scarce a friend but
the stubborn pride of my own bosom: now I
am distinguished, patronised, befriended by you.
Your friendly advice, I will not give them the
cold name of criticisms, I receive with revere-
cence. I have made some small alterations in
what I before had printed. I have the advice
of some very judicious friends among the literati
here, but with them I sometimes find it neces-
sary to claim the privilege of thinking for my-
self. The noble Earl of Glencarin, to whom I
owe more than to any man, does me the honour
of giving me his strictures: his hints, with re-
spect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow im-
plicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future
views and prospects; there I can give you no
light. It is all

"Dark as was Chaos are the infant sun
Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
Atheart the gloom profound." 1

The appellation of a Scottish bard, is by far
my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is
my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes
and Scottish story are the themes I could wish
to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it
in my power, unplagued with the routine of
business, for which heaven knows I am unfit
enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through
Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles;
to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers;
and to muse by the stately towers or vener-
able ruins, once the honoured abodes of her
heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have
dallied long enough with life; 'tis time to be in
earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care
for: and some other bosom ties perhaps equally
sadder. Where the individual only suffers by
the consequences of his own thoughtlessness,
indolence, or folly, he may be excusable; nay,
shining abilities, and some of the nobler virtues,
may half sanctify a heedless character; but
where God and nature have intrusted the wel-
fare of others to his care; where the trust is
sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must
be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to

reflection, whom these connexions will not rouse
to exerion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and
three hundred pounds by my authorship; with
that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to
have any intention, to return to my old ac-
quaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with
a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer.
I do not intend to give up poetry; being bred
to labour, secures me independence, and the
muses are my chief, sometimes have been my
only enjoyment. If my practice second my
resolution, I shall have principally at heart the
serious business of life; but while following my
plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a
leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of
my character, which gave me the notice of my
country, and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honoured Madam, I have given you the
bard, his situation, and his views, native as
they are in his own bosom.  

R. B.

LIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[This seems to be a letter acknowledging the payment
of Mrs. Dunlop's subscription for his poems.]

Edinburgh, 15th April, 1787.

MADAM,

There is an affectation of gratitude which I
dislike. The periods of Johnson and the pause
of Sterne, may hide a selfish heart. For my
part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for
servility, and too little prudence for selfishness.
I have this moment broken open your letter, but

"Rude am I in speech,
And therefore little can I grace my cause
In speaking for myself." 2

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches
and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand
on my heart and say, I hope I shall ever have
the truest, the warmest sense of your goodness.

I come abroad in print, for certain on Wed-
nesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend
to; only, by the way, I must tell you that I
was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss Wil-
liams's copies, through the medium of Commis-
sioner Cochrane in this place, but that we can
settle when I have the honour of waiting on you.

1 Blair's Grave.

8 From Othello.
OF ROBERT BURNS

Dr. Smith¹ was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him.

R. B.

LIV.

TO MR. SIBBALD,
BOOKSELLER IN EDINBURGH.

This letter first appeared in that very valuable work, Schott’s Illustrations of Literature.

SIR,

So little am I acquainted with the words and manners of the more public and polished walks of life, that I often feel myself much embarrassed how to express the feelings of my heart, particularly gratitude:—

"Rude am I in my speech,
And little therefore shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself—"

The warmth with which you have befriended an obscure man and a young author in the last three magazines—I can only say, Sir, I feel the weight of the obligation, I wish I could express my sense of it. In the mean time accept of the conscious acknowledgment from,

SIR,

Your obliged servant,

R. B.

LV.

TO DR. MOORE.

The book to which the poet alludes, was the well-known View of Society by Dr. Moore, a work of spirit and observation.

Edinburgh, 23d April, 1787.

I received the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill skilled in beating the covert of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, Sir, for the honour you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author’s friendly esteem, is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight, and after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of Caledonia, Cow-

den Knowes, Banks of Yarrow, Tweed, &c., I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetical compliment in kind.

R. B.

LVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[This letter was in answer to one of criticism and remonstrance, from Mrs. Dunlop, respecting "The Dream," which she had begged the poet to omit, lest it should harm his fortunes with the world.]

Edinburgh, 80th April, 1787.

—Your criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being, either in prose or verse.

I set as little by princes, lords, clergy, critics, &c., as all these respective gentry do by my hardship. I know what I may expect from the world, by and by—illiberal abuse, and perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my "Dream," which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing, at Dunlop, in its defence in person.

R. B.

¹ Adam Smith.
LVII.

TO THE REV. DR. HUGH BLAIR.

[The answer of Dr. Blair to this letter contains the following passage: "Your situation, as you say, was indeed very singular: and in being brought out all at once from the shades of deepest privacy to so great a share of public notice and observation, you had to stand a severe trial. I am happy you have stood it so well, and, as far as I have known, or heard, though in the midst of many temptations, without reproach to your character or behaviour."]

Lawn-market, Edinburgh, 3d May, 1787.

Respected and much-respected Sir,

I leave Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship you have shown me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honoured by the notice of those illustrious names of my country whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honour me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man, I knew very well that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over; I have made up my mind that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo's work for me, done on Indian paper, as a trifle but sincere testimony with what heartwarming gratitude I am, &c.

R. B.

LVIII.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

[The poet addressed the following letter to the Earl of Glencairn, when he commenced his journey to the Honours. It was first printed in the third edition of Lockhart's Life of Burns; an eloquent and manly work.]

My Lord,

I go away to-morrow morning early, and allow me to vent the fulness of my heart, in thanking your lordship for all that patronage,

The writer of the poet after Nasmyth.

that benevolence and that friendship with which you have honoured me. With brimful eyes, I pray that you may find in that great Being, whose image you so nobly bear, that friend which I have found in you. My gratitude is not selfish design—that I disdain—it is not dodging after the heels of greatness—that is an offering you disdain. It is a feeling of the same kind with my devotion.

R. B.

LIX.

TO MR. WILLIAM DUNBAR.

[William Dunbar, Colonel of the Crochallan Fencibles. The name has a martial sound, but the corps which he commanded was a club of wits, whose courage was exercised on "patricks, taits, moorpoits, and plouvers."]

Lawn-market, Monday morning.

Dear Sir,

In justice to Spenser, I must acknowledge that there is scarcely a poet in the language could have been a more agreeable present to me; and in justice to you, allow me to say, Sir, that I have not met with a man in Edinburgh to whom I would so willingly have been indebted for the gift. The tattered rhymes I herewith present you, and the handsome volumes of Spenser for which I am so much indebted to your goodness, may perhaps be not in proportion to one another; but be that as it may, my gift, though far less valuable, is as sincere a mark of esteem as yours.

The time is approaching when I shall return to my shades; and I am afraid my numerous Edinburgh friendships are of so tender a construction, that they will not bear carriage with me. Yours is one of the few that I could wish of a more robust constitution. It is indeed very probable that when I leave this city, we part never more to meet in this sublunary sphere; but I have a strong fancy that in some future eccentric planet, the comet of happier systems than any with which astronomy is yet acquainted, you and I, among the harum scarum sons of imagination and whim, with a hearty shake of a hand, a metaphor and a laugh, shall recognise old acquaintance:

"Where wit may sparkle all its rays, Enraptured with emotion's pleasure, That pleasure, bustling in the blaze Rejoice for endless years."
I have the honour to be, with the warmest sincerity, dear Sir, &c.   R. B.

LX.

TO JAMES JOHNSON.

[James Johnson was an engraver in Edinburgh, and proprietor of the Musical Museum; a truly national work, for which Burns wrote or amended many songs.]

Laxm-market, Friday noon, 3 May, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I have sent you a song never before known, for your collection; the air by M'Gibbon, but I know not the author of the words, as I got it from Dr. Blacklock.

Farewell, my dear Sir! I wished to have seen you, but I have been dreadfully throng, as I march to-morrow. Had my acquaintance with you been a little older, I would have asked the favour of your correspondance, as I have met with few people whose company and conversarion gives me so much pleasure, because I have met with few whose sentiments are so congenial to my own.

When Dunbar and you meet, tell him that I left Edinburgh with the idea of him hanging somewhere about my heart.

Keep the original of the song till we meet again, whenever that may be.   R. B.

LXI.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ.

EDINBURGH.

(This characteristic letter was written during the poet's border tour; he narrowly escaped a wagon with whisky, as well as with water; for, according to the Littre Sheep ford, 'a couple of Yarrow lads, lovers of poesy and punch, awaited his coming to Selkirk, but would not believe that the person-looking, black-awed man, who rode up to the inn, more like a drunken crew than a poet, could be Burns, and so went disappointed away.')

Selkirk, 18th May, 1787.

My Honoured Friend,

The enclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary inn in Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding. I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirk-shires; and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Harriet, sister to my noble patron; 'Quem Deus conservat! I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose, as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse, but I am jaded to death; so, with a grateful farewell,

I have the honour to be,

Good Sir, yours sincerely,   R. B.

Auld chuckle Reekie's sair distrest,

Down drops her ance weel burnish'd crest,

Nae joy her bonnie buskit nest

Can yield ava;

Her darling bird that she loves best,

Willie's awa. 2

LXII.

TO MR. PATISON,

BOOKSELLER, PAISET.

(This letter has a business air about it; the name of Patison is nowhere else to be found in the poet's correspondance.)

Berry-well, near Dunee, May 17th, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry I was out of Edinburgh, making a slight pilgrimage to the classic scenes of this country, when I was favoured with yours of the 11th instant, enclosing an order of the Paisley banking company on the royal bank, for twenty-two pounds seven shillings sterling, payment in full, after carriage deducted, for ninety copies of my book I sent you. According to your motions, I see you will have left Scotland before this reaches you, otherwise I would send you 'Holy Willie' with all my heart. I was so hurried that I absolutely forgot several things I ought to have minded, among the rest sending books to Mr. Cowan; but any order of yours will be answered at Creech's shop. You will please remember that non-subscribers pay six shillings, this is Creech's profit; but those who have subscribed, though their names have been neglected in the printed list, which is very incorrect, are supplied at subscription price. I was not at Glasgow, nor do I intend for London; and I think Mrs. Fame is very idle to tell

1 James, Earl of Glescaira.

2 See Poem LXXXIII.
so many lies on a poor poet. When you or Mr. Cowan write for copies, if you should want any direct to Mr. Hill, at Mr. Creech’s shop, and I write to Mr. Hill by this post, to answer either of your orders. Hill is Mr. Creech’s first clerk, and Creech himself is presently in London. I suppose I shall have the pleasure, against your return to Paisley, of assuring you how much I am, dear Sir, your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

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**LXIII.**

TO W. NICOL, ESQ.,

MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

[The postman named his mare after this vireno.

**Cardinal, June 1, 1787.**

**Kind, honest-hearted Willie,**

I’m sitten down here after seven and forty miles ridin’, e’en as forgeset and fornaived as a forfoghten cook, to gie you some notion o’ my land lower-like stravaguin sin the sorrowfu’ hour that I sheuk hands and parted wi’auld Reekie. My auld, ga’d gleyde o’ meere has huch-yial’d up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as tuagh and birnie as a vera devil wi’ me. It’s true, she’s as poor’s sang-maker and as hard’s a kirk, and tipper-taires when she takes the gate, first like a lady’s gentlewoman in a minuwais, or a hen on a het girdle; but she’s a yauld, poutherie Girran for a’ that, and has a stomach like Willie Stalker’s meere that wis has disgeested tumbler-wheels, for she’ll whip me aff her five stimparts o’ the best ait a’s a down-sittin’ and ne’er fash her thum. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her crucks and cramps, are fairly soup’d, she beets to, beets t., and sy the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a threety pennies, that for twa or three wooks ridin’ at fiftie miles a day, the dell-stricket a five gallopers acquesth Clyde and Whitborn could cast saut on her tail. I hae dander’d owre a’ the kissara frae Dumbar to Selcraig, and has forgather’d wi’ monie a guid fellow, and monie a weesfar’d huzie. I met wi’twa dink quines in particular, ane o’ them a sonnie, fine, fudgel lass, baith braw and

bonnie; the tither was a clean-shankit, straight, tight, weesfar’d winch, as bythie’s a linhtwhitena flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest a new-blawn plumrose in a bale shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o’ them had as muckle smealdum and rumblegumtion as the half o’ some presbytries that you and I baith ken. They play’d me sik a deevil o’ a shavie that I daur say if my harigales were turn’d out, ye wad see twa nicks l’the heart o’ me like the mark o’ a kell-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me, I gat mypeel see notouriously bitchify’d the day after kell-time, that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respecks to the guidwife and a’ our common friends, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruik-shank, and the honest guidman o’ Jock’s Lodges.

I’ll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the braneks bide hale.

Gude be wi’ you, Willie! Amen!

R. B.

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**LXIV.**

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

AT MILLER AND SMITH’S OFFICE, LINLITHGOW.

[Burns, it seems by this letter, had still a belief that he would be obliged to try his fortune in the West Indies: he soon saw how hollow all the hopes were, which had been formed by his friends of "pension, post or place," in his native land.]

**Maulchun, 11th June, 1787.**

MY EVER DEAR SIR,

I date this from Maulchun, where I arrived on Friday even last. I slept at John Dow’s, and called for my daughter. Mr. Hamilton and family; your mother, sister, and brother; my quondam Elisa, &c., all well. If anything had been wanting to disgust me completely at Armour’s family, their mean, servile compliance would have done it.

Give me a spirit like my favourite here, Milton’s Satan:

Hail, horrore! hai!

Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor! be he who brings
A mind not to be chang’d by place or time!

I cannot settle to my mind.—Farming, the only thing of which I know anything, and heaven above knows but little do I understand of that, I cannot, dare not risk on farms as they are. If I do not fix I will go for Jamais.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Should I stay in an unsettled state at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune, and ruin what I intend shall compensate my little ones, for the stigma I have brought on their names.

I shall write you more at large soon; as this letter costs you no postage, if it be worth reading you cannot complain of your penny-worth.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Yours, R. B.

P.S. The croot has unfortunately broke, but I have provided a fine buffalo-horn, on which I am going to affix the same cipher which you will remember was on the lid of the croot.

LXV.

TO WILLIAM NICOL, ESQ.

The charm which Dumfries threw over the poet, seems to have dissolved like a spell, when he sat down in Killiecrankie: he spoke, for a time, with little respect of either place or people.

Mauschline, June 18, 1787.

My dear Friend,

I am now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your gray-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands, and his reception of my hardiness, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks—Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gude forgie me! I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart: in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of anything generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN. "Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith; that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon.—Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for the walks of business; add to all, that thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many ignes fatui, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-heirwitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have in life, I have felt along the lines, and, damn them, they are almost all of them of such frail constmcture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and all the circle of our common friends.

P. S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

R. B.

LXVI.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH.

[Candlish was a classic scholar, but had a love for the songs of Scotland, as well as for the poetry of Greece and Rome.]

My dear Friend,

Edinburgh, 1787.

If once I were gone from this scene of hurry and dissipation, I promise myself the pleasure of that correspondence being renewed which
has been so long broken. At present I have

time for nothing. Dissipation and business en-

gross every moment. I am engaged in assist-

ing an honest Scotch enthusiast, a friend of

mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into

his head to publish a collection of all our songs

set to music, of which the words and music are
done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess,
is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have
collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen, all the
songs I could meet with. Pompey’s Ghost, words
and music, I beg from you immediately, to go
into his second number: the first is already
published. I shall show you the first number
when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a
fortnight or less. Do be so kind as to send me
the song in a day or two; you cannot imagine
how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruikshank’s, St.
James’s Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

R. B.

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LXVII.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

["Burns had a memory stored with the finest poetical
passages, which he was in the habit of quoting most
aptly in his correspondence with his friends: and he de-
lighted also in repeating them in the company of those
friends who enjoyed them." These are the words of
Ainslie, of Berrywell, to whom this letter is addressed.]

Arrach, 28th June, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WRITE on my tour through a country where
savage streams tumble over savage mountains,
thinly overspread with savage flocks, which
sparsely support as savage inhabitants. My
last stage was Inverary—tomorrow night’s
stage Dumbarton. I ought sooner to have an-
swered your kind letter, but you know I am a
man of many sins.

R. B.

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LXVIII.

TO WILLIAM NICOL, ESQ.

[This visit to Auchtertyre produced that sweet lyric,
beginning “Blythe, blythe and merry was she;” and the
1 Johnson, the publisher and proprietor of the Musical
Gazette.

Auchtertyre, Monday, June, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I FIND myself very comfortable here, neither
oppressed by ceremony nor mortified by neg-
lect. Lady Augusta is a most engaging woman,
and very happy in her family, which makes
one’s outgoings and incomings very agreeable.
I called at Mr. Ramsay’s of Auchtertyre as I
came up the country, and am so delighted with
him that I shall certainly accept of his invita-
tion to spend a day or two with him as I return.
I leave this place on Wednesday or Thursday.

Make my kind compliments to Mr. and Mrs
Cruikshank and Mrs. Nicol, if she is returned.

I am ever, dear Sir,

Your deeply indebted,

R. B.

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LXIX.

TO WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK, ESQ.

. ST. JAMES’S SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

[At the house of William Cruikshank, one of the mas-
ters of the High School, in Edinburgh, Burns passed
many agreeable hours.]

Auchtertyre, Monday morning.

I HAVE nothing, my dear Sir, to write to you
but that I feel myself exceedingly comfortably
situated in this good family: just notice enough
to make me easy but not to embarrass me. I was
storm-staid two days at the foot of the Ochill-
hills, with Mr. Traill of Herveyston and Mr.
Johnston of Alva, but was so well pleased that
I shall certainly spend a day on the banks of
the Devon as I return. I leave this place I
suppose on Wednesday, and shall devote a day
to Mr. Ramsay at Auchtertyre, near Stirling:
a man to whose worth I cannot do justice. My
respectful kind compliments to Mrs. Cruik-
shank, and my dear little Jeanie, and if you
see Mr. Masterton, please remember me to him.

I am ever,

My dear Sir, &c.

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

LXX.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,
LINLITHGOW.

[The young lady to whom the poet alludes in this letter, was very beautiful, and very proud: it is said she gave him a specimen of both her temper and her pride, when he touched on the subject of love.

June 30, 1787.

My dear Friend,

Our return, at a Highland gentleman’s hospitable mansion, we fell in with a merry party, and danced till the ladies left us, at three in the morning. Our dancing was none of the French or English insipid formal movements; the ladies sung Scotch songs like angels, at intervals; then we flew at Bab at the Bowster, Tullochgorum, Loch Erroch Side, &c., like midges sporting in the mottie sun, or craws prognosticating a storm in a hairst day. When the dear lasses left us, we ranged round the bowl till the good-fellow hour of six; except a few minutes that we went out to pay our devotions to the glorious lamp of day peering over the towering top of Benlomond. We all kneeled; our worthy landlord’s son held the bowl; each man a full glass in his hand; and I, as priest, repeated some rhyming nonsense, like Thomas-a-Rhymer’s prophecies I suppose.—After a small refreshment of the gifts of Somnus, we proceeded to spend the day on Lochlomond, and reach Dumbarton in the evening. We dined at another good fellow’s house, and consequently, pushed the bottle; when we went out to mount our horses, we found ourselves “No vera fou but gaylie yet.” My two friends and I rode soberly down the Loch side, till by came a Highlandman at the gallop, on a tolerably good horse, but which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather. We scorned to be out-galloped by a Highlandman, so off we started, whip and spur. My companions, though seemingly gaily mounted, fell sadly astern; but my old mare, Jenny Geddes, one of the Rosinante family, she strained past the Highlandman in spite of all his efforts with the hair halter; just as I was passing him, Donald wheeled his horse, as if to cross before me to mar my progress, when down came his horse, and threw his rider’s breakless a—e in a clipt hedge; and down came Jenny Geddes over all, and my bardship between her and the Highlandman’s horse. Jenny Geddes trode over me with such cautious reverence, that matters were not so bad as might well have been expected; so I came off with a few cuts and bruises, and a thorough resolution to be a pattern of sobriety for the future.

I have yet fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon. I was going to say, a wife too; but that must never be my blessed lot. I am but a younger son of the house of Parnassus, and like other younger sons of great families, I may intrigue, if I choose to run all risks, but must not marry.

I am afraid I have almost ruined one source the principal one, indeed, of my former happiness; that eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture. I have no paradisiacal evening interviews, stolen from the restless cares and prying inhabitants of this weary world. I have only an. This last is one of your distant acquaintances, a fine figure, and elegant manners; and in the train of some great folks whom you know, has seen the politest quarters in Europe. I do like her a good deal; but what piques me is her conduct at the commencement of our acquaintance. I frequently visited her when I was in ———, and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to ———, I wrote to her in the same style. Miss, constructing my words farther I suppose than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured me out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climate of her favour. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down at my foot, like Corporal Trim’s hat.

As for the rest of my acts, and my wars, and all my wise sayings, and why my mare was called Jenny Geddes, they shall be recorded in a few weeks hence at Linlithgow, in the chronicles of your memory, by

R. R.
LXXI.
TO MR JOHN RICHMOND.

[Mr. John Richmond, writer, was one of the poet's nearest and firmest friends; he, shared his room with him when they met in Edinburgh, and did him many little offices of kindness and regard.]

Monsignor, 7th July, 1787.

My dear Richmond,

I am all impatience to hear of your fate since the confounder of right and wrong has turned you out of place, by his journey to answer his indictment at the bar of the other world. He will find the practice of the court so different from the practice in which he has for so many years been thoroughly haccymed, that his friends, if he had any connexions truly of that kind, which I rather doubt, may well tremble for his sake. His chicanes, his left-handed wisdom, which stood so firmly by him, to such good purpose, here, like other accomplices in robbery and plunder, will, now the piratical business is blown, in all probability turn the king's evidences, and then the devil's bagpiper will touch him off "Bundle and go!"

If he has left you any legacy, I beg your pardon for all this; if not, I know you will swear to every word I said about him.

I have lately been rambling over by Dumfart and Inverary, and running a drunken race on the side of Loch Lomond with a wild Highlandman; his horse, which had never known the ornaments of iron or leather, sagraged across before my old spavin'd hunter, whose name is Jenny Geddes, and down came the Highlandman, horse and all, and down came Jenny and my hardship; so I have got such a skintful of bruises and wounds, that I shall be at least four-weeks before I dare venture on my journey to Edinburgh.

Not one new thing under the sun has happened in Mauchline since you left it. I hope this will find you as comfortably situated as formerly, or, if heaven pleases, more so; but, at all events, I trust you will let me know of course how matters stand with you, well or ill. 'Tis but poor consolation to tell the world when matters go wrong; but you know very well your connexion and mine stands on a different footing.

I am ever, my dear friend, yours,

R. B.

LXXII.
TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

[This letter, were proof wanting, shows the friendly and familiar footing on which Burns stood with the Ainslie, and more particularly with the author of that popular work, the "Reasons for the Hope that is in me."

Mauchline, 23rd July, 1787.

My dear Ainslie,

There is one thing for which I set great store by you as a friend, and it is this, that I have not a friend upon earth, besides yourself, to whom I can talk nonsense without forfeiting some degree of his esteem. Now, to one like me, who never cares for speaking anything else but nonsense, such a friend as you is an invaluable treasure. I was never a rogue, but have been a fool all my life; and, in spite of all my endeavours, I see now plainly that I shall never be wise. Now it rejoices my heart to have met with such a fellow as you, who, though you are not just such a hopeless fool as I, yet I trust you will never listen so much to the temptations of the devil as to grow so very wise that you will in the least disrespect an honest fellow because he is a fool. In short, I have set you down as the staff of my old age, when the whole list of my friends will, after a decent share of pity, have forgot me.

Though in the morn comes sturt and strife,
Yet joy may come at noon;
And I hope to live a merry, merry life
When a' thir days are done.

Write me soon, were it but a few lines just to tell me how that so sagacious man your father is—that kind dainty body your mother—that strapping chiel your brother Douglas—and my friend Rachel, who is as far before Rachel of old, as she was before her bear-eyed sister Leah.

R. B.

LXXIII.
TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

[The "savage hospitality," of which Burns complained in this letter, was at that time an evil fashion in Scotland: the bottle was made to circulate rapidly, and every glass was drunk "clean cup out."

Mauchline, July, 1787.

My dear Sir,

My life, since I saw you last, has been one continued hurry; that savage hospitality which
knocks a man down with strong liquors, is the devil. I have a sore warfare in this world; the devil, the world, and the flesh are three formidable foes. The first I generally try to fly from; the second, alas! generally flies from me; but the third is my plague, worse than the ten plagues of Egypt.

I have been looking over several farms in this country; one in particular, in Nithsdale, pleased me so well, that if my offer to the proprietor is accepted, I shall commence farmer at Whitsunday. If farming do not appear eligible, I shall have recourse to my other shift: but this to a friend.

I set out for Edinburgh on Monday morning; how long I stay there is uncertain, but you will know so soon as I can inform you myself. However I determine, poetry must be laid aside for some time; my mind has been vitiated with idleness, and it will take a good deal of effort to habituate it to the routine of business.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours sincerely,
R. B.

LXXIV.

TO DR. MOORE.

[Dr. Moore was one of the first to point out the beauty of the lyric compositions of Burns. "1 Green grow the Rashes," and of the two songs," says he, "which follow, beginning 'Again rejoicing nature sees,' and 'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' the latter is exquisite. By the way, I imagine you have a peculiar talent for such compositions which you ought to indulge: no kind of poetry demands more delicacy or higher polishing." On this letter to Moore all the biographies of Burns are founded.]

Machin, 2d August, 1787.

Sir,

For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be often at my own expense; for I assure you, Sir,

I have, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble,—I have, I say, like him turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him, too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.—After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

"My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' soundless o'er since the flood."  
Poem.

Gules, purpure, argent, &c., quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom—I have met with few who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, unger

1 Idiot for idiotes.
but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster
some thrashings, I made an excellent English
scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years
of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and
particles. In my infant and boyish days, too,
I owed much to an old woman who resided in
the family, remarkable for her ignorance, cre-
dulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose,
the largest collection in the country of tales and
songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brown-
ies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-
candles, deadlights, wrathias, apparitions, can-
trails, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and
other trumpery. This cultivated the latent
seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on
my imagination, that to this hour, in my noc-
turnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look
out in suspicious places; and though nobody
can be more sceptical than I am in such mat-
ters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy
to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest
composition that I recollect taking pleasure in,
was the Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addi-
son'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—"

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Col-
collection, one of my school-books. The first two
books I ever read in private, and which gave me
more pleasure than any two books I ever read
since, were the Life of Hannibal, and the Histo-
ry of Sir 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 bag-pipe, 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 floodgates of life shut
in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting
the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shini-
ing in conversation parties on Sundays, between
sermons, at funerals, &c., used a few years after-
wards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat
and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of
heresy against me, which has not ceased to this
hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to
me. My social disposition, when not checked
by some modifications of spirited pride, was like
our catechism definition of infinitude, without
bounds or limits. I formed several connexions
with other youngera, who possessed superior ad-
vantages; the youngling actors who were busy
in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were
shortly to appear on the stage of life, where,
alsi! I was destined to drudge behind the
scenes. It is not commonly at this green age,
that our young gentry have a just sense of the
immense distance between them and their ragged
playfellows. It takes a few dashes into the
world, to give the young great man that proper,
decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insig-
nificant stupid devils, the mechanics and pes-
santry around him, who were, perhaps, born in
the same village. My young superiors never
insulted the clatterous appearance of my plough-
boy carecase, the two extremes of which were
often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the
seasons. They would give me stray volumes of
books; among them, even then, I could pick up
some observations; and one, whose heart, I am
sure, not even the "Manny Begum" scenes have
tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting
with these my young friends and benefactors, as
they occasionally went off for the East or West
Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I
was soon called to more serious evils. My
father's generous master died! the farm proved
a ruinous bargain; and to clench the misfortune,
we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for
the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of
"The Tw Dogs." My father was advanced in
life when he married; I was the eldest of seven
children, and he, worn out by early hardships,
was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was
soon irritated, but not easily broken. There
was a freedom in his lease in two years more,
and to weather these two years, we retracted
our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a
dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next
elest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could
drive the plough very well, and help me to
thrust the corn. A novel-writer might, perhaps,
have viewed these scenes with some satisfac-
ton, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils
at the recollection of the soundrel factor's in-
solent threatening letters, which used to set us
all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a
hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-
slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little
before which period I first committed the sin of
rhyme. You know our country custom of com-
pling a man and woman together as partners in
the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn,
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." In short,
she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated
me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of
acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and
bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of
human joys, our dearest blessing here below!
How she caught the contagion I cannot tell;
you medical people talk much of infection from
breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I
never expressly said I loved her.—Indeed, I did
not know myself why I liked so much to loiter
behind her, when returning in the evening
from our labours; why the tones of her voice
made my heart-string thrill like an Æolian
harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such
a furious rata, when I looked and fingered
her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings
and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring
qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her fa-
vourite reel to which I attempted giving an em-
bodyed vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presum-
tuous as to imagine that I could make verses
like printed ones, composed by men who had
Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song
which was said to be composed by a small coun-
try laird's son, on one of his father's maids,
whom he was in love; and I saw no rea-
son why I might not rhyme as well as he; for
excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast
peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had
no more scholar-craft than myself.
Thus with me began love and poetry; which
at times have been my only, and till within the
last twelve months, have been my highest en-
joyment. My father struggled on till he reached
the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a
larger farm, about ten miles farther in the coun-
try. The nature of the bargain he made was
such as to throw a little ready money into his
hands at the commencement of his lease, other-
wise the affair would have been impracticable.
For four years we lived comfortably here, but a
difference commencing between him and his
landlord as to terms, after three years tossing
and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father
was just saved from the horrors of a jail, by a
consumption, which, after two years' promises,
ing bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was un penchant à l'adorable moirot du genre humain. My heart was completely tender, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and I dare say, I felt 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 half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my comppeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour 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.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a swaggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming fillette, who lived next door to the school, overreached my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden 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. The remaining week I stayed I did nothing but erase the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not threefarthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of the day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course

1 Paradise Lost, b. iv
OF ROBERT BURNS.

till my twenty-third year. *Vine l'amour, et vies la bagatelle,* were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—Tristram Shandy and the Man of Feeling were my bosom favourites. Poetry was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the coming over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except “Winter, a dirge,” the eldest of my printed pieces; “The Death of poor Maillie,” “John Barleycorn,” and songs first, second, and third. Song second was the eulogium of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town ( Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My * * * and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousel to the new year, the shop took fire and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a belle fille, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopelessly wretches who have got their mittimus—depart from me, ye cursed!

From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill-fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this time master of a large West-Indian man belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the “Poet's Welcome.”

My reading only increased while in this town by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Ferguson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emanating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, “come, go to, I will be wise!” I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late har-

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1 “Rob the Rhymers Welcome to his Bastard Child.”

—See Poem XXXIII.
vest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them dramatis personae in "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and 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. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But, before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say, that pauvre incomm as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

"Hungry rain had me in the wind."

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—"The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baleful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir: and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. Oublie-moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je t'oublier.

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch" the characters and the manners living as they rise." Whether I have profited, time will show
OF ROBERT BURNS.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. Her very elegant and friendly letter I cannot answer at present, as my presence is requisite in Edinburgh, and I set out to-morrow.

R. B.

LXXV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ., BEEBWELL DUNSE.

(This characteristic letter was first published by Sir Harris Nicolas; others, still more characteristic, addressed to the same gentleman, are abroad: how they escaped from private keeping is a sort of a riddle.)

Edinburgh, 23d August, 1787.

"As I passed up to Dunse
To warp a pickie yarn,
Robin, silly body,
He gat me wi' bairn."

From henceforth, my dear Sir, I am determined to set off with my letters like the periodical writers, viz. prefix a kind of text, quoted from some classic of undoubted authority, such as the author of the immortal piece, of which my text is a part. What I have to say on my text is exhausted in a letter which I wrote you the other day, before I had the pleasure of receiving yours from Inverkeithing; and sure never was anything more lucky, as I have but the time to write this, that Mr. Nicol, on the opposite side of the table, takes to correct a proof-sheet of a thesis. They are gabbling Latin so loud that I cannot hear what my own soul is saying in my own skull, so I must just give you a matter-of-fact sentence or two, and end, if time permit, with a verse de rei generatione.

To-morrow I leave Edinburgh in a chaise; Nicol thinks it more comfortable than horseback, to which I say, Amen; so Jenny Geddes goes home to Ayshire, to use a phrase of my mother's, wi' her finger in her mouth.

Now for a modest verse of classical authority:

The cats like kitchen;
The dogs like broo;
The lasses like the lads weel,
And th' said wives too.

CHORUS.
And we're a' noddin,
Nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin fou at s'en.

If this does not please you, let me hear from you; if you write any time before the 1st of September, direct to Inverness, to be left at the post-office till called for; the next week at Aberdeen, the next at Edinburgh.

The sheet is done, and I shall just conclude with assuring you that

I am, and ever with pride shall be,
My dear Sir, &c.

R. B.

Call your boy what you think proper, only interject Burns. What do you say to a Scripture name? Zimri Burns Ainslie, or Architophile, &c., look your Bible for these two heroes, if you do this, I will repay the compliment.

LXXVI.

TO MR. ROBERT MUIR.

[No Scotsman will ever read, without emotion, the poet's words in this letter, and in "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," about Bannockburn and its glories.]

Stirling, 28th August, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I intended to have written you from Edinburgh, and now write you from Stirling to make an excuse. Here am I, on my way to Inverness, with a truly original, but very worthy man, Mr. Nicol, one of the masters of the High-school, in Edinburgh. I left Auld Reekie yesterday morning, and have passed, besides by-excursions, Linlithgow, Borrowstounness, Falkirk, and here am I undoubtedly. This morning I went to the tomb of Sir John the Graham, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace; and two hours ago I said a fervent prayer, for Old Caledonia, over the hole in a blue whinstone, where Robert de Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn; and just now, from Stirling Castle, I have seen by the setting sun the glorious prospect of the windings of Forth through the rich carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich carse of Falkirk. The crops are very strong, but so very late, that there is no harvest, except a ridge or two perhaps in ten miles, all the way I have travelled from Edinburgh.

I left Andrew Bruce and family all well. I will be at least three weeks in making my tour, as I shall return by the coast, and have many people to call for.
My best compliments to Charles, our dear kinsman and fellow-saint; and Messrs. W. and H. Parkers. I hope Hughec is going on and prospering with God and Miss McCauslin.

If I could think on anything sprightly, I should let you hear every other post; but a dull, matter-of-fact business, like this scrawl, the less and seldomer one writes, the better.

Among other matters-of-fact I shall add this, that I am and ever shall be,

My dear Sir,

Your obliged,

R. B.

LXXVII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

[It is supposed that the warmth of the lover came in this letter to the aid of the imagination of the poet, in his account of Charlotte Hamilton.]

Stirling, 28th August, 1787.

My dear Sir,

Here am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile carnes of Falkirk and Sterling, and am delighted with their appearance: richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c., but no harvest at all yet, except, in one or two places, an old wife's ridge. Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandering Devon's banks, to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie; though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine, I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what these young folks are now. Your brother is as tall as you are, but slimmer rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word still to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart that might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure, and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration: she is not only beautiful but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:

—"Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one would almost say her body thought."

* Her eyes are fascinating: at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to answer about you. I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie was going on still very pretty; but I have it in commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady Mackenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat somewhat marred our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor Mackenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.

I am ever, Sir,

Yours most gratefully,

R. B
LXXXVIII.

TO MR. WALKER,
BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

(Professor Walker was a native of Ayrshire, and an accomplished scholar; he saw Burns often in Edinburgh; he saw him at Dumbarton; and after the copyright of Currie's edition of the poet's works expired, he wrote, with much taste and feeling, his life anew, and edited his works—what passed under his own observation he related with truth and ease.)

Inverness, 6th September, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I have just time to write the foregoing, and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of an half-hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was extempore, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat and the jogging of the chaise would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athol, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need! I shall never forget.

The "little angel-band!" I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyris. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table; the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother: the beautiful Mrs. G.—the lovely sweet Miss C., &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality—markedly kind indeed. Mr. Graham of Fintray's charms of conversation—Sir W. Murray's friendship. In short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company raises an honest glow in my bosom.

LXXIX.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

(The letters of Robert to Gilbert are neither many nor important: the latter was a calm, considerate, sensible man, with nothing poetic in his composition: he died lately, much and widely respected.)

1 The Humble Petition of Bruar-water.
TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

(SEW MRS. HAT.)

[To Margaret Chalmers, the youngest daughter of James Chalmers, Esq., of Fingland, it is said that Burns confined his affection to Charlotte Hamilton: his letters to Miss Chalmers, like those to Mrs. Dunlop, are distinguished for their good sense and delicacy as well as freedom.]

Sept. 26, 1787.

I send Charlotte the first number of the song; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book: but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intended to make it a description of some kind: the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, whig-minister at Kilmours. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farago, are just a Mauchline * * * a senseless rabbit.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries, to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms.—Do tell that to Lady Mackenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. "Wisdom dwell with Prudence." What a blessed fire-side! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Harvinston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years."

In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave: as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, "which the world cannot give, nor take away," I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

B. B.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS.

[That fine song, "The Banks of the Dee," dedicated to the charms of Charlotte Hamilton, was enclosed in the following letter.]

Without data.

I have been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family), I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighbourhood.

I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have, to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now completed. The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song, which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is
very well; and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only sincere, but just.

B. B.

LXXXII.

TO JAMES HOY, ESQ.

GORDON CASTLE.

[James Hoy, librarian of Gordon Castle, was, it is said, the gentleman whom his grace of Gordon sent with a message inviting in vain that "obstinate son of Latin prose," Nicol, to stop and enjoy himself.]

Edinburgh, 20th October, 1787.

Sir,

I will defend my conduct in giving you this trouble, on the best of Christian principles—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."—I shall certainly, among my legacies, leave my latest curse to that unlucky predicament which hurried—tore me away from Castle Gordon. May that obstinate son of Latin prose [Nicol] be cursed to Scotch mile periods, and damned to seven league paragraphs; while Declension and Conjugation, Gender, Number, and Time, under the ragged banners of Dissonance and Disarrangement, eternally rank against him in hostile array.

Allow me, Sir, to strengthen the small claim I have to your acquaintance, by the following request. An engraver, James Johnson, in Edinburgh, has, not from mercenary views, but from an honest, Scotch enthusiasm, set about collecting all our national songs and setting them to music; particularly those that have never been set before. Clarke, the well known musician, presides over the musical arrangement, and Mrs. Beattie and Blacklock, Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, and your humble servant to the utmost of his small power, assist in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes for a fine air make a stanza, when it has no words. The brats, too tedious to mention, claim a parental pang from my hardship. I suppose it will appear in Johnson's second number—the first was published before my acquaintance with him. My request is—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen," is one intended for this number, and I beg a copy of his Grace of Gordon's words to it, which you were so kind as to repeat to me. You may be sure we won't prefix the author's name, except you like, though I look on it as no small merit to this work that the names of many of the authors of our old Scotch songs, names almost forgotten, will be inserted.

I do not well know where to write to you—I rather write at you; but if you will be so obliging, immediately on receipt of this, as to write me a few lines, I shall perhaps pay you in kind, though not in quality. Johnson's terms are:—each number a handsome pocket volume, to consist at least of a hundred Scotch songs, with basses for the harpsichord, &c. The price to subscribers 6s.; to non-subscribers 6s. He will have three numbers I conjecture.

My direction for two or three weeks will be at Mr. William Cruikshank's, St. James's-square, New-town, Edinburgh.

I am,

Sir,
Your's to command,
B. B.

LXXXIII.

TO REV. JOHN SKINNER.

[The songs of "Tullochgorum," and "John of Bedan-ven," have made the name of Skinner dear to all lovers of Scottish verse; he was a man cheerful and pious, nor did the family talent expire with him: his son became Bishop of Aberdeen.]

Edinburgh, October 25, 1787.

REVEREND AND VENERABLE SIR,

Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical compliment I ever received. I assure you, Sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your other capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live I shall regret, that when I was in the north, I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—"Tullochgorum's my delight!" The world may think slightingly of the craft of song-making, if they please, but, as Job says—"Oh! that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rests with you. Our true brother, Ross of Lochiel, was likewise "owreannie"—"a wild warlock"—but now he sings among the "sons of the morning."

I have often wished, and will certainly endeav—
vour to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world is not our peers, so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness independent of that world.

There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best assistance. An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch songs, with the music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted, but the music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information respecting their origin, authors, &c. &c. This last is but a very fragment business; but at the end of his second number—the first is already published—a small account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of latter times. Your three songs, "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," and "Ewie wi' the crookit horn," are in this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times: and if you would be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish, your name will be inserted among the other authors.—"Nill ye, will ye." One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you; the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks.

I am,
With the warmest sincerity, Sir,
Your obliged humble servant.—R. B.

LXXXIV.
TO JAMES HOY, ESQ.
AT GORDON CASTLE, FOCARBER.

[In singleness of heart and simplicity of manners James Hoy is said, by one who knows him well, to have rivalled Domine deumus: his love of learning and his scorn of wealth are still remembered to his honour.]

Edinburgh, 6th November, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I would have wrote you immediately on receipt of your kind letter, but a mixed impulse of gratitude and esteem whispered me that I ought to send you something by way of return. When a poet owes anything, particularly when he is indebted for good offices, the payment that usually recurs to him—the only coin indeed in which he probably is conversant—is rhyme. Johnson sends the books by the fly, as directed, and begs me to enclose his most grateful thanks: my return I intended should have been one or two poetic bagatelles which the world have not seen, or, perhaps, for obvious reasons, cannot see. These I shall send you before I leave Edinburgh. They may make you laugh a little, which, on the whole, is no bad way of spending one's precious hours and still more precious breath: at any rate, they will be, though a small, yet a very sincere mark of my respectful esteem for a gentleman whose further acquaintance I should look upon as a peculiar obligation.

The duke's song, independent totally of his dukeship, charms me. There is I know not what of wild happiness of thought and expression peculiarly beautiful in the old Scottish song style, of which his Grace, old venerable Skinner, the author of "Tullochgorum," &c., and the late Ross, at Lochlee, of true Scottish poetic memory, are the only modern instances that I recollect, since Ramsay with his contemporaries, and poor Bob Ferguson, went to the world of deathless existence and truly immortal song. The mob of mankind, that many-headed beast, would laugh at so serious a speech about an old song; but as Job says, "O that mine adversary had written a book!" Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try.

I wish my Lord Duke would pay a proper attention to the Christian admonition—"Hide not your candle under a bushel," but "let your light shine before men." I could name half a dozen dukers that I guess are a devilish deal worse employed: nay, I question if there are half a dozen better: perhaps there are not half that scanty number whom Heaven has favoured with a tuneful, happy, and, I will say, glorious gift.

I am, dear Sir,
Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.
LXXXV.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE,
EDINBURGH.

"I set you down, says Burns, elsewhere, to Ainslie, "as the staff of my old age, when all my other friends, after a decent show of pity, will have forgot me."

Edinburgh, Sunday Morning,
Nov. 23, 1787.

I am, my dear Sir, you would not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie's to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c., I find I can't sup abroad to-night. I shall be in to-day till one o'clock if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you, that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence.—You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my good things.—I don't know upon the whole, if you are one of the first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be your friend.

R. B.

LXXXVI.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

[The views of Burns were always humble: he regarded a place in the excise as a thing worthy of paying court for, both in verse and prose.]

Edinburgh, 1787.

My Lord,

I know your lordship will disapprove of my ideas in a request I am going to make to you; but I have weighed, long and seriously weighed, my situation, my hopes and turn of mind, and am fully fixed to my scheme if I can possibly effectuate it. I wish to get into the Excise; I am told that your lordship's interest will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.

My brother's farm is but a wretched lease, but I think he will probably weather out the remaining seven years of it; and after the assistance which I have given and will give him, to keep the family together, I think, by my guess, I shall have rather better than two hundred pounds, and instead of seeking, what is almost impossible at present to find, a farm that I can certainly live by, with so small a stock, I shall lodge this sum in a banking-house, a sacred deposit, expecting only the calls of uncommon distress or necessitous old age.

These, my lord, are my views: I have resolved from the maturest deliberation; and now I am fixed, I shall leave no stone unturned to carry my resolve into execution. Your lordship's patronage is the strength of my hopes; nor have I yet applied to anybody else. Indeed my heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation, and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as the cold denial; but to your lordship I have not only the honour, the comfort, but the pleasure of being

Your lordship's much obliged
And deeply indebted humble servant,

R. B.

LXXXVII.

TO JAMES DALRYMPLE, ESQ., ORANGEFIELD.

[James Dalrymple, Esq., of Orangefield, was a greatest man of birth and poetic tastes—he interested himself in the fortunes of Burns.]

Edinburgh, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I suppose the devil is so elated with his success with you that he is determined by a coup de main to complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me; hummed over the rhymes; and, as I saw they were extempore, said to myself, they were very well; but when I saw at the bottom a name that I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I caput wide, but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the
friends of Job, of affliction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spoke not a word.

I am naturally of a superstitious cast, and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness, and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfall of the conclave, or the crushing of the Cork rumps; a ducal coronet to Lord George Gordon and the Protestant interest; or St. Peter's keys to the inaccessible. You want to know how I come on. I am just in a state of mind, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, in "auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glaicairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns, with a goodness like that benevolent Being, whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul, than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful squire H. L., or the reverend Mass J. M. go into their primitive nothing. At best, they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos, only one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throbs of benevolence, shall look on with princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

R. B.

LXXXVIII.

TO CHARLES HAY, ESQ., ADVOCATE.

[The verses enclosed were written on the death of the Lord President Dundas, at the suggestion of Charles Hay, Esq., advocate, afterwards a judge, under the title of Lord Newton.]

Sir,

The enclosed poem was written in consequence of your suggestion, last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. It cost me an hour or two of next morning's sleep, but did not please me; so it lay by, an ill-digested effort, till the other day that I gave it a critic brush. These kind of subjects are much hackneyed; and, besides, the wallings of the rhyming tribe over the sakes of the great are cursedly suspicious, and out of all character for sincerity. These ideas damped my muse's fire; however, I have done the best I could, and, at all events, it gives me an opportunity of declaring that I have the honour to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

LXXXIX.

TO MISS M—N.

[This letter appeared for the first time in the "Letters to Clarinda," a little work which was speedily suppressed—it is, on the whole, a sort of Corrydon and Philias affair, with here and there expressions too graphic, and passages over-warm. Who the lady was is not known—or known only to one.]

Saturday Noon, No. 2, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

Here have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony altitude of perplexed study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensitive to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter, all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliment is such a miserable Greenland expression, lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling on you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, some time about seven or after, I shall wait on you for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box I put into the hands of the proper connoisseur. The broken glass, likewise, went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric.

I am, dear Madam,
With all sincerity of enthusiasm,
Your very obedient servant,

R. B.
XC.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[Some dozen or so, it is said, of the most beautiful letters that Burns ever wrote, and dedicated to the beauty of Charlotte Hamilton, were destroyed by that lady, in a moment when anger was too strong for reflection.]

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1787.

I have one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcoming, well-fitted sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness,—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they make a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, 'er put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery; I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though, thank heaven, I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss—a lover.

Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle: I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk has a handle o' faults, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

Afternoon—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the "Wabater's grace:"

"Some say we're thieves, and 'e've said we were, Some say we lie, and 'e've said we do we! God forgive us, and I hope she will be! —Up and to your looms, lads."

R. B.

XCVI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[The "Ochel-Hills," which the poet promises in this letter, is a song, beginning,

"Where brav'ry angry winter's storm
The lofty Ochels rise,"

written in honour of Margaret Chalmers, and published along with the "Banks of the Devon," in Johnson's Musical Museum.]

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I am here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind lying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunk-en coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself have formed a "quadruple alliance" to guaranty the other. I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I enclose you a proof copy of the "Banks of the Devon," which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The "Ochel-hills" you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches!

R. B.
ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth, after the long-expected shower!

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty; attended as he always is, by iron-dusted oppression, and leering contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day already, and still my motto is—I DARE! My worst enemy is moi-même. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the ban-ners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion: and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wis-dom, prudence, and forethought move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of per-petual warfare, and, alas! frequent defeat.

There are just two creatures I would envy, a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

R. B.

XCVIII.

TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

[The Whitefoords of Whiteford, interested them-selves in all matters connected with literature: the power of the family, unluckily for Burns, was not equal to their taste.]

Edinburgh, December, 1787.

Sir,

Mr. MacKenzie, in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronized by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by ***** friends to them, and hon-oured acquaintances to me! but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevo-lence and goodness of heart has interested him-self for me, unsolicited and unknown. I am not master enough of the etiquette of these mat ters to know, nor did I stay to inquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner, as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the jus-tice to believe this letter is not the manoeuvre of the needy, sharpening author, fastening on those in upper life, who honour him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed, the situation of poets is generally such, to a pro-verb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents, they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by any means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn, but I believe a careless indolent attention to economy, is almost inseparable from it; then there must be in the heart of every hard of Nature's making, a certain me-dest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, that will ever keep him out of the way of those windfalls of fortune which frequently light on hardly impudence and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his whose poetic fancy unites him for the world, and whose character as a scholar gives him some pretensions to the politeas of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shed, and I have an inde-pendent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one who pre-tended in the least to the manners of the gentle-man, should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion, but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever pre-serve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness but one—a return which, I am persuaded, will not be unacceptable—the honest, warm wishes of a grateful heart for your hap-piness, and every one of that lovely flock, who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever ca-lunmy aim the poisoned shaft at them, may friendship be by to ward the blow!

R. B.

XCIV.

TO MISS WILLIAMS,

ON READING HER PAPER ON THE SLAVE-TRADE.

[The name and merits of Miss Williams are widely known; nor is it a small honour to her muse that her tender song of "Evan B.ckle" was impoited to Burns by
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I hope, as just as it is certainly elegant. The thought,

"Virtue . . . . . . . . . .
Sends from her unsullied source,
The gems of thought their purest force,"
is exceeding beautiful. The idea, from verse 61st to the 65th, that the "blest decree" is like the beams of morning ushering in the glorious day of liberty, ought not to pass unnoticed or unapplaused. From verse 80th to verse 106th, is an animated contrast between the unfeeling selfishness of the oppressor on the one hand, and the misery of the captive on the other. Verse 80th might perhaps be amended thus: "Nor ever quill her narrow maze." We are said to pass a bound, but we quail a maze. Verse 106th is exquisitely beautiful:

"They, whom wasted blessings tire."

Verse 110th is I doubt a clashing of metaphors; "to load a span" is, I am afraid, an unwarrantable expression. In verse 114th, "Cast the universe in shade," is a fine idea. From the 115th verse to the 142d is a striking description of the wrongs of the poor African. Verse 120th, "The load of unremitting pain," is a remarkable, strong expression. The address to the advocates for abolishing the slave-trade, from verse 148d to verse 208th, is animated with the true life of genius. The picture of oppression,

"While she links her iron chain,
And calculated the price of pain;
Weighs agony in scordid scales,
And marks if death or life prevails."

is nobly executed.

What a tender idea is in verse 108th! Indeed, that whole description of home may vie with Thomson's description of home, somewhere in the beginning of his Autumn. I do not remember to have seen a stronger expression of misery than is contained in these verses:

"Condemned, severe extreme, to live
When all is said that life can give"
The comparison of our distant joys to distant objects is equally original and striking.

The character and manners of the dealer in the infernal traffic is a well done though a horrid picture. I am not sure how far introducing the sailor was right; for though the sailor's common characteristic is generosity, yet, in this case, he is certainly not only an unconcerned witness, but, in some degree, an efficient
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

agent in the business. Verse 224th is a nervous . . . expressivé.—"The heart convulsive anguish breaks." The description of the captive wretch when he arrives in the West Indies, is carried on with equal spirit. The thought that the oppressor’s sorrow on seeing the slave pine, is like the butcher’s regret when his destined lamb dies a natural death, is exceedingly fine.

I am got so much into the cant of criticism, that I begin to be afraid lest I have nothing except the cant of it; and instead of elucidating my author, am only brightening myself. For this reason, I will not pretend to go through the whole poem. Some few remaining beautiful lines, however, I cannot pass over. Verse 280th is the strongest description of selfishness I ever saw. The comparison of verses 285th and 286th is new and fine; and the line, "Your arms to penury you lend," is excellent. In verse 317th, "like" should certainly be "as" or "so," for instance—

"His way the harbored bosom lends
To cruelty’s remorseless deeds:
As (or, so) the blue lightning when it springs
With fury on its livid wings,
Darts on the goal with rapid force,
Nor heedsthat rain marks its course."

If you insert the word "like" where I have placed "as," you must alter "darts" to "darting," and "heedst" to "heedling" in order to make it grammar. A tempest is a favourite subject with the poets, but I do not remember anything even in Thomson’s Winter superior to your verses from the 347th to the 351st. Indeed, the last simile, beginning with "Fancy may dress," &c., and ending with the 350th verse, is, in my opinion, the most beautiful passage in the poem; it would do honour to the greatest names that ever graced our profession.

I will not beg your pardon, Madam, for these strictures, as my conscience tells me, that for once in my life I have acted up to the duties of a Christian, in doing as I would be done by.

R. B.

XCV.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN, IRVINE.

(Richard Brown was the "hapless son of misfortune," alluded to by Burns in his biographical letter to Dr. Moore: by fortune and prudence he retrieved his fortunes, and lived much respected in Greenock, to a good old age. He said Burns had little to learn in matters of levity, when he became acquainted with him.)

Edinburgh, 30th Dec. 1787.

My dear Sir,

I have met with few things in life which have given me more pleasure than Fortune’s kindness to you since those days in which we met in the vale of misery; as I can honestly say, that I never knew a man who more truly deserved it, or to whom my heart more truly wished it. I have been much indebted since that time to your story and sentiments for steeling my mind against evils, of which I have had a pretty decent share. My will-o’wisp fate you know: do you recollect a Sunday we spent together in Eglinton woods! You told me, on my speaking some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces, which encouraged me to undertake at the character of a poet. I am happy to hear that you will be two or three months at home. As soon as a bruised limb will permit me, I shall return to Ayrshire, and we shall meet; and faith, I hope we’ll not sit dumb, nor yet cast out!"

I have much to tell you “of men, their manners, and their ways,” perhaps a little of the other sex. Apropos, I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Brown. There I doubt not, my dear friend, but you have found substantial happiness. I expect to find you something of an altered but not a different man: the wild, bold, generous young fellow composed into the steady affectionate husband, and the fond careful parent. For me, I am just the same will-o’wisp being I used to be. About the first and fourth quarters of the moon, I generally set in for the trade wind of wisdom: but about the full and change, I am the luckless victim of mad tornadoes, which blow me into chaos. Almighty love still reigns and revels in my bosom; and I am at this moment ready to hang myself for a young Edinburgh widow, who has wit and wisdom more murderously fatal than the assassinating stillette of the Sicilian banditti, or the poisoned arrow of the savage African. My highland dirk, that used to hang beside my crutches, I have gravely removed into a neighbouring closet, the key of which I cannot command in case of spring-tide paroxysms. You may guess of her wit by
OF ROBERT BURNS.

the following verses, which she sent me the other day:

Talk not of love, it gives me pain,
For love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And plunged me deep in woe.

But friendship's pure and lasting joys,
My heart was formed to prove.
There, welcome, win, and wear the prize,
But never talk of love.

Your friendship much can make me blest—
O why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious one request,
You know I must deny?

My best compliments to our friend Allan.

XCVI.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON.

[The Hamiltons of the West continue to love the memory of Burns: the old arm-chair in which the bard sat, when he visited Naneen Timock, was lately presented to the museum lodge of Muckbline, by Dr. Hamilton, the "wise curly Johoster" of the Dedication.]

[Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.]

MY DEAR SIR,

It is indeed with the highest pleasure that I congratulate you on the return of days of ease and nights of pleasure, after the horrid hours of misery in which I saw you suffering existence when last in Ayrshire; I seldom pray for any body, "I am aghast-dread, and wretched ill o' t;" but most fervently do I beseech the Power that directs the world, that you may live long and be happy, but live no longer than you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reterend care of your health. I know you will make it a point never at one time to drink more than a pint of wine (I mean an English pint), and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time, and that cold drinks, after drinking perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill late hour. Above all things, as I understand you are in habits of intimacy with that Boonerges of gospel powers, Father Auld, be earnest with him that he will wrestle in prayer for you,

1 See song 186, in Johnson's Musical Museum. Burns altered the two last lines, and added a stanza:

Way urge the only one request
You know I must deny!

that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising the casual moral works of charity, humanity, genrosity, and forgiveness of things, which you practis'd so flagrantly that it was evident you delighted in them, neglecting, or perhaps profanely despising, the wholesome doctrine of faith without works, the only anchor of salvation. A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present, and in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press on you to be diligent in chanting over the two enclosed pieces of sacred poetry. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours in the L-d,

XCVII.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[The blank which takes the place of the name of the "Gentleman in mind and manners," of this letter, cannot now be filled up, nor is it much matter: the acquaint ance of such a man as the poet describes few or none would desire.]

[Edinburgh, Dec. 1787.]

MY DEAR MADAM,

I JUST now have read yours. The poetical compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides, I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, Madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me bear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my poems; by second sight I suppose; for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear Madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by any ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world, the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prosemen. More for your information, both the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving

Your thought if love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought;
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.
angry winter's storms," is already set—the tune is Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercorn; the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's collection of ancient Scots music; the name is "Hà a Chaillich air me Dheth." My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about Les Incas; only I think you mentioned them as being in Creech's possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so anything, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw yours to——; it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr.—— has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns, in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated, and his knowledge of his father's disposition;—the whole affair is chimerical—yet he will gratify an idle penchant at the enormous, cruel expense, of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! He is a gentleman in his mind and manners—tant pis! He is a volatile school-boy—the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely——, the derided object of their purse-proud contempt!

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs.——'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her:

"As I came in by Gleanap,
I met with an aged woman:
She told me cheer up my heart,
For the best o' my days was come!"

This day will decide my affairs with Creech. Things are, like myself, not what they ought to be; yet better than what they appear to be.

"Heaven's sovereign saves all beings but himself—
That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

Farewell! Remember me to Charlotte.

R. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The poet alludes in this letter, as in some before, to a hurt which he got in one of his excursions in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh.]

Edinburgh, January 21, 1788.

After six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me loth to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission: for I would not take in any poor, ignorant wretch, by selling out. Lately I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starring cadet: a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to assemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh: and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop-House.

R. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The levity with which Burns sometimes spoke of things sacred, had been obliquely touched upon by his good and anxious friend Mrs. Dunlop: he pleads guilty of folly, but not of irreligion.]

Edinburgh, February 12, 1788.

Some things in your late letters hurt me: not that you say them, but that you mistake me. Religion, my honoured Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest enjoyment. I have, indeed, been the luckless victim of wayward follies; but, alas! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion is a probable character; an irreligious poet is a monster.

R. B.

TO THE REV. JOHN SKINNER.

[When Burns undertook to supply Johnson with songs for the Musical Museum, he laid all the birds of Scotland]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

[The letters of Burns to Brown, and Smith, and Richmond, and others of his west-country friends, written when he was in the first flush of fame, show that he did not forget humble men, who anticipated the public in perceiving his merit.]

Edinburgh, February 15th, 1788.

My dear friend,

I received yours with the greatest pleasure. I shall arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening; and beg, if possible, you will meet me on Tuesday. I shall wait you Tuesday all day. I shall be found at Davies’, Black Bull inn. I am hurried, as if hunted by fifty devils, else I should go to Greenock; but if you cannot possibly come, write me, if possible, to Glasgow, on Monday; or direct to me at Mossgiel by Mauchline; and name a day and place in Ayrshire, within a fortnight from this date, where I may meet you. I only stay a fortnight in Ayrshire, and return to Edinburgh. I am ever, my dearest friend, yours,

B. B.

TO MRS. ROSE, OF KILRAVOCK.

[Mrs. Rose of Kilravock, a lady distinguished by the elegance of her manners, as well as by her talents, was long remembered by Burns: she procured for him matches of old songs, and copies of northern melodies; to her we owe the preservation of some fine airs as well as the inspiration of some fine lyrics.]

Edinburgh, February 17th, 1788.

MY DEAR MRS. ROSE,

You are much indebted to some indispensable business I have had on my hands, otherwise my gratitude threatened such a return for your obliging favour as would have tired your patience. It but poorly expresses my feelings to say, that I am sensible of your kindness: it may be said of hearts such as yours is, and such, I hope, mine is, much more justly than Addison applies it,—

"Some souls by instinct to each other turn."

There was something in my reception at Kilravock so different from the cold, obsequious, dancing-school bow of politeness, that it almost got into my head that friendship had occupied
her ground without the intermediate march of acquaintance. I wish I could transcribe, or rather transfuse into language, the glow of my heart when I read your letter. My ready fancy, with colours more mellow than life itself, painted the beautifully wild scenery of Kilmarnock—the venerable grandeur of the castle—the spreading woods—the winding river, gliding leaving his unsightly, hethitry source, and lingering with apparent delight as he passes the fairy walk at the bottom of the garden;—your late distressful anxieties—your present enjoyments—your dear little angel, the pride of your hopes;—my aged friend, venerable in worth and years, whose loyalty and other virtues will strongly entitle her to the support of the Almighty Spirit here, and his peculiar favour in a happier state of existence. You cannot imagine, Madam, how much such feelings delight me; they are my dearest proofs of my own immortality. Should I never revisit the north, as probably I never will, nor again see your hospitable mansion, were I, some twenty years hence, to see your little fellow’s name making a proper figure in a newspaper paragraph, my heart would bound with pleasure.

I am assisting a friend in a collection of Scottish songs, set to their proper tunes; every air worth preserving is to be included: among others I have given “Morag,” and some few Highland airs which pleased me most, a dress which will be more generally known, though far, far inferior in real merit. As a small mark of my grateful esteem, I beg leave to present you with a copy of the work, as far as it is printed; the Man of Feeling, that first of men, has promised to transmit it by the first opportunity.

I beg to be remembered most respectfully to your venerable friend, and to your little Highland chieftain. When you see the “two fair spirits of the hill,” at Kildrummie,1 tell them that I have done myself the honour of setting myself down as one of their admirers for at least twenty years to come, consequently they must look upon me as an acquaintance for the same period; but, as the apostle Paul says, “this I ask of grace, not of debt.”

I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.,

R. B.

TO MR. WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK.

[The excite and forming alternately occupied the poet’s thoughts in Edinburgh: he studied books of husband...]

CIV.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

[While Burns was confined to his lodgings by his malady, he beguiled the time and eased the pangs by composing the Clarinda epistles, writing songs for Johnson, and letters to his companions.]

Mosgiel, 24th February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I CANNOT get the proper direction for my friend in Jamaica, but the following will do:—

To Mr. John Hutchinson, at Jo. Brownrigg’s, Esq., care of Mr. Benjamin Henriques, merchant, Orange-street, Kingston. I arrived here, at my brother’s, only yesterday, after fighting my way through Painley and Kilmarnock, against those old powerful foes of mine, the devil, the world, and the flesh—so terrible in the fields of dissipation. I have met with few incidents in my life which gave me so much pleasure as meeting you in Glasgow. There is a time of life beyond which we cannot form a tie worth the name of friendship. “O youth! enchanting stage, profusely blest.” Life is a fairy scene: almost all that deserves the name of enjoyment or pleasure is only a charming delusion; and in comes repining age in all the gravity of hoary wisdom, and wretchedly chases away the bewitching phantom. When I think of life, I resolve to keep a strict look-out in the course of economy, for the sake of worldly convenience and independence of mind; to cultivate intimacy with a few of the companions of youth, that they may be the friends of age; never to refuse my liquorish humour a handful of the sweetmeats of life, when they come not too dear; and, for futurity,—

“...The present moment is our sin,
The past we never saw.”1

How like you my philosophy? Give my best compliments to Mrs. B., and believe me to be,

My dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

R. B.

1 Miss Sophia Brodie, of L——, and Miss Rose of adrovock.

2 Mickle.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

My dear sir,

Apoologies for not writing are frequently like apologies for not singing—the apology better than the song. I have fought my way severely through the savage hospitality of this country, to send every guest drunk to bed if they can.

I executed your commission in Glasgow, and I hope the cocoa came safe. 'Twas the same price and the very same kind as your former parcel, for the gentleman recollected your buying there perfectly well.

I should return my thanks for your hospitality (I leave a blank for the epithet, as I know none can do it justice) to a poor, wayfaring bard, who was spent and almost overpowered fighting with prosoic wickednesses in high places; but I am afraid lest you should burn the letter whenever you come to the passage, so I pass over it in silence. 'T am just returned from visiting Mr. Miller's farm. The friend whom I told you I would take with me was highly pleased with the farm; and as he is, without exception, the most intelligent farmer in the country, he has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans of life before me; I shall balance them to the best of my judgment, and fix on the most eligible. I have written Mr. Miller, and shall wait on him when I come to town, which shall be the beginning or middle of next week; I would be in sooner, but my unlucky knee is rather worse, and I fear for some time will scarcely stand the fatigue of my Excise instructions. I only mention these ideas to you; and, indeed, except Mr. Ainslie, whom I intend writing to to-morrow, I will not write at all to Edinburgh till I return to it. I would send my compliments to Mr. Nicol, but he would be hurt if he knew I wrote to anybody and not to him: so I shall only beg my best, kindest compliments to my worthy hostess and the sweet little rose-bud.

So soon as I am settled in the routine of life, either as an Excise officer, or as a farmer, I propose myself great pleasure from a regular correspondence with the only man almost I ever saw who joined the most attentive prudence with the warmest generosity.

I am much interested for that best of men,

Mr. Wood; I hope he is in better health and spirits than when I saw him last.

I am ever,

My dearest friend,

Your obliged, humble servant,

R. B.

Mr. Ainslie, March 3d, 1788.

The sensible and intelligent farmer on whose judgment Burns depended in the choice of his farm, was Mr. Tait, of Glenconner.

My dear friend,

I am just returned from Mr. Miller's farm. My old friend whom I took with me was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent sensible farmer in the county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal. I have the two plans before me: I shall endeavour to balance them to the best of my judgement, and fix on the most eligible. On the whole, if I find Mr. Miller in the same favourable disposition as when I saw him last, I shall in all probability turn farmer.

I have been through sore tribulation and under much buffeting of the wicked one since I came to this country. Jean I found banished, forlorn, destitute and friendless: I have reconciled her to her fate, and I have reconciled her to her mother.

I shall be in Edinburgh middle of next week. My farming ideas I shall keep private till I see. I got a letter from Clarinda yesterday, and she tells me she has got no letter of mine but one. Tell her that I wrote to her from Glasgow, from Kilmarnock, from Mauchline, and yesterday from Cumnock as I returned from Dumfries. Indeed she is the only person in Edinburgh I have written to till this day. How are your soul and body putting up?—a little like man and wife, I suppose.

R. B.
CVI.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

[Richard Brown, it is said, fell off in his liking for Burns when he found that he had made free with his name in his spire to Moore.]  

Mauchline, 7th March, 1788.

I have been out of the country, my dear friend, and have not had an opportunity of writing till now, when I am afraid you will be gone out of the country too. I have been looking at farms, and, after all, perhaps I may settle in the character of a farmer. I have got so vicious a bent to idleness, and have ever been so little a man of business, that it will take no ordinary effort to bring my mind properly into the routine; but you will say a "great effort is worthy of you." I say so myself; and butter up my vanity with all the stimulating compliments I can think of. Men of grave, geometrical minds, the sons of "which was to be demonstrated," may cry up reason as much as they please; but I have always found an honest passion, or native instinct, the truest auxiliary in the warfare of this world. Reason almost always comes to me like an unlucky wife to a poor devil of a husband, just in sufficient time to add her reproaches to his other grievances.

I am gratified with your kind inquiries after Jean; as, after all, I may say with Othello:—

"Excellent wretch!  
Petition catch my soul, but I do love thee!"

I go for Edinburgh on Monday.

Yours,—R. B.

CVII.

TO MR. MUIR.

[The change which Burns says in this letter took place in his ideas, refers, it is said, to his West India voyage, on which, it appears by one of his letters to Smith, he meditated for some time after his debut in Edinburgh.]

Moosgiel, 7th March, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I have partly changed my ideas, my dear friend, since I saw you. I took old Glenconner with me to Mr. Miller's farm, and he was so pleased with it, that I have wrote an offer to Mr. Miller, which, if he accepts, I shall sit down a plain farmer, the happiest of lives when a man can live by it. In this case I shall not stay in

Edinburgh above a week. I set out on Monday, and would have come by Kilmaurs, but there are several small sums owing me for my first edition about Galston and Newmilns, and I shall set off so early as to dispatch my business, and reach Glasgow by night. When I return, I shall devote a forenoon or two to make some kind of acknowledgment for all the kindness I owe your friendship. Now that I hope to settle with some credit and comfort at home, there was not any friendship or friendly correspondence that promised me more pleasure than yours; I hope I will not be disappointed. I trust the spring will renew your shattered frame, and make your friends happy. You and I have often agreed that life is no great blessing on the whole. The close of life, indeed, to a reasoning eye, is,

"Dark as was chaos, are the infant sun  
Was roll'd together, or had try'd his beams  
Athis the gloom profound."  

But an honest man has nothing to fear. If we lie down in the grave, the whole man a piece of broken machinery, to moulder with the clods of the valley, be it so; at least there is an end of pain, care, woes, and wants: if that part of us called mind does survive the apparent destruction of the man—away with old-wife prejudices and tales! Every age and every nation has had a different set of stories; and as the many are always weak, of consequence, they have often, perhaps always, been deceived; a man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow-creatures—even granting that he may have been the sport at times of passions and instincts—he goes to a great unknown Being, who could have no other end in giving him existence but to make him happy, who gave him those passions and instincts, and well knows their force. These, my worthy friend, are my ideas; and I know they are not far different from yours. It becomes a man of sense to think for himself, particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark.

Adieu, my dear Sir; God send us a cheerful meeting!

R. B.

1 Blair's Grave.
CXXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Some of the daughters of Mrs. Dunlop painted a sketch of Càilà from Burns's poem of the Vision: it is still in existence, and is said to have merit.

May 26th, 1791.

MADAM,

The last paragraph in yours of the 30th February affected me most, so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a sinner with any little wit I have, I do confess; but I have taxed my recollection to no purpose, to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm a great deal worse than I do the devil; at least as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my honoured friend, who cannot appear in any light but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or, if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many, and the esteem of all; but, God help us, who are wits or writings by profession, if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coils. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet of his muse Scotia, from which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coils ("tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scottish dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):—

"Ye shak your hand, but o' my legs,
Ye're set auld Scotia on her legs;
Lang had she lain wi' beds and sags,
Bambair'd and dizzie,
Her fiddle wanted strings and sags.
Wae's me, poor hizzie."

R. B.

CXXXI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[The excuse given in this letter arose from the dilatory and reluctant movements of Creech, who was so slow in settling his accounts that the poet suspected his solvency.]

Glasgow, 28th March, 1788.

I am monstrously to blame, my dear Sir, in not writing to you, and sending you the Directory. I have been getting my tack extended, as I have taken a farm; and I have been racking shop accounts with Mr. Creech, both of which, together with watching, fatigue, and a load of care almost too heavy for my shoulders, have in some degree actually fevered me. I really forgot the Directory yesterday, which vexed me; but I was convulsed with rage a great part of the day. I have to thank you for the ingenious, friendly, and elegant epistle from
your friend Mr. Crawford. I shall certainly write to him, but not now. This is merely a card to you, as I am posting to Dumfries-shire, where many perplexing arrangements await me. I am vexed at the Directory; but, my dear Sir, forgive me: these eight days I have been positively crazed. My compliments to Mrs. B. I shall write to you at Grenada.—I am ever, my dearest friend,

Yours,—R. B.

CXL.

TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN.

[Cleghorn was a farmer, a social man, and much of a musician. The poet wrote the Chevalier's Lament to please the Jacobitical taste of his friend; and the musician gave him advice in forming which he neglected to follow:—"Farmer Attention," says Cleghorn, "is a good farmer everywhere."]

Mmachline, 31st March, 1788.

Yesterday, my dear Sir, as I was riding through a track of melancholy, joyless mazes, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, "Captain O'Keen," coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. You will see that the first part of the tune must be repeated.

I am tolerably pleased with these verses, but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music.

I am so harassed with care and anxiety, about this farming project of mine, that my muse has degenerated into the veriest prose-wench that ever picked cinders, or followed a tinker. When I am fairly got into the routine of business, I shall trouble you with a longer epistle; perhaps with some queries respecting farming; at present, the world sits such a load on my mind, that it has effaced almost every trace of the poet in me.

My very best compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Cleghorn.

R. B.

CXII.

TO MR. WILLIAM DUNBAR, EDINBURGH.

[This letter was printed for the first time by Robert Chambers, in his "People's Edition" of Burns.]

Mmachline, 7th April, 1789.

I have not delayed so long to write you, my much respected friend, because I thought no farther of my promise. I have long since given up that kind of formal correspondence, where one sits down irksomely to write a letter, because we think we are in duty bound so to do.

I have been roving over the country, as the farm I have taken is forty miles from this place, hiring servants and preparing matters; but most of all I am earnestly busy to bring about a revolution in my own mind. As, till within these eighteen months, I never was the wealthy master of ten guineas, my knowledge of business is to learn; add to this my late scenes of idleness and dissipation have enervated my mind to an alarming degree. Skill in the sober science of life is my most serious and hourly study. I have dropped all conversation and all reading (prose reading) but what tends in some way or other to my serious aim. Except one worthy young fellow, I have not one single correspondent in Edinburgh. You have indeed kindly made me an offer of that kind. The world of wits, and gens comme il faut which I lately left, and with whom I never again will intimately mix—from that port, Sir, I expect your Gazette: what les beaux esprits are saying, what they are doing, and what they are singing. Any sober intelligence from my sequestered walks of life; any droll original; any passing reward, important forsooth, because it is mine; any poetic effort, however embroth; these, my dear Sir, are all you have to expect from me. When I talk of, poetic efforts, I must have it always understood, that I appeal from your wit and taste to your friendship and good nature. The first would be my favourite tribunal, where I defied censure; but the last, where I declined justice.

I have scarcely made a single distich since I saw you. When I meet with an old Scots air that has any facetious idea in its name, I have a peculiar pleasure in following out that idea for a verse or two.

I trust that this will find you in better health
OF ROBERT BURNS.

than I did last time I called for you. A few lines from you, directed to me at Mauchline, were it but to let me know how you are, will set my mind a good deal at rest. Now, never shun the idea of writing me because perhaps you may be out of humour or spirits. I could give you a hundred good consequences attending a dull letter; one, for example, and the remaining ninety-nine some other time—it will always serve to keep in countenance, my much respected Sir, your obliged friend and humble servant, R. B.

CXIII.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[The meritorious poet, by the way, was his resolution to unite his fortune with Jean Armour.]

Mauchline, 7th April, 1788.

I am indebted to you and Miss Nimmie for letting me know Miss Kennedy. Strange! how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who pique myself on my skill in marking characters—because I am too proud of my character as a man, to be dazzled in my judgment for glaring wealth; and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biassed against aqualid poverty—I was unacquainted with Miss K.'s very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in mon grand âge, the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices, for which, were I died to-day within the situation and recant the circumstances, you should applaud me.

R. B.

CXIV.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[The hint alluded to, was a whisper of the insolvency of Creech; but the bailiff was firm as the bass.]

No date.

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke measures with Creech, and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honour that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor d—ned, insensible, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions?

"I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die!" I had lately "a hairbreadth 'scape in th' imminent deadly breach" of love too. Thank my stars, I got off heart-whole, "waur flayed than hurt."—Interruption.

I have this moment got a hint: I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best. Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution; accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path: but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

R. B.

CXV.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

[Although Burns gladly grasped at a situation in the excise, he wrote many apologies to his friends, for the acceptance of a place, which, though humble enough, was the only one that offered.]

Edinburgh, Sunday.

To-morrow, my dear madam, I leave Edinburgh. I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and, indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken. I have entered into the excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh, for six weeks' instructions: afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go où il plait à Dieu.—et mon Roi. I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not yet what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in; but what doory does she open to us? I was not likely to get anything to do. I wanted an âge, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread, and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in com
parison of all my preceding life: besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.

R. B.

CXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The Tasso, with the perusal of which Mrs. Dunlop indulged the poet, was not the fine version of Fairfax, but the translation of Hoole—a far inferior performance.]

Mauchline, 28th April, 1788.

MADAM,

Your powers of reprehension must be great indeed, as I assure you they made my heart ache with penitential pangs, even though I was really not guilty. As I commence farmer at Whit-Sunday, you will easily guess I must be pretty busy; but that is not all. As I got the offer of the Excise business without solicitation, and as it costs me only six months' attendance for instructions, to entitle me to a commission—which commission lies by me, and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed—I thought five-and-thirty pounds a-year was no bad dernier resort for a poor poet, if fortune in her jade tricks should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up.

For this reason, I am at present attending these instructions, to have them completed before Whit-sunday. Still, Madam, I prepared with the sincerest pleasure to meet you at the Mount, and came to my brother's on Saturday night, to set out on Sunday; but for some nights preceding I had slept in an apartment, where the force of the winds and rains was only mitigated by being sifted through numberless apertures in the windows, walls, &c. In consequence I was on Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday, unable to stir out of bed, with all the miserable effects of a violent cold.

You see, Madam, the truth of the French maxim, le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable; your last was so full of expostulation, and was something so like the language of an offended friend, that I began to tremble for a correspondence, which I had with grateful pleasure set down as one of the greatest enjoyments of my future life.

Your books have delighted me: Virgil, Dryden, and Tasso were all equally strangers to me; but of this more at large in my next.

R. B.

CXVII.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

AVON PRINTFIELD, LINLITHGOW.

[James Smith, as this letter intimates, had moved from Mauchline to try to mend his fortunes at Avon Printfield, near Linlithgow.]

Mauchline, April 28, 1788.

BEWARE of your Strasburgh, my good Sir! Look on this as the opening of a correspondence, like the opening of a twenty-four guns battery!

There is no understanding a man properly, without knowing something of his previous ideas (that is to say, if the man has any ideas; for I know many who, in the animal-muster, pass for men, that are the scanty masters of only one idea on any given subject, and by far the greatest part of your acquaintances and mine can barely boast of ideas, 1.25—1.5—1.75 or some such fractional matter;) so to let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussy of your acquaintance, to whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus.

"Bede a robe and wear it, Bede a pock and bear it," says the wise old Scots adage! I hate to prescribe ill-luck; and as my girl has been doubly kinder to me than even the best of women usually are to their partners of our sex, in similar circumstances, I reckon on twelve times a brace of children against I celebrate my twelfth wedding-day: these twenty-four will give me twenty-four gossippings, twenty-four christenings (I mean one equal to two), and I hope, by the blessing of the God of my fathers, to make them twenty-four dutiful children to their parents, twenty-four useful members of society, and twenty-four approved servants of their God! * * *

"Light's hearty and" quo' the wife when she was stealing sheep. You see what a lamp I have hung up to lighten your paths, when you are idle enough to explore the combinations and
relations of my ideas. 'Tis now as plain as a
pike-staff, why a twenty-four gun battery was
a metaphor I could readily employ.

Now for business.—I intend to present Mrs.
Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which
I dare say you have variety: 'tis my first pre-
sent to her since I have irrevocably called her
mine, and I have a kind of whimsical wish to
get her the first said present from an old and
much-valued friend of hers and mine, a trusty
Trojan, on whose friendship I count myself pos-
sessed of as a life-rent lease.

Look on this letter as a "beginning of sor-
rows;" I will write you till your eyes ache read-
ing nonsense.

Mrs. Burns ('tis only her private designation)
 begs her best compliments to you. R. B.

CXVIII.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

[Dugald Stewart loved the poet, admired his works,
and enriched the biography of Burns with some genuine
reminiscences of his earlier days.]

Mauchline, 3d May, 1788.

Sir,

I enclose you one or two more of my baga-
telles. If the fervent wishes of honest grati-
dude have any influence with that great unknown
being who frames the chain of causes and events,
prosperity and happiness will attend your visits
to the continent, and return you safe to your
native shore.

Wherever I am, allow me, Sir, to claim it as
my privilege to acquaint you with my progress
in my trade of rhymes; as I am sure I could
say it with truth, that next to my little fame,
and the having it in my power to make life more
tolerable to those whom nature has made
dear to me, I shall ever regard your counte-
nance, your patronage, your friendly good
offices, as the most valued consequence of my
late success in life.

R. B.

CXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

A poem, something after the fashion of the Georgics,
was long present to the mind of Burns: had fortune
been more friendly he might have, in due time, produced
it.]

Mauchline, 4th May, 1788.

Madam,

Dryden's Virgil has delighted me. I do not
know whether the critics will agree with me
but the Georgics are to me by far the best of
Virgil. It is indeed a species of writing en-
tirely new to me; and has filled my head with
a thousand fancies of emulation: but, alas!
when I read the Georgics, and then survey my
own powers, 'tis like the idea of a Shetland
pony, drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred
hunter to start for the plate. I own I am dis-
appointed in the Aesid. Faultless correctness
may please, and does highly please, the lettered
critic: but to that awful character I have not
the most distant pretensions. I do not know
whether I do not hazard my pretensions to be
a critic of any kind, when I say that I think
Virgil, in many instances, a servile copier of
Homer. If I had the Odyssey by me, I could
parallel many passages where Virgil has evi-
dently copied, but by no means improved, Ho-
mer. Nor can I think there is anything of this
owing to the translators; for, from everything
I have seen of Dryden, I think him in genius
and fluency of language, Pope's master. I have
not perused Tasso enough to form an opinion:
in some future letter, you shall have my ideas
of him; though I am conscious my criticisms
must be very inaccurate and imperfect, as there
I have ever felt and lamented my want of learn-
ing most.

R. B.

CXX.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

[I have heard the gentleman say, to whom this brief
letter is addressed, how much he was pleased with
the imitation, that the poet had reunited himself with Jean
Armour, for he knew his heart was with her.]

Mauchline, May 26, 1788.

My dear Friend,

I am two kind letters in your debt, but I have
been from home, and horribly busy, buying and
preparing for my farming business, over and
above the plague of my Excise instructions,
which this week will finish.

As I flatter my wishes that I foresee many
future years' correspondence between us, 'tis
foolish to talk of excusing dull epistles; a dull letter may be a very kind one. I have the pleasure to tell you that I have been extremely fortunate in all my buyings, and bargainings hitherto; Mrs. Burns not excepted; which title I now sow to the world. I am truly pleased with this last affair: it has indeed added to my anxieties for futurity, but it has given a stability to my mind, and resolutions unknown before; and the poor girl has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to me, and has not a wish but to gratify my every idea of her deportment. I am interrupted.—Farewell! my dear Sir. R. B.

CXXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

(This letter, on the hiring season, is well worth the consideration of all masters, and all servants. In England, servants are engaged by the month; in Scotland by the half-year, and therefore less at the mercy of the changeable and capricious.)

27th May, 1788.

MADAM,

I have been torturing my philosophy to no purpose, to account for that kind partiality of yours, which has followed me, in my return to the shade of life, with assiduous benevolence. Often did I regret, in the fleeting hours of my late will-o’-wisp appearance, that "here I had no continuing city," and but for the consolation of a few solid guineas, could almost lament the time that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life—insignificance and poverty.

There are few circumstances relating to the unequal distribution of the good things of this life that give me more vexation (I mean in what I see around me) than the importance the opulent bestow on their trifling family affairs, compared with the very same things on the contracted scale of a cottage. Last afternoon I had the honour to spend an hour or two at a good woman’s fireside, where the planks that composed the floor were decorated with a splendid carpet, and the gay table sparkled with silver and china. ’Tis now about term-day, and there has been a revolution among those creatures, who though in appearance partakers, and equally noble partakers, of the same nature with Madame, are from time to time—their nerves, their sinews, their health, strength, wisdom, experience, genius, time, nay a good part of their very thoughts—sold for months and years, not only to the necessities, the conveniences, but the caprices of the important few. We talked of the insignificant creatures; nay, notwithstanding their general stupidity and rascality, did some of the poor devils the honour to commend them. But light be the turf upon his breast who taught "Reverence thyself!" We looked down on the unpollished wretches, their impertinent wives and cloutier brats, as the lordly bull does on the little dirty ant-hill, whose puny inhabitants he crushes in the carelessness of his ramble, or tosses in the air in the wantonness of his pride. R. B.

CXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,

AT MR. DUNLOP’S, HADDINGTON.

(In this, the poet’s first letter from Ellisland, he lays down his whole system of in-door and out-door economy: while his wife took care of the household, he was to manage the farm, and “say a stanza” during his hours of leisure.)

Ellisland, 18th June, 1788.

"Where’er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untrained, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my friend it turns with ceaseless pain,
And drugs at search a lengthening chain."

—Goldsmith.

This is the second day, my honoured friend, that I have been on my farm. A solitary inmate of an old smoky spense; far from every object I love, or by whom I am beloved; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except Jenny Geidies, the old mare I ride on; while uncouth cares and novel plans hourly insult my awkward ignorance and bashful inexperience. There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care; consequently the dreary objects seem larger than the life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.
"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his single woe?" &c.

Your surprize, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband.

To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger.
My preservative from the first is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me: my antidote against the last is my long and deep-rooted affection for her.

In housewife matters, of aptness to learn and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress; and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy and other rural business.

The muse must not be offended when I tell them, the concerns of my wife and family will, in my mind, always take the pas; but I assure them their ladieships will ever come next in place.

You are right that a bachelor state would have insured me more friends; but, from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.

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;—there is no sportsing with a fellow-creature’s happiness or misery.

The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny pay-wedding.

R. B.

CXXIII.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

[Had Burns written his last song, beginning "Contented wi’ little and cantie wi’ mair," when he penned this letter, the prose might have followed as a note to the verse: he calls the Excise a luxury.]

Ellisland, June 14th, 1788.

This is now the third day, my dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: in Ayrshire I have several variations of friendship’s compass, here it points invariably to the pole. My farm gives me a good many uncouth cares and anxieties, but I hate the language of complaint. Job, or some one of his friends, says well—"why should a living man complain?"

I have lately been much mortified with con templating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow-creatures. I do not mean any complaint to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspicious simplicity of conscious truth and honour: I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dulness. In two or three small instances lately, I have been most shamefully out.

I have all along bitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms among the light-horse— the piquet-guards of fancy; a kind of hussars and Highlanders of the brain; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions, who have no ideas of a battle but fighting the foe, or of a siege but storming the town. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance.

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, besides the great studies of your profession? You said something about religion in your last. I don’t exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayrshire; but I thought it not only prettily said, but nobly thought. You will make a noble fellow if once you were married. I make no reservation of your being well-married: you have as much sense, and knowledge of human nature, that though you may not realize perhaps the ideas of romance, yet you will never be unmarried.

Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting provision for a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness. As it is,
I look to the Excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance!—luxury to what either Mrs. Burns or I were born to.

Adieu.

R. B.

CXXIV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

[The kindness of Field, the profliet, has not only indulged me with a look at the original, from which the profile alluded to in the letter was taken, but has put me in possession of a capital copy.]

Mauchline, 23d June, 1788.

This letter, my dear Sir, is only a business scrap. Mr. Miers, profile painter in your town, has executed a profile of Dr. Blacklock for me: do me the favour to call for it, and sit to him yourself for me, which put in the same size as the doctor's. The account of both profiles will be fifteen shillings, which I have given to James Connell, our Mauchline carrier, to pay you when you give him the parcel. You must not, my friend, refuse to sit. The time is short: when I sat to Mr. Miers, I am sure he did not exceed two minutes. I propose hanging Lord Glencairn, the Doctor, and you in trio over my new chimney-piece that is to be.

Adieu.

R. B.

CXXV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

["There is a degree of folly," says Burns in this letter, "in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs." The folly is scarcely less to write about them, and much did the poet and his friend write about their own private affairs as well as those of others.]

Ellistand, June 30th, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I just now received your brief epistle; and, to take vengeance on your lazziness, I have, you see, taken a long sheet of writing-paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vexed at that affair of the * * *, but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master's and friend's death. I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying, except he has been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment in the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal, but he is dropped into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food; that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself. You have been imposed upon in paying Mr. Miers for the profile of a Mr. H. I did not mention it in my letter to you, nor did I ever give Mr. Miers any such order. I have no objection to lose the money, but I will not have any such profile in my possession.

I desired the carrier to pay you, but as I mentioned only fifteen shillings to him, I would rather enclose you a guinea note. I have it not, indeed, to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the bank-notes through the house like salt permints.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes, by his silly garrulous pruency. I know it has been a fault of my own, too; but from this moment I abjure it, as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend forsooth to crack their jokes on prudence; but 'tis a squallid vagabond glorying in his rag. Still, imprudence respecting money matters is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice, in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same disingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegrative depravity of principle, in the hackneyed victims of profusion, as in the unfeeling children of parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much-talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes, and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact. But in things belonging to, and ter-
OF ROBERT BURNS.

minating in this present scene of existence, man
has serious and interesting business on hand.
Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome
in the discounted elevation of respect, or
shrink from contempt in the subject corner of in-
significance; whether he shall wanton under the
tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the
comfortable latitudes of easy convenience, or
starve in the Arctic circle of dreary poverty;
whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness
of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a gall-
ing load of regret and remorse—these are alter-
atives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally
to sermonise too; I wish you would, in
charity, favour me with a sheet full in your
own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord
Bolingbroke writes to Dean Swift:—"Adieu
dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee en-
tirely: make an effort to love me with all
mine!" Humble servant, and all that trumpery,
is now such a prostituted business, that honest
friendship, in her sincere way, must have re-
course to her primitive, simple,—farewell!

R. B.

CXXVII.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

(Peter Hill was a bookseller in Edinburgh: David Ramsay, printer of the Evening Courant; William Dusazer, an advocate, and president of a club of Edinburgh wits; and Alexander Cunningham, a jeweller, who loved mirth and wine.)

MY DEAR HILL,

I shall say nothing to your mad present—
you have so long and often been of important
service to me, and I suppose you mean to go on
conferring obligations until I shall not be able
to lift up my face before you. In the mean
time, as Sir Roger de Coverley, because it hap-
pened to be a cold day in which he made his
will, ordered his servants great costs for mourn-
ing, so, because I have been this week plagued
with an indigestion, I have sent you by the
carrier a fine old ewe-milk cheese.

Indigestion is the devil: nay, 'tis the devil
and all. It besets a man in every one of his
senses. I lose my appetite at the sight of success-
fuflsuccess knavery, and sicken to loathing at the
noise and nonsense of self-important folly.
When the hollow-hearted wretch takes me by
the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner: the
proud man's wine so offends my palate that it
choke me in the gullet; and the pulcinated,
feathered, pert coxcomb is so disgustful in my
nostril that my stomach turns.

If ever you have any of these disagreeable
sensations, let me prescribe for you patience
and a bit of my cheese. I know that you are
no niggard of your good things among your
friends, and some of them are in much need of
a slice. There, in my eye is our friend Smel-
lie; a man positively of the first abilities and
greatest strength of mind, as well as one of
the best hearts and keenest wits that I have
ever met with; when you see him, as, alas! he
too is smarting at the pinch of distressful cir-
cumstances, aggravated by the sneer of contu-
melious greatness—a bit of my cheese alone will
not cure him, but if you add a tankard of brown stout, and superadd a magnum of right Oporto, you will see his sorrows vanish like the morning mist before the summer sun.

Candish, the earliest friend, except my only brother, that I have on earth, and one of the worthiest fellows that ever any man called by the name of friend, if a luncheon of my cheese would help to rid him of some of his superabundant modesty, you would do well to give it him.

David, with his Courant, comes, too, across my recollection, and I beg you will help him largely from the said ewe-milk cheese, to enable him to digest those bedaubing paragraphs with which he is eternally larding the lean characters of certain great men in a certain great town. I grant you the periods are very well turned; so, a fresh egg is a very good thing, but when thrown at a man in a pillory, it does not at all improve his figure, not to mention the irreparable loss of the egg.

My facetious friend Dunbar I would wish also to be a partaker: not to digest his spleen, for that he laughs off, but to digest his last night's wine at the last field-day of the Crochallan corps.

Among our common friends I must not forget one of the dearest of them—Cunningham. The brutality, insolence, and selfishness of a world unworthy of having such a fellow as he is in it, I know sticks in his stomach, and if you can help him to anything, what will make him a little easier on that score, it will be very obliging.

As to honest J—— S——, he is such a contented, happy man, that I know not what can annoy him, except, perhaps, he may not have got the better of a parcel of modest anecdotes which a certain poet gave him one night at supper, the last time the said poet was in town. Though I have mentioned so many men of law, I shall have nothing to do with them professedly—the faculty are beyond my prescription. As to their clients, that is another thing; God knows they have much to digest!

The clergy I pass by; their profundity of Vulgar, and their liberality of sentiment; their total want of pride, and their detestation of hypocrisy, are so proverbially notorious as to place them far, far above either my praise or censure.

I was going to mention a man of worth whom I have the honour to call friend, the Laird of Craigdarroch; but I have spoken to the landlord of the King's Arms inn here, to have at the next county meeting a large ewe-milk cheese on the table, for the benefit of the Dumfries-shire Whigs, to enable them to digest the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct.

I have just this moment an opportunity of a private hand to Edinburgh, as perhaps you would not digest double postage. R. B.

CXXXVIII.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ.,
OF FERNTRAY.

[The filial and fraternal claims alluded to in this letter were satisfied with about three hundred pounds, two hundred of which went to his brother Gilbert—a sum which made a sad impression on the money arising from the second edition of his Poems.]

Sir,

When I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole-house, I did not think so soon of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakespeare, asked Old Kent why he wished to be in his service, he answered, "Because you have that in your face which I would fain call master." For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of Excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with anything like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life, in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner, which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last and often best friend, rescued him.
I know, Sir, that to need your goodness, is to have a claim on it; may I, therefore, beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division; where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.

R. B.

CXXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The lines on the Hermitage were presented by the poet to several of his friends, and Mrs. Dunlop was among the number.]

Menchline, August 2, 1788.

HONOUR'D MADAM,

Your kind letter welcomed me, yesternight, to Ayrshire. I am, indeed, seriously angry with you at the quantum of your luckenny; but vexed and hurt as I was, I could not help laughing very heartily at the noble lord's apology for the missed napkin.

I would write you from Nithsdale, and give you my direction there, but I have scarce an opportunity of calling at a post-office once in a fortnight. I am six miles from Dumfries, am scarcely ever in it myself, and, as yet, have little acquaintance in the neighbourhood. Besides, I am now very busy on my farm, building a dwelling-house; as at present I am almost an evangelical man in Nithsdale, for I have scarce "where to lay my head."

There are some passages in your last that brought tears in my eyes. "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddled not therewith." The repository of these "sorrows of the heart" is a kind of sanctum sanctuarum: and 'tis only a chosen friend, and that, too, at particular sacred times, who dares enter into them:

"Heaven oft tears the bosom-chords\nThat nature finest strung."

You will excuse this quotation for the sake of the author. Instead of entering on this subject farther, I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a hermitage, belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are among the only favours the muses have conferred on me in that country:

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Since I am in the way of transcribing the following were the production of yesterday as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend, Mr. Graham, of Fintray, one of

1 See Poems LXXXIX and XC
the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen
not only of this country, but, I will dare to say
it, of this age. The following are just the first
crude thoughts "unhouse'd, unanointed, unan-
noised":—
* * * * *

Pity the tuneful muses' helpless train;
Weak, timid landmen on life's stormy main:
The world were blest, did bliss on them depend;
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a
friend!"
The little fate bestows they share as soon;
Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard-wrung
boon.
Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
Who life and wisdom at one race begun;
Who feel by reason and who give by rule;
Instinct's a brute and sentiment a fool!
Who make poor will do wait upon I should;
We own they're prudent, but who owns they're
good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye;
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come=* * * * * * * *

Here the muse left me. I am astonished at
what you tell me of Anthony's writing me. I
never received it. Poor fellow! you vex me
much by telling me that he is unfortunate.
I shall be in Ayrshire ten days from this date. I
have just room for an old Roman farewell.

R. B.

CXXXI.
TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[This letter has been often cited, and very proper y, as
a proof of the strong attachment of Burns to one who
was, in many respects, worthy.]

Mauchline, August 10, 1788.

My much honoured friend,
Yours of the 24th June is before me. I found
it, as well as another valued friend—my wife,
waiting to welcome me to Ayrshire: I met both
with the sincerest pleasure.

When I write you, Madam, I do not sit down
to answer every paragraph of yours, by echoing
every sentiment, like the faithful Commons of
Great Britain in Parliament assembled, an-
swering a speech from the best of kings! I ex-
press myself in the fulness of my heart, and
may, perhaps, be guilty of neglecting some of
your kind inquiries; but not from your very
old reason, that I do not read your letters. All
your epistles for several months have cost me
nothing, except a swelling throb of gratitude,
or a deep-felt sentiment of veneration.

When Mrs. Burns, Madam, first found her-
self "as women wish to be who love their
lords," as I loved her nearly to distraction, we
took steps for a private marriage. Her parents
got the hint; and not only forbade me her com-
pany and their house, but, on my rumoured
West Indian voyage, got a warrant to put me
in jail, till I should find security in my about-
to-be paternal relation. You know my lucky
reverse of fortune. On my return to
Mauchline, I was made very welcome to visit
my girl. The usual consequences began to betray
her; and, as I was at that time laid up a
cripple in Edinburgh, she was turned, literally
turned out of doors, and I wrote to a friend to
shelter her till my return, when our marriage
was declared. Her happiness or misery were
in my hands, and who could triffole with such a
deposit?

I can easily fancy a more agreeable compan-
ion for my journey of life; but, upon my
honour, I have never seen the individual ins-
ance.

Circumstanced as I am, I could never have
got a female partner for life, who could have
entered into my favourite studies, relished my
favourite authors, &c., without probably entail-
ing on me at the same time expensive living,
fantastic caprices, perhaps spish affection, with
all the other blessed boarding-school acquire-
ments, which (pardon moi, Madam,) are
sometimes to be found among females of the
upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the
miseries of the would-be gentrity.

I like your way in your church-yard lucuba-
tions. Thoughts that are the spontaneous result
of accidental situations, either respecting health,
place, or company, have often a strength, and
always an originality, that would in vain be
looked for in fancied circumstances and studied
paragraphs. For me, I have often thought of
keeping a letter, in progression by me, to send
you when the sheet was written out. Now I
talk of sheets, I must tell you, my reason for
writing to you on paper of this kind is my pru-
riency of writing to you at large. A page of
post is on such a dissocial, narrow-minded scale,
better than other folks' corn." I was going to make a New Testament quotation about "casting pearls" but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste.

After all that has been said on the other side of the question, man is by no means a happy creature. I do not speak of the selected few, favoured by partial heaven, whose souls are tuned to gladness amid riches and honours, and prudence and wisdom. I speak of the neglected many, whose nerves, whose sinews, whose days are sold to the minions of fortune.

If I thought you had never seen it, I would transcribe for you a stanza of an old Scottish ballad, called, "The Life and Age of Man;"

beginning thus:

"Twas in the sixteenth hundred year
Of God and fifty-three,
Free Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie."

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived awhile in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of "The Life and Age of Man."

It is this way of thinking; it is these melancholy truths, that make religion so precious to the poor, miserable children of men.—If it is a mere phantom, existing only in the heated imagination of enthusiasm,

"What truth on earth so precious as a lie."

My idle reasonings sometimes make me a little sceptical, but the necessities of my heart always give the cold philosophising the lie. Who looks for the heart weaned from earth; the soul attainted to her God; the correspondence fixed with heaven; the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn; who thinks to meet with these in the court, the palace, in the glare of public life? No: to find them in their precious importance and divine efficacy, we must search among the obscure recesses of disappointment, affliction, poverty, and distress.

I am sure, dear Madam, you are now more than pleased with the length of my letters. I return to Ayrshire middle of next week: and it quickens my pace to think that there will be a letter from you waiting me there. I must be here again very soon for my harvest.

B. B.
CXXXIII.

TO MR. BEugo,
ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

[Mr. Beugo was a well-known engraver in Edinburgh: he engraved Naumnth’s portrait of Burns, for Creech’s first edition of his Poems; and as he could draw a little, he improved, as he called it, the engraving from sittings of the poet, and made it a little more like, and a little less poetic.]

Ellisland, 9th Sept. 1788.

My dear Sir,

There is not in Edinburgh above the number of the graces whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the 3d instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on the farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country, in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose they only know in graces, prayers, &c., and the value of these they estimate as do their plaiding webes—by the ell! As for the muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a post. For my old capricious but good-natured luxry of a muse—

"By banks of Nith I sat and wept
When Coils I thought on,
In midst thereof I hung my harp
The willow-trees upon."  

I am generally about half my time in Ayrshire with my "darling Jean," and then I, at lucid intervals, throw my horny fist across my beeb-webbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning-wheel.

I will send you the "Fortunate Shepherdess" as soon as I return to Ayrshire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for anything it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue; 'tis purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me, I should be extremely happy; that is to say if you neither keep nor look for a regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being obliged to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works—twas a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do me one thing?—whenever you finish any head I should like to have a proof copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but as what everybody knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

R. B.

CXXXIV.

TO MISS CHALMERS,
EDINBURGH.

[To this fine letter all the biographers of Burns are largely indebted.]

Ellisland, near Dumfries, Sept. 16th, 1788.

Where are you? and how are you? and is Lady Mackenzie recovering her health? for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and for my part—

"When thou, Jerusalem, I forget,
Skilf part from my right hand!"

"My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea." I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows—rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark of impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much à l'égard de moi, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness. I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two, whose estemr flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say more, but so much as Lady Mackenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest of human kind—unfortunate even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days than I can do with almost any body I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child! If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more
OF ROBERT BURNS.

This business, I know you would approve of my idea.

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail; I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the silly, idle gewgaws of wealth, or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When followers, the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at everything dishonest, and the same scorn at everything unworthy—if they are not in the dependence of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense are they not equals? And if the bias, the instinctive bias, of their souls run the same way, why may they not be friends?

When I may have an opportunity of sending you this, Heaven only knows. Shenstone says, "When one is confined idle within doors by bad weather, the best antidote against ennui is to read the letters of or write to, one's friends;" in that case then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately—to wit, since harvest began—wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner, of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my muse's pinion in that way. I will send you a copy of it, when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large poetic works: how the superstructure will come on, I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—time. Johnson's collection of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and, of consequence, finds me a consumer for a great deal of idle metre. One of the most tolerable things I have done in that way is two stanzas I made to an air, a musical gentleman of my acquaintance composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the seventh of November. Take it as follows:

"The day returns—my bosom burns,
The blissful day we two did meet," &c.¹

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit, before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty farewell.

¹ Song LXIX.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

To make some amends, mee chiere Meedame, for dragging you on to this second sheet, and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some of my late poetic bagatelles; though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day in a hermitage on the banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows, supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

Lines Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage.

"Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed." ¹

R. B.

CXXXV.
TO MR. MORISON,
MAUCHLINE.

[Morison, of Mauchline, made most of the poet’s furniture; for Ellisland: from Mauchline, too, came that eight-day clock, which was sold, at the death of the poet’s widow, for thirty-eight pounds, to one who would have paid one hundred, sooner than wanted it.]

Ellisland, September 22, 1788.

My DEAR Sir,

Necessity obliges me to go into my new house even before it be plastered. I will inhabit the one end until the other is finished. About three weeks more, I think, will at farthest be my time, beyond which I cannot stay in this present house. If ever you wished to deserve the blessing of him that was ready to perish; if ever you were in a situation that a little kindness would have rescued you from many evils; if ever you hope to find rest in future states of untired being—get these matters of mine ready. My servant will be out in the beginning of next week for the clock. My compliments to Mrs. Morison.

I am,

After all my tribulation,
Dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

CXXXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
OF DUNLOP.

[Burns had no great respect for critics who found his misfits without perceiving beauties: he expresses his contempt for such in this letter.]

Mauchline, 27th Sept. 1788.

I have received twins, dear Madam, more than once; but scarcely ever with more pleasure than when I received yours of the 12th instant. To make myself understood; I had wrote to Mr. Graham, enclosing my poem addressed to him, and the same post which favoured me with yours brought me an answer from him. It was dated the very day he had received mine; and I am quite at a loss to say whether it was most polite or kind.

Your criticisms, my honoured benefactress, are truly the work of a friend. They are not the blasting depredations of a canker-toothed, caterpillar critic; nor are they the fair statement of cold impartiality, balancing with unfeeling exactitude the pro and con of an author’s merits; they are the judicious observations of animated friendship, selecting the beauties of the piece. I have just arrived from Nithsdale, and will be here a fortnight. I was on horseback this morning by three o’clock; for between my wife and my farm is just forty-six miles. As I jogged on in the dark, I was taken with a poetic fit as follows:

"Mrs. Ferguson of Craigdarroch’s lamentation for the death of her son; an uncommonly promising youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age."

"Fate gave the word—the arrow sped,
And pierced my darling’s heart."²

You will not send me your poetic ramble, but, you see I am no niggard of mine. I am sure your impromptus give me double pleasure; what falls from your pen can neither be unentertaining in itself, nor indifferent to me. The one fault you found, is just; but I cannot please myself in an emendation.

What a life of solicitude is the life of a parent! You interested me much in your young couple. I would not take my folio paper for this epistle, and now I repent it. I am so jaded with my dirty long journey that I was afraid to draw into the essence of dulness with any-

¹ Poems LXXXIX. and XCI.
² Poem XCII.
thing larger than a quarto, and so I must leave out another rhyme of this morning's manufact.
I will pay the sapientpotent George, most cheerfully, to hear from you ere I leave Ayrshire.

R. B.

CXXXVII.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

["The 'Address to Lochlomond,' which this latter criticizes," says Currie in 1800, "was written by a gentleman, now one of the masters of the High-school of Edin
burgh, and the same who translated the beautiful story of 'The Paris,' published in the Bee of Dr. Anderson."]

Mauchline, 1st October, 1788.

I have been here in this country about three days, and all that time my chief reading has been the "Address to Lochlomond" you were so obliging as to send to me. Were I impad
elled one of the author's jury, to determine his criminality respecting the sin of poetry, my verdict should be "guilty! a poet of nature's making!" It is an excellent method for im
provement, and what I believe every poet does, to place some favourite classic author in his own way of study and composition, before him as a model. Though your author had not men
tioned the name, I could have, at half a glance, guessed his model to be Thomson. Will my brother-poet forgive me, if I venture to hint that his imitation of that immortal bard is in
two or three places rather more servile than such a genius as his required: 

"To soothe the maddening passions all to peace."

ADDRESSES.

"To soothe the throbbing passions into peace."

THOMSON.

I think the "Address" is in simplicity, harmony, and elegance of versification, fully equal to the "Seasons." Like Thomson, too, he has looked into nature for himself: you meet with no copied description. One particular criticism I made at first reading; in no one instance has he said too much. He never flags in his pro
gress, but, like a true poet of nature's making kindles in his course. His beginning is simple and modest, as if distrustful of the strength of his pinion; only, I do not altogether like—

"Truth, the soul of every song that's nobly great." Fiction is the soul of many a song that is nobly great. Perhaps I am wrong: this may be but a prose criticism. Is not the phrase, in line 7, page 6, "Great lake," too much vulgar
ized by every-day language for so sublime a poem?

"Great mass of waters, theme for nobler song," is perhaps no emendation. His enumeration of a comparison with other lakes is at once har
monious and poetic. Every reader's ideas must sweep the "Winding margin of an hundred miles."

The perspective that follows mountains blue—the imprisoned billows heaving in rain—the wooded isles—the digression on the yew-tree—"Ben-lomond's lofty, cloud-envelop'd head," &c.
are beautiful. A thunder-storm is a subject which has been often tried, yet our poet in his grand picture has interjected a circumstance so far as I know, entirely original:—

"the gloom Deep seem'd with frequent streaks of moving fire."

In his preface to the Storm, "the glesn how
dark between," is noble highland landscape. The "rain ploughing the red mould," too, is beautifully fancied. "Ben-lomond's lofty, path
less top," is a good expression; and the sur rounding view from it is truly great: the "silver mist,

Beneath the beaming sun," is well described; and here he has contrived to enliven his poem with a little of that passion which bids fair, I think, to usurp the modern muses altogether. I know not how far this episode is a beauty upon the whole, but the swain's wish to carry "some faint idea of the vision bright," to entertain her "partial lis
tening ear," is a pretty thought. But in my opinion the most beautiful passages in the whole poem are the fowls crowing, in wintry frost, to Lochlomond's " hospitable flood:" their wheeling round, their lighting, mixing, diving, &c.; and the glorious description of the sportsman. This last is equal to anything in the "Seasons." The idea of "the floating tribe distant seen, far glistering to the moon," provoking his eye as he is obliged to leave them, is a noble ray of poetical genius. "The howling winds," the "hideous roar" of the white cascad es, are all in the same style.

I forget that while I am thus holding forth with the heedless warmth of an enthusiast, I am perhaps tiring you with nonsense. I must, however, mention that the last verse of the six teenth page is one of the most elegant compli
ments I have ever seen. I must likewise notice that beautiful paragraph beginning, "The gleaming lake," &c. I dare not go into the particular beauties of the last two paragraphs, but they are admirably fine, and truly Ossianic.

I must beg your pardon for this lengthened scrawl. I had no idea of it when I began—I should like to know who the author is; but, whoever he be, please present him with my grateful thanks for the entertainment he has afforded me.

A friend of mine desired me to commission for him two books, "Letters on the Religion essential to Man," a book you sent me before; and "The World unmasked, or the Philosopher the greatest Cheat." Send me them by the first opportunity. The Bible you sent me is truly elegant; I only wish it had been in two volumes.

R. B.

CXXXVIII.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE STAR."

[The clergyman who preached the sermon which this letter condemns, was a man equally worthy and stern—a divine of Scotland's elder day: he received "a harmonious call" to a smaller stipend than that of Dunmore—and accepted it.]

November 8th, 1768.

Sir,

NOTWITHSTANDING the opprobrious epithets with which some of our philosophers and gloomy sectarians have branded our nature—the principle of universal selfishness, the proneness to all evil, they have given us; still the detestation in which inhumanity to the distressed, or insolence to the fallen, are held by all mankind, shows that they are not natives of the human heart. Even the unhappy partner of our kind, who is undone, the bitter consequence of his follies or his crimes, who but sympathizes with the miseries of this ruined profligate brother? We forget the injuries and feel for the man.

I went, last Wednesday, to my parish church, most cordially to join in grateful acknowledgment to the AUTHOR of ALL GOOD, for the consequent blessings of the glorious revolution. To that auspicious event we owe no less than our liberties, civil and religious; to it we are likewise indebted for the present Royal Family, the ruling features of whose administration have ever been mildness to the subject, and tenderness of his rights.

Bred and educated in revolution principles, the principles of reason and common sense, it could not be any silly political prejudice which made my heart revolt at the harsh abusive manner in which the reverend gentleman mentioned the House of Stewart, and which, I am afraid, was too much the language of the day. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils, without cruelly raking up the ashes of those whose misfortune it was, perhaps as much as their crime, to be the authors of those evils; and we may bless God for all his goodness to us as a nation, without at the same time cursing a few ruined, powerless exiles, who only harboured ideas, and made attempts, that most of us would have done, had we been in their situation.

"The bloody and tyrannical House of Stewart" may be said with propriety and justice, when compared with the present royal family, and the sentiments of our days; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stewarts more attentive to their subjects' rights? Might not the epithets of "bloody and tyrannical" be, with at least equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or any other of their predecessors?

The simple state of the case, Sir, seems to be this:—At that period, the science of government, the knowledge of the true relation between king and subject, was, like other sciences and other knowledge, just in its infancy, emerging from dark ages of ignorance and barbarity.

The Stewarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying: but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation and the rights of subjects.

In this contest between prince and people, the consequence of that light of science which had lately dawned over Europe, the monarch of France, for example, was victorious over the struggling liberties of his people: with us, luckily the monarch failed, and his unwarrantable pretensions fell a sacrifice to our rights and happiness. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the justling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but likewise happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call
OF ROBERT BURNS.

at a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the convented terms which placed them there.

The Stewarts have been condemned and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1715 and 1745. That they failed, I bless God; but cannot join in the ridicule against them. Who does not know that the abilities or defects of leaders and commanders are often hidden until put to the touchstone of exigency; and that there is a caprice of fortune, an omnipotence in particular accidents and conjunctions of circumstances, which exalt us as heroes, or brand us as madmen, just as they are for or against us?

Man, Mr. Publisher, is a strange, weak, inconsistent being; who would believe, Sir, that in this our Augustan age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them—that a certain people under our national protection should complain, not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our whole legislative body, for similar oppression, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the house of Stewart! I will not, I cannot enter into the merits of the cause; but I dare say the American Congress, in 1776, will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stewart.

To conclude, Sir; let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman) who ever looked with reverential pity on the doughty of a parent, cast a veil over the fatal reftakes of the kings of his forefathers.

R. B.

CXXXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
AT MOREHAM MAINS.

(The heifer presented to the poet by the Dunlops was bought, at the sale of Ellisland stock, by Miller of Dalvean, and long grazed the pastures in his "poloises" by the name of "Burns."

Mauchline, 13th November, 1788.

MADAM,

I had the very great pleasure of dining at Dunlop yesterday. Men are said to flatter women because they are weak; if it is so, poets must be weaker still; for Misses R. and K. and Miss G. McK., with their flattering attentions, and artful compliments, absolutely turned my head. I own they did not lead me over as many a poet does his patron, but they so intoxicated me with their sly insinuations and delicate inuendos of compliment, that if it had not been for a lucky recollection, how much additional weight and lustre your good opinion and friendship must give me in that circle, I had certainly looked upon myself as a person of no small consequence. I dare not say one word how much I was charmed with the Major's friendly welcome, elegant manner, and acute remark, lest I should be thought to overbalance my orientalisms of applause over-against the finest quey in Ayrshire, which he made me a present of to help and adorn my farm-stock. As it was on hallow-day, I am determined annually, as that day returns, to decorate her horns with an ode of gratitude to the family of Dunlop.

So soon as I know of your arrival at Dunlop, I will take the first conveniency to dedicate a day, or perhaps two, to you and friendship, under the guarantee of the Major's hospitality. There will soon be threescore and ten miles of permanent distance between us; and now that your friendship and friendly correspondence is entwined with the heart-strings of my enjoyment of life, I must indulge myself in a happy day of "The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

R. B.

CXLI.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,
ENGRAVER.

[James Johnson, though not an ungenerous man, meanly refused to give a copy of the Musical Museum to Burns, who desired to bestow it on one to whom his family was deeply indebted. This was in the last year of the poet's life, and after the Museum had been brightened by so much of his lyric verse.]

Mauchline, November 15th, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have sent you two more songs. If you have

--- Heifer.
got any tunes, or anything to correct, please
send them by return of the carrier.

I can easily see, my dear friend, that you
will very probably have four volumes. Perhaps
you may not find your account lucratively in
this business; but you are a patriot for the
music of your country; and I am certain
posterity will look on themselves as highly in-
depted to your public spirit. Be not in a hurry;
let us go on correctly, and your name shall be
immortal.

I am preparing a flaming preface for your
third volume. I see every day new musical
publications advertised; but what are they?
Gaudy, hunted butterflies of a day, and then
vanish for ever: but your work will outlive the
momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the
teeth of time.

Have you never a fair goddess that leads you
a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let
me know a few of her qualities, such as whether
she berather black, or fair; plump, or thin;
short, or tall, &c.; and choose your air; and I
shall task my muse to celebrate her. B. B.

CXLII.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

[Blacklock, though blind, was a cheerful and good
man. "There was, perhaps, never one among all man-
kind," says Hieron, "whom you might more truly have
called an angel upon earth."

Mauchline, November 16th, 1788.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

As I hear nothing of your motions, but that
you are, or were, out of town, I do not know
where this may find you, or whether it will find
you at all. I wrote you a long letter, dated
from the land of matrimony, in June; but either
it had not found you, or, what I dread more, it
found you or Mrs. Blacklock in too precarious
a state of health and spirits to take notice of
an ill packet.

I have done many little things for Johnson
since I had the pleasure of seeing you; and I
have finished one piece, in the way of Pope's
"Misan Epistles;" but, from your silence, I
have everything to fear, so I have only sent you
two melancholy things, which I tremble lest
they should too well suit the tone of your pre-
sent feelings.

In a fortnight I move, bag and baggage, to
Nithsdale; till then, my direction is at this
place; after that period, it will be at Elliland,
near Dumfries. It would extremely oblige me,
were it but half a line, to let me know how you
are, and where you are. Can I be indifferent
to the fate of a man to whom I owe so much?
A man whom I not only esteem, but venerate.

My warmest good wishes and most respectful
compliments to Mrs. Blacklock, and Miss John-
ston, if she is with you.

I cannot conclude without telling you that I
am more and more pleased with the step I
took respecting "my Jean." Two things, from
my happy experience, I set down as apothegms
in life. A wife's head is immaterial, com-
pared with her heart; and—"Virtue's (for wis-
dom what poet pretends to it?) ways are ways
of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Adieu! B. B.

[Here follow "The Mother's Lament for the Loss of
her Son," and the song beginning "The lazy mist hangs
from the brow of the hill."

CXLIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The "Auld lang syne," which Burns here introduces
to Mrs. Dunlop as a strain of the oldest time, is as surely
his own as "Tam-o'-Shanter."

Elliland, 17th December, 1788.

MY DEAR HONOURED FRIEND,

Yours, dated Edingbrough, which I have just
read, makes me very unhappy. "Almost blind
and wholly deaf," are melancholy news of
human nature; but when told of a much-loved
and honoured friend, they carry misery in
the sound. Goodness on your part, and gratitude
on mine, began a tie which has gradually en-
twisted itself amongst the dearest chords of my
bosom, and I tremble at the omens of your late
and present illness and shattered health.
You miscalculate matters widely, when you for-
bide my writing to you, lest it should hurt my
worldly comfort. My small scale of farming
is exceedingly more simple and easy than what
you have lately seen at Moreham Mains. But,
be that as it may, the heart of the man and the
fancy of the poet are the two grand considera-
tions for which I live: if miry ridges and dirty
dunghills are to engross the best part of the
functions of my soul immortal, I had better been
a rock or a magpie at once, and then I should...
not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grubs; not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time. If you continue so deaf, I am afraid a visit will be no great pleasure to either of us; but if I hear you are got so well again as to be able to relish conversation, look you to it, Madam, for I will make my threatenings good. I am to be at the New-year-day fair of Ayr; and, by all that is sacred in the world, friend, I will come and see you.

Your meeting, which you so well describe, with your old schoolfellow and friend, was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world!—They spoil "these social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the "men of the world" would have met with little more heart-workings than two old hacks wormed out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase, "Auld lang syne," exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs. I shall give you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr. Ker will save you the postage.

"Should acquaintance be forgot?" R. B.

TO MISS DAVIES.

(The Laird of Glenriddel informed "the charming, lovely Davies" that Burns was composing a song in her praise. The poet acted on this, and sent the song, enclosed in this characteristic letter.)

MADAM,

I understand my very worthy neighbour, Mr. Biddel, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something so provoking in the idea of being the butt of a ballad, that I do not think Job or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was: so my worthy friend has done me a mischief, which I dare say he never intended; and reduced me to the unfortunaté alternative of leaving your curiosity ungratified, or else disgusting you with foolish verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman who had some genius, much eccentricity, and very considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental group of life into which one is thrown, wherever this gentleman met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a nota bene, to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, my muse is to me; and the verses I do myself the honour to send you are a memento exactly of the same kind that he indulged in.

It may be more owing to the fastidiousness of my caprice than the delicacy of my taste; but I am so often tired, disgusted and hurt with insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person "after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox Protestant would call a species of idolatry, which acts on my fancy like inspiration; and I can no more desist rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A distich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were gray-bearded-age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment are equally striking and unaffected—by heavens! though I had lived three score years a married man, and three score years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea: and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.

R. B.

TO MR. JOHN TENNANT.

(The mill of John Currie stood on a small stream which fed the loch of Permit's Castle—near the house of the damsel of whom he sang, "Be a wife as Willie bad.")

December 22, 1788.

Yesterday I tried my cask of whiskey for the first time, and I assure you it does you great
credit. It will bear five waters strong; or six ordinary todly. The whiskey of this country is a most rascally liquor; and, by consequence, only drank by the most rascally part of the inhabitants. I am persuaded, if you once get a footing here, you might do a great deal of business, in the way of consumpt; and should you commence distiller again, this is the native barley country. I am ignorant if, in your present way of dealing, you would think it worth your while to extend your business so far as this country side. I write you this on the account of an accident, which I must take the merit of having partly designed to. A neighbour of mine, a John Currie, miller in Carsmill—a man who is, in a word, a "very" good man, even for a £500 bargain—he and his wife were in my house the time I broke open the cask. They keep a country public-house and sell a great deal of foreign spirits, but all along thought that whiskey would have degraded this house. They were perfectly astonished at my whiskey, both for its taste and strength; and, by their desire, I write you to know that you could supply them with liquor of an equal quality, and what price. Please write me by first post, and direct to me at Ellisland, near Dumfries. If you could take a jaunt this way yourself, I have a spare spoon, knife and fork very much at your service. My compliments to Mrs. Tennant, and all the good folks in Glenconnel and Barquharrie. R. B.

CXLV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The feeling mood of moral reflection exhibited in the following letter, was common to the house of William Burns: in a letter addressed by Gilbert to Robert of this date, the poet is reminded of the early vicissitudes of their name, and desired to look up, and be thankful.]

Ellisland, New-year-day Morning, 1789.

This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description!—the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquility and self-enjoyment, should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habitual routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day, the first Sunday of May, a breezy, blue-skied noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables:

"On the 6th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

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

R. B.

CXLVI.

TO DR. MOORE.

[The poor scene, in this letter, to perceive that Ellisland was not the bargain he had reckoned it: be laminated,
OF ROBERT BURNS.

as the reader will remember, something of the same kind to Margaret Chalmers.)

Ellisland, 4th Jan. 1789.

Sir,

As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary-sized statue offering to a conversation with the Rhodian colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarry somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have at last got some business with you, and business letters are written by the stylebook. I say my business is with you, Sir, for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late eclat was owing to the singularity of my situation, and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetical character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;"—but I as firmly believe, that excellence in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poetry I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses, in a good measure, the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend—not only of abilities to judge, but with good-nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic diseases—heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I enclose you an essay of mine in a walk of poetry to me entirely new; I mean the epistle addressed to R. G. Esq., or Robert Graham of Fintry, Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of Mr. Creech's ingenuous fair dealing to me. He kept me hanging about Edinburgh from the 7th August, 1787, until the 13th April, 1788, before he would condescend to give me a statement of affairs; nor had I got it even then, but for an angry letter I wrote him, which irritated his pride. "I could" not "tales" but a detail "unfold," but what am I that should speak against the Lord's anointed Ballie of Edinburgh?

I believe I shall in the whole, 100l. copy-right included, clear about 400l. some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentle man has yet to settle with me. I give you this information, because you did me the honour to interest yourself much in my welfare. I give you this information, but I give it to yourself only, for I am still much in the gentleman's mercy. Perhaps I injure the man in the idea I am sometimes tempted to have of him—God forbid I should! A little time will try, for in a month I shall go to town to wind up the business if possible.

To give the rest of my story in brief, I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm: with the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied: with the last, it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who supports my aged mother; another still younger brother, and three sisters, in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh, it cost me about 180l. to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much.—I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part: I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the grand reckoning. There is still one thing would make my circumstances quite easy: I have an excise officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the commissioners of excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were
very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a Treasury warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, &c.

Thus, secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet poetry, delightful maid," I would consecrate my future days.  R. B.

CXLVI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

(The song which the poet says he brushed up a little is nowhere mentioned: he wrote one hundred, and brushed up more, for the Museum of Johnson.)

Elisland, Jan. 6, 1789.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear Sir! May you be comparatively happy up to your comparative worth among the sons of men; which wish would, I am sure, make you one of the most blest of the human race.

I do not know if passing a "Writer to the signet," be a trial of scientific merit, or a mere business of friends and interest. However it be, let me quote you my two favourite 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. NIGHT THOUGHTS.

"Hear, 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. MARQUE OF ALFRED.

I grant you enter the lists of life, to struggle for bread, business, notice, and distinction, in common with hundreds. - But who are they? Men, like yourself, and of that aggregate body your compers, seven-tenths of them come short of your advantages natural and accidental; while two of those that remain, either neglect their parts, as flowers blooming in a desert, or mis-spend their strength, like a bull goring a bramble-bush.

But to change the theme: I am still catering for Johnson's publication; and among others, I have brushed up the following old favourite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humour of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it.

R. B.

CXLVIII.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART

(The iron justice to which the poet alludes, in his letter, was exercised by Dr. Gregory, on the poem of the "Wounded Hare."

Elisland, 20th Jan., 1789.

Sir,

The enclosed sealed packet I sent to Edinburgh, a few days after I had the happiness of meeting you in Ayrshire, but you were gone for the Continent. I have now added a few more of my productions, those for which I am indebted to the Nithsdale muse. The piece inscribed to R. G. Esq., is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham, of Fintray, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter to me of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted, for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This poem is a species of composition new to me, but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the "Poet's Progress." These fragments, if my design succeed, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions, ripened by years; of course I do not wish it much known. The fragment beginning "A little, upright, pert, tart, &c."
I have not shown to man living, till I now send it you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching, but, lest idle conjecture should pretend to point out the original, please to let it be for your single, sole inspection.

Need I make any apology for this trouble, to a gentleman who has treated me with such marked benevolence and peculiar kindness—
who has entered into my interests with so much zeal, and on whose critical decisions I can so fully depend? A poet as I am by trade, these decisions are to me of the last consequence. My late transient acquaintance among some of the mere rank and file of greatness, I resign with ease; but to the distinguished champions of genius and learning, I shall be ever ambitious of being known. The native genius and accurate discernment in Mr. Stewart's critical strictures; the justness (iron justice, for he has no bowels of compassion for a poor poetic min-
OF ROBERT BURNS.

mer) of Dr. Gregory's remarks, and the delicacy of Professor Dalzel's taste, I shall ever revere. I shall be in Edinburgh some time next month.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your highly obliged, and very
Humble servant,
R. B.

OXLIX.

TO BISHOP GEDDES.

[A exander Geddes was a controversialist and poet, and a bishop of the broken remnant of the Catholic Church of Scotland: he is known as the author of a very humorous ballad called "The Wee bi Withie," and as the translator of one of the books of the Iliad, in opposition to Cowper.]

Ellisland, 8d Feb. 1789.

VENERABLE FATHER,

As I am conscious that wherever I am, you do me the honour to interest yourself in my welfare, it gives me pleasure to inform you that I am here at last, stationary in the serious business of life, and have now not only the retired leisure, but the hearty inclination, to attend to those great and important questions—what I am? where I am? and for what I am destined?

In that first concern, the conduct of the man, there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blamable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by Nature and Nature's God. I was sensible that to so helpless a creature as a poor poet, a wife and family were encumbrances, which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but when the alternative was, being at eternal warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity, would, to me, ever justify, I must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice. Besides, I had in "my Jean" a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

In the affair of a livelihood, I think myself tolerably secure: I have good hopes of my farm, but should they fail, I have an excuse commission, which on my simple petition, will, at any time, procure me bread. There is a certain

Office, but I do not pretend to borrow honour from my profession; and though the salary be comparatively small, it is luxury to anything that the first twenty-five years of my life taught me to expect.

Thus, with a rational aim and method in life, you may easily guess, my reverend and much-honoured friend, that my characteristic trade is not forgotten. I am, if possible, more than an enthusiast to the muses. I am determined to study man and nature, and in that view incessantly; and to try if the ripening and corrections of years can enable me to produce something worth preserving.

You will see in your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of Nith. Some large poetic plans that are floating in my imagination, or partly put in execution, I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting with you; which, if you are then in Edinburgh, I shall have about the beginning of March.

That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me, you must still allow me to challenge; for with whatever unconcern I give up my transient connexion with the merely great, those self-important beings whose intrinsic * * * [con]cealed under the accidental advantages of their * * * I cannot lose the patronising notice of the learned and good, without the bitterest regret.

R. B.

CII.

TO MR. JAMES BURNESS.

[Francy Burness married Adam Armour, brother to bowie Jean, went with him to Mauchline, and bore his sons and daughters.]

Ellisland, 9th Feb. 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Why I did not write to you long ago, is what even on the rack, I could not answer. If you can in your mind form an idea of indolence, dissipation, hurry, cares, change of country, entering on untried scenes of life, all combined, you will save me the trouble of a blushing apology. It could not be want of regard for a man for whom I had a high esteem before I knew him—an esteem which has much increased since I did know him; and this caveat entered, I shall plead guilty to any other indictment with which you shall please to charge me.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

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After I had parted from you for many months my life was one continued scene of dissipation. Here at last I am become stationary, and have taken a farm and—a wife.

The farm is beautifully situated on the Nith, a large river that runs by Dumfries, and falls into the Solway Firth. I have given a lease of my farm as long as I pleased; but how it may turn out is just a guess, it is yet to improve and enclose, &c.; however, I have good hopes of my bargain on the whole.

My wife is my Jean, with whose story you are partly acquainted. I found I had a much-loved fellow creature’s happiness or misery among my hands, and I durst not trifle with so sacred a deposit. Indeed I have not any reason to repent the step I have taken, as I have attached myself to a very good wife, and have shaken myself loose of every bad failing.

I have found my book a very profitable business, and with the profits of it I have begun life pretty decently. Should fortune not favour me in farming, as I have no great faith in her fickle ladyship, I have provided myself in another resource, which however some folks may affect to despise is, still a comfortable shift in the day of misfortune. In the heyday of my fame, a gentleman whose name at least I dare say you know, as his estate lies somewhere near Dundee, Mr. Graham, of Fintry, one of the commissioners of Excise, offered me the commission of an Excise officer. I thought it prudent to accept the offer; and accordingly I took my instructions, and have my commission by me. Whether I may ever do duty, or be a penny the better for it, is what I do not know; but I have the comfortable assurance, that come whatever ill fate will, I can, on my simple petition to the Excise-board, get into employ.

We have lost poor uncle Robert this winter. He has long been very weak, and with very little alteration on him, he expired 3d Jan.

His son William has been with me this winter, and goes in May to be an apprentice to a mason. His other son, the eldest, John, comes to me I expect in summer. They are both remarkably stout young fellows, and promise to do well. His only daughter, Fanny, has been with me ever since her father’s death, and I purpose keeping her in my family till she be quite woman grown, and fit for service. She is one of the cleverest girls, and has one of the most amiable dispositions I have ever seen.

All friends in this country and Ayrshire are well. Remember me to all friends in the north. My wife joins me in compliments to Mrs. B. and family.

I am ever, my dear Cousin,
Yours, sincerely,

B. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

(The beautiful lines with which this letter concludes, I have reason to believe were the production of the lady to whom the epistle is addressed.)

Ellisland, 4th March, 1789.

Dear Mr. I, my honoured friend, returned safe from the capital. To a man, who has a home, however humble or remote—if that home is like mine, the scene of domestic comfort—the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust.

‘Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you!’

When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim—‘What merit has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches in his puny flat, and I am kicked into the world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride?’ I have read somewhere of a monarch (in Spain I think it was), who was so out of humour with the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, that he said had he been of the Creton’s council, he could have saved him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have gilded with humble stealth through the pomp of Princes’ street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a small pushes out his horns, or, as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb-sinews of many of his majesty’s liege subjects, in the way of tossing the head and tip-top strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage, in enabling us at once to adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that too within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or
OF ROBERT BURNS.

an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature itself requires; as a measuring-glance at its towering altitude, would determine the affair like instinct.

You are right, Madam, in your idea of poor Mylne’s poem, which he has addressed to me. The piece has a good deal of merit, but it has one great fault—it is, by far, too long. Besides, my success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish Poets, that the very term Scottish Poetry borders on the burlesque. When I write to Mr. Carfrae, I shall advise him rather to try one of his deceased friend’s English pieces. I am prodigiously hurried with my own matters, else I would have requested a perusal of all Mylne’s poetic performances; and would have offered his friends my assistance in either selecting or correcting what would be proper for the press. What it is that occupies me so much, and perhaps a little oppresses my present spirits, shall fill up a paragraph in some future letter. In the mean time, allow me to close this epistle with a few lines done by a friend of mine.****. I give you them, that as you have seen the original, you may guess whether one or two alterations I have ventured to make in them, be any real improvement.

"Like the fair plant that from our touch withdraws,
Shrink, mildly fearful, even from applause,
Be all a mother’s fondest hope can dream,
And all you are, my charming...seem.

Straight as the fox-glove, ere her bells disclose,
Mild as the maiden-blushing hawthorn blows,
Fair as the fairest of each lovely kind,
Your form shall be the image of your mind;

Your manners shall so true your soul express,
That all shall long to know the worth they guess:
Congenial hearts shall greet with kindred love,
And even sicking envy most approve."—R. B.

CLIX.

TO THE REV. PETER CARFRAE.

[Mylne was a worthy and a modest man; he died of an inflammatory fever in the prime of life.]

1789.

Rev. Sir,
I do not recollect that I have ever felt a severer pang of shame, than on looking at the date of your obliging letter which accompanied Mr. Mylne’s poem.
I am much to blame: the honour Mr. Mylne has done me, greatly enhanced in its value by the endearing, though melancholy circumstance, of its being the last production of his muse, deserved a better return.

I have, as you hint, thought of sending a copy of the poem to some periodical publication; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid, that in the present case, it would be an improper step. My success, perhaps as much accidental as merited, has brought an inundation of nonsense under the name of Scottish poetry. Subscription-bills for Scottish poems have so dunned, and daily do dun the public, that the very name is in danger of contempt. For these reasons, if publishing any of Mr. Mylne’s poems in a magazine, &c., be at all prudent, in my opinion it certainly should not be a Scottish poem. The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne’s relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest, which fate has denied himself to reap. But let the friends of Mr. Mylne’s fame (among whom I crave the honour of ranking myself) always keep in eye his respectability as a man and as a poet, and take no measure that, before the world knows anything about him, would risk his name and character being classed with the fools of the times.

I have, Sir, some experience of publishing; and the way in which I would proceed with Mr. Mylne’s poem is this—I would publish, in two or three English and Scottish public papers, any one of his English poems which should, by private judges, be thought the most excellent, and mention it, at the same time, as one of the productions of a Lothian farmer, of respectable character, lately deceased, whose poems his friends had it in idea to publish, soon, by subscription, for the sake of his numerous family;—not in pity to that family, but in justice to what his friends think the poetic merits of the deceased; and to secure, in the most effectual manner, to those tender connexions, whose right it is, the pecuniary reward of those merits.

R. B.

CLX.

TO DR. MOORE.

[Edward Nelson, whom Burns here introduces to Dr. Moore, was minister of Kirkbean, on the Solway-side.]
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

he was a jovial man, and loved good cheer, and merry company.

Ellisland, 23d March, 1789.

Sir,

The gentleman who will deliver you this is a Mr. Nielson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourly, and a very particular acquaintance of mine. As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness, to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him:—Mr. Nielson is on his way for France, to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him, and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, &c., for him, when he has crossed the channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honour of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character, gives you much pleasure.

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. Oswald, of Auchencruive. You, probably, knew her personally, an honour of which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was tested with the most heart-felt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Wigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald, and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poetry and prose sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately, and settled finally with Mr. Creech; and I must own, that, at last, he has been amicable and fair with me.

R. B.

TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

[William Burns was the youngest brother of the poet; he was bred a saddler; went to Longtown, and finally to London, where he died early.]

Iste, March 25th, 1789.

I have stolen from my corn-sowing this minute to write a line to accompany your shirt and hat, for I can no more. Your sister Maria arrived yesternight, and begs to be remembered to you. Write me every opportunity, never mind postage. My head, too, is as addle as an egg, this morning, with dining abroad yesterday. I received yours by the mason. Forgive me this foolish-looking scrawl of an epistle.

I am ever,

My dear William,

Yours,

R. B.

TO MR. HILL.

[The Monkland Bock Club existed only while Robert Riddell, of the Priar-Canne, lived, or Burns had reason to attend: such institutions, when well conducted, are very beneficial, when not oppressed by divinity and verse, as they sometimes are.]

Ellisland, 2d April, 1789.

I will make no excuse, my dear Bibliopolus (God forgive me for murdering language!) that I have sat down to write you on this vile paper.

It is economy, Sir; it is that cardinal virtue, prudence: so I beg you will sit down, and either compose or borrow a panegyric. If you are going to borrow, apply to **** to compose, or rather to compound, something very clever on my remarkable frugality; that I write to one of my most esteemed friends on this wretched paper, which was originally intended for the
OF ROBERT BURNS.

venal fist of some drunken excelsior, to take
dirty notes in a miserable vault of an ale-
cellar.

O Frugality! thou mother of ten thousand
blessings—thou cook of fat beef and dainty
greens!—thou manufacturer of warm Shetland
hose, and comfortable surcots!—thou old house-
wife, darning thy decayed stockings with thy
ancient spectacles on thy aged nose!—lead me,
hand me in thy clutching palsied fist, up those
heights, and through those thickets, hitherto in-
accessible, and impervious to my anxious, weary
feet:—not those Parnassian craggs, bleak and
barren, where the hungry worshippers of fame
are breathless, clambering, hanging between
heaven and hell; but those glittering cliffs of
Potosi, where the all-sufficient, all powerful
deity, Wealth, holds his immediate court of joys
and pleasures; where the sunny exposure of
plenty, and the hot walls of profusion, produce
those blissful fruits of luxury, exotics in this
world, and natives of paradise!—Thou withered
sibyl, my sage conductress, usher me into thy
refulgent, adored presence!—The power, splen-
did and potent as he now is, was once the puling
nursering of thy faithful care, and tender arms!
Call me thy son, thy cousin, thy kinsman, or
favourite, and adjure the god by the scenes of
his infant years, no longer to repulse me as a
stranger, or an alien, but to favour me with his
peculiar countenance and protection?—He daily
bestows his greatest kindness on the undeserv-
ing and the worthless—assure him, that I bring
ample documents of meritorious demerits! Pledge
yourself for me, that, for the glorious
cause of LOCKE, I will do anything, be anything
—but the horse-leech of private oppression, or
the vulture of public robbery!

But to descend from heroes.

I want a Shakespeare; I want likewise an
English dictionary—Johnson's, I suppose, is
best. In these and all my prose commissions, the
cheapest is always the best for me. There is a
small debt of honour that I owe Mr. Robert
Cleghorn, in Saughton Mills, my worthy friend,
and your well-wisher. Please give him, and
urge him to take it, the first time you see him,
ten shillings worth of anything you have to sell,
and place it to my account.

The library scheme that I mentioned to you,
is already begun, under the direction of Captain
Riddel. There is another in emulation of it
going on at Closeburn, under the auspices of Mr.
Monteith, of Closeburn, which will be on a
greater scale than ours. Capt. Riddel gave his
infant society a great many of his old books,
else I had written you on that subject; but
one of these days, I shall trouble you with a
commission for "The Monkland Friendly Soci-
ty"—a copy of The Spectator, Mirror, and
Lounger, Man of Feeling, Man of the World,
Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, with some re-
ligious pieces, which is likely be our first order.

When I grow richer, I will write to you on
this post, to make amends for this sheet. At
present, every guinea has a five guinea errand
with,

Your faithful, poor, but honest, friend,
R. B.

CLVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Some lines which extend, but fail to finish the sketch
contained in this letter, will be found elsewhere in this
publication.]

Ellisland, 4th April, 1789.

I so sooner hit on any poetic plan or fancy,
but I wish to send it to you: and if knowing
and reading these give half the pleasure to you,
that communicating them to you gives to me, I
am satisfied.

I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at
present dedicate, or rather inscribe to the Right
Hon. Charles James Fox; but how long that
fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the
first lines, I have just rough-sketched as fol-
lows:

SKETCH.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their
white;
How genius, the illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradic-
tion—
I sing: If these mortals, the critics, should bus-
tle,
I care not, not I, let the critics go whistle.

But now for a patron, whose name and whose
glory.
At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem more
lucky hits;
With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;
With passion so potent, and fancies so bright,
No man with the half of 'em ere went quite right;
A sorry, poor misbegotten son of the muse,
For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

On the 20th current I hope to have the honour of assuring you in person, how sincerely I am—

R. B.

CLVII.

TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS,

SADLER,

CASE OF MR. WRIGHT, CARRIER, LONOTOWN.

["Never to despair!" was a favourite saying with Burns: and "firm resolve," he held, with Young, to be "the columns of true majesty in man."]

Edin., 16th April, 1789.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I am extremely sorry at the misfortune of your legs; I beg you will never let any worldly concern interfere with the more serious matter, the safety of your life and limbs. I have not time in these hurried days to write you anything other than a mere how d'ye letter. I will only repeat my favourite quotation:

"What proves the hero truly great
Is never, never to despair."

My house shall be your welcome home; and as I know your prudence (would to God you had resolution equal to your prudence!) if anywhere at a distance from friends, you should need money, you know my direction by post.

The enclosed is from Gilbert, brought by your sister Nanny. It was unluckily forgot. Yours to Gilbert goes by post.—I heard from them yesterday, they are all well.

Adieu.

R. B.

CLVIII.

TO MRS. M'CURDO,

DRUMLANRIG.

Of this accomplished lady, Mrs. M’Curdo, of Drum early, and her daughters, something has been said in the

notes on the songs: the poem alluded to was the song of "Bonnie Jean."

Ellisland, 2d May, 1789.

MADAM,

I have finished the piece which had the happy fortune to be honoured with your approbation; and never did little miss with more sparkling pleasure show her applauded sampler to partial mammas, than I now send my poem to you and Mr. M’Murdo if he is returned to Drumlankrig. You cannot easily imagine what thin-skinned animals—what sensitive plants poor poets are. How do we shrink into the emibittered corner of self-abasement, when neglected or condemned by those to whom we look up to and how do we, in erect importance, add another cubit to our stature on being noticed and applauded by those whom we honour and respect! My late visit to Drumlankrig has, I can tell you, Madam, given me a balloon waft up Parnassus, where on my fancied elevation I regard my poetic self with no small degree of complacency. Surely with all their sins, the rhyming tribe are not ungrateful creatures—I recollect your goodness to your humble guest—I see Mr. M’Murdo adding to the politeness of the gentleman, the kindness of a friend, and my heart swells as it would burst, with warm emotions and ardent wishes! It may be it is not gratitude—it may be a mixed sensation. That strange, shifting, doubling animal man is so generally, at best, but a negative, often a worthless creature, that we cannot see real goodness and native worth without feeling the bosom glow with sympathetic approbation.

With every sentiment of grateful respect,

I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your obliged and grateful humble servant,

R. B.

CLIX.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[Honest Jamie Thomson, who shot the hare because she browsed with her companions on his father’s "wheat-braid," had no idea he was pulling down such a burst of ingratitude on his head as this letter with the poem which it enclosed expresses]

Ellisland, 4th May, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your duty-free favour of the 26th April I received two days ago; I will not say I perused it with pleasure; that is the cold compliment of
ceremony: I perused it, Sir, with delicious satisfaction;—in short, it is such a letter, that not you, nor your friend, but the legislature, by express proviso in their postage laws, should shun.

A letter informed with the soul of friendship is such an honour to human nature, that they should order it free ingress and egress to and from their bags and mails, as an encouragement and mark of distinction to superneminent virtue.

I have just put the last hand to a little poem which I think will be something to your taste. 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 neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came creeping 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. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying for our sport individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue.

Inhuman man! curse on thy barbarous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye!
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart! &c. &c.

Let me know how you like my poem. I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one altogether.

Cruikshank is a glorious production of the author of man. You, he, and the noble Colonel of the Crochullan Fencibles are to me

"Dear as the ruddy drops which warm my heart"

I have a good mind to make verses on you all, to the tune of "Three guid fellows ayeont the glen."

R. B.

CLX.

TO MR. SAMUEL BROWN.

[Samuel Brown was brother to the poet’s mother: he seems to have been a jovial sort of person, who loved a joke, and understood double meanings]

Mossiel, 4th May, 1789.

DEAR UNCLE,

This, I hope, will find you and your conjugal yoke-fellow in your good old way; I am impa-
tient to know if the Ailsa fowling be commenced for this season yet, as I want three or four stones of feathers, and I hope you will bespeak them for me. It would be a vain attempt for me to enumerate the various transactions: have been engaged in since I saw you last, but this news,—I am engaged in a smuggling trade, and God knows if ever any poor man experienced better returns, two for one, but as freight and delivery have turned out so dear, I am thinking of taking out a license and beginning in fair trade. I have taken a farm on the borders of the Nith, and in imitation of the old Patriarchs, get men-servants and maid-ser-
vants, and flocks and herds, and begat sons and daughters.

Your obedient nephew, R. B.

CLXI.

TO RICHARD BROWN.

[Burns was much attached to Brown; and one regrets that an inconsiderate word should have estranged the haughty sailor.]

Mouskie, 21st May, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was in the country by accident, and hearing of your safe arrival, I could not resist the temptation of wishing you joy on your return, wishing you would write to me before you sail again, wishing you would always set me down as your bosom friend, wishing you long life and prosperity, and that every good thing may attend you, wishing Mrs. Brown and your little ones as free of the evils of this world, as is consistent with humanity, wishing you and she were to make two at the ensuing lying-in, with which Mrs. B. threatens very soon to favour me, wishing I had longer time to write to you at present; and, finally, wishing that if there is to be another state of existence, Mr. B., Mrs. B., our little ones, and both families, and you and I, in some snug retreat, may make a jovial party to all eternity!

My direction is at Ellisland, near Dumfries.

Yours,

R. B.
CLXII.

TO MR. JAMES HAMILTON.

[James Hamilton, grocer, in Glasgow, interested himself early in the fortunes of the poet.]

Ellisland, 25th May, 1789.

DearSir,

I send you by John Glover, carrier, the account for Mr. Turnbull, as I suppose you know his address.

I would fain offer, my dear Sir, a word of sympathy with your misfortunes; but it is a tender string, and I know not how to touch it. It is easy to flourish a set of high-floored sentiments on the subjects that would give great satisfaction to—a breast quite at ease; but as one observer, who was very seldom mistaken in the theory of life, “The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddled not therewith.”

Among some distressful emergencies that I have experienced in life, I ever laid this down as my foundation of comfort—that he who has lived the life of an honest man, has by no means lived in vain!

With every wish for your welfare and future success,

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,

B. B.

CLXIII.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ.

[The poet made the acquaintance of Mr. M'Auley, of Dumbarton, in one of his northern tours,—he was introduced by his friend Kennedy.]

Ellisland, 30th May, 1789.

Sir,

I had intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent toothache so engross all my inner man, as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense. However, as in duty bound, I approach my bookseller with an offering in my hand—a few poetical clinches, and a song:—To expect any other kind of offering from the Rhyming Tribe would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these morceaux, but I have two reasons for sending them; primo, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw-bones; and secondly, they are so short, that you cannot leave off in the middle, and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you, by all your wishes and by all your hopes, that the muse will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will wrangle the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! Grant my request as speedily as possible—send me by the very first fly or coach for this place three copies of the last edition of my poems, which place to my account.

Now may the good things of prose, and the good things of verse, come among thy hands, until they be filled with the good things of this life, prayeth

B. B.

CLXIV.

TO MR. M'AULEY.

[The poet made the acquaintance of Mr. M'Auley, of Dumbarton, in one of his northern tours,—he was introduced by his friend Kennedy.]

Ellisland, 4th June, 1789.

Dear Sir,

Though I am not without my fears respecting my fate, at that grand, universal inquest of right and wrong, commonly called The Last Day, yet I trust there is one sin, which that arch-vagabond, Satan, who I understand is to be king’s evidence, cannot throw in my teeth, I mean ingratitude. There is a certain pretty large quantum of kindness for which I remain, and from inability, I fear, must still remain, your debtor; but though unable to repay the debt, I assure you, Sir, I shall ever warmly remember the obligation. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear by my old acquaintance, Mr. Kennedy, that you are, in immortal Allan’s language, “Hale, and well, and living;” and that your charming family are well, and promising to be an amiable and respectable addition to the company of performers, whom the Great Manager of the Drama of Man is bringing into action for the succeeding age.

With respect to my welfare, a subject in which you once warmly and effectively interested yourself, I am here in my old way, holding my plough, marking the growth of my corn, or the
are—this, to a generous mind, is another sort of more important object of care than any concerns whatever which centre merely in the individual. On the other hand, let no young, unmarried, rakehell dog among you, make a song of his pretended liberty and freedom from care. If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and friends, be anything but the visionary fancies of dreaming metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, humanity and justice, be sought but empty sounds; then the man who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, honourable female, whose tender faithful embrace endears life, and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, and the support, may the very vital existence of his country in the ensuing age—com—are such a man with any fellow whatever, who, whether he bustle and push in business among labourers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and drink and sing in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will breathe a single sigh—ho, except from the cobweb-tie of what is called good-fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what terminates in himself—if there be any grovelling earthborn wretch of our species, a renegade to common sense, who would fain believe that the noble creature man, is no better than a sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, and soon dissipated in nothing, nobody knows where; such a stupid beast, such a crawling reptile, might balance the foregoing unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the patience.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for this long silence.

To make you amends, I shall send you soon, and more encouraging still, without any postage, one or two rhymes of my later manufacture.

CLXVI.

TO MR. M'MURDO.

[John M'Murdo has been already mentioned as one of Burns's nearest friends; his table at Droumhaan was always spread at the poet's coming; nor was it uncoveted by the presence of the lady of the house and her daughters.]

Ellisland, 19th June, 1789

SIR,

A pox and a beggar are, in so many points of view, alike, that one might take them for the...
same individual character under different designations; were it not that though, with a trifling poetic license, most poets may be styled beggars, yet the converse of the proposition does not hold, that every beggar is a poet. In one particular, however, they remarkably agree; if you help either the one or the other to a mug of ale, or the picking of a bone, they will very willingly repay you with a song. This occurs to me at present, as I have just despatched a well-lined rib of John Kirkpatrick's Highlander; a bargain for which I am indebted to you, in the style of our ballad printers, "Five excellent new songs." The enclosed is nearly my newest song, and one that has cost me some pains, though that is but an equivocal mark of its excellence. Two or three others, which I have by me, shall do themselves the honour to wait on your after pleasure: petitioners for admittance into favour must not harass the condescension of their benefactor.

You see, Sir, what it is to patronize a poet; 'tis like being a magistrate in a petty borough; you do them the favour to preside in their council for one year, and your name bears the prefatory stigma of Baillie for life.

With, not the compliments, but the best wishes, the sincerest prayers of the season for you, that you may see many and happy years with Mrs. M'Murdo, and your family; two blessings by the bye, to which your rank does not, by any means, entitle you; a loving wife and fine family being almost the only good things of this life to which the farm-house and cottage have an exclusive right,

I have the honour to be,

Sir,
Your much indebted and very humble servant,

R. B.

CLXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The devil, the pope, and the Pretender darkened the same sun for more than a century, of many sound divines in the north. As a Jacobite, Burns disliked to hear Prince Charles called the Pretender, and as a man of a tolerant nature, he disliked to hear the Pope treated unlike a gentleman; his notions regarding Satan are recorded in his inimitable address.]

Ellisland, 21st June, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

Will you take the effusions, the miserable effusions of low spirits, just as they flow from their bitter spring? I know not of any particular cause for this worst of all my woes besetting me; but for some time my soul has been beclouded with a thickening atmosphere of evil imaginings and gloomy presages.

Monday Evening.

I have just heard Mr. Kirkpatrick preach a sermon. He is a man famous for his benevolence, and I revere him; but from such ideas of my Creator, good Lord deliver me! Religion, my honoured friend, is surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich. That there is an incomprehensible Great Being, to whom I owe my existence, and that he must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery, and consequent outward deportment of this creature which he has made; these are, I think, self-evident propositions. That there is a real and eternal distinction between virtue and vice, and consequently, that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay, positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave; must, I think, be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment’s reflection. I will go farther, and affirm that from the sublimity, excellence, and purity of his doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the aggregated wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though, in appearance, he himself was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species; therefore Jesus Christ was from God.

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.

What think you, madam, of my creed? I trust that I have said nothing that will lessen me in the eye of one, whose good opinion I value almost next to the approbation of my own mind.

R. B.

CLXVIII.

TO MRS.______

[The name of the person to whom the following letter is addressed is unknown: he seems, from his letter to Burns, to have been intimate with the unfortunate poet.]
OF ROBERT BURNS.

1789.

My dear Sir,

The hurry of a farmer in this particular season, and the idleness of a poet at all times and seasons, will, I hope, plead my excuse for neglecting so long to answer your obliging letter of the 5th of August.

That you have done well in quitting your laborious concern in ***, I do not doubt; the weighty reasons you mention, were, I hope, very, and deservedly indeed, weighty ones, and your health is a matter of the last importance; but whether the remaining proprietors of the paper have also done well, is what I much doubt. The ***, so far as I was a reader, exhibited such a brilliancy of point, such an elegance of paragraph, and such a variety of intelligence, that I can hardly conceive it possible to continue a daily paper in the same degree of excellence: but if there was a man who had abilities equal to the task, that man’s assistance the proprietors have lost.

When I received your letter I was transcribing my letter to the magistrates of the Canongate, Edinburgh, begging their permission to place a tombstone over poor Ferguson, and their edict in consequence of my petition, but now I shall send them to ***. Poor Ferguson! If there be a life beyond the grave, which I trust there is; and if there be a good God presiding over all nature, which I am sure there is; thou art now enjoying existence in a glorious world, where worth of the heart alone is distinction in the man; where riches, deprived of all their pleasure-purchasing powers, return to their native sordid matter; where titles and honours are the disregarded reveries of an idle dream; and where that heavy virtue, which is the negative consequence of steady dulness, and those thoughtless, though often destructive follies which are the unavoidable aberrations of frail human nature, will be thrown into equal oblivion as if they had never been!

Adieu, my dear Sir! So soon as your present views and schemes are centered in an aim, I shall be glad to hear from you; as your welfare and happiness is by no means a subject indifferent to

Yours,

R. B.
CLXX.
TO MR. JOHN LOGAN.

[The Kirk’s Alarm, to which this letter alludes, has little of the spirit of malice and drollery, so rife in his earlier controversial compositions.]

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 7th Aug. 1789.

Dear Sir,

I intended to have written you long ere now, and as I told you, I had gotten three stanzas and a half on my way in a poetical epistle to you; but that old enemy of all good works, the devil, threw me into a prosoic mire, and for the soul of me I cannot get out of it. I dare not write you a long letter, as I am going to intrude on your time with a long ballad. I have, as you will shortly see, finished “The Kirk’s Alarm;” but now that it is done, and that I have laughed once or twice at the conceits in some of the stanzas, I am determined not to let it get into the public; so I send you this copy, the first that I have sent to Ayrshire, except some few of the stanzas, which I wrote off in embryo for Gavin Hamilton, under the express provision and request that you will only read it to a few of us, and do not on any account give, or permit to be taken, any copy of the ballad. If I could be of any service to Dr. M’Gill, I would do it, though it should be at a much greater expense than irritating a few bigoted priests, but I am afraid serving him in his present embarrassment is a task too hard for me. I have enemies enough, God knows, though I do not wantonly add to the number. Still as I think there is some merit in two or three of the thoughts, I send it to you as a small, but sincere testimony how much, and with what respectful esteem,

I am, dear Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

R. B.

CLXXI.
TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The poetical epistle of worthy Janet Little was of small account: nor was the advice of Dr. Moore, to abandon the Scotch stanzas and dialect, and adopt the measure and language of modern English poetry, better inspired than the strains of the milkmaid, for such was Jenny Little.]

Ellisland, 6th Sept., 1789.

Dear Madam,

I have mentioned in my last my appointment to the Excise, and the birth of little Frank; who, by the bye, I trust will be no discredit to the honourable name of Wallace, as he has a fine manly countenance, and a figure that might do credit to a little fellow two months older; and likewise an excellent good temper, though when he pleases he has a pipe, only not quite so loud as the horn that his immortal namesake blew as a signal to take out the pin of Stirling bridge.

I had some time ago an epistle, part poetic, and part prosoic, from your poetess, Mrs. J. Little, a very ingenious, but modest composition. I should have written her as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country; and I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her: I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain. I am no dab at fine-drawn letter-writing; and, except when prompted by friendship or gratitude, or, which happens extremely rarely, inspired by the muse (I know not her name) that presides over epistolary writing, I sit down, when necessitated to write, as I would sit down, to beat hemp.

Some parts of your letter of the 20th August, struck me with the most melancholy concern for the state of your mind at present.

Would I could write you a letter of comfort, I would sit down to it with as much pleasure, as I would to write an epic poem of my own composition that should equal the Iliad. Religion, my dear friend, is the true comfort! A strong persuasion in a future state of existence; a proposition so obviously probable, that, setting revelation aside, every nation and people, as far as investigation has reached, for at least near four thousand years, have, in some mode or other, firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but, when I reflected, that I was opposing the most ardent wishes, and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief, in all ages, I was shocked at my own conat.

I know not whether I have ever sent you the following lines, or if you have ever seen them; but it is one of my favourite quotations, which I keep constantly by me in my progress through life, in the language of the book of Job,

"Against the day of battle and of war"—

spoken of religion:

"Tis this, my friend, that stirs our morning bright;
'Tis this, that gilds the horror of our night.
When wealth forsookes us, and when friends are few,
When friends are faithlesse, or when foes pursuice;
Tis this that wards the blow, and stills the smart,
Discours affliction, or repels his dart;
Within the breast bids parent raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies.

I have been busy with Zeluco. The Doctor is
so obliging as to request my opinion of it; and
I have been revolving in my mind some kind of
criticisms on novel-writing, but it is a depth be-
Yond my research. I shall however digest my
thoughts on the subject as well as I can. Zeluco is
a most sterling performance.

Farewell! —A Dieu, le bon Dieu, je vous com-
mende.

R. B.

CLXXII.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL,
CARSE.

(The Whistle alluded to in this letter was contended for
on the 16th of October, 1789—the successful competitor,
Ferguson, of Craigdarroch, was killed by a fall from his
horse, some time after the "jovial contest.")

Ellisland, 16th Oct., 1789.

Sir,

Bio with the idea of this important day at
Frisa-Carse, I have watched the elements and
skies in the full persuasion that they would an-
nounce it to the astonished world by some phe-
nomena of terrific portent.—Yesternight until a
very late hour did I wait with anxious horror,
for the appearance of some comet firing half the
sky; or aerial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians,
darting athwart the startled heavens, rapid as the ragged
lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury
nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the mat-
ter very quietly: they did not even usher in this
morning with triple suns and a shower of blood,
symbolical of the three potent heroes, and the
mighty claretshed of the day.—For me, as
Thomson in his Winter says of the storm—I
shall "Hear astonisht, and astonisht singing"

The whistle and the man; I sing

The man that won the whistle, &c.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys I traw are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold coward loun is he:

Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king among us three.

To leave the heights of Parnassus and come to
the humble vale of pros—-I have some misgiv-
ings that I take too much upon me, when I re-
quiest you to get your guest, Sir Robert Lowrie,
to frank the two enclosed covers for me, the
one of them to Sir William Cunningham, of
Robertland, Barty, at Kilmarnock,—the other to
Mr. Allan Masterton, Writing-Master, Edin-
burgh. The first has a kindred claim on Sir
Robert, as being a brother Baronet, and likewise
a keen Foxite; the other is one of the worthiest
men in the world, and a man of real genius; so,
allow me to say, he has a fraternal claim on you.
I want them franked for to-morrow, as I cannot
get them to the post to-night.—I shall send a
servant again for them in the evening. Wishing
that your head may be crowned with laurels to
night, and free from aches to-morrow,

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your deeply indebted humble Servant,

R. B.

CLXXIII.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL.

[Robert Riddell kept one of those present poets of
society—an album—into which Burns copied the Lines
on the Hermitage, and the Wounded Hare.]

Ellisland, 1789.

Sir,

I wish from my inmost soul it were in my
power to give you a more substantial gratifica-
tion and return for all the goodness to the poet,
than transcribing a few of his idle rhymes.—
However, "an old song," though to a proverb
an instance of insignificance, is generally the
only coin a poet has to pay with.

If my poems which I have transcribed, and
mean still to transcribe into your book, were
equal to the grateful respect and high esteem I
bear for the gentlemen to whom I present them,
they would be the finest poems in the language.
—As they are, they will at least be a testimony
with what sincerity I have the honour to be.

Sir,
Your devoted humble Servant,

R. B.
CLXXIV.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

[The ignominy of a poet becoming a gauger seems ever to have been present to the mind of Burns—but those moving things can't wives and weasna have a strong influence on the actions of man.]

Ellisland, 1st Nov. 1789.

My dear Friend,

I had written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you, for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edinburgh.—Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeyman excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes of excise; there to flourish and bring forth fruits—worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a poet. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmaronock.

"Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and consequently with an honest fellow has the surest chance for preferment."

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favourable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills; capricious foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situation; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily does ruin many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead, and is almost, without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you will be both is the firm persuasion of,

My dear Sir, &c.

R. B.

CLXXV.

TO MR. RICHARD BROWN.

[With this letter closes the correspondence of Robert Burns and Richard Brown.]

Ellisland, 4th November, 1789.

I have been so hurried, my ever dear friend, that though I got both your letters, I have not been able to command an hour to answer them as I wished; and even now, you are to look on this as merely confessing debt, and craving days. Few things could have given me so much pleasure as the news that you were once more safe and sound on terra firma, and happy in that place where happiness is alone to be found, in the frescirc circle. May the benevolent Director of all things peculiarly bless you in all those endearing connexions consequent on the tender and venerable names of husband and father! I have indeed been extremely lucky in getting an additional income of £50 a year, while, at the same time, the appointment will not cost me above £10 or £12 per annum of expenses more than I must have inevitably incurred. The worst circumstance is, that the excise division which I have got is so extensive, no less than ten parishes to ride over; and it abounds besides with so much business, that I can scarcely steal a spare moment. However, labour endears rest, and both together are absolutely necessary for the proper enjoyment of human existence. I cannot meet you anywhere. No less than an order from the Board of Excise, at Edinburgh, is necessary before I can have so much time as to meet you in Ayrshire. But do you come, and see me. We must have a social
day, and perhaps lengthen it out with half the night, before you go again to sea. You are the earliest friend I now have on earth, my brothers excepted; and is not that an endearing circumstance? When you and I first met, we were at the green period of human life. The twigs would easily take a bent, but would as easily return to its former state. You and I not only took a mutual bent, but by the melancholy, though strong influence of being both of the family of the unfortunate, we were entwined with one another in our growth towards advanced age; and blasted be the sacrilegious hand that shall attempt to undo the union! You and I must have one bumper to my favourite toast, "May the companions of our youth be the friends of our old age!" Come and see me one year; I shall see you at Port Glasgow the next, and if we can contrive to have a gossipping between our two bed-fellows, it will be so much additional pleasure. Mrs. Burns joins me in kind compliments to you and Mrs. Brown. Adieu! I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,

R. B.

GLXXVI.

TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ.

[The poet enclosed in this letter to his patron in the Encise the clever verses on Captain Grose, the Kirk's Alarm, and the first ballad on Captain Miller's election.]

9th December, 1789.

Sir,

I have a good while had a wish to trouble you with a letter, and had certainly done it long ere now—but for a humiliating something that throws cold water on the resolution, as if one should say, "You have found Mr. Graham a very powerful and kind friend indeed, and that interest he is so kindly taking in your concerns, you ought by everything in your power to keep alive and cherish." Now though since God has thought proper to make one powerful and another helpless, the connexion of obliger and obliged is all fair; and though my being under your patronage is to me highly honourable, yet, Sir, allow me to flatter myself, that, as a poet and an honest man you first interested yourself in my welfare, and principally as such, still you permit me to approach you.

I have found the excise business go on a great deal smoother with me than I expected; owing to a good deal of the generous friendship of Mr. Mitchel, my collector, and the kind assistance of Mr. Findlater, my supervisor. I dare to be honest, and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondance with the muses. Their visits to me, indeed, and I believe to most of their acquaintances, like the visits of good angels, are short and far between: but I meet them now and then as I jog through the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr. I take the liberty to enclose you a few bagatelles, all of them the productions of my leisure thoughts in my excise rides.

If you know or have ever seen Captain Grose, the antiquarian, you will enter into any humour that is in the verses on him. Perhaps you have seen them before, as I sent them to a London newspaper. Though I dare say you have none of the solemn-league-and-covenant fire, which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon, and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr. McGill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter-winds. The enclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local, but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.

The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of boroughs. I do not believe there will be such a hard-rum in the whole general election.

I am too little a man to have any political attachments; I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of his country, and who * * * *, is a character that one cannot speak of with patience.

Sir J. J. does "what man can do," but yet I doubt his fate.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

CLXXVII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Burns was often a prey to lowness of spirit: at this
time some dull men have marvell'd; but the dull have no
miserings: they go blindly and stupidly on, like a horse
in a mill, and have none of the sorrows or joys which
genius is heir to.]

Ellisland, 18th December, 1789.

Many thanks, dear Madam, for your sheet
ful of rhymes. Though at present I am below
the veriest prose, yet from you everything
pleases. I am groaning under the miseries of
a diseased nervous system; a system, the state
of which is most conducive to our happiness—or
the most productive of our misery. For now
near three weeks I have been so ill with a ner-
vous head-ache, that I have been obliged for a
time to give up my excise-books, being scarce
able to lift my head, much less to ride once a
week over ten muir parishes. What is man?—
To-day in the luxuriance of health, exulting in
the enjoyment of existence; in a few days, per-
haps in a few hours, loaded with conscious pain-
ful being, counting the tardy pace of the linger-
ing moments by the repercussions of anguish,
and refusing or denied a comforter. Day fol-
ows night, and night comes after day, only to
curse him with life which gives him no plea-
sure; and yet the awful, dark termination of
that life is something at which he recoils.

"Tell us, ye dead; will none of you in pity
Disclose the secret—
What is your age, and we must shortly be?
"Is it no matter?
A little time will make us learn'd as you are."

Can it be possible, that when I resign this
frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in
conscious existence? When the last gasp of
agonia has announced that I am no more to those
that knew me, and the few who loved me; when
the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corpse is
resigned into the earth, to be the prey of un-
sightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden
clod, shall I be yet warm in life, seeing and seen,
enjoying and enjoyed? Ye venerable sages and
holy flames, is there probability in your conjec-
tures, truth in your stories, of another world
beyond death; or are they all alike, baseless
visions, and fabricated fables? If there is an-
other life, it must be only for the just, the bene-
volent, the amiable, and the humane; what a
flattering idea, then, is a world to come! Would
to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish
it! There I should meet an aged parent, now
at rest from the many buffetings of an evil
world, against which he so long and so bravely
struggled. There should I meet the friend, the
disinterested friend of my early life; the man
who rejoiced to see me, because he loved me
and could serve me.—Muir, thy weaknesses were
the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart
glowed with everything generous, manly and
noble; and if ever emanation from the All-good
Being animated a human form, it was thine! There
should I, with speechless agony of rup-
ture, again recognize my lost, my ever dear
Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth,
honour, constancy, and love.

"My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of heavenly rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters! I
trust thou art no impostor, and that thy reve-
lation of blissful scenes of existence beyond
death and the grave, is not one of the many
impositions which time after time have been
palmed on credulous mankind. I trust that in
thee "shall all the families of the earth be
blessed," by being yet connected together in a
better world, where every tie that bound heart
to heart, in this state of existence, shall be, far
beyond our present conceptions, more endearing.

I am a good deal inclined to think with those
who maintain, that what are called nervous af-
flections are in fact diseases of the mind. I can-
ot reason, I cannot think; and but to you I
would not venture to write anything above an
order to a cobbler. You have felt too much of
the ills of life not to sympathise with a diseased
wretch, who has impaired more than half of any
faculties he possessed. Your goodmess will
excuse this distracted scribble, which the writer
dare scarcely read, and which he would throw
into the fire, were he able to write anything
better, or indeed anything at all.

Rumour told me something of a son of yours,
who was returned from the East or West Indies.
If you have given news from James or An-
thony, it was cruel in you not to let me know;
as I promise you on the sincerity of a man, who
is weary of one world, and anxious about an-
other, that scarce anything could give me so
much pleasure as to hear of any good thing be-
falling my honoured friend.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CLXXXVIII.

TO LADY W[INIFRED] M[AXWELL] CONSTABLE.

[The Lady Winifred Maxwell, the last of the old line of Nithsdale, was granddaughter of that Earl who, in 1715, made an almost miraculous escape from death, through the spirit and fortitude of his countess, a lady of the noble family of Powis.]

Ellisland, 16th December, 1789.

My Lady,

In vain have I from day to day expected to hear from Mrs. Young, as she promised me at Dalswinton that she would do me the honour to introduce me at Tiawald; and it was impossible, not from your ladyship's accessibility, but from my own feelings, that I could go alone. Lately indeed, Mr. Maxwell of Carruchen, in his usual good nature, offered to accompany me, when an unlucky indisposition on my part hindered my embracing the opportunity. To court the notice or the tables of the great, except where I sometimes have had a little matter to seek of them, or more often the pleasant task of witnessing my gratitude to them, is what I never have done, and I trust never shall do. But with your ladyship I have the honour to be connected by one of the strongest and most endearing ties in the whole moral world. Common sufferers, in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious, the cause of heroic loyalty! Though my fathers had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hazard in the contest, though they left their humble cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost; with unshaken firmness and unimpeached political attachments, they shook hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country. The language and the enclosed verses are for your ladyship's eye alone. Poets are not very famous for their prudence; but as I can do nothing for a cause which is now nearly no more, I do not wish to hurt myself.

I have the honour to be,

My lady,

Your ladyship's obliged and obedient

Humble servant,

R. B.

CLXXIX.

TO PROVOST MAXWELL,
OF LOCHMABEN.

[Of Lochmaben, the "Marjory of the many Loche" of the election bullets, Maxwell was at this time provost, a post more of honour than of labour.]

Ellisland, 20th December, 1789.

Dear Provost,

As my friend Mr. Graham goes for your good town to-morrow, I cannot resist the temptation to send you a few lines, and as I have nothing to say I have chosen this sheet of foolscap, and begun as you see at the top of the first page, because I have ever observed, that when once people have fairly set out they know not where to stop. Now that my first sentence is concluded, I have nothing to do but to pray heaven to help me on to another. Shall I write you on Politics or Religion, two master subjects for your sayer's of nothing. Of the first I dare say by this time you are nearly surfeited: and for the last, whatever they may talk of it, who make it a kind of company concern, I never could endure it beyond a soliloquy. I might write you on farming, on building, or marketing, but my poor distracted mind is so torn, so jaded, so racked and bedeviled with the task of the superlative damned to make one guinea do the business of three, that I detest, abhor, and swoon at the very word business, though not less than four letters of my very short surnames are in it.

Well, to make the matter short, I shall take myself to a subject ever fruitful of themes; a subject the turtle-feast of the sons of Satan, and the delicious secret sugar-plum of the abodes of grace—a subject sparkling with all the jewels that wit can find in the mines of genius: and pregnant with all the stores of learning from Moses and Confucius to Franklin and Priestley—in short, may it please your Lordship, I intend to write * * *

[Here the Poet inserted a song which can only be sung at times when the punch-bowl has done its duty and wild wit is set free.]

If at any time you expect a field-day in your town, a day when Dukes, Earls, and Knights pay their court to weavers, tailors, and cobblers, I should like to know of it two or three days beforehand. It is not that I care three skips of a cur dog for the politics, but I should like to see
such an exhibition of human nature. If you meet with that worthy old veteran in religion and good-fellowship, Mr. Jeffrey, or any of his amiable family, I beg you will give them my best compliments.

R. B.

TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.

[Of the Monkland Book-Club alluded to in this letter, the clergyman had omitted at mention in his account of the Parish of Dunsecure, published in Sir John Sinclair's work: some of the books which the post introduced were stigmatized as vain and frivolous.]

Sir,

The following circumstance has, I believe, been committed in the statistical account, transmitted to you of the parish of Dunsecure, in Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it to you because it is new, and may be useful. How far it deserves of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge, is certainly of very great importance, both to them as individuals and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection, is giving them a source of innocent and inculcable amusement; and besides, raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddel, set on foot a species of circulating library, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in every corner of the country; and so useful, as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman, who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artisan, a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddell got a number of his own tenants, and farming neighbours, to form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two in case of a removal to a distance, or death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings; and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of

books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase, was always decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood for that night first on the list, had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second, and so on to the last. At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting, was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves; each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddell’s patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were, Blair’s Sermons, Robertson’s History of Scotland, Hume’s History of the Stewarts, The Spectator, Idler, Adventurer, Mirror, Lounger, Observer, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, Chrysal, Don Quixote, Joseph Andrews, &c. A peasant who can read, and enjoy such books, is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour, who perhaps stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brutes he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success,

I am, Sir,
Your humble servant,
A Peasant.

TO CHARLES SHARPE, ESQ.,
OF HODDAM.

[The family of Hoddam is of old standing in Nithsdale; it has mingled blood with some of the noblest Scottish names; nor is it unknown either in history or literature— the fierce knight of Cheesbourn, who in the scuffle between Bruce and Comyns drew his sword and made
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"mocker," and my friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, are not the least distinguished of its members."

[1790.]

It is true, Sir, you are a gentleman of rank and fortune, and I am a poor devil: you are a feather in the cap of society, and I am a very hobnail in his shoes; yet I have the honour to belong to the same family with you, and on that score I now address you. You will perhaps suspect that I am going to claim affinity with the ancient and honourable house of Kirkpatrick. No, no, Sir: I cannot indeed be properly said to belong to any house, or even any province or kingdom; as my mother, who, for many years was spouse to a marching regiment, gave me into this bad world, aboard the packet-boat, somewhere between Dunghadie and Portpatrick. By our common family, I mean, Sir, the family of the muses. I am a fiddler and a poet; and you, I am told, play an exquisite violin, and have a standard taste in the Belles Lettres. The other day, a brother fiddler gave me a charming Scots air of your composition. If I was pleased with the tune, I was in raptures with the title you have given it; and taking up the idea I have spun it into the three stanzas enclosed. Will you allow me, Sir, to present you them, as the dearest offering that a misbegotten son of poverty and rhyme has to give? I have a longing to take you by the hand and unburthen my heart by saying, "Sir, I honour you as a man who supports the dignity of human nature, amid an age when frivolity and avarice have, between them, debased us below the brutes that perish!" But, alas, Sir! to me you are unapproachable. It is true, the muses baptized me in Castilian streams, but the thoughtless gipsies forgot to give me a name. As the sex have served many a good fellow, the Nine have given me a great deal of pleasure, but, bewitching jades! they have beggared me. Would they but spare me a little of their cast-linen! Were it only in my power to say that I have a shirt on my back! but the idle wenches, like Solomon's lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin;" so I must e'en continue to tie my remnant of a cravat, like the hangman's rope, round my naked throat, and coax my galligaskins to keep together their many-coloured fragments. As to the affair of shoes, I have given that up. My pilgrimages in my ballad-trade, from town to town, and on your stony-hearted turnpikes too, are what not even the hide of Job's Behemoth could bear. The coat on my back is no more: I shall not speak evil of the dead. It would be equally unhandsome and ungrateful to find fault with my old surtout, which so kindly supplies and conceals the want of that coat. My hat indeed is a great favourite; and though I got it literally for an old song, I would not exchange it for the best beaver in Britain. I was, during several years, a kind of fac-totum servant to a country clergyman, where I pick up a good many scraps of learning, particularly in some branches of the mathematics. Whenever I feel inclined to rest myself on my way, I take my seat under a hedge, laying my poetical wallet on the one side, and my fiddle-case on the other, and placing my hat between my legs, I can, by means of its brim, or rather brims, go through the whole doctrine of the conic sections.

However, Sir, don't let me mislead you, as if I would interest your pity. Fortune has so much forsaken me, that she has taught me to live without her; and amid all my rags and poverty, I am as independent, and much more happy, than a monarch of the world. According to the hackneyed metaphor, I value the several actors in the great drama of life, simply as they act their parts. I can look on a worthless fellow of a duke with unqualified contempt, and can regard an honest scavenger with sincere respect. As you, Sir, go through your role with such distinguished merit, permit me to make one in the chorus of universal applause, and assure you that with the highest respect, I have the honour to be, &c.,

JOHNNY FAAL.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

[In the few fierce words of this letter the poet bids adieu to all hopes of wealth from Ellisland.]

Ellisland, 11th January, 1790.

DEAR BROTHERS,

I mean to take advantage of the frank, though I have not, in my present frame of mind, much appetite for exertion in writing. My nerves are in a cursed state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands.
But let it go to hell! I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On Newyear-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause.

No song nor dance I bring from you great city,
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Tho', by the bye, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home.

I can no more.—If once I was clear of this cursed farm, I should requite more at ease.

R. B.

TO MR. SUTHERLAND,
PLAYER.

ENCLOSING A PROLOGUE.

[When the farm failed, the poet sought pleasure in the playhouses: he tried to retire from his own harassing reflections, into a world created by other minds.]

Monday Morning.

I was much disappointed, my dear Sir, in wanting your most agreeable company yesterday. However, I heartily pray for good weather next Sunday; and whatever aerial Being has the guidance of the elements, may take any other half-doven of Sundays he pleases, and clothe them with

"Vapours and clouds, and storms,
Until he terrify himself
At combustion of his own raising."

I shall see you on Wednesday forenoon. In the greatest hurry,

R. B.

TO WILLIAM DUNBAR, W. S.

[This letter was first published by the Etrick Shepherd, in his edition of Burns: it is remarkable for this sentence, "I am resolved never to breed up a son of mine to any of the learned professions: I know the value of independence, and since I cannot give my sons an independent fortune, I shall give them an independent line of life." We may look round us and inquire which face of life the poet could possibly mean.]

Ellistead, 14th January, 1790.

Since we are here creatures of a day, since "a few summer days, and a few winter nights, and the life of man is at an end," why, my dear much-esteem'd Sir, should you and I let negligent indolence, for I know it is nothing worse, step in between us and bar the enjoyment of a mutual correspondence? We are not shaped out of the common, heavy, methodical clod, the elemental stuff of the plodding selfish race, the sons of Arithmetic and Prudence; our feelings and hearts are not benumbed and poisoned by the cursed influence of riches, which, whatever blessing they may be in other respects, are no friends to the nobler qualities of the heart: in the name of random sensibility, then, let never the moon change on our silence any more. I have had a tract of bad health most part of this winter, else you had heard from me long ere now. Thank Heaven, I am now got so much better as to be able to partake a little in the enjoyments of life.

Our friend Cunningham will, perhaps, have told you of my going into the Excise. The truth is, I found it a very convenient business to have £50 per annum, nor have I yet felt any of those mortifying circumstances in it that I was led to fear.

Feb. 2.

I have not, for sheer hurry of business, been able to spare five minutes to finish my letter. Besides my farm business, I ride on my Excise matters at least two hundred miles every week. I have not by any means given up the muses. You will see in the 5th vol. of Johnson's Scott's songs that I have contributed my mite there.

But, my dear Sir, little ones that look up to you for paternal protection are an important charge. I have already two fine, healthy, stout little fellows, and I wish to throw some light upon them. I have a thousand reveries and schemes about them, and their future destiny. Not that I am an Utopian projector in these things. I am resolved never to breed up a son of mine to any of the learned professions. I know the value of independence; and since I cannot give my sons an independent fortune, I shall give them an independent line of life. What a chaos of hurry, chance, and changes is this world, when one sits soberly down to reflect on it! To a father, who himself knows the world, the thought that he shall have sons to
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ushet into it must fill him with dread; but if he have daughters, the prospect in a thoughtful moment is apt to shock him.

I hope Mrs. Fordyce and the two young ladies are well. Do let me forget that they are nieces of yours, and let me say that I never saw a more interesting, sweeter pair of sisters in my life.

I am the fool of my feelings and attachments. I often take up a volume of my Spenser to realize you to my imagination, and think over the social scenes we have had together. God grant that there may be another world more congenial to honest fellows beyond this. A world where these rubs and plagues of absence, distance, misfortunes, ill-health, &c., shall no more damp hilarity and divide friendship. This I know is your throng season, but half a page will much oblige,

My dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

OLXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Falconer, the poet, whom Burns mentions here, perished in the Aurora, in which he acted as purser; he was a satirist of no mean power, and wrote that useful work, the Maritime Dictionary: but his fame depends upon "The Shipwreck," one of the most original and mournful poems in the language.

Edinburgh, 25th January, 1790.

It has been owing to unceasing hurry of business that I have not written to you, Madam, long ere now. My health is greatly better, and I now begin once more to share in satisfaction and enjoyment with the rest of my fellow-creatures.

Many thanks, my much-esteemcd friend, for your kind letters; but why will you make me run the risk of being contemptible and mercenary in my own eyes? When I pique myself on my independent spirit, I hope it is neither poetic license, nor poetic rant; and I am so flattered with the honour you have done me, in making me your companion in friendship and friendly correspondence, that I cannot without pain, and a degree of mortification, be reminded of the real inequality between our situations.

Most sincerely do I rejoice with you, dear Madam, in the good news of Anthony. Not only your anxiety about his fate, but my own esteem for such a noble, warm-hearted, manly young fellow, in the little I had of his acquaintance, has interested me deeply in his fortunes.

Falconer, the unfortunate author of the "Shipwreck," which you so much admire, is no more.

After witnessing the dreadful catastrophe he so feelingly describes in his poem, and after weathering many hard gales of fortune, he went to the bottom with the Aurora frigate.

I forget what part of Scotland had the honour of giving him birth; but he was the son of obscurity and misfortune. He was one of those daring adventurous spirits, which Scotland, beyond any other country, is remarkable for producing. Little does the fond mother think, as she hangs delighted over the sweet little leech at her bosom, where the poor fellow may hereafter wander, and what may be his fate. I remember a stanza in an old Scottish ballad, which, notwithstanding its rude simplicity, speaks feelingly to the heart:

"Little did my mother think,

That day she cradled me,

What land I was to travel in,

Or what death I should die?"

Old Scottish song are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine, and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you. The catastrophe of the piece is a poor ruined female, lamenting her fate.

She concludes with this pathetic wish:

"O that my father had ne'er on me smil'd;

O that my mother had ne'er to me sung;

O that my cradle had never been rock'd;

But that I had died when I was young.

O that the grave it were my bed;

My blankets were my winding sheet,

The clocks and the worms my bedfellows a';

And O my soul as I should sleep!"

I do not remember in all my reading, to have met with anything more truly the language of misery, than the exclamation in the last line. Misery is like love; to speak its language truly, the author must have felt it.

I am every day expecting the doctor to give your little godson the small-pox. They are rife in the country, and I tremble for his fate. By the way, I cannot help congratulating you on his looks and spirit. Every person who sees
him, acknowledges him to be the finest, handsomest child he has ever seen. I am myself delighted with the manly swell of his little chest, and a certain miniature dignity in the carriage of his head, and the glance of his fine black eye, which promises the undaunted gallantry of an independent mind.

I thought I have sent you some rhymes, but time forbids. I promise you poetry until you are tired of it, next time I have the honour of assuring you how truly I am, &c. 

B. B.

CLXXXVI.

TO MR. PETER HILL, BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

[The Mademoiselle Burns whom the poet requires about, was one of the "ladies of the Canongate," who desired to introduce free trade in her profession into a close borough: this was refused by the magistrates of Edinburgh, though advocated with much eloquence and humour in a letter by her namesake—it is coloured too strongly with her calling to be published.]

Ellisland, 2d Feb., 1790.

No! I will not say one word about apologies or excuses for not writing—I am a poor, rascally gauger, condemned to gallop at least 200 miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels, and where can I find time to write to, or importance to interest anybody? the upbraiding of my conscience, nay the upbraiding of my wife, have persecuted me on your account these two or three months past. I wish to God I was a great man, that my correspondence might throw light upon you, to let the world see what you really are: and then I would make your fortune without putting my hand in my pocket for you, which, like all other great men, I suppose I would avoid as much as possible. What are you doing, and how are you doing? Have you lately seen any of my few friends? What is become of the noble reform, or how is the fate of my poor namesake, Mademoiselle Burns, decided? O man! but for thee and thy selfish appetites, and dishonest artifices, that beauteous form, and that once innocent and still ingenious mind, might have shone conspicuous and lovely in the faithful wife, and the affectionate mother; and shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures have no claim on thy humanity!

I saw lately in a Review, some extracts from a new poem, called the Village Curate; send it me. I want likewise a cheap copy of The World. Mr. Armstrong, the young poet, who does me the honour to mention me so kindly in his works, please give me my best thanks for the copy of his book—I shall write him, my first leisure hour. I like his poetry much, but I think his style in prose quite astonishing.

Your book came safe, and I am going to trouble you with further commissions. I call it troubling you, because I want only, moxes; the cheapest way, the best; so you may have to hunt for them in the evening auctions. I want Smollette's works, for the sake of his incomparable humour. I have already Boderick Random, and Humphrey Clinker. Peregrine Pickle, Launcelot Greaues, and Ferdinand Count Fathom, I still want; but as I said, the vertiest ordinary copies will serve me. I am nice only in the appearance of my poets.* I forgot the price of Cowper's Poems, but, I believe, I must have them. I saw the other day, proposals for a publication, entitled "Banks's new and complete Christian's Family Bible," printed for C. Cooke, Paternoster-row, London.

—He promises at least, to give in the work, I think it is three hundred and odd engravings, to which he has put the names of the first artists in London.—You will know the character of the performance, as some numbers of it are published; and if it is really what it pretends to be, set me down as a subscriber, and send me the published numbers.

Let me hear from you, your first leisure minute, and trust me you shall in future have no reason to complain of my silence. The dazzling perplexity of novelty will dissipate and leave me to pursue my course in the quiet path of methodical routine.

B. B.

CLXXXVII.

TO MR. W. NICOL.

[The poet has recorded this unlooked-for death of the Domine's muse in some hasty verses, which are not much superior to the subject.]

Ellisland, Feb. 9th, 1790.

My dear Sir,

That d--ned mare of yours is dead. I would
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freely have given her price to have saved her; she has vexed me beyond description. Indebted as I was to your goodness beyond what I can ever repay, I eagerly grasped at your offer to have the mare with me. That I might at least show my readiness in wishing to be grateful, I took every care of her in my power. She was never crossed for riding above half a score of times by me or in my keeping. I drew her in the plough, one of three, for one poor week. I refused fifty shillings for her, which was the highest bode I could squeeze for her. I fed her up and had her in fine order for Dumfries fair; when four or five days before the fair, she was seized with an unaccountable disorder in the sinews, or somewhere in the bones of the neck; with a weakness or total want of power in her fillets, and in short the whole vertebræ of her spine seemed to be diseased and unhinged, and in eight-and-forty hours, in spite of the two best farriers in the country, she died and be d-maned to her! The farriers said that she had been quite strained in the fillets beyond cure before you had bought her; and that the poor devil, though she might keep a little flesh, had been jaded and quite worn out with fatigue and oppression. While she was with me, she was under my own eye, and I assure you, my much valued friend, everything was done for her that could be done; and the accident has vexed me to the heart. In fact I could not pluck up spirits to write to you, on account of the unfortunate business.

There is little new in this country. Our theatrical company, of which you must have heard, leave us this week.—Their merit and character are indeed very great, both on the stage and in private life; not a worthless creature among them; and their encouragement has been accordingly. Their usual run is from eighteen to twenty-five pounds a night; seldom less than the one, and the house will hold no more than the other. There have been repeated instances of sending away six, and eight, and ten pounds a night for want of room. A new theatre is to be built by subscription; the first stone is to be laid on Friday first to come. Three hundred guineas have been raised by thirty subscribers, and thirty more might have been got if wanted. The manager, Mr. Sutherland, was introduced to me by a friend from Ayr; and a worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with. Some of our clergy have slept in by stealth now and then; but they have got up a farce of their own.

You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Kirkpatrick of Dunsecro, and the rest of that faction, have accused in formal process, the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron, of Kirkgunzeon, that in ordaining Mr. Nielson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nielson to the confession of faith, so far as it was agreeable to reason and the word of God!

Mrs. B. begs to be remembered most gratefully to you. Little Bobby and Frank are charmingly well and healthy. I am jaded to death with fatigue. For these two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than two hundred miles a week. I have done little in the poetic way. I have given Mr. Sutherland two Prologues; one of which was delivered last week. I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas, to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunaté mare, beginning (the name she got here was Peg Nicholson)

"Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,  
As ever trod on airm;  
But now she's floating down the Nith,  
And past the mouth o' Cairn."

My best compliments to Mrs. Nicol, and little Neddy, and all the family; I hope Ned is a good scholar, and will come out to gather nuts and apples with me next harvest.

R. B

CLXXXVIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[Burns looks back with something of regret to the days of rich dinners and flowing wine-cups which he experienced in Edinburgh. Alexander Cunningham and his unhappy loves are recorded in that fine song, "Had I a cave on some wild distant shore."]

Ellisland, 18th February, 1790.

I ask your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unsightly sheet—

"My poverty but not my will consents."

But to make amends, since of modest post I have none, except one poor widowed half-sheet of gilt, which lies in my drawer among my plebeian fool's-cap pages, like the widow of a man...
of fashion, whom that unpoltile scoundrel, Neccessity, has driven from Burgundy and Pineapple, to a dish of Bohes, with the scandal-bearing help-mate of a village-priest; or a glass of whisky-toddy, with a ruby-nosed yoke-fellow of a foot-paddling exciseman—I make a vow to enclose this sheet-full of epistolary fragments in that my only scrap of gilt paper.

I am indeed your unworthy debtor for three friendly letters. I ought to have written to you long ere now, but it is a literal fact, I have scarcely a spare moment. It is not that I will not write to you; Miss Burnet is not more dear to her guardian angel, nor his grace the Duke of Queensbury to the powers of darkness, than my friend Cunningham to me. It is not that I cannot write to you; should you doubt it, take the following fragment, which was intended for you some time ago, and be convinced that I can antithesis sentiment, and circumvolute periods, as well as any coiner of phrase in the regions of philology.

December, 1789.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

WHERE are you? And what are you doing? Can you be that son of levity, who takes up a friendship as he takes up a fashion; or are you, like some other of the worthiest fellows in the world, the victim of indolence, laden with fetters of ever-increasing weight?

What strange beings are we! Since we have a portion of conscious existence, equally capable of enjoying pleasure, happiness, and rapture, or of suffering pain, wretchedness, and misery, it is surely worthy of an inquiry, whether there be not such a thing as a science of life; whether method, economy, and fertility of expedients be not applicable to enjoyment, and whether there be not a want of dexterity in pleasure, which renders our little scantling of happiness still less; and a profusion, an intoxication in bliss, which leads to satiety, disgust, and self-abhorrence. There is not a doubt but that health, talents, character, decent competency, respectable friends, are real substantial blessings; and yet do we not daily see those who enjoy many or all of these good things contrive notwithstanding to be as unhappy as others to whose lot few of them have fallen? I believe one great source of this mistake or misconduct is owing to a certain stimulus, with us called ambition, which goads us up the hill of life, not as we ascend other eminences, for the laudable curiosity of viewing an extended landscape, but rather for the dishonest pride of looking down on others of our fellow-creatures, seemingly diminutive in humbler stations, &c.

Sunday, 14th February, 1790.

God help me! I am now obliged to

"You ought to, and Sunday to the week."

If there be any truth in the orthodox faith of these churches, I am d—ned past redemption, and what is worse, d—ned to all eternity. I am deeply read in Boston's Four-fold State, Marshals on Sanction, Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest, &c.; but "there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there," for me; so I shall e'en turn Arminian, and trust to "sin-cere though imperfect obedience."

Tuesday, 16th.

Luckily for me, I was prevented from the discussion of the knotty point at which I had just made a full stop. All my fears and care are of this world: if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a Deist: but I fear, every fair, unprejudiced inquirer must in some degree be a sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man; but like electricity, phlogiston, &c., the subject is so involved in darkness, that we want data to go upon. One thing frightens me much: that we are to live for ever, seems too good news to be true. That we are to enter into a new scene of existence, where, exempt from want and pain, we shall enjoy ourselves and our friends without satiety or separation—how much should I be indebted to any one who could fully assure me that this was certain!

My time is once more expired. I will write to Mr. Cleghorn soon. God bless him and all his concerns! And may all the powers that preside over conviviality and friendship, be present with all their kindest influence, when the bearer of this, Mr. Simm, and you meet! I wish I could also make one.

Finally, brethren, farewell! Whate’er things are lovely, whate’er things are gentle, whate’er things are charitable, whate’er things are kind, think on these things, and think on

R. B.
OLXXXIX.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

[That Burns turned at this time his thoughts on the drama, this order to his book-seller for dramatic works, as well as his attendance at the Dumfries theatre, afforded proof.

Ellisland, 2d March, 1790.

At a late meeting of the Mankland Friendly Society, it was resolved to augment their library by the following books, which you are to send us as soon as possible:—The Mirror, The Lounger, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, (these, for my own sake, I wish to have by the first carrier), Knox's History of the Reformation; Rae's History of the Rebellion in 1715; any good history of the rebellion in 1745; A Display of the Secession Act and Testimony, by Mr. Gibb; Hervey's Meditations; Beveridge's Thoughts; and another copy of Watson's Body of Divinity.

I wrote to Mr. A. Masterton three or four months ago, to pay some money he owed me into your hands, and lately I wrote to you to the same purpose, but I have heard from neither one or other of you.

In addition to the books I commissioned in my last, I want very much An Index to the Excise Laws, or an Abridgment of all the Statutes now in force relative to the Excise, by Jellinger Symons; I want three copies of this book: if it is now to be had, cheap or dear, get it for me. An honest country neighbour of mine wants too a Family Bible, the larger the better; but second-hand, for he does not choose to give above ten shillings for the book. I want likewise for myself, as you can pick them up, second-hand or cheap, copies of Otway's Dramatic Works, Ben Jonson's, Dryden's, Congreve's, Wycherley's, Vanbrugh's, Cibber's, or any dramatic works of the more modern, MacKlin, Garrick, Foote, Colman, or Sheridan. A good copy too of Moliere, in French, I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also, but comic authors, chiefly, though I should wish to have Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire too. I am in no hurry for all, or any of these, but if you accidentally meet with them very cheap, get them for me.

And now to quit the dry walk of business, how do you do, my dear friend? and how is Mrs. Hill? I trust, if now and then not so elegantly handsome, at least as amiable, and sings as divinely as ever. My good wife too has a charming "wood-note wild;" now could we four——

I am out of all patience with this vile world, for one thing. Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures, except in a few soundlessly instances. I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have, is born with us; but we are placed here amid so much nakedness, and hunger, and poverty, and want, that we are under a cursed necessity of studying selfishness, in order that we may exist! Still there are, in every age, a few souls, that all the wants and woes of life cannot debase to selfishness, or even to the necessary alloy of caution and prudence. If ever I am in danger of vanity, it is when I contemplate myself on this side of my disposition and character. God knows I am no saint; I have a whole host of follies and sins, to answer for; but if I could, and I believe I do it as far as I can, I would wipe away all tears from all eyes.

Adieu!

R. B.

CXG.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[It is not a little singular that Burns says, in this letter, he had just met with the Mirror and Lounger for the first time: it will be remembered that a few years before a generous article was dedicated by Mackenzie, the editor, to the Poems of Burns, and to this the poet oftentimes alludes in his correspondence.]

Ellisland, 10th April, 1790.

I have just now, my ever honoured friend, enjoyed a very high luxury, in reading a paper of the Lounger. You know my national prejudices. I had often read and admired the Spectator, Adventurer, Rambler, and World; but still with a certain regret, that they were so thoroughly and entirely English. Alas! Have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the union, that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! I often repeat that couplet of my favourite poet, Goldsmith——

"The very poor, may yet be very bright."

"Nothing can reconcile me to the common terms, 'English ambassador, English court,' &c. And I am out of all patience to see that
The one I have just read, Lounger, No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than anything I have read of a long time. Mackenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he is certainly outside him in the tender and the pathetic. His Man of Feeling (but I am not counsel learned in the laws of criticism) I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what book, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself, or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley?

Still, with all my admiration of Mackenzie's writings, I do not know if they are the fittest reading for a young man who is about to set out, as the phrase is, to make his way into life. Do not you think, Madam, that among the few favoured of heaven in the structure of their minds (for such there certainly are) there may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity, an elegance of soul, which are of no use, nay, in some degree, absolutely disqualifying for the truly important business of making a man's way into life? If I am not much mistaken, my gallant young friend, A * * * * *, is very much under these disqualifications; and for the young females of a family I could mention, well may they excite parental solicitude, for I, a common acquaintance, or as my vanity will have it, an humble friend, have often trembled for a turn of mind which may render them eminently happy—or peculiarly miserable!

I have been manufacturing some verses lately; but when I have got the most hurried season of excise business over, I hope to have more leisure to transcribe anything that may show how much I have the honour to be, Madam,

Yours, &c.

K. B.

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL.

[Collector Mitchell was a kind and considerate gentle
man: to his grandson, Mr. John Campbell, surgeon, in
Aberdeen, I owe this characteristic letter.]

Ellisland, 1790.

Sir,

I shall not fail to wait on Captain Riddel
to-night—I wish and pray that the goddess of justice herself would appear to-morrow among our hon. gentlemen, merely to give them a word in their ear that mercy to the thief is injustice to the honest man. For my part I have galloped over my ten parishes these four days, until this moment that I am just sighted, or rather, that my poor jackass-skeleton of a horse has let me down; for the miserable devil has been on his knees half a score of times within the last twenty miles, telling me in his own way, "Behold, am not I thy faithful jade of a horse, on which thou hast ridden these many years?"

In short, Sir, I have broke my horse's wind, and almost broke my own neck, besides some injuries in a part that shall be nameless, owing to a hard-hearted stone for a saddle. I find that every offender has so many great men to espouse his cause, that I shall not be surprised if I am committed to the strong hold of the law to-morrow for insolence to the dear friends of the gentlemen of the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient humble

B. B.

CXCl.

TO DR. MOORE.

[The sonnets alluded to by Burns were those of Charlotte Smith; the poet's copy is now before me, with a few marks of his pen on the margins.]

Dumfries, Excise Office, 14th July, 1790.

Sir,

Coming into town this morning, to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you, as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can; but let my letter be as stupid as a * * * * * * * as miscellaneous as a newspaper, as short as a hungry grace-before-meat, or as long as a law-paper in the Douglas cause; as ill-spelt as country John's billet-doux, or as unsightly a scrap as Betty Byre-Mucker's answer to it; I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it; and as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, Zeebo. In fact, you are in some degree blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me, that nothing less would serve my overweening fancy, than a formal criticism on the book. In fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel-writers. This, I own, betrays my ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear; and I am fond of the spirit young Elihu shows in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion," I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pen, and marking with asterisks, parentheses, &c., wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkable well-turned period, or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I should hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative View," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are.

I have just received from my gentleman that horrid summons in the book of Revelations—"That time shall be no more!"

The little collection of sonnets have some charming poetry in them. If indeed I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgments, and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of her pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feelings as an author, doing as I would be done by.

B. B.

CXCl.

TO MR. MURDOCH,

TEACHER OF FRENCH, LONDON.

[The account of himself, promised to Murdoch by Burns, was never written.]

Ellisland, July 16, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received a letter from you a long time ago.
but unfortunately, as it was in the time of my peregrinations and journeyings through Scotland, I mislaid or lost it, and by consequence your direction along with it. Luckily my good star brought me acquainted with Mr. Kennedy, who, I understand, is an acquaintance of yours: and by his means and mediation I hope to replace that link which my unfortunate negligence had so unluckily broke in the chain of our correspondence. I was the more vexed at the vile accident, as my brother William, a journeyman saddler, has been for some time in London; and wished above all things for your direction, that he might have paid his respects to his father's friend.

His last address he sent me was, "Wm. Burns, at Mr. Barber's, saddler, No. 181, Strand." I write him by Mr. Kennedy, but neglected to ask him for your address; so, if you find a spare half-minute, please let my brother know by a card where and when he will find you, and the poor fellow will joyfully wait on you, as one of the few surviving friends of the man whose name, and Christian name too, he has the honour to bear.

The next letter I write you shall be a long one. I have much to tell you of "hairbreadth escapes in th' imminent deadly breach," with all the eventful history of a life, the early years of which owed so much to your kind tutorage; but this at an hour of leisure. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Murdoch and family.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Your obliged friend,
R. B.

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You knew Henderson—I have not flattered his memory.
I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obliged humble servant,
R. B.

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CXCIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Inquiries have been made in vain after the name of Burns's ci-devant friend, who had so deeply wounded his feelings.]

8th August, 1790.

DEAR MADAM,

After a long day's toil, plague, and care, I sit down to write to you. Ask me not why I have delayed it so long! It was owing to hurry, indolence, and fifty other things; in short to anything—but forgetfulness of la plus aimable de son sexe. By the bys, you are indebted your best courtesy to me for this last compliment; as I pay it from my sincere conviction of its truth—a quality rather rare in compliments of these grinning, bowing, scraping times.

Well, I hope writing to you will ease a little my troubled soul. Sorely has it been bruised to-day! A ci-devant friend of mine, and an intimate acquaintance of yours, has given my feelings a wound that I perceive will gangrene dangerously ere it cure. He has wounded my pride!

R. B.

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CXCVI.

TO MR. M'MURDO.

[This hasty note was accompanied by the splendid elegy on Matthew Henderson, and no one could better feel than M'Murdo, to whom it is addressed, the difference between the music of verse and the change of politics.]

Ellisland, 2d August, 1790.

SIR,

Now that you are over with the sirens of Flattery, the harpies of Corruption, and the furies of Ambition, these infernal deities, that on all sides, and in all parties, preside over the villanous business of politics, permit a rustic muse of your acquaintance to do her best to soothe you with a song.—
san enter into the feelings of the young man, who goes into life with the laudable ambition to do something, and to be something among his fellow-creatures; but whom the consciousness of friendless obscurity presses to the earth, and wounds to the soul!

Even the fairest of his virtues are against him. That independent spirit, and that ingenuous modesty, qualities inseparable from an noble mind, are, with the million, circumstances not a little disqualifying. What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and the happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the counte-
nance and glad the heart of such depressed youth? I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse—the goods of this world cannot be divided without being less-
ened—but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes no-	hing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap ourselves up in the cloak of our own better fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortal's should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I am the worst hand in the world at asking a favour. That indirect address, that insinuating implication, which, without any positive request, plainly expresses your wish, is a talent not to be acquired at a plough-tail. Tell me then, for you can, in what periphery of language, in what circumvolution of phrase, I shall envelope, yet not conceal this plain story.—"My dear Mr. Tait, my friend Mr. Duncan, whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you, is a young lad of your own profession, and a gentleman of much modesty, and great worth. Perhaps it may be in your power to assist him in the, to him, important consideration of getting a place; but at all events, your notice and acquaintance will be a very great acquisition to him; and I dare pledge myself that he will never disgrace your favour."

You may possibly be surprised, Sir, at such a letter from me; 'tis, I own, in the usual way of calculating these matters, more than our acquain-
tance entitles me to; but my answer is short:—Of all the men at your time of life, whom I knew in Edinburgh, you are the most accessible on the side on which I have assailed you. You are very much altered indeed from what you were when I knew you, if generosity point the path you will not tread, or humanity call to you in vain.

As to myself, a being to whose interest I believe you are still a well-wisher; I am here, breathing at all times, thinking sometimes, and rhyming now and then. Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation I am persuaded has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.

My best compliments to your father and Miss Tait. If you have an opportunity, please re-
member me in the solemn league and covenant of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay. I am a wretch for not writing her; but I am so hankneyed with self-accusation in that way, that my con-
science lies in my bosom with scarce the sens-
ibility of an oyster in its shell. Where is Lady M'Kenzie? wherever she is, God bless her! I likewise beg leave to trouble you with com-
pliments to Mr. Wm. Hamilton; Mrs. Hamilton and family; and Mrs. Chalmers, when you are in that country. Should you meet with Miss Nimmo, please remember me kindly to her.

R. B.

CO.

TO ———

[This letter contained the Kirk's Alarm, a satire written to help the cause of Dr. M'Gill, who recanted his heresy rather than be removed from his kirk.]

Ellisland, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Whether in the way of my trade I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor, I am fear very doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull-hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Ajax! am I not a Hector, and the worthy Doc-
tor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence. Good God, Sir! to such a shield, humour is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a school-
boy. Creation-disgracing scelerats such as they, God only can mend, and the devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they all had but one neck. I feel impo-
tent as a child to the ardour of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germins of their wicked machinations! O for a poisonous tornado, winged from the torrid zone of Tura.
to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for
the press, you have only to spell it right, and
place the capital letters properly: as to the
punctuation, the printers do that themselves.

I have a copy of Tam o’ Shanter ready to send
you by the first opportunity: it is too heavy to
send by post.

I heard of Mr. Corbet lately. He, in conse-
quency of your recommendation, is most zealous
to serve me. Please favour me soon with an
account of your good folks; if Mrs. H. is re-
covering, and the young gentleman doing well.

R. B.

TO LADY W. M. CONSTABLE.

[The present alluded to was a gold snuff-box, with a
portrait of Queen Mary on the lid.]

Ellisland, 11th January, 1791

My Lady,

Nothing less than the unlucky accident of
having lately broken my right arm, could have
prevented me, the moment I received your lady-
ship’s elegant present by Mrs. Miller, from re-
turning you my warmest and most grateful
acknowledgments. I assure your ladyship, I
shall set it apart—the symbols of religion shall
only be more sacred. In the moment of poetic
composition, the box shall be my inspiring
genius. When I would breathe the compre-
ensive wish of benevolence for the happiness of
others, I shall recollect your ladyship; when I
would interest my fancy in the distresses in-
cident to humanity, I shall remember the unfor-
tunate Mary.

R. B.

TO WILLIAM DUNBAR, W. S.

[This letter was in answer to one from Dunbar in
which the witty colonel of the Crochallan Fencibles
supposed the poet had been translated to Elysium to sing
to the immortals, as his voice had not been heard of late
on earth.]

Ellisland, 17th January, 1791.

I am not gone to Elysium, most noble colonel,
but am still here in this sublunary world, serv-
ing my God, by propagating his image, and
honouring my king by begetting him loyal subjects.

Many happy returns of the season await my friend. May the thorns of care never beset his path! May peace be an inmate of his bosom, and rapture a frequent visitor of his soul! May the blood-hounds of misfortune never track his steps, nor the screech-owl of sorrow alarm his dwelling! May enjoyment tell thy hours, and pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the bard! "Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee!!"

As a further proof that I am still in the land of existence, I send you a poem, the latest I have composed. I have a particular reason for wishing you only to show it to select friends, should you think it worthy a friend's personal; but if, at your first leisure hour, you will favour me with your opinion of, and strictures on, the performance, it will be an additional obligation on, dear Sir, your deeply indebted humble servant,

R. B.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

[The poet's eloquent apostrophe to poverty has no little feeling in it: he beheld the money which his poems brought melt silently away, and he looked to the future with more fear than hope.]

Ellisland, 17th January, 1791.

Take these two guineas, and place them over against that d—ned account of yours! which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules; not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage, were such an insuperable business, such an infernal task!! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell: where shall I find force of execution equal to the amplitude of thy demerits? Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little—little aid to support his existence, from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sum of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him denied and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, injuriously under the neglect, or writhe in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant, false-telling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shalow greatness in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee: the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education, is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies as usual bring him to want; and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. His early follies and extravagance, are spirit and fire; his consequent wants are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rape and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a sounder and a lord.—Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot wheels of the coroneted Sir, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.

Well! divines may say of it what they please; but execration is to the mind what phlebotomy is to the body: the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.

R. B.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[To Alexander Cunningham the poet generally commended his favourite compositions.]

Ellisland, 29d January, 1791.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear friend! As many of the good things
OF ROBERT BURNS.

of this life, as is consistent with the usual mixture of good and evil in the cup of being!
I have just finished a poem (Tam o' Shanter) which you will receive enclosed. It is my first essay in the way of tales.
I have these several months been hammering at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get, no farther than the following fragment, on which please give me your strictures. In all kinds of poetic composition, I set great store by your opinion; but in sentimental verses, in the poetry of the heart, no Roman Catholic ever set more value on the infallibility of the Holy Father than I do on yours.
I mean the introductory couplets as text verses.

ELEGY ON THE LATE MISS BURNET, OF MONBODDO.

Life ne'er exulted in so rich a prise
As Burnet lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Let me hear from you soon. Adieu!

R. B.

OCVIL.

TO A. F. TYTLER, ESQ.

["I have seldom in my life," says Lord Woodhouselee, "tasted a higher enjoyment from any work of genius than I received from Tam o' Shanter."]

Sir,

Nothing less than the unfortunate accident I have met with, could have prevented my grateful acknowledgments for your letter. His own favourite poem, and that an essay in the walk of the muse, entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were on the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt; to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever thrilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet. However, Providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which it seems is necessary in this sublime state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter, my horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there: one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce, it cannot easily be remedied. Your approbation, Sir, has given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition, that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

OCVIL.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[The elegy on the beautiful Miss Burnet, of Monboddo, was laboured zealously by Burns, but it never reached the excellence of some of his other compositions.]

Ellistland, 7th Feb. 1791.

When I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing; you will allow that it is too good an apology for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet, of Monboddo. I had the honour of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance, as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's work was no more. I have, as yet, gone no farther than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted, that any new idea on the business is not to be expected; in the fall, if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last, you
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

will judge from what follows. I have proceeded no further.

Your kind letter, with your kind remembrance of your godson, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partiality apart, the sweetest boy I have for a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the small-pox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and never had a grain of doctor’s drugs in his bowels.

I am truly happy to hear that the “little floweret” is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the “mother plant” is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her “cruel wounds” be healed. I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler you shall hear farther from,

Madam, yours,

R. B.

CCVIII.

TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

[Alison was much gratified, it is said, with this recognition of the principles laid down in his ingenious and popular work.]

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 14th Feb. 1791.

SIR,

You must by this time have set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honour to present me with a book, which does honour to science and the intellectual powers of man, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up forsooth a deep learned digest of strictures on a composition, of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that at first glance, several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangour of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle twangle of a jew’s-harp: that the delicate texture of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock; and that from something innate and independent of all associations of ideas;—these I had set down as irrefragable, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith.—In short, Sir, except Euclid’s Elements of Geometry, which I made a shift to unravel by my father’s side, in the winter evening of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas, as your “Essays on the Principles of Taste.” One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work, I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style, sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print ¹ is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.

I am, Sir, &c.

R. B.

CCIX.

TO DR. MOORE.

[Moore admired but moderately the beautiful ballad on Queen Mary, etc., the Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson: Tam o’ Shanter he thought full of poetical beauties.—He again regrets that he writes in the language of Scotland.]

Ellisland, 20th February, 1791.

I do not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to Grose’s Antiquities of Scotland. If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of showing you, that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.

The Elegy on Captain Henderson, is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets

¹ Tam o’ Shanter.
have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living; and as a very orthodox text, I forget where in scripture, says, 'whatever is not of faith is sin;'' so say I, whatever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or stillmore dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with Percy's Reliques of English Poetry. By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of Buchanan and Targe! 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving Targe the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not.

I have just read over, once more of many times, your Zeluco. I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one or two, I think, which with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart, is your and Fielding's province beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson indeed might perhaps be excelled; but unhappily, dramati persona are beings of another world; and however they may captivate the unexperienced, romantic fancy of a boy or a girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper years.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence: so soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog you know has his day), my getting forward in the excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life, as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much of the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors, this is one of the best, Better be the head o' the commonalty, than the tail o' the gentry.

But I am got on a subject, which however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honour to be,

Yours, &c.

R. B.

Written on the blank leaf of a book, which I presented to a very young lady, whom I had formerly characterised under the denomination of The Rose Bud. * * *

COX.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[Cunningham could tell a merry story, and sing a very morose song; nor was he without a feeling for the deep sensibilities of his friend's verse.]

Ellisland, 12th March, 1791.

If the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have just composed always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe in general, novelty has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the poor patient, as usual, with.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced, in the revolution of many a hymeneal honeymoon. But lest I sink into stupid prose, and so sacrelegiously intrude on the office of my parish-priest, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition, which will appear perhaps in Johnson’s work, as well as the former.

You must know a beautiful Jacobite air, There’ll never be peace ’till Jamie comes hame. When political combustion ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then you know becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets.

By you castle was’ at the close of the day, I heard a man sing, tho’ his head it was grey; And as he was singing, the tears fast down came—

There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

If you like the air, and if the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to “the memory of joys that are past,” to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on ’till I hear the clock has intimatet the near approach of

That hour, o’ night’s black arch the key-stane.—

So good night to you! Sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams! Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad, I have just now on the tapis?

I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
Far, far in the west is he I love best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me!

Good night, once more, and God bless you! R. B.

CCXII.

TO MRS. GRAHAM,
OF FINTRAY.

[Mrs. Graham, of Fintry, felt both as a lady and a Scottish one, the tender Lament of the fair and unfortunate princess, which this letter contained.]

MADAM,

Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while.

Ellisland, 19th March, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it encloses an idle poem of mine, which I send you; and God knows you may perhaps pay dear enough for it if you read it through. Not that this is my own opinion; but the author, by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite bored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart, what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered, at the loss of my best friend, my first and dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and brave! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will, who by nature’s ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you, indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family, how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honoured remains of my noble patron, are designed to be brought to the family burial-place. Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression.

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply indebted to Mr. Graham's goodness; and what, in the usual way of men, is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor: but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and without any fustian affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm, that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter sort ever make me do anything injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart, and an independent mind! It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr. Graham's chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine, to receive with thankfulness, and remember with undiminished gratitude.

R. B.

COXIII.

TO MRS. GRAHAM,
OF FINTRAY.

[The following letter was written on the blank leaf of a new edition of his poems, presented by the poet, to one whom he regarded, and justly, as a patroness.]

It is probable, Madam, that this page may be read, when the hand that now writes it shall be mouldering in the dust: may it then bear witness, that I present you these volumes as a tribute of gratitude, on my part ardent and sincere, as your and Mr. Graham's goodness to me has been generous and noble! May every child of yours, in the hour of need, find such a friend as I shall teach every child of mine, that their father found in you.

R. B.

COXIV.

TO THE REV. G. BAIRD.

[It was proposed to publish a new edition of the poems of Michael Bruce, by subscription, and give the profits to his mother, a woman eighty years old, and poor and helpless, and Burns was asked for a poem to give a new impulse to the publication.]

Ellisland, 1791.

REVEREND SIR,

Why did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style on the business of poor Bruce? Don't I know, and have I not felt, the many ills, the peculiar ills that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and had your letter had my direction, so as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment), I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask, that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription bills, may bear, that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it in the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clubbed a share in the work from mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of pecadilloes, failings, follies, and backslidings (anybody but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little the vista of retrospection.

R. B.

COXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Francis Wallace Burns, the godson of Mrs. Dunlop, to whom this letter refers, died at the age of fourteen—he was a fine and a promising youth.]

Ellisland, 11th April, 1791.

I am once more able, my honoured friend, to return you, with my own hand, thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster, that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy; rather stouter, but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little namesake to be my chef d'œuvr in that species of manufacture, as I look on Tam o' Shanter to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis
true, both the one and the other discover a spice of rogish waggery, that might perhaps be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius and a finishing polish that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast, as a reaper from the cornridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale, sprightly damsels, that are bred among the hay and heather. We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cestus of Venus. It is indeed such an inestimable treasure, that where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to Heaven, I should think it cheaply purchased at the expense of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such a humble one as mine, we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence—as fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty, and unsullied purity; nature’s mother-wit, and the rudiments of taste; a simplicity of soul, unsuspicous of, because unacquainted with, the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world; and the dearest charm of all the rest, a yielding sweetness of disposition, and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part, and ardently glowing with a more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, a sound, vigorous constitution, which your higher ranks can scarcely ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made. Do let me hear, by first post, how cher petit Monseigneur comes on with his small-pox. May almighty goodness preserve and restore him!

R. B.

G.C. 

TO ________.

[That his works found their way to the newspapers, need have occasioned no surprise: the poet gave copies of his favourite pieces freely to his friends, as soon as they were written; who, in their turn, spread their fame among their acquaintances.]

Ellisland, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

I am exceedingly to blame in not writing you long ago; but the truth is, that I am the most indolent of all human beings; and when I matriculate in the herald’s office, I intend that my supporters shall be two sloths, my crest a slow-worm, and the motto, “Dell tak the foremost.” So much by way of apology for not thanking you sooner for your kind execution of my commission.

I would have sent you the poem; but somehow or other it found its way into the public papers, where you must have seen it.

I am ever, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

CXXXVII.

TO ________.

[This singular letter was sent by Burns, it is believed, to a critic, who had taken him to task about obscure language, and imperfect grammar.]

Ellisland, 1791.

Thou enunuch of language: thou Englishman, who never was south the Tweed: thou servile echo of fashionable barbarisms: thou quack, vening the nostrums of empirical elocution: thou marriage-maker between vowels and consonants, on the Greta-green of caprice: thou cobler, botching the flimsy socks of bombast oratory: thou blacksmith, hammering the rivets of absurdity: thou butcher, imbruing thy hands in the bowels of orthography: thou arch-heretic in pronunciation: thou pitch-pipe of affected emphasis: thou carpenter, mortising the awkward joints of jarring sentences: thou squeaking dissonance of cadence: thou pimp of gender: thou Lion Herald to silly etymology: thou antipode of grammar: thou executioner of construction: thou brood of the speech-distracting builders of the Tower of Babel: thou lingual confusion worse confounded: thou scape-gallows from the land of syntax: thou scavenger of mood and tense: thou murderous accoucheur of infant learning: thou ignis fatuus, misleading the steps of benighted ignorance: thou pickle-herring in the puppet-show of nonsense: thou faithful recorder of barbarous idiom: thou
of Robert Burns.

Persecutor of syllabication: thou baleful meteor, foretelling and facilitating the rapid approach of Nox and Erebus.

R. B.

CXXVIII.

To Mr. Cunningham.

[To Clarke, the Schoolmaster, Burns, it is said, addressed several letters, which on his death were put into the fire by his widow, because of their license of language.]

11th June, 1791.

Let me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman who waits on you with this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal schoolmaster there, and is at present suffering severely under the persecution of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to boys that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of sensibility and genius, and such is my friend Clarke, when a booby father presents him with his booby son, and insists on lighting up the rays of science, in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and inaccessible by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel: a fellow whom in fact it savours of impiety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a blockhead in the book of fate, at the almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat-school are, the ministers, magistrates, and town-council of Edinburgh, and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do everything in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius and worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistracy and council, but particularly you have much to say with a reverend gentleman to whom you have the honour of being very nearly related, and whom this country and age have had the honour to produce. I need not name the historian of Charles V. I tell him through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronage. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance.

God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often, alas! almost unexceptionably, received by their friends with disrespect and reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. O! to be a sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence, amid the solitary wilds of his deserts; rather than in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature! Every man has his virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curs e: n that privileged plain-dealing of friendship, which, in the hour of my calamity, cannot reach forth the helping hand without at the same time pointing out those failings, and apportioning them their share in procuring my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls ye, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by my virtues if you please, but do, also, spare my follies: the first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude, must be incident to human nature, do thou, Fortune, put it in my power, always from myself, and of myself, to bear the consequence of those errors! I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend, Mr. Clarke, to your acquaintance and good offices; his worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other. I long much to hear from you.

Adieu!

R. B.

CXXIX.

To the Earl of Buchan.

[Lord Buchan printed this letter in his Essay on the Life of Thomson, in 1799. His lordship invited Burns to leave his corn unopened, walk from Ellisland to Dryburgh, and help him to crown Thomson's bust with bay, on Ednam Hill, on the 2nd of September.]

Ellisland, August 29th, 1791

My Lord,

Language sinks under the ardour of my feelings when I would thank your lordship for the honour you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson. In my first enthusiasm in reading the card you did me the honour to write me, I overlooked
every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two's absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on. I once already made a pilgrimage up the whole course of the Tweed, and fondly would I take the same delightful journey down the windings of that delightful stream.

Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired. I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. B.

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TO MR. THOMAS SLOAN.

[Thomas Sloan was a west of Scotland man, and seems, though not much in correspondence, to have been on intimate terms with Burns.]

Ellisland, Sept. 1, 1791.

My dear Sloan,

Sorrow is worse than disappointment, for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learned that Mr. Ballantyne does not choose to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information—your address.

However, you know equally well, my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life "in the world's hale and undegenerate days," that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the embarrass of your present situation. You know my favourite quotation from Young—

"On reason build resolve! The column of true majesty in man!"

and that other favourite one from Thomson’s Alfred—

"What proves the hero truly valiant, Is never, never to despair.""

Or shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

"—Whether doing, suffering, to prosperous, You may do miracles by—RESHAPING.""

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se’ennight, and sold it very well. A guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the row was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting, indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decanting, until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them, that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayrshire these many weeks.

Farewell; and God bless you, my dear friend! B. B.

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TO LADY E. CUNNINGHAM.

[The poem enclosed was the Lament for James, Earl of Glencarn: it is probable that the Earl’s sister liked the verses, for they were printed soon afterwards.]

My Lady,

I would, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you anything I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the enclosed had been much more worthy your perusal: as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship’s feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencarn, I would wish to show as openly that my heart glows, and will ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship’s goodness. The
sables I did myself the honour to wear to his
lordship's memory, were not the 'mockery of
woe.' Nor shall my gratitude perish with me!
—if among my children I shall have a son that
has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child
as a family honour, and a family debt, that
my dearest existence I owe to the noble house
of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think
the poem may venture to see the light, I would,
in some way or other, give it to the world.

R. B.

TO MR. AINSLIE.

[It has been said that the poet loved to aggravate his fol-
dees to his friends: but that this tone of aggravation was
often ironical, this letter, as well as others, might be
cited.]

Ellisland, 1791.

MY DEAR AINSLIE,

Can you minister to a mind diseased? can
you, amid the horrors of penitence, remorse,
head-ache, nausea, and all the rest of the d——
hounds of hell, that beset a poor wretch, who
has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can
you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Misèreable perdus that I am, I have tried every-
thing that used to amuse me, but in vain: here
must I sit, a monument of the vengeance laid
up in store for the wicked, slowly counting every
chick of the clock as it slowly, slowly, numbers
over these lazy scoundrels of hours, who, d—if
them, are ranked up before me, every one at
his neighbour's backside, and every one with
a burden of anguish on his back, to pour on my
devoted head—and there is none to pity me.
My wife scolds me! my business torments me,and
my sins come staring me in the face, every
one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow.—

When I tell you even ** has lost its power
to please, you will guess something of my hell
within, and all around me—I began Ellisait's
and Ellisait's, but the stanzas fell unenjoyed, and
unfinished from my listless tongue: at last I
luckily thought of reading over an old letter of
yours, that lay by me in my book-case, and I
felt something for the first time since I opened
my eyes, of pleasurable existence.—Well—
I begin to breathe a little, since I began to write
to you. How are you, and what are you doing?
How goes Law? Apropos, for connexion's sake,
do not address to me supervisor, for that is an

honour I cannot pretend to—I am on the list,
as we call it, for a supervisor, and will be called
out by and bye to act as one; but at pre-
sent, I am a simple gauger, tho' another day I
got an appointment to an excise division of 25l.
per annum better than the rest. My present
income, down money, is 70l. per annum.

I have one or two good fellows here whom
you would be glad to know.

R. B.

TO COL. FULLARTON.

OF FULLARTON.

[This letter was first published in the Edinburgu
Chronicle.]

Ellisland, 1791.

Sir,

I have just this minute got the frank, and
next minute must send it to post, else I purposed
to have sent you two or three other bagatelles,
that might have amused a vacant hour about
as well as "Six excellent new songs," or, the
Aberdeen 'Prognostication for the year to come.'

I shall probably trouble you soon with another
packet. About the gloomy month of November,
then 'the people of England hang and drown
themselves,' anything generally is better than
one's own thought.

Fond as I may be of my own productions, it
is not for their sake that I am so anxious to
send you them. I am ambitious, covetously
ambitious of being known to a gentleman whom
I am proud to call my countryman; a gentle-
man who was a foreign ambassador as soon as
he was a man, and a leader of armies as soon
as he was a soldier, and that with an eclat
unknown to the usual minions of a court, men
who, with all the adventitious advantages of
princely connexions and princely fortune, must
yet, like the caterpillar, labour a whole lifetime
before they reach the wished height, there to
roost a stupid chrysalis, and dose out the re-
mainder of glimmering existence of old age.

If the gentleman who accompanied you when
you did me the honour of calling on me, is with
you, I beg to be respectfully remembered to
him.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your highly obliged, and most devoted,
Humble servant,

R. B.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

COXXIV.

TO MISS DAVIES.

A still accomplished lady was the youngest daughter of Dr. Davies, of Tenby, in Pembrokeshire; she was related to the Riddels of Prior's Carse, and one of her sisters married Captain Adam Gordon, of the noble family of Kenmare. She had both taste and skill in verse.

It is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful mind, can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners; I mean a torpidity of the moral powers, that may be called, a lethargy of conscience. In vain Remorse rears her hortent crest, and rouses all her snakes; beneath the deadly fixed eye and leaden hand of Indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigours of winter, in the chink of a ruined wall. Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed I had one apology—the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss Davies's fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes, that to make her the subject of a silly ballad is downright mockery of these ardent feelings; 'tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers? Why is the most generous wish to make others blest, impotent and ineffectual—as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert! In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said—"Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tumble under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others, which, I am certain, will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow."

Why, dear Madam, must I wake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of add-
ing one comfort to the friend I love!—Out upon the world, say I, that its affairs are administered so ill! They talk of reform;—good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons and even the daughters of man!—Down, immediately, should go fools from the high places, where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they shirk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow.

As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them: had I a world, there should not be a knave in it.

But the hand that could give, I would liberally fill: and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive, and generously love.

Still the inequalities of life are, among men, comparatively tolerable—but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely Woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedence among them—but let them be ALL SACRED. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable; it is an original component feature of my mind.

B. B.

COXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Burns, says Cromek, acknowledged that a refined and accomplished woman was a being all but new to him till he went to Edinburgh, and received letters from Mrs. Dunlop.]  

Ellisland, 17th December, 1791

Many thanks to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little floweret and the mother-plant. I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest sincerity of their fullest extent; and then Mrs. Henri will find her little darling the representative of his late parent, in everything but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song, which to a lady the descendant of Wallace—and many heroes of his true illustrious line—and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology.
"Scene—a field of battle—time of the day, evening; the wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following:

SONG OF DEATH.

Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies!
Now gay with the bright setting sun;
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties—
Our race of existence is run!

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was, looking over with a musical friend M'Donald’s collection of Highland airs, I was struck with one, an Isle of Skye tune, entitled “Oran and Aog, or, The Song of Death,” to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which, ere you fullorbbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at old mother earth all night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. A Dieu je vous commande.

R. B.

OXXXVI.
TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[That the poet spoke mildly concerning the rebuke which he received from the Exciseman on what he calls his political disloyalties, his letter to Erskine of Mar sufficiently proves.]

5th January, 1792.

You see my hurried life, Madam; I can only command starts of time; however, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham, for the board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you, that all is set to rights in that quarter. Now as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to—but, hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall a swearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless babblings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness—in all the charities and all the virtues, between one class of human beings and another! For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of Dunlop, their generous hearts—their uncontaminated dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whimseelrie cup, and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm, that they insisted on bumbering the punch round in it; and by and by, never did your great ancestor lay a Sabbath more completely to rest, than for a time did your cup my two friends. Apropos, this is the season of wishing. My God bless you, my dear friend, and bless me, the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours wherever they are scattered over the earth!

R. B.

OXXXVII.
TO MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE,
PRINTER.

[When Burns sends his warmest wishes to Smellie, and prays that fortune may never place his subsistence at the mercy of a knave, or set his character on the judgment of a fool, he had his political enemies probably in his mind.]

Dumfries, 22d January, 1792.

I sitt down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies, than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of fashion,
as an idiot painter that seems industrious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the foreground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades. Mrs. Riddel, who will take this letter to town with her, and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady, too, is a votary to the muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct, and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the lady-poetesses of the day. She is a great admirer of your book; and, hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital. I told her that her best way was, to desire her near relation, and your intimate friend, Craigdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl, of eighteen, as girls of eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady’s merits, she has one unlucky failing: a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it; and a failing that you will easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself;—where she dislikes, or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it, than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning compliments of the season, but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers, that Fortune may never throw your subsistence to the mercy of a Knave, or set your character on the judgment of a Fool; but that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say, here lies a man who did honour to science, and men of worth shall say, here lies a man who did honour to human nature.

R. B.

COXXVIII.

TO MR. W. NICOL.

[This ironical letter was an answer to one from Nicol, containing counsel and reproof.]

20th February, 1792.

O thou, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full-moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! How infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rat-tat-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy super-eminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude, thou lockest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of unities, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs and master of maxims, that antipode of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicol! Amen! Amen! Yes, so be it!

For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing! From the cave of my ignorance, among the fogs of my dulness, and pestilent fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee, as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon, to the cloudless glory of a summer sun! Sorely sighing in bitterness of soul, I say, when shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Leggan’s many hills? As for him, his works are perfect: never did the pen of calumnius blur the fair page of his reputation, nor the bolt of hatred fly at his dwelling.

Thou mirror of purity, when shall the effacing lamp of my glimmerous understanding, purged from sensual appetites and gross desires, shine like the constellation of thy intellectual powers!—As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy. Never did the unshallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of thy sky-descended and heaven-bound desires: never did the vapours of impurity stain the unclouded serene of thy cerulean imagination. O that like thine were the tenor of my life, like thine the tenor of my conversation! then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness! Then should I lie down and rise up, and none to make me afraid.—May thy pity and thy prayer be exercised for, O thou lamp of wisdom and mirror of morality! thy devoted slave.

R. B.
OXXIX.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ., F.S.A.

'Captain Grose was introduced to Burns, by his brother Antiquary, of Friar's Carse: he was collecting materials for his work on the Antiquities of Scotland."

Dumfries, 1792.

Sir,

I believe among all our Scots Literati you have not met with Professor Dugald Stewart, who fills the moral philosophy chair in the University of Edinburgh. To say that he is a man of the first parts, and what is more, a man of the first worth, to a gentleman of your general acquaintance, and who so much enjoys the luxury of unnumbered freedom and undisturbed privacy, is not perhaps recommendation enough:—but when I inform you that Mr. Stewart's principal characteristic is your favourite feature; that sterling independence of mind, which, though every man's right, so few men have the courage to claim, and fewer still, the magnanimity to support:—when I tell you that, unsobered by splendour, and undisgusted by wretchedness, he appreciates the merits of the various actors in the great drama of life, merely as they perform their parts—in short, he is a man after your own heart, and I comply with his earnest request in letting you know that he wishes above all things to meet with you. His house, Catrie, is within less than a mile of Sorn Castle, which you proposed visiting; or if you could transmit him the enclosed, he would with the greatest pleasure meet you anywhere in the neighbourhood. I write to Ayrshire to inform Mr. Stewart that I have acquainted myself of your promises. Should your time and spirits permit your meeting with Mr. Stewart, 'tis well; if not, I hope you will forgive this liberty, and I have at least an opportunity of assuring you with what truth and respect,

I am, Sir,
Your great admirer,
And very humble servant,

R. B.

OXX.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, ESQ., F.S.A.

[This letter, interesting to all who desire to see how a poet works beauty and regularity out of a vulgar tradition, was first printed by Sir Egerton Brydges, in the "Censura Literaria."]

Dumfries, 1792.

Among the many witch stories I have heard, relating to Alloway kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail; in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough- irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious look-out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above, on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay, into, the very kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junta were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c., for the business of the night.—It was in for a penny in for a pound, with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:

On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified with a blaze stream-
lag from the kirk, yet it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bag-pipe. The farmer stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say; but that the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening un luckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled, that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, “Weel lappen, Maggie wi’ the short sark!” and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful bags, were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream, but the horse’s tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature’s life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene; but as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer’s evening, about the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy, belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the plant Ragwort. He observed that as each person pulled a Ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, “Up horse!” on which the Ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his Ragwort, and cried with the rest, “Up horsis!” and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt, was a merchant’s wine-cellar in Bordeaux, where, without saying by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, foes to the umps and works of darkness, threaten ed to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousalis.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said such-a-one’s herd in Alloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.

I am, &c.,

B. B.

CXXXI.

TO MR. S. CLARKE,

EDINBURGH.

[This introduction of Clarke, the musician, to the M’Murdo’s of Drumlanrig, brought to two of the ladies the choicest honours of the muse.]

July 1, 1792.

Mr. Burns begs leave to present his most respectful compliments to Mr. Clarke.—Mr. B. some time ago did himself the honour of writing to Mr. C. respecting coming out to the country, to give a little musical instruction in a highly respectable family, where Mr. C. may have his own terms, and may be as happy as indolence, the devil, and the ghost will permit him. Mr. B. knows well how Mr. C. is engaged with another family; but cannot Mr. C. find two or three weeks to spare to each of them? Mr. B. is deeply impressed with, and awfully conscious of, the high importance of Mr. C’s time, whether in the winged moments of symphonious exhibition, at the keys of harmony, while listening seraphs cease their own less de-
OF ROBERT BURNS.

light from the sun, or the drowsy arms of slumberous repose, in the arms of his dearly beloved elbowchair, where the frowzy, but potent power of indolence, circumflues her vapours round, and sheds her dews on the head of her darling son. But half a line conveying half a meaning from Mr. C. would make Mr. B. the happiest of mortals.

OCXXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[To enthusiastic fits of admiration for the young and the beautiful, such as Burns has expressed in this letter, be loved to give way:—we owe some of his best songs to these salutes.]

Annan Water Foot, 22d August, 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam,—my own conscience, hackneyed and weather-beaten as it is in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c., has continued to punish me sufficiently.

Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours; to esteem for much worth, and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of, now old acquaintance, and I hope and am sure of progressive, increasing friendship—as for a single day, not to think of you—to ask the Fates what they are doing and about to do with my much-loved friend and her wide-scattered connexions, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can?

Apropos! (though how it is apropos, I have not leisure to explain,) do you not know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I—I am in love, souse! over head and ears, deep as the most unfathomable abyss of the boundless ocean; but the word Love, owing to the intermingledema of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know, then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of heaven, appearing in all the unpolluted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour, at M——. Mr. B. with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G. passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. "Twas about nine, I think, when I left them, and riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with—

"My bonnie Lizzie Baillie
I'll row thee in my plaidie, &c."

So I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unnointed, unanneal'd," as Hamlet says.—

O saw ye bonny Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet it has ever had this curse, that two or three people, who would be the happier the oftener they met together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet but once or twice a-year, which, considering the few years of a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man. I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that, "we meet to part no more!"

Tell us, ye dead,
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret,
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be?

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men, but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question.

"O that some courteous ghost would blab it out!" but it cannot be; you and I, my friend,
must make the experiment by ourselves and for ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary, by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I should take every care that your little godson, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labour of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.

R. B.

CXXXIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[There is both bitterness and humour in this letter: the poet discourses on many matters, and woman is among them—but he places the bottle at his elbow as an antidote against the discourtesy of scandal.]

Dumfries, 10th September, 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology.—Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise; making ballads, and then drinking, and singing them! and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications; still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow-creatures. I might have done as I do at present, snatch an hour near “witching time of night,” and scrawl a page or two. I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian archers for the honour they have done me (though, to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme, else I had done both long ere now). Well, then, here’s to your good health! for you must know, I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me, just by way of spell, to keep away the meikle horned deil, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

But what shall I write to you?—“The voice said cry,” and I said, “what shall I cry?”—O, thou spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible! be thou a bogle by the eerie side of an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd-callan man bicker in his gloamin route fae the fauldie!—Be thou a brownie, set, at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn, where the repercussions of thy iron flail half airdight thyself as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cook-crowning summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose—Be thou a kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry, in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yail with the howling of the storm and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat!—or, lastly, be thou a ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of the time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent ghastly dwellings of the dead around thee! or taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain, or the murderer, pouringtray on his dreaming fancy, pictures, dreadful as the horrors of unvelled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come, thou spirit, but not in these horrid forms; come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations, which thou breathest round the wig of a praying advocate, or the tête of a teasipping gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of olib-madrasver for ever and ever—come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half a hundred words; to fill up four quarto pages, while he has not got one single sentence of recollection, information, or remark worth putting pen to paper for.

I feel, I feel the presence of supernatural assistance circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labours, like the blasted Sybil on her three-footed stool, and like her, too, labours with Nonsense.—Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend, and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law; the sadalversen paths of physic; and particularly in the sightless soarings of school divinity, who, leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pinion, Reason, delirious with eying his giddy flight; and Truth creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision—raves abroad on all the winds.

“On earth Discord! a gloomy Heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteenth thousandth part of the tithe of mankind; and below, an inescapable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!!”—O doctrine! comfortable and
healing to the weary, wounded soul of man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction, ye pauvres misères, to whom day brings no pleasure, and night yields no rest, be comforted! "Tis but one to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world;" so, alas, the experience of the poor and the needy too often affirms; and 'tis nineteen hundred thousand to one, by the dogmas of **** that you will be damned eternally in the world to come!

But of all nonsense, religious nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the by, will you or can you tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalise the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful: but still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril-snuffing putrescence, and a foot-sputtering filth, in short, with a conceited dignity that your titled **** or any other of your Scottish lordlings of seven centuries standing, display when they accidentally mix among the many-aproned sons of mechanical life. I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave.—How ignorant are plough-boys!—Nay, I have since discovered that a godly woman may be a ****;—But hold—Here's t'ye again,—this rum is generous Antigus, so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like, I mean really like, the married life? Ah, my friend! matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be! But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of his institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you my ideas of the conjugal state, (en paixant; you know I am no Latinist, is not conjugal derived from jugum, a yoke?) 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 (I would add a fine waist too, but that is so soon spoilt you know), all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on, a wife, such as fortune, connexions, education (I mean education extraordinary) family, blood, &c., 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, in the aforesaid scale, entitled to the dignity of an integer.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss Lesley Baillie, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her and her father's family fifteen miles on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God, in such an unequalled display of them—how, in galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which these two stanzas make a part—

Thou, bonny Lesley, art a queen,
Thy subjects we before thee;
Thou, bonny Lesley, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The very deil he could na scathe
Whatever wad belong thee!
He'd look into thy bonnie face
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

—behold all these things are written in the chronicles of my imaginations, and shall be read by thee, my dear friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear friend, at a more convenient season.

Now, to thee, and to thy before-designed bosom-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignest influences of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life, for ever and ever! Amen!

_____

TO MR. THOMSON.

[George Thomson, of Edinburgh, principal clerk to the trustees for the encouraging the manufactures of Scotland, projected a work, entitled, "A select Collection of Original Scotti airs, for the Voices, to which are added introductory and concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte and Violin, by Playel and Kosselach, with select and characteristic Verses, by the most admired Scottish Poets." To Burns he applied for help in the verse: he could not find a true poet, nor one to whom such a work was more congenial.]
Dumfries, 18th Sept. 1792.

Sir,

I have just this moment got your letter. 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 exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. Only, don't hurry me—"Dell tak the hindmost" is by no means the cri de guerre of my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me? You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers to approve or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication. Apropos, 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. English verses, particularly the works of Scotmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. "Tweedside!" "Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate!" "Ah! Chloris, could I now but sit," &c., you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as "To Fanny fair could I impart," &c., usually set to "The Mill, Mill, O!" is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the further prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say amendments, for I will not alter except where I myself, at least, think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they should absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright prostitution of soul! a proof of each of the songs that I com-

pose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the work!"

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

R. B.

COXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[One of the daughters of Mrs. Dunlop was married to M. Henri, a French gentleman, who died in 1790, at London Castle, in Ayrshire. The widow went with her orphan son to France, and lived for awhile amid the dangers of the revolution.]

Dumfries, 24th September, 1792.

I have this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the twenty-third. All your other kind repetitions, your news, &c., are out of my head when I read and think on Mrs. H——'s situation. Good God! a heart-wounded helpless young woman—in a strange, foreign land, and that land convulsed with every horror that can harrow the human feelings—sick-looking, long-winding for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too—but it is too much: he who wounded (he only can) may He heal!

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family.

* * * * *

I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a cursed life! As to a Laird farming his own property: sowing his own corn in hope; and reaping it, in spite of bittter weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, 'what dost thou?'—fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and getting sons and daughters, until he be the venerable, gray-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat.

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me when I make my Ayrshire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. B—— until her nine months race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She, too, seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as to let me have them in the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased. I hope, if I am spared with them, to show a
set of boys that will do honour 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. Apropos, your little godson is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed the mildest, gentliest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we get into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart: you can excuse it. God bless you and yours! R. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[This letter has no date: it is supposed to have been written on the death of her daughter, Mrs. Henri, whose orphan son, deprived of the protection of all his relations, was preserved by the affectionate kindness of Mademoiselle Gazelette, one of the family domestics, and after the Revolution obtained the estate of his blood and name.]

I had been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day. What shall I say to comfort you, my much-valued, much-afflicted friend? I can but grieve with you; consolation I have none to offer, except that which religion holds out to the children of affliction—children of affliction!—how just the expression! and like every other family they have matters among them which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, takes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years? What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery: like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one, from the face of night, and leaves us, without a ray of comfort, in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again. R. B.

1 Song CILXXVII
2 It is something worse in the Edinburgh edition.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson had delivered judgment on some old Scottish songs, but the poet murmured against George's decree.]

MY DEAR SIR,

Let me tell you, that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have, all but one, the faults you remark in them: but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say, "Go to! I will make a better!"? For instance, on reading over "The Lea-rig," I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough.

When o'er the hill the eastern star, &c.¹

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr. Percy's ballad to the air, "Nannie, O!" is just. It is, besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that in the sentiment and style of our Scotch airs, there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, say peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve or reject, as you please) that my ballad of "Nannie, O!" might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head, that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship, and have nothing to be pleased or offended at, in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my "Nannie, O!" the name of the river is horribly prosaic.² I will alter it:

Behind you hills where Lugar flows.

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

"Behind you hills where Stinchar flows."—Poems, p. 392.
I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Gude be wi' ye, &c.

Friday Night.

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you "Nannie, O!" at length.

Your remarks on "Ewe-bughts, Marion," are just; still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and what with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of "Ewe-bughts:" but it will fill up this page. You must know that all my earlier love-songs were the 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.

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary? &c.

"Gala Water" and "Auld Rob Morris" I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on my verses, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is not to stand aloof, the uncomplying bigot of opinidrett, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The story of Mary Campbell’s love is related on the notes on the songs which the poet wrote in her honour. Thomson says, in his answer, "I have heard the sad story of your Mary; you always seem inspired when you write of her."]

14th November, 1792.

My dear Sir,

I agree with you that the song, "Katherine Ogie," is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it; but the awkward sound, Ogie, recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The foregoing song 4 pleases myself; I think it

1 Song CLXXXIX.
2 Song CLXXX
3 Song CLXXXI.

4 Ye ranks and busses and streams around
Tae castle o’ Montgomery.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The poet approved of several emendations proposed by Thomson, whose wish was to make the words flow more readily with the music; he refused, however, to adopt others, where he thought too much of the sense was sacrificed.]

Dumfries, 1st December, 1792.

Your alterations of my "Nannie, O!" are perfectly right. So are those of "My wife's a winsome wee thing." Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear Sir, with the freedom which characterizes our correspondence, I must not, cannot alter "Bonnie Lesley." You are right; the word "Alexander" makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of Scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

For nature made her what she is,
And never made another. (Such a person as she is.)

This is, in my opinion, more poetical than "'Ne'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: make it either way. "Caledonia," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay; but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

B. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Burns often discoursed with Mrs. Dunlop on poetry and poets: the dramas of Thomson, to which he alludes, are stiff, cold compositions.]

Dumfries, 8th December, 1792.

I shall be in Ayrshire, I think, next week; and, if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much-esteem'd friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop-house.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on accessions of happiness! I have not passed half the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper, that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I, and other acquaintances, little thought to meet with there so soon. Every other instance of the mortality of our kind, makes us cast an anxious look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehension for our own fate. But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals? Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life, more than another? A few years ago, I could have laid down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield." By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition; Mrs. B—— having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charm—

1 Songs CLXXXIII and CLXXXIV
ing passage in Thomson’s "Edward and Eleonora:"

"The valiant is himself; what can he suffer?"
"Or what need he regard his single woes?" &c.

As I am got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly, alas! too peculiarly opposite, my dear Madam, to your present frame of mind:

"Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With his fair-weather virtue, that exults
Glad over the summer main! the tempest comes,
The rough white rage aloud; when from the helm,
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting—Heavens! if privileged from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson’s dramas. I pick up favourite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence. Of these is one, a very favourite one, from his “Alfred:"

"Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, set loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another; but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is religion—speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says,

"Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright."

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e’en scribble out t’other sheet. We, in this country here, have many alarms of the reforming, or rather the republican spirit, of your part of the kingdom. Indeed we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a placeman, you know; a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter.

I have taken up the subject, and the other day, for a pretty actress’s benefit night, I wrote an address, which I will give on the other page, called "The rights of woman:"

"While Europe’s eye is fixed on mighty things."

I shall have the honour of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop.

B. B.

CXLI.

TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ.

FIRTHAY.

[Since stood by the bard in the hour of peril recorded in this letter: and the Board of Excise had the generosity to permit him to eat its 'bitter bread' for the remainder of his life.]

December, 1792.

SIR,

I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your Board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government.

Sire, you are a husband—and a father. You know what you would feel, to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas, Sir! must I think that such, soon, will be my lot! and from the d—ned, dark insinuations of bellish, groundless envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omnicience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head; and I say, that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British constitution on Revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached; you, Sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not for my single self, call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for at the worst, "Death's thousand doors stand open:" but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage, and wither two
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil, has raised a little demon on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my supervisors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in everything else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my soul. War I deplore: misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon.

R. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Horns was ordered, he says, to mind his duties in the Excise, and to hold his tongue about politics—the latter part of the injunction was hard to obey, for at that time politics were in every mouth.

Dumfries, 31st December, 1792.

DEAR MADAM,

A hurry of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgments to the good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed. Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! on my road so Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

Jan. 2, 1793.

I HAVE just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint. You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned: it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard-drinking gentlemen of this country, that do me the mischief—but even this I have more than half given over.

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor, for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine.

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The songs to which the poet alludes were "Poorie Cabbie," and "Gallie Water."]

Jan. 1793.

MANY returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication?—will these two foregoing [Songs clxxxv. and clxxxvi.] be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune, besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued Cunningham, greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.

Yours, &c.,

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson explained more fully than at first the plan of his publication, and stated that Dr. Beattie had proposed an essay on Scottish music, by way of an introduction to the work.]

26th January, 1793.

I APPROVE greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans Dr. Beattie's essay will, of itself, be a treasure. On my part I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c., of our Scots songs. All the late Mr
Tyler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him, from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast, that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, "Lochaber" and the "Brass of Ballenden" excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the meantime, do not you think that some of them, particularly "The sow's tail to Geordie," as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a revisted, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and, I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Findar is an acquisition to your work. His "Gregory" is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter—what would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.

[Here follows "Lord Gregory." Song CLXXXVII.]

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS. soon.

Yours,

B. B.

COXLVII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[The seal, with the coat-of-arms which the poet invented, is still in the family, and regarded as a relique.]

3d March, 1798.

Since I wrote to you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you further. When I say that I had not time, that as usual means, that the three demons, indolence, business, and ennui, have so completely shared my hours among them, as not to leave me a five minutes' fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I dare say he thinks I have used him unkindly, and I must own with too much appearance of truth. Apropos, do you know the much admired old Highland air called "The Sutor's Dochter?" It is a first-rate favourite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it to you as it was sung with great applause in some fashionable circles by Major Roberston, of Lude, who was here with his corps.

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend which vexes me much.

I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearing on it; will you be so obliging as inquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented arms for myself, so you know I shall be chief of the name; and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald, and shall give you, secondum actum, 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 colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes; round the top of the crest, Wood-notes wild: at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, Better a wee bush than nae bield. By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia, but a stock and horn, and a club, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the Gentle Shepherd. By the bye, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius—Why is he not more known?—Has he no patrons? or do "Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was, I mean
OF ROBERT BURNS.

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dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it; but I was told that it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the only artist who has hit genuine pastoral costume. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and harden the heart so? I think, that were I as rich as the sun, I should be as generous as the day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-like quality to the possessor, at which the man, in his native poverty, would have revolted. What has led me to this, is the idea of such merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob or government contractor possesses, and why they do not form a mutual league. Let wealth shelter and cherish unprotected merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay it.

R. B.

OCXLVIII.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[In these careless words makes us acquainted with one of his sweetest songs.]

20th March, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,
The song prefixed ["Mary Morison"] is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stunted powers) to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c., of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you, by and bye. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot, bear rivalry from you, nor anybody else.

R. B.

OCXLIX.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[For the "Wandering Willie" of this communication Thomson offered several corrections.]

March, 1798.

Hark awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my sae only dearie, [same].
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the

Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was na the blast brought the tear in my e'e;
Now welcome the simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.
Ye hurricanes, rest in the cave o' your slumbers!
Oh how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken, ye breezes! blow gently, ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ane mair to my arms.

But if he's forgotten his faithfu'est 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!

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to determine whether the above, or the old "Thro' the lang muir I have followed my Willie," be the best.

R. B.

OCL.
TO MISS BENSON.

[Miss Benson, when this letter was written, was on a visit to Arbigland, the beautiful seat of Captain Craik; she is now Mrs. Basil Montagu.]

Dumfries, 21st March, 1798.

MADAM,

Among many things for which I envy those hale, long-lived old fellows before the flood, is this in particular, that when they met with anybody after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life.

Now in this short, stormy, winter day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the Chapter of Accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you, that you shall never meet with that valued character more. On the other hand, brief as this miserable being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill-run of the chances shall be so against you, that in the over-takings, turnings, and jostlings of life, pop, at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and
will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's respite. 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 devil. It is well-known that he has some kind of short-hand way of taking down our thoughts, and I make no doubt he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss Benson: how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth, and how fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss Hamilton tells me that she is sending a packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed sonnet, though, to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.

CCLI.

TO PATRICK MILLER, ESQ.,
OF DALSWINTON.

[The time to which Burns alludes was the period of his occupation of Ellishand.]

[Dumfries, April, 1798.]

SIR,

Mr poems having just come out in another edition, will you do me the honour to accept of a copy? A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you, as a man, whose benevolence of heart does honour to human nature.

There was a time, Sir, when I was your dependent: this language them would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it. Now that connexion is at an end, do me the honour to accept of this honest tribute of respect from, Sir,

Your much indebted humble servant,

R. B.

1 Burns here calls himself the "Voice of Colms," in imitation of Ossian, who denominates himself the "Voice of Gods."—Croker.

CCLII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[This review of our Scottish lyrics is well worth the attention of all who write songs, read songs, or sing songs.]

THANK YOU, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c., ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en cast 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 "Colms" shall be, "Good night, and joy be wi' you a'!" So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks, as they have occurred at random, on looking over your list.

The first lines of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but, in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay!—the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to make or mend.

"For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove," is a charming song; but "Logan burn and Logan braes" is sweetly susceptible of rural imagery; I'll try that likewise, and, if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of "Logan Water" (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty:

"'Now my dear lad man face his fate,
Far, far from me and Logan braes.'"

"'My Katy's a lover gay,' is unequal. "'His mind is never muddy,' is a muddy expression indeed.
"Then I'll resign and marry Patsy,
And save my coxcombry!"

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay or your book. My song, "Rigs of barley," to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it, and thresh a few loose sentiments.

6 By Thomson, not the musician, but the poet.

7 This song is not old; its author, the late John Mayne, long outlived Burns.
OF ROBERT BURNS. 457

out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. "The last o' Patie's mill" is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend Mr. Erskine will take into his critical consideration. In Sir John Sinclair's statistical volumes, are two claints—one, I think from Aberdeen, and the other from Ayrshire—for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it of the late John, Earl of Loudon, I can, on such authorities, believe: Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon-castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding or walking, out together, his lordship and Allan passed a sweet romantic spot on Irvine water, still called "Patie's mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bare-headed on the green." My lord observed to Allan, that it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and, lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

"One day I heard Mary say," is a fine song; but, for consistency's sake, alter the name "Adonis." Were there ever such bans published, as a purpose of marriage between Adonis and Mary! I agree with you that my song, "There's nought but care on every hand," is much superior to "Poorthit cauld." The original song, "The mill, mill, O!" though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow as an English set. "The Banks of the Dee" is, you know, literally "Langolee," to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it: for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sang from the tree."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen or heard on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza, equal to "The small birds rejoice," &c., I do myself honestly avow, that I think it a superior song.4 "John Anderson, my jo"—the song to this tune in Johnson's Museum, is my composition, and I think it not my worst; if it suit you, take it, and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are "Tullochgorum," "Lumps o' puddin," "Tibbie Fowler," and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called "Craigieburn wood," and, in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of the sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it; and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. "Shepherds, I have lost my love!" is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it! I have made one to it a good while ago, which I think * * *, but in its original state it is not quite a lady's song. I enclose an altered, not amended copy for you,6 if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his "Lone vale"! is divine.

Yours, &c. • R. B.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

OCLIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The letter to which this is in part an answer, Currie says, contains many observations on Scottish songs, and on the manner of adapting the words to the music, which at Mr. Thomson's desire are suppressed.]

April, 1798.

I have yours, my dear sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes upper most.

1 By Crawford.
2 By Ramsay.
3 The author, John Tait, a writer to the Signet and some time Judge of the police-court in Edinburgh, presented to this, and altered the line to,
4 Song CXXXI. 5 Song LXXX. 6 Song CLXXVII.
7 "How sweet this lone vale, and how soothing to the ear."
8 You nightingale's voice which in melody resounds.

The song has found its way into several recitals.
The business of many of our tunes wanting, at the beginning, what fiddlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

"There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes, That wander through the blooming heather," you may alter to

"Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes, Ye wander," &c.

My song, "Here awa, there awa," as amended
by Mr. Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is, in my opinion, reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad—I mean simplicity: now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Raemsey, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces; still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. Walker proposes doing with "The last time I came o'er the moor." Let a poet, if he choose, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house—by Heaven, 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song, as the Highlander mended his gun—he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in "The last o' Patie's mill" must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we can take the same liberty with "Corn rigs are bonnie." Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. "Cauld kail in Aberdeen," you must leave with me yet while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, "Poorlith cauld and restless love." At any rate, my other song, "Green grow the rashes," will never suit. That song is current in Scott land under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name, which, of course, would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit "Bonnie Dundee." I send you also a ballad to the "Mill, mill, O!"

"The last time I came o'er the moor," I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Raemsey's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scots airs by me, which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned legs would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air called "Jackie Hume's Lament?" I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll enclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum. I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from wise soses.

Adieu.

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson, it would appear by his answer to this letter, was at issue with Burns on the subject-matter of simplicity: the former seems to have desired a sort of diplomatic and varnished style; the latter felt that elegance and simplicity were "sisters twin." ]

April, 1793.

My dear Sir,

I had scarcely put my last letter into the post-office, when I took up the subject of "The last time I came o'er the moor," and ere I slept drew the outlines of the foregoing. How I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered, when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have

1 Songs CXCI. and CXCII.
2 Song CXCIV.
3 Song CXCVIII.
4 Song CXXIV.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert anything of mine. 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 more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

B. B.

OLIV.

TO JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, ESQ.,
OF MARY.

(This remarkable letter has been of late the subject of some controversy: Mr. Findlater, who happened then to be in the Excise, is vehement in defence of the "honourable board," and is certain that Burns has misrepresented the conduct of his very generous masters. In answer to this it has been urged that the word of the poet has in no other thing been questioned: that in the last moments of his life, he solemnly wrote this letter into his memorandum-book, and that the reproach of Mr. Corbet, is given by him either as a quotation from a paper or an exact recollection of the words used: the expressions, "not to think" and "silent and obedient" are underlined.)

Dumfries, 18th April, 1798.

Sir,

Degenerate as human nature is said to be, and in many instances, worthless and unprincipled it is, still there are bright examples to the contrary; examples that even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronise and befriended a distant, obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardiness of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismissal from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintray, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous

intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismissal; but the little money I gained by my publication, is almost every guineas embarked, to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea!—That a constitution, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory:—that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of Reform. But, that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious constitution; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these, I stated in a letter to my generous patron, Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors—general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, not to think; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be silent and obedient."

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward, are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my countrymen has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the Poet I have served manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the man. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and, situated as I was, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my
dearest concern; and a thousand times have I
trembled at the idea of those degrading epithets
that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my
name. I have often, in blasting anticipation,
listened to some future hackney scribbler, with
the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting
in his hirpling paragraphs—"Burns, notwith-
standing the funfaronade of independence to be
found in his works, and after having been held
forth to public view and to public estimation as
a man of some genius, yet quite desirute of re-
sources within himself to support his borrowed
dignity, he dwindled into a palpity exciseman,
and slunk out the rest of his insignificant ex-
istence in the meanest of pursuits, and among
the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to
hodge my disavowal and defiance of these slan-
derous falsehoods. Burns was a poor man from
birth, and an exciseman by necessity: but I
cannot say it! the sterling of his honest worth, no
poverty could deface, and his independent
British mind, oppression might bend, but could
not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious
stake in my country's welfare than the richest
dukedom in it?—I have a large family of chil-
dren, and the prospect of many more. I have
three sons, who, I see already, have brought
into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the
bodies of slaves.—Can I look tamely on, and
see any manchination to wrest from them the
birthright of my boys,—the little independent
Barrons, in whose veins runs my own blood?
No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream
around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my full efforts
can be of no service; and that it does not be-
long to my humble station to meddle with the
concern of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals
as I, that a nation has to rest, both for the
hand of support, and the eye of intelligence.
The uninformed won may swell a nation's bulk;
and the titled, tinsel, courtoy throng, may be its
feathered ornament; but the number of those
who are elevated enough in life to reason and to
reflect; yet low enough to keep clear of the
venal contagion of a court!—these are a nation's
strength.

I know not how to apologize for the imperi-
nent length of this epistle; but one small re-
quest I must ask of you further—when you have
honoured this letter with a perusal, please to
commit it to the flames. Burns, in whose be-
half you have so generously interested yourself,
I have here in his native colours drawn as he is,
but should any of the people in whose hands is
the very bread he eats, get the least knowledge
of the picture, it would ruin the poor bard for
ever!

My poems having just come out in another
edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy,
as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent
gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your deeply indebted,
And ever devoted humble servant,
R. B.

OCTV.

TO ROBERT AINSLIE, ESQ.

["Up tales a', by the light o' the moon," was the name
of a Scottish sir, to which the devil danced with the
witches of Fife, on Magus Moor, as reported by a war-
lock, in that credible work, "Satan's Invisible World
discovered."]

April 26, 1793.

I am d---nably out of humour, my dear Ains-
lie, and that is the reason, why I take up the
pen to you: 'tis the nearest way (probatum est)
to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much enter-
tained with it; but I will not at this time, nor at
any other time, answer it.—Answer a letter! I
never could answer a letter in my life!—I have
written many a letter in return for letters I
have received; but then—they were original
matter—spurt-away! sig here, sag there; as
if the devil that, my Grannie (an old woman in-
deed) often told me, rode on will-o' the-wisp, or, in
her more classic phrase, Spunkie, was looking
over my elbow.—Happy thought that idea has
engendered in my head! Spunkie—thou shalt
henceforth be my symbol signature, and tutelary
genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-
awa-there-awa, higgle-tiggle-piggle, bell-mall,
hither-and-yon, ram-stam, happy-go-lucky, up-
tails-a'-by-the-light-o' the-moon,—has been, is,
and shall be, my progress through the mazes and
moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of
a life of ours.

Come then, my guardian spirit, like thee may
I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own
light: and if any opaque-soled lubber of man-
kind complain that my elixir, lambent, gliss
merous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs, let the thickheaded blunderbuss recollect that he is not Spunkin:

—that

"Spunkin's wanderings could not copy be:
Amid these petty nose durst walk but he."—

I have no doubt but scholarcraft may be caught, as a Scotchman catches the itch,—by friction. How else can you account for it, that born blackheads, by mere dint of handling books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surprised at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honour of their good sense, made me facetum in the business; one of our members, a little, wise-looking, squat, upright, jabbering body of a tailor, I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, to bind the book on his back.—Jonnie took the hint; and as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Prickhouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and, of course, another in returning, Bedkin was sure to lay his hand on some heavy quarto, or ponderous folio, with, and under which, wrapped up in his grey plaid, he grew wise, as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far, that an old musty Hebrew concordance, which we had in a present from a neighbouring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaster, between his shoulders, stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory.

Yours, Spunkin.

OCLVII.

TO MISS KENNEDY.

[Miss Kennedy was one of that numerous band of ladies who patronised the poet in Edinburgh; she was related to the Hamiltons of Mossgiel.]

MADAM,

Permit me to present you with the enclosed song as a small though grateful tribute for the honour of your acquaintance. I have, in these verses, attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished simple manner of descriptive truth.—Flattery, I leave to your lovers, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of beauty; as, if they are really poets of nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of spring, or the pensive mildness of autumn; the grandeur of summer, or the hoary majesty of winter, the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetical heart that the head of man are strangers to.—On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. Hamilton's kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your heart—that the snare of villany may never beset you in the road of life—that innocence may hand you by the path of honour to the dwelling of peace, is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to be, &c. R. B.

OCLVIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The name of the friend who fell a sacrifice to those changeable times, has not been mentioned: it is believed he was of the west country.]

June, 1793.

When I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unbalance me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss as to pecuniary matters is trifling; but the total ruin of a much-loved friend is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the "Min
Mill, O!" What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty; so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Fraser, the hautboy-player in Edinburgh— he is here, instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this county. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well known as a reel, by the name of "The Quaker's Wife;" and which, I remember, a grand-aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of "Liggeram Cosh, my bonnie wee lass." Mr. Fraser plays it now, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it, that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin, and enclose Fraser's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy, they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

Blythe has I been on you hill. I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Against the mighty oppressors of the earth the poet was ever ready to set the sharpest shafts of his wrath: the times in which he wrote were sadly out of sort.] June 25th, 1798.

Have you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation, on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdoms, 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," and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer, and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done anything at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit:—

O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide.  

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment, in Watherspoon's collection of Scots songs?

Air—"Hughie Graham."

"Oh gin my love were ye red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa';
And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

"Oh there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night,
Seal'd on her silk-saft finaids to rest,
Till they'd awa by Phoebus light!"

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forewarn you altogether unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the kind legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet who knows anything of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

Oh were my love you lila faire,
Wit' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing!

How I wad mourn, when it was torn
By autumn wild and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renewed.

R. B.

1 "The lines were the third and fourth:

'Wit' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning.'

As our poet had maintained a long silence, and the first number of Mr. Thomson's musical work was in the press, this gentleman ventured, by Mr. Erakine's advice, to substitute for them, in that publication,

2 Song CXV.
3 Song CXXVI.
4 Better known as Hard's. Watherspoon was one of the publishers.

5 See Song CXXVII.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

CCLX.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson, in his reply to the preceding letter, laments that anything should amount to the feelings of the poet, and begs his acceptance of five pounds, as a small mark of his gratitude for his beautiful songs.]

July 24, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just finished the following ballad, and, as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's wood-note wild, is very fond of it, and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

There was a lass, and she was fair.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M'Murdo, daughter to Mr. M'Murdo, of Drumlanrig, one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager.

R. B.

CCLXI.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Burns in this letter speaks of the pecuniary present which Thomson sent him, in a lofty and angry tone: he who published poems by subscription might surely have accepted, without any impertiety, payment for his songs.]

July, 1798.

I assure you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honour which crowns the upright stature of Robert Burns's Integrity—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the bypast transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and indepen-

dence of mind, will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold unfeeling ore can supply; at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold in any musical work such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written, only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

"The Flowers o' the Forest," is charming as a poem, and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas beginning,

"I've seen the smiling of fortune beguiling," are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn, I forget of what place, but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O sickie fortune, why this cruel sporting,
Why thus perplex us, poor sons of a day?"

The old ballad, "I wish I were where Helen lies," is silly to contemplability. My alteration of it, in Johnson's, is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, ancient ballads (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough, forgeries), has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations—but no matter.

In my next I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the meantime allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have committed your character and fame, which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the Sons and Daughters of Taste—all whom poesy can please or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretell and affirm, that your great-grand-child will hold up your volumes, and say, with honest pride, "This so much admired collection was the work of my ancestor!"

R. B.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

OCLXII.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[Stephen Clarke, whose name is at this strange note, was a musician and composer; he was a clever man, and had a high opinion of his own powers.]

August, 1798.

My dear Thomson,

I hold the pen for our friend Clarke, who at present is studying the music of the spheres at my elbow. The Georgium Sidus he thinks is rather out of tune; so, until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the rounde subjects, and if more are wanted, he says you shall have them.

* * * * * *

Confound your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

OCLXIII.
TO MR. THOMSON.

["Phillis the Fair" endured much at the hands of both Burns and Clarke. The young lady had reason to complain, when the poet volunteered to sing the imaginary love of that fantastic fiddler.]

August, 1793.

Your objection, my dear Sir, to the passages in my song of "Logan Water," is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it: if I can, I will. The other passage you object to does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on "Robin Adair," and, you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing anything better to it.

While larks with little wing.

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for "Cauld kail in Aberdee." If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine; if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly on the business. 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself.

R. B.

OCLXIV.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[The infusion of Highland airs and north country subjects into the music and songs of Scotland, has invigorated both: Burns, who had a fine ear as well as a fast taste, was familiar with all, either Highland or Lowland.]

August, 1793.

That crinkum-crankum tune, "Robin Adair," has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice as follows:

Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,8

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he will remember his mother singing Gaelic songs to both "Robin Adair," and "Grammochree." They certainly have more of the Scotch than Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness; so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them; except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scot land and Ireland, and so some favourite air might be common to both. A case in point—they have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called "Caun du delich." The fact is, in a publication of Corri'a, a great while ago, you will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is "Oran Gaelil," and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan or the Rev. Gaelic parson, about these matters.

R. B.

OCLXV.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[White Burns composed songs. Thomson got some— the happiest embodied by David Allan, the painter, whose illustrations of the Gentle Shepherd had been favourably received. But save when an old man was admitted to

Song CXCIX.

8 Song CC.
Owhistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.  

Another favourite air of mine is, "The muckin' o' Geordie's byre." When sung slow, with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry; that I have endeavoured to supply as follows:

Adown winding Nith I did wander.

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his, and out of compliment to him I have made the song. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to "Bonnie Jean." They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming-mill.

R. B.

CCLXVII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Burns was fond of expressive words: "Gloaming, the twilight," says Currie, "is a beautiful poetic word, which ought to be adopted in England." Burns and Scott have made the Scottish language popular over the world.]

August, 1793.

That tune, "Cauld kail," is such a favourite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloamin-shot at the muse; when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Colla, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my gloaming fancy. In the first place, since I left Colla's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her, so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or, at least, makes me occasional visits; secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you, is the very words that Colla taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's Museum.

Come, let me take thee to my breast.

If you think the above will suit your idea of

Song CCI.  

Song CCI.  

Song CCI.  

Song CCI.  

Song CCIIV.
your favourite air, I shall be highly pleased.
"The last time I came o'er the moor" I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.  

R. B.

CCLXVIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

["Could I be in Aberdeen, and cast off in Stabroegae," are words which have no connexion with the sentiment of the song which Burns wrote for the air.]

August, 1798.

SONG.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers.1

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N. B. In the Museum they have drawed out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is — nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.2

CCLXIX.

TO MISS CRAIK

[Miss Helen Craik, of Arbigland, had merit both as a poetess and novelist: her ballads may be compared with those of Hector M'Neil; her novels had a seasoning of satire in them.]

Dumfries, August, 1798.

MADAM,

Some rather unlooked-for accidents have prevented my doing myself the honour of a second visit to Arbigland, as I was so hospitably invited, and so positively meant to have done.—However, I still hope to have that pleasure before the busy months of harvest begin.

I enclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind of return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain MS. volume of poems in the possession of Captain Riddel. To repay one with an old song, is a proverb, whose force, you, Madam, I know, will not allow. What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry, none ever despised it who had pretensions to it. The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrlogies that ever were penned, so useful a narrative as the lives of the poets.—In the comparative view of wreaths, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagracy, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him a drift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet. To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the councils of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baffling them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures that we owe to the lovely queen of the heart of man!  

R. B.

CGLXX.

TO LADY GLENCAIRN.

[Burns, as the concluding paragraph of this letter proves, continued to the last years of his life to think of the composition of a Scottish drama, which Sir Walter
OF ROBERT BURNS.

My Lady,

The honour you have done your poor poet, in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid, amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of diseased nerves and December weather. As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, Heaven is my witness with what sincerity I could use those old verses which please me more in their rude simplicity than the most elegant lines I ever saw.

"If thee, Jerusalem, I forget,
    Skill part from my right hand.
My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
    If I do thee forget,
Jerusalem, and thee above,
    My chief joy do not set."

When I am tempted to do anything improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your ladyship and family. Now and then, when I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with any mortification from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxurious insolence of upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronised by the noble house of Glencairn; and at galas, times, such as new-year's day, a christening, or the kirm-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with,—The Countess of Glencairn! My good woman with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries, My Lord! and so the toast goes on until I end with Lady Harriet's little angel! whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your ladyship's letter, I was just in the act of transcribing for you some verses I have lately composed; and meant to have sent them my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with my late change of life. I mentioned to my lord my fears concerning my farm. Those fears were indeed too true; it is a bargain would have ruined me, but for the lucky circumstance of my having an excise commission.

People may talk as they please, of the ignominy of the excise; 50l. a year will support my wife and children, and keep me independent of the world; and I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business, is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, consequently assisting me vastly in my poetic pursuits. I had the most ardent enthusiasm for the muses when nobody knew me, but myself, and that ardour is by no means cooled now that my lord Glencairn's goodness has introduced me to all the world. Not that I am in haste for the press. I have no idea of publishing, else I certainly had consulted my noble generous patron; but after acting the part of an honest man, and supporting my family, my whole wishes and views are directed to poetic pursuits. I am aware that though I were to give performances to the world superior to my former works, still if they were of the same kind with those, the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. I have turned my thoughts on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic muse.

Does not your ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with affectation, folly, and whim of true Scottish growth, than manners which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second hand?

I have the honour to be,
Your ladyship's ever devoted
And grateful humble servant,

R. B.

CCLXXI.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Peter Pindar, the name under which it was the p.asure of that bitter but vulgar satirist, Dr. Wolcot, to write, was a man of little lyrical talent. He purchased a good annuity for the remainder of his life, by the copy-right of his works, and survived his popularity many years.]

Sept. 1798.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that my exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then; though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business. You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly
where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of your connoisseurs, affect my simple leg no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air "Hey tuttie taitie," may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's haut-boy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it 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 one might suppose to be the gallant Royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on the eventful morning.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled.¹

So may God ever defend the cause of truth and liberty, as he did that day! Amen.

F.S. I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum, though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

COLXXII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[This letter contains further proof of the love of Burns for the airs of the Highlands.]

Sept. 1798.

I dare say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse, which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgrimick, the bedlam jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of men.

The following song I have composed for "Oran-gooil," the Highland air that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—If not, 'tis also well!

Behold the hour, the boat arrive!

R.B.

COLXXIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[This is another of the sagacious letters on Scottish song, which poets and musicians would do well to read and consider.]

Sept. 1798.

I have received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.²

"Down the burn, Davie." I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he oft did lay,
And love was eye the tale.
With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"  
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And eye shall follow you." ³

"Thro' the wood, ladde"—I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes home," the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

"Cowden-knowen." Remember in your index that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning, "When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"²

¹ Song CCVII.
² Song CCVIII.
³ Mr. Thomson's list of songs for his publication.
⁴ This is an alteration of one of Crawford's songs.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

is the production of Crawfurdi. Robert was his Christian name.1

"Laddie, lie near me," must lie by me for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects of nature around me which are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jude, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

"Gil Morico" I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never sung; and its place can well be supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list—for instance "Craigieburn-wood" and "Boy's wife." The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty, and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the handwriting of the lady who composed it; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.

"Highland laddie." The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the an Italianised one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls the old "Highland laddie," which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called "Ginglin Johnnie;" it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum. "I have been at Crookieden," &c. I would advise you, in the musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and in the meantime, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. 

"Auld Sir Simon" I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place "The Quaker's wife."

"Blythe has I been on you hill," is one of the finest songs ever I made in my life, and, besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include "The bonniest lass in a' the world," in your collection.

"Dainty Davie" I have heard sung nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow, exactly as lucky Nancy in the Museum.

"Fee him, father! I enclose you Frazer's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas, in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Frazer gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which "Patie Allan's mither died—that was about the back o' midnight;" and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overcast every mortal in company except the hautbois and the muse.

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie.8

"Jockie and Jenny" I would discard, and in its place would put "There's nae luck about the house," which has a very pleasant air, and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other language. "When she came ben she bobbit," as an air is more beautiful than either, and in the andante way would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

"Saw ye my father?" is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fiddlers call it, but to

1 His Christian name was William.
2 Song CCIX.
3 By William Julius Mickle.
burst at once into the pathos. Every country
girl sings "Saw ye my father?" &c.
My song is but just begun; and I should like,
before I proceed, to know your opinion of it.
I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect,
but it may be easily turned into correct Eng-
lish.1

"Todlin bame." Urbani mentioned an idea
of his, which has long been mine, that this air
is highly susceptible of pathos: accordingly,
you will soon hear him at your concert try it
to a song of mine in the Museum, "Ye banks
and braes o' bonnie Doon." One song more and
I have done; "Auld lang syne." The air is
but mediocre; but the following song, the old
song of the olden times, and which has never
been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I
took it down from an old man's singing, is
enough to recommend any air.2

Now, I suppose, I have tried your patience
fairly. You must, after all is over, have a
number of ballads, properly so called. "Gil
Morice," "Tranent Muir," "Machperton's fare-
well," "Battle of Sherriffmuir," or, "We ran,
and they ran," (I know the author of this char-
mimg ballad, and his history,) "Hardiknute,"
"Barbara Allan" (I can furnish a finer set of
this tune than any that has yet appeared;) and
besides do you know that I really have the old
tune to which "The cherry and the slate" was
sung, and which is mentioned as a well-known
air in "Scotland's Complaint," a book published
before poor M'ary's days?3 It was then called
"The banks of Helicon," an old poem which
Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see
all this in Tytler's history of Scottish music.
The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great
merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a
good many original things of this kind.

R. B.

CCLXXIV.
TO MR. THOMSON.

[Herein I listened too readily to the suggestion of Thom-
son, to alter "Bruce's Address to his troops at Bannock-
burn," whatever may be the merits of the air of "Louis
Bordon," the sublime simplicity of the words was in-

1 The song here alluded to is one which the poet after-
wards sent in an entire form:—
"Where are the joys I have met in the morning?"
2 Song CCX.

2 A curious and rare book, which Leyden afterwards
edited.
4 Song CCVII.

September, 1798.

I am happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases
you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is,
though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if
you please, we will let the line stand as it is.
I have altered the song as follows:4

N. B. I have borrowed the last stanza from
the common stall edition of Wallace—

"A fa as swper sinks in every sea,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet of Homer. Yesterday you
had enough of my correspondence. The post
goes, and my head aches miserably. One com-
fort! I suffer so much, just now, in this world,
for last night's joviality, that I shall escape
scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen.
R. B.

CCLXXV.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The poet's good sense rose at last in arms against
the criticisms of the musician, and he refused to lessen
the dignity of his war-odes by any more alterations.]

September, 1798.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?"
My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter
it. Your proposed alterations would, in my
opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged
to you for putting me on reconsidering it, as I
think I have much improved it. Instead of
"soldier! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian,
on wi' me!"

I have scrutinized it over and over; and to
the world, some way or other, it shall go as it
is. At the same time it will not in the least
hurt me, should you leave it out altogether,
and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's
verses.

I have finished my song to "Saw ye my fa-
ther!" and in English, as you will see. That
there is a syllable too much for the expression
of the air, is true; but, allow me to say, that
the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a
crotchet and a quaver, is not a great matter:
however, in that I have no pretensions to cope
in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak
with confidence; but the music is a business
where I hint my ideas with the utmost dif-
fidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal,
and are popular: my advice is to set the air to
the old words, and let mine follow as English
verses. Here they are:—

Where are the joys I have met in the morn-
ing?1

Adieu, my dear Sir! the post goes, so I shall
defer some other remarks until more leisure.

R. B.

OCLXXVI.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[For "Fy! let us a' to the bridal," and "Fy! gie me
my ooggie, Sirs," and "There's nae luck about
the house," Burns puts in a word of praise, from a feeling
that Thomson's taste would induce him to exclude the
first—one of our most original songs—from his collec-
tion.]

September, 1798.

I have been turning over some volumes of
songs, to find verses whose measures would suit
the airs for which you have allotted me to find
English songs.

For "Muirland Willie," you have, in Rams-
say's Tea-Table, an excellent song beginning,
"Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" As for
"The Collier's Dochter," take the following old
bacchanal:

"Deluded swain, the pleasure, &c."2

The faulty line in Logan-Water, I mend thus:

How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?

The song otherwise will pass. As to "McGre-
goira Ruia-Ruia," you will see a song of mine
to it, with a set of the air superior to yours, in
the Museum, vol. ii. p. 181. The song begins,

Raving winds around her blowing.3

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are rank
Irish. If they were like the "Banks of Ban-
ns," for instance, though really Irish, yet in the
Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since
you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to
twenty-five of them in an additional number?
We could easily find this quantity of charming
airs; I will take care that you shall not want
songs; and I assure you that you would find it
the most saleable of the whole. If you do not
approve of "Roy's wife," for the music's sake,
we shall not insert it. "Dell tak the waris" is
a charming song; so is, "Saw ye my Peggy!"
"There's nae luck about the house" well de-
serves a place. I cannot say that "O'er the
hills and far awa" strikes me as equal to your
selection. "This is no my ain house," is a great
favourite air of mine; and if you will send me
your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest
effort. What is your opinion of "I hae laid a
herrin' in saut"? I like it much. Your jaco-
bite airs are pretty, and there are many others
of the same kind pretty; but you have not room
for them. You cannot, I think, insert "Fy!
let's a' to the bridal," to any other words than
its own.

What pleases me, as simple and naïve, dis-
gusts you as ludicrous and low. For this rea-
son, "Fy! gie me my ooggie, Sirs," "Fy! let's
a' to the bridal," with several others of that
cast, are to me highly pleasing; while, "Saw
ye my father, or saw ye my mother?" delights
me with its descriptive simple pathos. Thus
my song, "Ken ye what Meg o' the mill has
gotten!" pleases myself so much, that I cannot
try my hand at another song to the air, so I
shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at
all this; but "Ilka man wears his belt his ain
gait."4

R. B.

OCLXXVII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Of the Hon. Andrew Erskine an account was commu-
nicated in a letter to Burns by Thomson, which the
writer has withheld. He was a gentleman of talent, and
joint projector of Thomson's now celebrated work.]

October, 1798.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was
indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor
Erskine! The recollection that he was a co-
adjutator in your publication, has till now scared
me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts
on composing for you.

4 "The honourable Andrew Erskine, whose melancholy
death Mr. Thomson had communicated in an excellent
letter, which he has suppressed."—Currie.
I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the "Quaker's wife;" though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of "Lèiger m' chosa." The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air.

Thine am I, my faithful fair:
Your objection to the English song I proposed for "John Anderson my jo," is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit.

SONG.—BY GAVIN TURNBULL.
Oh, condescend, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;
A tender swain, to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

While here, all melancholy,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urg'd by stern, resistless fate,
I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain
The urchin's power denied.
I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

But how my state is alter'd!
Those happy days are o'er;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

Oh, yield, illustrious beauty, yield!
No longer let me mourn;
And though victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

Let generous pity warm thee,
My wond'ring peace restore;
And grateful I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more.

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale will suit as an English song to the air "There was a lass, and she was fair." By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS., which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour; but I like some of his pieces very much.

THE NIGHTINGALE.
Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove,
That ever tried the plaintive strain,

Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For though the muse's deign to aid
And teach him smoothly to complain,
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

All day, with fashion's gaudy zone,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain;
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Beguile, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to "Lewie Gordon."

LAURA.
Let me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among:
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

If at rover dawn I choose
To indulge the smiling muse;
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noontide heat;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Thro' unquenched wilds I stray;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise,
While with boundless joy I rove
Thro' the fairy land of love;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.

R. B.

CCLXXVIII.
TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.,
WITH A PARCEL.

[The collection of songs alluded to in this letter, are only known to the curious in loose lore: they were published, at Glasgow, in 1768, under the title of "Poetical Essays."
OF ROBERT BURNS.

I shall ever claim as mine:—to no man, whatever his station in life, or his power to serve me, have I ever paid a compliment at the expense of truth.

THE AUTHOR.

COLXXX.

TO CAPTAIN

[This excellent letter, obtained from Stewart of Dalguise, is copied from my kind friend Chambers's collection of Scottish songs.]

Dumfries, 5th December, 1798.

Sir,

Heated as I was with wine yesternight, I was perhaps rather seemingly impertinent in my anxious wish to be honoured with your acquaintance. You will forgive it: it was the impulse of heart-felt respect. "He is the father of the Scottish county reform, and is a man who does honour to the business, at the same time that the business does honour to him," said my worthy friend Glenriddell to somebody by me who was talking of your coming to this county with your corps. "Then," I said, "I have a woman's longing to take him by the hand, and say to him, 'Sir, I honour you as a man to whom the interests of humanity are dear, and as a patriot to whom the rights of your country are sacred."

In times like these, Sir, when our commoners are barely able by the glimmer of their own twilight understandings to scrawl a frank, and when lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman. To him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be in earnest for her welfare; and who in the honest pride of man can view with equal contempt the insolence of office and the allurement of corruption.

I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song I had lately composed, and which I think has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble but most sincere tribute of respect from a man, who, dear as he prizes poetical fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind.

I have the honour to be,

R.B.

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Dumfries, [December, 1798.]

Sir,

'Tis said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man. Here is Kerr's account, and here are the six guineas; and now I don't owe a shilling to man—or woman either. But for these dirty, dog's-ear'd little pages, I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiori

y in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something to you of a collection of Scots songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glimpses of them will probably more than suffice you. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint, of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me good deal of pains.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R.B.

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COLXXXIX.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.,

DUMBLANDIG.

[These words, thrown into the form of a note, are copied from a blank leaf of the poet's works, published in two volumes, small octavo, in 1793.]

Dumfries, 1793.

Will Mr. M'Murdo do me the favour to accept of these volumes: a trifling but sincere mark of the very high respect I bear for his worth as a man, his manners as a gentleman, and his kindness as a friend. However inferior now, or afterwards, I may rank as a poet; one honest virtue to which few poets can pretend, I trust

1 Scottish Bank notes.
COLXXXI.

TO MRS. RIDDLE,

Who was about to bespeak a Play one evening at the Dumfries Theatre.

(This clever lady, to whom Burns so happily applies the words of Thomson, died in the year 1890, at Hampton Court.)

I am thinking to send my "Address" to some periodical publication, but it has not yet got your sanction, so pray look over it.

As to the Tuesday's play, let me beg of you, my dear madam, to give us, "The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret!" to which please add, "The Spoilt Child"—you will highly oblige me by so doing.

Ah, what an enviable creature you are! There now, this cursed, gloomy, blue-devil day, you are going to a party of choice spirits—

"To play the shapes
Of frolic fancy, and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never joint'd before,
Where lively wit excites to gaudy surprise;
Or folly-painting humour, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve."—Thomson.

But as you rejoice with them that do rejoice, do also remember to weep with them that weep, and pity your melancholy friend.

R. B.

COLXXXII.

TO A LADY.

IN FAVOUR OF A PLAYER'S BENEFIT.

(The name of the lady to whom this letter is addressed, has not transpired.)

Dumfries, 1794.

My dear Madam,

You were so very good as to promise me to honour my friend with your presence on his benefit night. That night is fixed for Friday first: the play a most interesting one! "The Way to Keep Him." I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which do honour to patronage: he is a poor and modest man; claims which from their very silence have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas, for pity! that from the indolence of those who have the good things of this life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon, the rightful due of retiring, humble want! Of all the qualities we assign to the author and director of nature, by far the most enviable is—to be able "to wipe away all tears from all eyes.

O what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent monuments, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam: I came to beg, not to preach.

R. B.

COLXXXIII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN,

With a Copy of Bruce's Address to his Troops at Bannockburn.

(This fantastic Earl of Buchan died a few years ago: when he was put into the family burial-ground, at Dryburgh, his head was laid the wrong way, which Sir Walter Scott said was little matter, as it had never been quite right in his lifetime.)

Dumfries, 12th January, 1794.

My Lord,

Will your lordship allow me to present you with the enclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for the acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honour me?

Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly and indeed invaluable! for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

If my little ode has the honour of your lordship's approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

COLXXXIV.

TO CAPTAIN MILLER,
DALSWINTON.

(Captain Miller, of Dalswinton, sat in the House of Commons for the Dumfries district of burroughs. Dalswinton has passed from the family to my friend James M'Phee Lemy, Esq.)

DEAR SIR,

The following ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference.

Oh, Liberty,

"Thus make the gloomy face of nature gay,
Giv'"beauty to the man, and pleasure to the day."

ADAMSON.

It does me so much good to meet with a man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm, the heroic daring of liberty, that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner.

I have the honour to be,

DEAR SIR, &c.

R. B.


COLXXXV.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

(The dragon guarding the Hesperian fruit, was simply a military officer, who, with the courtesy of those whose trade is arms, paid attention to the lady.)

DEAR MADAM,

I meant to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view, was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic part a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday; when we may arrange the business of the visit.

Among the profusion of idle compliments, which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly, incessantly offer at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart and an independent mind; and to assure you, that I am, thou most amiable and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c.

R. B.


COLXXXVI.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

(The patient sons of order and prudence seem often to have shielded the poet to such invectives as this letter exhibits.)

I will wait on you, my ever-valued friend, but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our curtse revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call the pis-hores class: what enviable dogs they are! Round, and round, and round they go;—Mundell's ox that drives his cotton-mill is their exact prototype—without an idea or wish beyond their circle; fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d muc'd melange of festfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor, my soul flouncing and fluttering round her temenage, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—"And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!" If my resentment is awaked, it is sure to be where it dare not squeak: and if—* * * * *

Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visitors of .

R. B.


COLXXXVII.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

(Th' bard often offended and often apprized this whimsical but very clever lady.)

I have this moment got the song from Syme, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him anything again.

I have sent you "Werther," truly happy to have any the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at Woodles; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs. R. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her.

R. B.

OCLXXXVIII.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

[Burns often complained in company, and sometimes in his letters, of the caprices of Mrs. Riddel.]

I have often told you, my dear friend, that you had a spice of caprice in your composition, and you have as often disavowed it; even perhaps while your opinions were, at the moment, irrefragably proving it. Could anything estrange me from a friend such as you?—No! To-morrow I shall have the honour of waiting on you. Farewell, thou first of friends, and most accomplished of women; even with all thy little caprices!

R. B.

OCLXXXIX.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

[The offended lady was soothed by this submissive letter, and the feud was re-established in her good graces.]

MADAM,

I return your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms, but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, now to find cold neglect, and contemptuous scorn—is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable good luck, and while de haut-en-bas rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their piquancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities; the most sincere esteem and ardent regard for your gentle heart and amiable manners; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honour to be,

Madam,

Your most devoted humble servant,

R. B.

OCX.

TO JOHN SYME, ESQ.

[John Syme, of the stamp-office, was the companion as well as comrade in arms, of Burns: he was a well-informed gentleman, loved witty company, and shone in rhyme now and then: his epigrams were often happy.]

You know that among other high dignities, you have the honour to be my supreme court of critical judicature, from which there is no appeal. I enclose you a song which I composed since I saw you, and I am going to give you the history of it. Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honour to call my acquaintances, the Oswald family, there is nothing charms me more than Mr. Oswald's unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman. Did you ever, my dear Syme, meet with a man who owed more to the Divine Giver of all good things than Mr. O.? A fine fortune; a pleasing exterior; self-evident amiable dispositions, and an ingenious upright mind, and that informed, too, much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank and fortune: and to all this, such a woman!—but of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying anything adequate: in my song I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings, on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I, in my first fervour, thought of sending it to Mrs. Oswald, but on second thoughts, perhaps what I offer as the honest incense of genuine respect, might, from the well-known character of poverty and poetry, be construed into some modification or other of that servility which my soul abhors.

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

OCXCI.

TO MISS ———.

[Burns, on other occasions than this, recalled both his letters and verses; it is to be regretted that he did not recall more of both.]

Dumfries, 1794.

MADAM,

Nothing short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste, and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have passed with the friend of my soul and his amiable connexions! the wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world! and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight!

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish. — However, you also may be offended with some imputed improprieties of mine; sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me, is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?

I have a favour to request of you, Madam, and of your sister Mrs. ———, through your means. You know that, at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my tristles in verse which I had ever written. They are many of them local, some of them puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake, a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who "watch for my halting," and the contemptuous sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion; I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts — Will Mrs. ——— have the goodness to destroy them, or return them to me? As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance indeed was all their merit. Most unhappily for me, that merit they no longer possess; and I hope that Mrs. ———'s goodness, which I well know, and ever will revere, will not refuse this favour to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.

With the sincerest esteem,
I have the honour to be,

Madam, &c.

R B

OCXII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[The religious feeling of Burns was sometimes blunted, but at times it burst out, as in this letter, with eloquence and fervour, mingled with fear.]

25th February, 1794.

Canst thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why would'st thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, as origines, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypocondrias, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these cursed times; losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. A heart at ease would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The one is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude,
magnanimity. The other is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those senses of the mind, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful, obscure realities—an all-powerful, and equally beneficent God; and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field: the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty few, to lead the undiscerning many; or as at most an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know anything of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature’s God. His soul, by swift delighting degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

"These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.——The rolling year
Is full of thee."

And so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn. These are no ideal pleasures, they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior,

not to say equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.

R. B.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

[The original letter is in the possession of the Hon Mrs. Halland, of Foynants: it is undated, but from a memorandum on the back it appears to have been written in May, 1794.]

May, 1794.

* * *

MY LORD,

When you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter, and on the title-page of the book I do myself the honour to send your lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me that it must be a name not entirely unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the lowest obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavoured to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead, and my respect for the living (fame belles you, my lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man, which was your noble brother’s characteristic feature), I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town:—allow me to present it you.

I, know my lord, such is the vile, venal contagion which pervades the world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a poet, to a lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honours of your lordship’s name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine; with the uprightness of an honest man, I come before your lordship with an offering, however humble, ’tis all I have to give, of my grateful respect; and to beg of you, my lord,—’tis all I have to ask of you,—that you will do me the honour to accept of it.

I have the honour to be,

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

OCXCV.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The correspondence between the poet and the musician was interrupted in spring, but in summer and autumn the song-strains were renewed.]

May, 1794.

My dear Sir,

I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younger knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and, though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the burin, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the "Gentle Shepherd," and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, I shall be quite in song, as you shall see by and bye. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron, of Heron, which she calls "The Banks of Cree." Cree is a beautiful romantic stream; and, as her ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it.

Here is the glen and here the bower.

... 

OCXCVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Castle Douglas is a thriving Galloway village: it was in other days called "The Carlislewark," but accepted its present proud name from an opulent family of mercantile Douglasses, well known in Scotland, England, and America.]

Castle Douglas, 25th June, 1794.

Hans, in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may.—Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favourite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been so exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid that I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I passed along the road. The subject is Liberty: you know, my honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it as an irregular ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed, and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swelling eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingle with the mighty dead!
Beneath the hallowed turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds in silence sweep,
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep.
with additions of
That arm which nerved with thundering fate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
One quenched in darkness like the sinking star,
And one the palied arm of tottering, power-
less age.

You will probably have another scrawl from
me in a stage or two. R. B.

OCXVIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The blank in this letter could be filled up without
writing treason: but nothing has been omitted of an
original nature.]

July, 1794.

Is there no news yet of Pleyel? Or is your
work to be at a dead stop, until the allies set
our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage
thraldom of democrat discord? Alas the day!
And woe is me! That auspicious period, preg-
nant with the happiness of millions.

I have presented a copy of your songs to the
daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured
friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintray. I
wrote on the blank side of the title-page the
following address to the young lady:

Here, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
&c.

OCXIX.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson says to Burns, "You have anticipated my
opinion of 'O'er the seas and far away.'"] Yet some of
the verses are original and touching.

30th August, 1794.

The last evening, as I was straying out, and
thinking of "O'er the hills and far away," I
spun the following stanza for it; but whether
my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store,
like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or
brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture
of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your
usual candid criticism. I was pleased with
several lines in it at first, but I own that now it
appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether
it be worth a critique. We have many sailor
songs, but as far as I at present recollect, they
are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not
the walkings of his love-lorn mistress. I must
here make one sweet exception—"Sweet Annie
flee the sea-beach came." Now for the song:—

How can my poor heart be glad.

1 Poem CCXXIX. 2 Song CCXXXIV
I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness. B. B.

OCC.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[The stream on the banks of which this song is supposed to be sung is known by three names, Cairn, Dalgonar, and Claden. It rises under the name of Cairn, runs through a wild country, under the name of Dalgonar, affording fine trout-fishing as well as fine scenery, and under that of Claden it all but washes the walls of Linlithgow College, and then unites with the Nith.]

Sept. 1794.

I shall withdraw my "On the seas and far away" altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world to try him.

For that reason I send you the offering of my brain, abstractions and all; and, as such, pray look over them, and forgive them, and burn them. I am flattered at your adopting "Ca' the yowes to the knowes," as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, Mr. Clunie, who sang it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll which I took today, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes, &c.¹

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs my first scribbling fit. B. B.

OCC.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Dr. Maxwell, whose skill called forth the praises of the poet, had the honour of being named by Burke in the House of Commons: he shared in the French revolution.

² Song CCXXV

³ Song CCXXVI.

¹ Song CCXXXI.

² Song CCXXXII.

Sept. 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song called "Onagh's Waterfall"? The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of hers shall have merit; still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the Scotia Musical Museum; and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song, to the air above mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing in the company of ladies.

Saw flashes were her ringlets.²

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decreed, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inegalent and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for "Rothemurchu's rant," an air which puts me in raptures; and, in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. "Rothemurchu," he says, "is an air both original and beautiful," and, on his recommendation, I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.

[Here follow two stanzas of the song, beginning "Lassie wi' the last-white locks." Song CCXXXIII.]

I have begun anew, "Let me in this as night." Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I
do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the denouement to be successful or otherwise—should she let him in or not?

Did you not once propose "The sow's tail to Geordie" as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's Christian name, and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following:

TO DR. MAXWELL,
ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.
Maxwell, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessy from the grave?—
An angel could not die!

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!

TO MR. THOMSON.

(The poet relates the history of several of his best songs in this letter: the true old strain of "Andro and his cutty gun" is the first of its kind.)

19th October, 1794.

My dear Friend,

By this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two, so please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do—persuade you to adopt my favourite "Craigieburn-wood," in your selection: it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and in fact (entiérement) is in a manner to me what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now, don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any dissembler about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book? No! no! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? Tout au contraire! I have a glorious recipie; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business: if you like my idea of "When she cam ben she bobbit," the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly, when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas:

O saw ye my dear, my Phely.¹

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. "The Posie" (in the Museum) is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs. Burna's voice. It is well known in the west country, but the old words are trash. By the bye, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which "Roslin Castle" is composed. The second part in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. "Strathallan's Lament" is mine: the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. "Donacht-Head" is not mine; I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edinburgh Herald, and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it. "Whistle o'er the lawn o't" is mine: the music said to be by a John

¹ Song CCXXVII
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Bruce, a celebrated violin-player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know; Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by all the old musical people here is believed to be the author of it.

"Andrew and his cutty gun." The song to which this is set in the Museum is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

"How long and dreary is the night!" I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

How long and dreary is the night, &c.¹

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world, as naked as Mr. What-d’ye-call-um has done in his London collection.²

These English songs grizzle me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at "Duncan Gray," to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:

Let not woman e’er complain, &c.³

Since the above, I have been out in the country, taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with a lady whom I mentioned in the second page in this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got into song; and returning home I composed the following:

Sleep’t thou, or wakest thou, fairest creature &c.⁴

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I enclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish

¹ Song CXXVIII.
² Mr. Ritson, whose collection of Scottish songs was published this year.
³ One. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarks has set a bass to it, and I intend putting it into the Musical Museum. Here follow the verses I intend for it.

But lately seen in gladsome green, &c.⁵

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson’s collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please: whether this miserable drawing hotchpotch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

VARIATION.

Now to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers,
His lay the linnet pours;
The lav’rock to the sky
Ascends wi’ songs o’ joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

When thru my Choris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
The night’s gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o’ercast my sky.
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty’s light;
Her beaming glories dart;
’Tis then, ’tis then I wake to life and joy!

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

(The presents made to the poet were far from numerous: ours, the book for which he expresses his thanks, was the work of the wampish Ritson.)

November, 1794.

Many thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present; it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes. &c. for your work. I intend drawing them up in the form of a letter to you, which will save

⁵ Song CXXXIX.
⁶ Song CXXX
from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c., it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for "My lodging is on the cold ground." On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetical 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.

My Chloris, mark how green the groves.¹

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well. I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of "ma chère amie." I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. 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 the 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 modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids and generosity disdains the purchase.

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 of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. 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 you: "Dainty Davie," as follows:

It was the charming month of May.²

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast, original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to "Rothemurcho’s rant," and you have Clarke to consult as to the set of the air for singing.

Lassie witt the lint-white locks, &c.³

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well; if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

R. B

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Sir Walter Scott remarked, on the lyrics of Burns, "that last the writing a series of songs for large musical collections degenerated into a slavish labour which no talents could support."]

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as "Deil tak the warn," to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of "Saw ye my father!"—By heavens! the odds is gold to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernised into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius Tom D’Urfey, so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan, in the "Duenna," to this air, which is out of sight superior to D’Urfey’s. It begins,

"When aphis night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune.

Now for my English song to "Nancy’s to the greenwood," &c.

Farewell thou stream that winding flows.⁴

There is an air, "The Caledonian Hunt’s Delight," to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson, "Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie

¹ Song CCXXXI. ² Song CCXXXII. ³ Song CCXXXIII. ⁴ Song CCXXXIV.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

Doon: this air I think might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend Clarke; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain is it that, in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys; but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now, to show you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air; say, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a countess informed me, that the first person who introduced the air into this country, was a baronet’s lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting “Craigieburnwood,” and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new “Craigieburnwood” altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request; ‘tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amendes, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson’s volumes.

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. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

R. B.

OGGY

TO MR. THOMSON.

(Willy and Phily, in one of the lyrics which this letter contained, carry on the pleasant bantering of praise till compliments grow scarce, and the lovers are reduced to silence.)

19th November, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though, indeed, you may thank yourself for the tedious of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet, which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old.

O Philly, happy be the day.1

Tell me honestly how you like it, and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly, but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has to my ear a vulgarity about it, which unfitts it for anything except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetsasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity; whereas, simplicity is as much sologiis from vulgarity on the one hand, as from affecte’t point and puérile conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air, “Craigieburnwood,” that a chorus would, in some degree, spoil the effect, and shall certainly have none

1 Song CXXXV.
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with "Rothemurche;" there, as in "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch," a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with "Roy's Wife," as well as "Rothemurche." In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting note in both tunes, has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

Try, Oh Roy's wife of Aldivalloch. and
compare with Roy's wife of Aldivalloch. Lassie wi' the lint-white locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true fervor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas, in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the cognoscenti.

"The Caledonian Hunt" is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, "Todlin hame," is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and "Andrew and his cutty gun" is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a heart-ache. Apropos to bacchanalian songs in Scottish, I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much—"Lumps o' puddin."

Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair.\(^1\)

If you do not relish this air, I will send it to Johnson. R. B.

To Mr. Thomson.

[The instrument which the poet got from the braes of Athole, seems of an order as rude and incapable of fine

\(^*\) Song CCXXXVI.

\(^1\) Song CCXXXVII.

\(^1\) Sounds as the whistles which school-boys make in spring from the smaller boughs of the plane-tree.

Since yesterday's pennmanship, I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to "Roy's Wife." You will allow me, that in this instance my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?\(^*\)

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another, to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one, but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and lastly, an oaten reed exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd boy have, when the corn-stems are green and full grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventages on the upper side, and one back-ventage, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds want to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Fride in poes is nac sin:" and I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.

R. B.
OF ROBERT BURNS.

TO PETER MILLER, JUN., ESQ., OF DALSWINTON.

In a conversation with James Perry, editor of the Morning Chronicle, Mr. Miller, who was then member for the Dumfries boroughs, kindly represented the poverty of the poet and the increasing number of his family: Perry at once offered fifty pounds a year for any contributions he might choose to make to his newspaper: the reasons for his refusal are stated in this letter.

Dumfries, Nov. 1794.

Dear Sir,

Your offer is indeed truly generous, and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but in my present situation, I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time, they are most welcome to my Ode; only, let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me. —Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honour, after your character of him, I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which anything will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world though the medium of some: newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr. Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his paper, which, by the bye, to anybody who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed.

With the most grateful esteem I am ever, Dear Sir,

R. B.

TO MR. SAMUEL CLARKE, JUN., DUMFRIES.

[Political animosities troubled society during the days of Burns, as much at least as they disturb it now—this letter is an instance of it.]

Sunday Morning,

Dear Sir,

I was, I know; drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. —— made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as, generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble.

Farther, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way.—You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mr. Burn's welfare with the task of waiting as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, show him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause." —A toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add, that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. ——, should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.

* * * * *

R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Burns allowed for the songs which Wolcott wrote for Thomson a degree of lyric merit which the world has refused to sanction.]

December, 1794.

It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do anything to forward or add to the value of your book; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the Museum to "There'll never
be peace till Jamie comes hame," would not so
well consort with Peter Findar's excellent lovesong to that air, I have just framed for you the
following:—

Now in her green mantle, &c.\footnote{Song CCXXXVIII.}

How does this please you? As to the point of
time for the expression, in your proposed print
from my "Sodger's Return," it must certainly
be at—"She gae'd." The interesting dubiety
and suspense taking possession of her coun-
tenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mix-
ture of roguish playfulness, in his, strike me as
things of which a master will make a great deal.
In great haste, but in great truth, yours.

R. B.

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\textbf{CCCXI.}

\textbf{TO MR. THOMSON.}

[Of this letter Dr. Currie writes, "the poet must have
been tipsy indeed to abuse sweet Ecclefeshan at the
rate;" it is one of the prettiest of our Annandale vi-
lages, and the birth-place of that distinguished biogra-
pher.]

\textit{Ecclefeshan, 7th February, 1796.}

MY DEAR THOMSON,

You cannot have any idea of the predicament
in which I write to you. In the course of my
duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have
acted of late), I came yesternight to this unfor-
tunate, wicked little village. I have gone for-
ward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded
my progress: I have tried to "gae back the
gate I can again," but the same obstacle has
shut me up within insuperable bars. To add
to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has
been torturing catgut, in sounds that would
have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under
the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, or
that very account, exceeding good company.
In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get
drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang
myself, to get rid of them: like a prudent man
(a character congenial to my every thought,
word, and deed), I of two evils have chosen the
least, and am very drunk, at your service!

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had
not time then to tell you all I wanted to say;
and, Heaven knows, at present I have not ca-
pacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must
know it—"We'll gang nac mair to your town?"
I think, in slovish time, it would make an ex-
cellent song. I am highly delighted with it;
and if you should think it worthy of your atten-
tion, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I
would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good
night.

R. B.

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\textbf{CCCXII.}

\textbf{TO MR. THOMSON.}

[The song of Caledonia, in honour of Mrs. Burns, was
accompanied by two others in honour of the poet's mis-
fortune].

\textit{Farewell! God bless you!}

R. B.

\footnote{Song CCLXIV.}

\footnote{Song CCXLV.}
OF ROBERT BURNS.

May, 1796.

O stay, sweet warbling woodnaik, stay! 1
Let me know, your very first leisure, how
you like this song.

Long, long the night. 2

How do you like the foregoing? The Irish
air, "Humours of Glen," is a great favourite
of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the
"Poor Soldier," there are not any decent verses
for it, I have written for it as follows:

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands
rocks.

Let me hear from you. 3

R. B.

OOX XIII.

TO MR. THOMSON.

(The poet calls for praise in this letter, a species
of coin which is always ready.)

How cruel are the parents. 4

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion. 5

Well, this is not amiss. You see how I an-
swer your orders—your tailor could not be more
punctual. I am just now in a high fit for poet-
ing, provided that the strait-jacket of criti-
cism don't cure me. If you can, in a post or
two, administer a little of the intoxicating po-
tion of your applause, it will raise your humble
servant's phrenzy to any height you want. I
am at this moment "holding high converse"
with the muses, and have not a word to throw
away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

R. B.

OOX XIV.

TO MR. THOMSON.

(Thomson at this time sent the drawing to Burns in
which David Allan sought to embody the "Cotter's
Saturday Night," it displays at once the talent and want
of taste of the ingenious artist.)

May, 1796.

The thousand thanks for your elegant pre-
sent—though I am ashamed of the value of it,

being bestowed on a man who has not, by any
means, merited such an instance of kindness.
I have shown it to two or three judges of the first
abilities here, and they all agree with me
in classing it as a first-rate production. My
phils is see kenspeckle, that the very joiner's
apprentice, whom Mrs. Burns employed to break
up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew
it at once. My most grateful compliments to
Allan, who has honoured my rustic music so
much with his masterly pencil. One strange
coincidence is, that the little one who is making
the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the
most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, d—n'd,
wee, rumblegairie urchin of mine, whom from
that propensy to witty wickedness, and man-
fa' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I
foresaw would form the striking features of his
disposition, I named Willie Nicol, after a cer-
tain friend of mine, who is one of the masters of
a grammar-school in a city which shall be
nameless.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued
friend Cunningham, and tell him, that on
Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to
whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me
in a manner introduced me—I mean a well-
known military and literary character, Colonel
Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last
songs. Are they condemned? 6

R. B.

OOX XV.

TO MR. THOMSON.

(In allusion to the preceding letter, Thomson says to
Burns, "You really make me blush when you tell me
you have not merited the drawing from me." The "For
a' that and a' that," which went with this letter, was, it
is believed, the composition of Mrs. Riddel.)

Isn't Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,
the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear.
Here goes what I think is an improvement:

Oh whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Oh whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father and mother and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame, at whose shrine I, the
priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Par-
nasus—a dame whom the Graces have attired

1 Song CCLIX. 2 Song CCL. 3 Song CCLI.
4 Song CCLIII. 5 Song CCLIV.
in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed
with lightening—a fair one, herself the heroine
of the song, insists on the amendment, and dis-
pute her commands if you dare?

This is no my ain lassie, &c.

Do you know that you have roused the torpid-
ity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to
write three or four songs for him, which he is
to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet
contains two songs for him, which please to pre-
sent to my valued friend Cunningham.

I enclose the sheet open, both for your inspec-
tion, and that you may copy the song "Oh bon-
nie was yon rosy brier." I do not know whether
I am right, but that song pleases me; and as it
is extremely probable that Clarke's newly-
roused celestial spark will be soon smothered
in the fogs of idleness, if you like the song, it
may go as Scottish verse to the air of "I wish
my love was in a mire;" and poor Erkine's
English lines may follow.

I enclose you a "For a' that and a' that,"
which was never in print: it is a much superior
song to mine. I have been told that it was
composed by a lady, and some lines written on
the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of
my poems, presented to the lady whom, in so
many fictitious reveries of passion, but with the
most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I
have so often sung under the name of Chloris:

To Chloris.

Une bagatelle de l'amitié.  

To MR. THOMSON.

[In the double service of poetry and music the poet had
so sing of pangs which he never endured, from beauties
to whom he had never spoken.]

Forsaken my love, no comfort near, &c.

How do you like the foregoing? I have writ-
ten it within this hour: so much for the speed
of my Pegasus; but what say you to his bottom?

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

Suppose himself to be writing from the dead to the
living.

[Ill health, poverty, a sense of dependence, with the
much he had deserved of his country, and the little he
had obtained, were all at this time pressing on the mind
of Burns, and inducing him to forget what was due to
himself as well as to the courtesies of life.]

MADAM,

I DARE say that this is the first epistle you
ever received from this neither world. I write
you from the regions of Hell, amid the horrors
of the damned. The time and the manner of
my leaving your earth I do not exactly know; as
I took my departure in the heat of a fever
of intoxication contracted at your too hospitable
mansion; but, on my arrival here, I was fairly
tried, and sentenced to endure the purgatorial
tortures of this infernal confine for the space of
ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-
nine days, and all on account of the impropriety
of my conduct yesternight under your roof.
Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless surce, with
my aching head reclined on a pillow of ever-
piercing thorn, while an infernal tormentor,
wrinkled, and old, and cruel, his name I think is
Recollection, with a whip of scorpions, forbids
peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish
eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could be
any measure be reinstated in the good opinion
of the fair circle whom my conduct last night
OF ROBERT BURNS.

so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology.—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have much to apologise. Your good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had made on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss I——, too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners—do make on my part, a miserable d—ned wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs. G——, a charming woman, did me the honour to be prejudiced in my favour; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness.—To all the other ladies please present my humblest contribution for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me—but—

* * * * *

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hellhounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam, your humble slave.

R. B.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

[Mr. Riddel, it is said, possessed many more of the poet's letters than are printed; she sometimes read them to friends who could feel their wit, and like herself, make allowance for their freedom.]

Dumfries, 1795.

Mr. Burns's compliments to Mrs. Riddel—ia much obliged to her for her polite attention in sending him the book. Owing to Mr. B.'s being at present acting as supervisor of excise, a department that occupies his every hour of the day, he has not that time to spare which is necessary for any belle-letter pursuit; but, as he will, in a week or two, again return to his wonted leisure, he will then pay that attention to Mrs. R.'s beautiful song, "To thee, loved

Nith"—which it so well deserves. When "Anarchia's Travels" come to hand, which Mrs. Riddel mentioned as her gift to the public library, Mr. B. will thank her for a reading of it previous to her sending it to the library, as it is a book Mr. B. has never seen: he wishes to have a longer perusal of them than the regulations of the library allow.

Friday Eve.

P. S. Mr. Burns will be much obliged to Mrs. Riddel if she will favour him with a perusal of any of her poetical pieces which he may not have seen.

R. B.

TO MISS LOUISA FONTENELLES.

[That Miss Fontenelle, as an actress, did not deserve the high praise which Burns bestows may be guessed: the lines to which he alludes were recited by the lady on her benefit-night, and are printed among his Poems.]

Dumfries, December, 1796.

MADAM,

In such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures, are positively our benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would insure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines be of any service to you in your approaching benefit-night? If they will I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honour to be, &c.

R. B.
General Correspondence

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[Of the sweet girl to whom Burns alludes in this letter, he was deprived during this year: her death pressed sorely on him.]

15th December, 1795.

My dear friend,

As I am in a complete Decemberish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid as even the Deity of Dullness herself could wish, I shall not draw out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it: these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill, that every day, a week or less, threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate! even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune.—A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject!

To leave talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad—

"O that I had ne'er been married,
I would never had nae care;
Now I've got a wife and hame,
They cry crowdie! avenair.
Crowdie! once; crowdie! twice;
Crowdie! three times in a day;
An ye crowdie! ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie! a' my meal away."

* * * * * * *

December 24th.

We have had a brilliant theatre here this season; only, as all other business does, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, want of cash. I mentioned our theatre merely to lug in an occasional address which I wrote for the benefit-night of one of the actresses, and which is as follows—

ADDRESS,
SPOKEN BY MISS FOSTERHILL ON HER BENEFIT-NIGHT,
DEC. 4, 1795, AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES.

Still anxious to secure your partial favour, &c.

25th, Christmas-Morning.

This, my much-loved friend, is a morning of wishes—accept mine—so heaven hear me as they are sincere! that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favourite author, "The Man of Feeling," "May the Great Spirit bear up the weight of thy gray hairs, and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, 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. Were not you to send me your "Zeluco," in return for mine? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old dusty papers, which, from time to time, I had parcelled by, as trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet at the same time I did not care to destroy; I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book.

R. B.

TO MR. ALEXANDER FINDLATER,
SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

[The person to whom this letter is addressed, is the same who lately denied that Burns was harshly used by the Board of Excise: but those, and they are many, who believe what the poet wrote to Erskine, of Mar, cannot agree with Mr. Findlater.]

Sir,

Enclosed are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the collector's one, but
for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr. Erakine promised me to make it right, if you will have the goodness to show him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. So much for schemes.—And that no scheme to betray a friend, or mislead a stranger; to seduce a young girl, or rob a heathen; to subvert liberty, or bribe an excise-man; to disturb the general assembly, or annoy a gossipping; to overthrow the credit of orthodoxy, or the authority of old songs; to oppose your wishes, or frustrate my hopes—may prosper—is the sincere wish and prayer of

R. B.

OCCXXXIII.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

[Cromek says, when a neighbour complained that his copy of the Morning Chronicle was not regularly delivered to him from the post-office, the post wrote the following indignant letter to Perry on a leaf of his exercise-book, but before it went to the post he reflected and recalled it.]

Dumfries, 1795.

Sir,

You will see by your subscribers' list, that I have been about nine months of that number. I am sorry to inform you, that in that time, seven or eight of your papers either have never been sent me, or else have never reached me. To be deprived of any one number of the first newspaper in Great Britain for information, ability, and independence, is what I can ill brook and bear; but to be deprived of that most admirable oration of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he made the great though ineffectual attempt (in the language of the poet, I fear too true), "to save a sinking state"—this was a 'vue that I neither can nor will forgive you.—That paper, Sir, never reached me; but I demand it of you. I am a Briton; and must be interested in the cause of liberty:—I am a man; and the rights of human nature cannot be indifferent to me. However, do not let me mislead you: I am not a man in that situation of life, which, as your subscriber, can be of any consequence to you, in the eyes of those to whom situation of life alone is the criterion of man. I am but a plain tradesman, in this distant, obscure country town: but that humble domicile in which I shelter my wife and children is the CASTELLMAN of a BRITON; and that scanty, hard-earned income which supports them is as truly my property, as the most magnificent fortune, of the most puissant member of your house of nobles.

These, Sir, are my sentiments; and to them I subscribe my name: and were I a man of ability and consequence enough to address the public, with that name should they appear.

I am, &c.

OCCXCV.

To MR. HERON,
OF HERON.

[Of Patrick Heron, of Kerronghtree, something has been said in the notes on the Ballads which bear his name.]

Dumfries, 1794, or 1795.

Sir,

I enclose you some copies of a couple of political ballads; one of which, I believe, you have never seen. Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stew- artry—but—

"Who does the utmost that he can,
Does well, acts nobly, angels could do more."

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe, I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country.

To pillory on Parthenus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a prodigate juncto which has not only outraged virtue, but violated common decency; which, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry insincerity below their daring;—to unmask their fagitiatedness to the broadest day—to deliver such over to their merited fate, is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue. You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and, swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter, and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr. Syme showed me. At present my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at
least for two or three years. The statement is this—I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed of course. Then, a friend might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list; and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure with a decent competency, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honour to subscribe myself

R. B.

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CCXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP,
IN LONDON.

[In the correspondence of the poet with Mrs. Dunlop he rarely mentions Thomson's Collection of Songs, though his heart was set much upon it: in the Dunlop library there are many letters from the poet, it is said, which have not been published.]

Dumfries, 20th December, 1795.

I have been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country, and did not return until too late to answer your letter; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route; and now I know not what is become of you, or whether this may reach you at all. God grant that it may find you and yours in prospering health and good spirits! Do let me hear from you the soonest possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend Captain Miller, I shall every leisure hour, take up the pen, and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poetry, sermon or song. In this last article I have abounded of late. I have often introduced to you a superb publication of Scotch songs which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honour to preside over the Scotchian verse, as no less a personage than Peter Findar does over the English.

December 29th.

Since I began this letter, I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here, and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary, and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period when I shall be appointed in full form: a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

This is the season (New-year's day is now my date) of wishing; and mine are most fervently offered up for you! May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged, is my wish for my own sake, and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but other day I was a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast o'er my frame. With all my follies of youth, and I fear, a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had in early days religion strongly impressed on my mind. I have nothing to say to any one as to which sect he belongs to, or what creed he believes: but I look on the man, who is firmly persuaded of infinite wisdom and goodness, superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in his lot—'I felicitate such a man as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay, in the hour of difficulty, trouble, and distress; and a never-failing anchor of hope, when he looks beyond the grave.
January 12th.

You will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend, the Doctor, long ere this. I hope he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I dare say for the hundred and fiftieth time, his View of Society and Manners; and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of anybody but Dr. Moore. By the bye, you have deprived me of Zulucos, remember that, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.1

* * * * * * * * B. B.

COXXXVI.

ADDRESS OF THE SCOTCH DISTILLERS

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

[This ironical letter to the prime minister was found among the papers of Burns.]

SIR,

While purry burgesses crowd your gate, sweating under the weight of heavy addresses, permit us, the quondam distillers in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, to address you, not with venal approbation, but with fraternal condensation; not as what you are just now, or for some time have been; but as what, in all probability, you will shortly be. We shall have the merit of not deserting our friends in the day of their calamity, and you will have the satisfaction of perusing at least one honest address. You are well acquainted with the dissection of human nature; nor do you need the assistance of a fellow-creature's bosom to inform you, that man is always a selfish, often a pernicious being. This assertion, however the hasty conclusions of superficial observation may doubt of it, or the raw inexperience of youth may deny it, those who make the fatal experiment we have done, will feel. You are a statesman, and consequently are not ignorant of the traffic of these corporation compliments—the little great man who drives the borough to market, and the very great man who buys the borough in that market, they two do the whole business; and you well know they, likewise, have their price. With that sullen disdain which you can so well assume, rise, illustrious Sir, and spurn these hireling efforts of venal stupidity. At best they are the compliments of a man's friends on the morning of his execution: they take a decent farewell, resign you to your fate, and hurry away from your approaching hour.

If fame say true, and omens be not very much mistaken, you are about to make your exit from that world where the sun of gladness gilds the paths of prosperous man: permit us, great Sir, with the sympathy of fellow-feeling to hail your passage to the realms of ruin.

Whether the sentiment proceed from the selfishness or cowardice of mankind is immaterial; but to point out to a child of misfortune those who are still more unhappy, is to give him some degree of positive enjoyment. In this light, Sir, our downfall may be again useful to you: though not exactly in the same way, it is not perhaps the first time it has gratified your feelings. It is true, the triumph of your evil star is exceedingly [despiteful. At an age when others are the votaries of pleasure, or underlings in business, you had attained the highest wish of a British statesman; and with the ordinary date of human life, what a prospect was before you! Deeply rooted in Royal favour, you overshadowed the land. The birds of passage, which follow ministerial sunshine through every clime of political faith and manners, flocked to your branches; and the beasts of the field (the lordly possessors of hills and valleys) crowded under your shade. "But behold a watchet, a holy one, came down from heaven, and cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches!" A blow from an unthought-of quarter, one of those terrible accidents which peculiarly mark the hand of Omnipoetry, overest your career, and laid all your fancied honours in the dust. But turn your eyes, Sir, to the tragic scenes of our fate:—an ancient nation, that for many ages had gallantly maintained the unequal struggle for independence with her much more powerful neighbour, at last agrees to a union which should ever after make them one people. In consideration of certain circumstances, it was covenanted that the former should enjoy a stipulated alleviation in her share of the publis
burdens, particularly in that branch of the revenue called the Excise. This just privilege has of late given great umbrage to some interested, powerful individuals of the more potent part of the empire, and they have spared no wicked pains, under insidious pretexts, to subvert what they dared not openly to attack, from the dread which they yet entertained of the spirit of their ancient enemies.

In this conspiracy we fell; nor did we alone suffer, our country was deeply wounded. A number of (we will say) respectable individuals, largely engaged in trade, where we were not only useful, but absolutely necessary to our country in her dearest interests; we, with all that was near and dear to us, were sacrificed without remorse, to the infernal deity of political expediency! We fell to gratify the wishes of dark envy, and the views of unprincipled ambition! Your foes, Sir, were avowed; were too brave to take an ungenerous advantage; you fell in the face of day.—On the contrary, our enemies, to complete our overthrow, contrived to make their guilt appear the villany of a nation.—Your downfall only drags with you your private friends and partisans: in our misery are more or less involved the most numerous and most valuable part of the community—all those who immediately depend on the cultivation of the soil, from the landlord of a province, down to his lowest bond.

Allow us, Sir, yet further, just to hint at another rich vein of comfort in the dreary regions of adversity;—the gratulations of an approving conscience. In a certain great assembly, of which you are a distinguished member, panegyrics on your private virtues have so often wounded your delicacy, that we shall not distress you with anything on the subject. There is, however, one part of your public conduct which our feelings will not permit us to pass in silence: our gratitude must trespass on your modesty; we mean, worthy Sir, your whole behaviour to the Scotch Distillers.—In evil hours, when obtrusive recollection presses bitterly on the sense, let that, Sir, come like an healing angel, and speak the peace to your soul which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,
Your sympathizing fellow-sufferers,

And grateful humble servants,

JOHN BAILEY CORN.—Press.

TO THE HON. PROVOST, BAILIES, AND TOWN COUNCIL OF DUMFRIES.

(The Provost and Bailies complied at once with the modest request of the poet: both Jackson and Steig, who were heads of the town by turns, were men of taste and feeling.)

GENTLEMEN,

The literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools, as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger, with my large family, and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honour of making me an honorary Burgess.—Will you allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far, as to put me on a footing of a real freeman of the town, in the schools?

If you are so very kind as to grant my request, it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where I can officially serve you; and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your devoted humble servant,

R. B.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

[Mrs. Riddel was, like Burns, a well-wisher to the great cause of human liberty, and lamented with him the excesses of the French Revolution.]

Dumfries, 20th January, 1796.

I CANNOT express my gratitude to you, for allowing me a longer perusal of “Anacharsis.” In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obligation you have laid us under. Indeed to me the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society; as “Anacharsis” is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the muse.

The health you wished me in your morning’s card, is, I think, flown from me for ever. I
have not been able to leave my bed to-day till about an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend, and I am ill able to go in quest of him.

The muse has not quite forsaken me. The following detached stanza I intend to interweave in some disastrous tale of a shepherd.

R. B.

— — — —

COCXXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

[It seems that Mrs. Dunlop regarded the conduct of Burns, for some months, with displeasure, and withheld or delayed her usual kind and charming communications.]

Dumfries, 31st January, 1796.

These many months you have been two packets in my debt—what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly-valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess. Alas! Madam, ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep in the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

"When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the dream, the married sight,
And shuts, for ever shuts! life's doubtful day."

R. B.

— — — —

COCXXX

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Cromek informed me, on the authority of Mrs. Burns, that the "handsome, elegant present" mentioned in this letter, was a common worsted shawl.]

February, 1796.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. Burns, and for my remaining volume of P. Pindar. Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo, with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much.

Awa! wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms.¹

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs I dislike one thing, the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady: but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad. Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose. What you once mentioned of "axen locks" is just: they cannot enter into an elegant description of beauty. Of this also again—God bless you!²

R. B.

— — — —

COCXXXI.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[It is seldom that painting speaks in the spirit of poetry. Burns perceived some of the blemishes of Allan's illustrations: but at that time little nature and less elegance entered into the embellishments of books.]

April, 1796.

Alas! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams I have sat and wept" almost ever since I wrote you last; I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Ferguson,

"Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my howff, and where

¹ Song CCLXVI.

² Our poet never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris.—Mr. Thomson.
our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan's etchings. "Woo'd an' married an' a," is admirable! The grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire "Turnspike." What I like least is "Jenny said to Joe!" Besides the female being in her appearance ** ** **, if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathise with him. Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a sad subject. R. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

The genius of the poet triumphed over pain and woe,—his last songs are as tender and as true as any of his early compositions.

My dear Sir,

I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—"Here's a health to them that's a'wa', hiney," but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses, and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it.

[Here follow the first three stanzas of the song, beginning,  
Here's a health to ane I love dear;  
the fourth was found among the poet's MSS. after his death.]

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Mr. Lewars, whom the poet introduces to Thomson, was a mother granger, and a kind, warm-hearted gentleman. Jessie Lewars was his sister, and at this time but in her teens.]

This will be delivered by Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him: and if you have a spare half-hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the originals or copies. I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying goat—a sad business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

R. B.

TO MRS. RIDDLE.

Who had desired him to go to the Birth-Day Assembly on that day to show his loyalty.

[This is the last letter which the poet wrote to this accomplished lady.]

Dumfries, 4th June, 1796.

I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Rack'd as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Baal-am—"Come, curse me Jacob; and come, defy me Israel!" So say I—Come, curse me that east wind; and come, defy me the north! Would you have me in such circumstances copy you out a love-song?

I may perhaps see you on Saturday, but I will not be at the ball.—Why should I? "mam delights not me, nor woman either!" Can you supply me with the song, "Let us all be unhappy together?"—do if you can, and oblige, je pauvre miserable

R. B.
TO MR. CLARKE,
SCHOOLMASTER, FOR FAR.

[Who will say, after reading the following distressing letter, lately come to light, that Burns did not die in great poverty?]

Dumfries, 26th June, 1796.

My dear Clarke,

[Still, still the victim of affliction! Were you to see the emaciated figure who now holds the pen to you, you would not know your old friend. Whether I shall ever get about again, is only known to Him, the Great Unknown, whose creature I am. Alas, Clarke! I begin to fear the worst.]

As to my individual self, I am tranquil, and would despise myself, if I were not; but Burns's poor widow, and half-a-dozen of his dear little ones—helpless orphans!—there I am weak as a woman's tear. Enough of this! 'Tis half of my disease.

I duly received your last, enclosing the note. It came extremely in time, and I am much obliged by your punctuality. Again I must request you to do me the same kindness. Be so very good, as, by return of post, to enclose me another note. I trust you can do it without inconvenience, and it will seriously oblige me. If I must go, I shall leave a few friends behind me, whom I shall regret while consciousness remains. I know I shall live in their remembrance. Adieu, dear Clarke. That I shall ever see you again, is, I am afraid, highly improbable.

R. B.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON,
EDINBURGH.

[In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of a work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed gratuitously no less than one hundred and eighty-four original, admired, and collected songs! The editor has seen one hundred and eighty transcribed by his own hand, for the "Museum."—Crowe. Will it be believed that this "humble request" of Burns was not complied with! The work was intended as a present to Jessie Lewars.]

Dumfries, 4th July, 1796.

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that serenity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia. In the meantime let us finish what we have so well begun.

You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the poet to other and far more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of sentiment! However, hope is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. Your work is a great one; and now that it is finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the "Scots Musical Museum." If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first fay, as I am anxious to have it soon.

The gentleman, Mr. Lewars, a particular friend of mine, will bring out any proofs (if they are ready) or any message you may have. I am extremely anxious for your work, as indeed I am for everything concerning you, and your welfare.

Farewell.

R. B.

P. S. You should have had this when Mr. Lewars called on you, but his saddle-bags miscarried.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

[Few of the last requests of the poet were effectual: Clarke, it is believed, did not send the second note he wrote for: Johnson did not send the copy of the Museum]
Dear Brother,  

It will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. I have been a week at seabathing, and I will continue there, or in a friend's house in the country, all the summer. God keep my wife and children: if I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months, partly from too much thoughtlessness as to expense, when I came to town, that will cut out much on the little I leave them in your hands. Remember me to my mother.

Yours,

R.B.

TO MR. JAMES ARMOUR,  
MASON, MACOLINE.

[The original letter is now in a safe sanctuary, the hands of the poet's son, Major James Glencairn Burns.]

July 10th [1796.]

For Heaven's sake, and as you value the [w]elfare of your daughter and my wife, do, my dearest Sir, write to Fife, to Mrs. Armour to come if possible. My wife thinks she can yet reckon upon a fortnight. The medical people order me, as I value my existence, to fly to seabathing and country-quarters, so it is ten thousand chances to one that I shall not be within a dozen miles of her when her hour comes. What a situation for her, poor girl, without a single friend by her on such a serious moment.

I have now been a week at salt-water, and though I think I have got some good by it, yet I have some secret fears that this business will be dangerous if not fatal.

Your most affectionate son,

R.B.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

[This letter contained heavy news for Gilbert Burns: the loss of a brother whom he dearly loved and admired, was not all, though the worst.]

TO MRS. BURNS.

[See-bathing; I have heard skilful men say, was injudicious: but it was felt that Burns was on his way to the]
grave, and as he desired to try the influence of sea-water, as well as sea-air, his wishes were not opposed.

My dearest Love,

I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her, and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday.

Your affectionate husband,

B. B.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

("The poet had the pleasure of receiving a satisfactory explanation of this lady's silence," says Carne, "and an assurance of the continuance of her friendship to his widow and children.")

Brow, Saturday, 12th July, 1796.

MADAM.

I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that bourne whence no traveller returns. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship, dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart.

Farewell!!!

B. B.

TO MR. THOMSON.

[Thomson instantly complied with the dying poet's request, and transmitted the exact sum which he requested, viz. five pounds, by return of post: he was afraid of offending the pride of Burns, otherwise he would, he says, have sent a larger sum. He has not, however, told us how much he sent to the all but despo-
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

language to you, O do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curt command.

I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up; but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [require] your advice.

Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post;—save me from the horrors of a jail!

My compliments to my friend James, and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible I dare not look it over again.

Farewell. R. B.

TO JAMES GRACIE, ESQ.

JAMES Gracie was, for some time, a banker in Dem free: his eldest son, a fine, high-spirited youth, fell by a rifle-ball in America, when leading the troops to the attack on Washington.

Brow, Wednesday Morning, 16th July, 1793.

My dear Sir,

It would [be] doing high injustice to this place not to acknowledge that my rheumatisms have derived great benefit from it already; but alas! my loss of appetite still continues. I shall not need your kind offer this week, and I return to town the beginning of next week, it not being a tide-week. I am detaining a man in a burning hurry.

So God bless you. R. B.

REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONGS AND BALLADS.

[The following Strictures on Scottish Song exist in the handwriting of Burns, in the interleaved copy of Johnson's Musical Museum, which the poet presented to Captain Riddell, of Frier's Caves; on the death of Mrs. Riddell, these precious volumes passed into the hands of her niece, Eliza Bayley, of Manchester, who kindly permitted Mr. Crook to transcribe and publish them in the Reliques.]

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.

This Highland Queen, music and poetry, was composed by Mr. M'Vicar, purser of the Solebay man-of-war.—This I had from Dr. Blacklock.

BESS THE GAWKIE.

This song shows that the Scottish muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald, as I have good reason to believe that the verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen. It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scotch taste. We have few pastoral compositions, I mean the pastoral of nature, that are equal to this.

OH, OPEN THE DOOR, LORD GREGORY.

It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries-shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of these countries. This, I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called, both by tradition and in printed collections, "The Lass of Lochroyan," which I take to be Lochroyan, in Galloway.

THE BANKS OF THE TweED.

This song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the ap-
pellerion of Anglo-Scottish productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.

THE BEDS OF SWEET ROSES.

This song, as far as I know, for the first time appears here in print.—When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayrshire. I remember to have heard those fanatices, the Buchanites, sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.

ROSLIN CASTLE.

These beautiful verses were the production of a Richard Hewit, a young man that Dr. Blacklock, to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, kept for some years as an amanuensis. I do not know who is the author of the second song to the tune. Tyler, in his amusing history of Scots music, gives the air to Oswald; but in Oswald’s own collection of Scots tunes, where he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.

SAW YE JOHNIE CUMMIN’ QUO’ SHE.

This song, for genuine humour in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.

CLOUT THE CALDBRON.

A tradition is mentioned in the “Bees,” that the second Bishop Chisholm, of Dunblane, used to say, that if he were going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way as to hear “Clout the Caldbron” played.

I have met with another tradition, that the old song to this tune,

“Hae ye onie pots or pana,
Or onie broken chalners,”

was composed on one of the Kenmure family, in the cavalier times; and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of

“The blacksmith and his apron,”

which from the rhythm, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune.

SAW YE MY PEGGY.

This charming song is much older, and in deed superior to Ramsay’s verses, “The Toast,” as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit, it is not quite ladies’ reading.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear.

“Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie
Linkin’ o’er the len?”

High killed was she,
High killed was she,
High killed was she,
Her coat aboon her knee.

What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
That ane may ken her be’?

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be old verses. The two songs in Ramsay, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the fire-side circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd’s mouth. Ramsay, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.

THE FLOWERS OF EDINBURGH.

This song is one of the many effusions of Scotia Jacobitism.—The title “Flowers of Edinburgh,” has no manner of connexion with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish muse were all Jacobites.—I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps anybody living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyrical reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick; while there are hundreds satirizing them.—This may be thought no panegyrical on the Scots Poets, but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment to have it said, that my heart ran before my head,—and surely the gallant though
unfortunate house of Stewart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme

JAMIE GAY.

JAMIE GAY is another and a tolerable Anglo-Scottish piece.

MY DEAR JOCKIE.

ANOTHER Anglo-Scottish production.

FYE, GAE RUB HER O’ER WI’ STRAE.

It is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay’s beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of nature; and poetry, particularly songs, are always less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day among people who know nothing of Ramsay’s verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard:

"Gie ye meet a bonnie lassie,
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
But gie ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o’er wi’ strae.

Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
Fye, gae rub her o’er wi’ strae:
An’ gie ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gae rub her o’er wi’ strae."

THE LASS O’ LIVISTON.

This old song, in three eight-line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humour; but it is rather unfit for insertion.—It begins,

"The Bonnie lass o’ Liviston,
Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
And she has written in her contract
To lie her lane, to lie her lane."

THE LAST TIME I CAME O’ER THE MOOR.

Ramsay found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming

air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.

JOCKIE’S GRAY BREEKS.

Though this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well-known tune and song in the north of Ireland, called "The Weaver and his Shuttle O," which, though sung much quicker, is every note the very tune.

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.

ANOTHER, but very pretty Anglo-Scottish piece.

THE LASS OF PATIE’S MILL.

In Sinclair’s Statistical Account of Scotland, this song is localized (a verb I must use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the north of Scotland, and likewise is claimed by Ayrshire.—The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it from the last John, Earl of Loudon. The then Earl of Loudon, and father to Earl John before mentioned, had Ramsay at Loudon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near New-Mills, at a place called Patie’s Mill, they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song.—Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.

THE TURNIMSPIKE.

There is a stanza of this excellent song for local humour, omitted in this set.—Where I have placed the asterisks.

"They tak the horse then by te head,
And tae tey mak her stan’, man;
Me tell tem, me has seen te day,
Tey no had sic comman’, man."

HIGHLAND LADDIE.

As this was a favourite theme with our later Scottish muse, there are several airs and songs
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

of that name. That which I take to be the oldest, is to be found in the "Musical Museum," beginning, "I have been at Crochick-dun." One reason for my thinking so is, that Oswald has it in his collection, by the name of "The Auld Highland Laddie." It is also known by the name of "Jinglan Johnie," which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be an earlier song than Jacobite times. As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasants by the name of "Highland Laddie;" while everybody knows "Jinglan Johnie." The song begins:

"Jinglan John, the meikle man,
He met wit' a lass was blithe and bony."

Another "Highland Laddie" is also in the "Musuem," vol. v., which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus—"O my bonie Highland lad," &c. It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus; and has humour in its composition—it is an excellent, but somewhat licentious song. It begins:

"As I cam o'er Caimie mount,
And down among the blooming heather."

This air, and the common "Highland Laddie," seem only to be different sets.

Another "Highland Laddie," also in the "Musuem," vol. v., is the tune of several Jacobite fragments. One of these old songs to it, only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines—

"Where has ye been a day,
Bonis laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin Maggie, courtin Maggie."

Another of this name is Dr. Arne's beautiful air, called the new "Highland Laddie."

THE GENTLE SWAIN.

To sing such a beautiful air to such execrable verses, is downright prostitution of common sense! The Scots verses indeed are tolerable.

WE STOLE MY TENDER HEART AWAY.

This is an Anglo-Scottish production, but by no means a bad one.

FAIREST OF THE FAIR.

It is too barefaced to take Dr. Percy's charming song, and by means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer to pass it for a Scots song.—I was not acquainted with the editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else, had I known in time, I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity.

THE BLAITHRIE O'T.

The following is a set of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman sung it to me, and I picked it up, every word, at first hearing.

"O Willy, weel I mind, I leant you my hand
To sing you a song which you did me command;
But my memory's so bad I had almost forgot
That you called it the gear and the blaithrie o't."

I'll not sing about confusion, delusion or pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride,
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear and the blaithrie o't.—

Tho' my lassie has nae scarlets or silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon the throne;
I wed rather has my lassie, tho' she cam in her smock.
Than a princess wi' the gear and the blaithrie o't.—

Tho' we has nae horses or messenies at command,
We will toil on our foot, and we'll work wi' our hand;
And when weared without rest, we'll find it sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear and the blaithrie o't.—

If we has any babies, we'll count them as lent;
Has we less, has we mair, we will be content;
For they say they has mair pleasure that wins be great,
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blaithrie o't.—

I'll not meddle wi' th' affairs of the kirk or the queen;
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink, let them swim;
On your kirk I'll never consecrate, but I'll hold it still remote;
See this for the gear and the blaithrie o't."

MAY EVE, OR KATE OF ABERDEEN.

"Kates of Aberdeen" is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the player; of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital. A fat dignitary of the church coming past Cunningham one Sunday, as the poor poet was busy plying a fishing-rod in some stream near Durham, his native country, his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very se
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very for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that insidious gentleness of manners which was his peculiar characteristic, replied, that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, "as he had no dinner to eat, but what lay at the bottom of that pool." This, Mr. Woods, the player, who knew Cunningham well, and esteemed him much, assured me was true.

TWEED SIDE.

In Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, he tells us that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentlemen of his acquaintance; which songs are marked with the letters D. C. &c. — Old Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous Queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C, in the Tea-table, were the composition of a Mr. Crawford, of the house of Achnames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France. — As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence, the beautiful song of Tweed Side is Mr. Crawford's, and indeed does great honour to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates was a Mary Stewart, of the Castle-Milk family, afterwards married to a Mr. John Ritchie.

I have seen a song, calling itself the original Tweed Side, and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester. It consisted of two stanzas, of which I still recollect the first—

"When Maggy and I was acquainted,
I carried my noddle fu' his;
Nae lint white on a' the green plain,
Nor gowispink nae happy as me;
But I saw her me fair and I loo'd:
I wou'd, but I cam nea' great speed;
So now I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed."—

THE POSTY.

It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his Roslin Castle on the modulation of this air. — In the second part of Oswald, in the three first bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed the three first bars of the old air; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit. — The following is a specimen:

"There was a pretty May, and a milkkin she went;
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair;
And she has met a young man a comin o'er the bank,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

O where are ye gosig, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Unto the yowes a milkkin, kind air, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

What if I gang along with thee, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Was I be aught the worse o' that, kind air, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee, fair May.

MARY'S DREAM.

The Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary Macaghie, daughter to the Laird of Airds, in Galloway. The poet was a Mr. John Low, who likewise wrote another beautiful song, called Pompey's Ghost. — I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, to a lady in Scotland. — By the strain of the verses, it appeared that they allude to some love affair.

THE MAID THAT TENDS THE GOATS.

BY MR. DUDERSON.

This Dudgeon is a respectable farmer's son in Berwickshire.

I WISH MY LOVE WERE IN A MIRE.

I never heard more of the words of this old song than the title.

ALLAN WATER.

This Allan Water, which the composer of the music has honoured with the name of the air, I have been told is Allan Water, in Strathallan.

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

This is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any other language. — The two lines,

"And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak?"

as well as the two preceding ones, are unequalled almost by anything I ever heard or read: and the lines,
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MARY SCOTT, THE FLOWER OF YARROW.
Ms. Robertson, in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says, that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dryhope, and married into the Hardman family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot, of Stobbes, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, and it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times. The father-in-law agrees to keep his daughter for some time after the marriage; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas moon!

DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.
I have been informed, that the tune of "Down the burn, Davie," was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood hounds, belonging to the Laird of Riddell, in Tweeddale.

BLINK O'ER THE BURN, SWEET BETTY.
The old words, all that I remember, are,—

"Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
It is a sauld winter night:
It rains, it hails, it thunders,
The moon she gies me light:
It's a' for the sake o' sweet Betty,
That ever I tist my way;
Sweet, let me lie beyond thee
Until it be break o' day.—"

O, Betty will bake my bread,
And Betty will brew my ale,
And Betty will be my love,
When I come over the dae!
Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me,
And while I have life, dear lassie,
My ain sweet Betty thou'st be."
JOHN HAY'S BONNIE LASSIE.

JOHN HAY's "Bonnie Lassie" was daughter of John Hay, Earl or Marquis of Tweeddale, and late Countess Dowager of Roxburgh. She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, some time between the years 1720 and 1740.

THE BONIE BRUCKET LASSIE.

The two first lines of this song are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the Museum marked T., are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of Balloon Tytler, from his having projected a balloon; a mortal, who, though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and kneebuckles as unlike as George-by-the-grace-of-God, and Solomon-the-son-of-David; yet that same unknown drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot's pompous Encyclopaedia Britannica, which he composed at half a guinea a week!

SIE MERRY AS WE TWA HA'KE BEEN.

This song is beautiful. The chorus in particular is truly pathetic. I never could learn anything of its author.

CHORUS.

"Sae merry as we twa ha' been,
Sae merry as we twa ha' been;
My heart is like for to break,
When I think on the days we ha' seen."

THE BANKS OF FORTH.

This air is Oswald's.

THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

This is another beautiful song of Mr. Crawford's composition. In the neighbourhood of Traquair, tradition still shows the old "Bush;" which, when I saw it, in the year 1787, was composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls "The New Bush."

CROMLET'S LILT.

The following interesting account of this plaintive dirge was communicated to Mr. Biddel by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee.

"In the latter end of the sixteenth century, the Chisoles were proprietors of the estate of Cromlecks (now possessed by the Drummonds). The eldest son of that family was very much attached to a daughter of Sterling of Ardoch, commonly known by the name of Fair Helen of Ardoch.

"At that time the opportunities of meeting betwixt the sexes were more rare, consequently more sought after than now; and the Scottish ladies, far from priding themselves on extensive literature, were thought sufficiently book-learned if they could make out the Scriptures in their mother-tongue. Writing was entirely out of the line of female education. At that period the most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or found a grave, in France. Cromlus, when he went abroad to the war, was obliged to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay-brother of the monastery of Dumbland, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cromleck, and near Ardoch. This man, unfortunately, was deeply sensible of Helen's charms. He artfully prepossessed her with stories to the disadvantage of Cromlus; and, by misinterpreting or keeping up the letters and messages intrusted to his care, he entirely irritated both. All connexion was broken off betwixt them; Helen was inconsolable, and Cromlus has left behind him, in the ballad called 'Cromlet's Lilt,' a proof of the elegance of his genius, as well as the steadiness of his love.

"When the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen's sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover: Helen was obdurate: but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother, with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands—she submitted, rather than consented to the ceremony; but there her compliance ended; and, when forcibly put into bed, she started quite frantic from it, screaming out, that after three gentle taps on the wainscot, at the bed-head, she heard Cromlus's voice, crying, 'Helen, Helen, mind me!' Cromlus soon after coming home, the treachery of the confidant was die...
covered,—her marriage disannulled,—and Helen became Lady Cromlecks."

N. B. Marg. Murray, mother to these thirty-one children, was daughter to Murray of Strewn, one of the seventeen sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the Tutor of Ardoch, died in the year 1716, aged 111 years.

MY DEARIE, IF THOU DIE.

Another beautiful song of Crawford's.

SHE ROSE AND LEFT ME IN.

The old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this; but somebody, I believe it was Ramsay, took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indecencies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.

GO TO THE EWE-BIGHTS, MARION.

I am not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland. There is a song, apparently as ancient as "Ewe-bights, Marion," which sings to the same tune, and is evidently of the North.—It begins thus:

"The Lord o' Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marjat, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen."

LEWIS GORDON.

This air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed,

"Tune of Tarry Woo."

Of which tune a different set has insensibly varied into a different air.—To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line,

'Tho' his back be at the wa',"

—must be very striking. It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song.

The supposed author of "Lewis Gordon" was a Mr. Geddes, priest, at Shenval, in the Ayrshire.

O HONE A RIE.

Dr. Blacklock informs me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.

I'LL NEVER LEAVE THEE.

This is another of Crawford's songs, but I do not think in his happiest manner.—What an absurdity, to join such names as Adonis and Mary together!

CORR RIGS ARE BONIE.

All the old words that ever I could meet to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus:

"O corn rigs and 7ye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie;
And whare'er you meet a bonie lass,
Preen up her cockernyon."

THE MUCKING OF GEORDIE'S BYRE.

The chorus of this song is old; the rest is the work of Balloon Tytler.

BIDE YE YET.

There is a beautiful song to this tune, beginning,

"Alas, my son, you little know,"—

which is the composition of Miss Jenny Graham, of Dumfries.

WAUKIN O' THE FAULD.

There are two stanzas still sung to this tune, which I take to be the original song whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the Gentle Shepherd.—It begins

"O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld."

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of this old fragment is not equal to its wit and humour.

TRANENT-MUIR

"TRANENT-MUIR," was composed by a Mr. Skirving, a very worthy respectable farmer near Haddington. I have heard the anecdote often, that Lieut. Smith, whom he mentions in the ninth stanza, came to Haddington after the
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publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirling to meet him at Haddington, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in his song. "Gang away back," said the honest farmer, "and tell Mr. Smith that I have no leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here, and I'll tak a look o' him, and if I think I'm fit to fech him, I'll fech him; and if no, I'll do as he did—I'll rin awa."

TO THE WEAVERS GIN YE GO.

The chorus of this song is old, the rest of it is mine. Here, once for all, let me apologize for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together anything near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed whose every performance is excellent.

POLWARTH ON THE GREEN.

The author of "Polwarth on the Green" is Capt. John Drummond McGregor, of the family of Bochradie.

STREPHON AND LYDIA.

The following account of this song I had from Dr. Blacklock.

The Strephon and Lydia mentioned in the song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of Beau Gibson. The lady was the "Gentle Jean," celebrated somewhere in Hamilton of Bangour's poems.—Having frequently met at public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connexion, Strephon was sent abroad with a commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthagena.

The author of this song was William Wallace, Esq. of Cairnhill, in Ayrshire.

I'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.

The chorus of this song is old. The rest of it, such as it is, is mine

M'PHERSON'S FAREWELL.

M'Pherson, a daring robber, in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be hanged at the assizes of Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own lament or farewell.

Gow has published a variation of this fine tune as his own composition, which he calls "The Princess Augusta."

MY JO, JANET.

Johnson, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humorous ballad.

THE SHEPHERD'S COMPLAINT.

The words by a Mr. R. Scott, from the town or neighbourhood of Biggar.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

I composed these stanzas standing under the falls of Aberfeldy, at or near Moness.

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE O.

This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My Highland lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature so ever blessed a man with generous love. After a very long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayer, where we spent the day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of autumn following she crossed the seas to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her last illness.

FIFE, AND A' THE LANDS ABOUT IT.

This song is Dr. Blacklock's. He, as well as I, often gave Johnson verses, trifling enough
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perhaps, but they served as a vehicle to the music.

WERE 'NA MY HEART LIGHT I WAD DIE.
Lord Hailes, in the notes to his collection of ancient Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of a Lady Grissel Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie, of Jerviswood.

THE YOUNG MAN'S DREAM.
This song is the composition of Balloon Tytler.

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.
This air is the composition of one of the worthiest and best-hearted men living—Allan Masterton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause.
To tell the matter-of-fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of ris la bagatelle.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.
The chorus of this is old; the two stanzas are mine.

THE TEARS OF SCOTLAND.
Dr. Blacklock told me that Smollet, who was at the bottom a great Jacobite, composed these beautiful and pathetic verses on the infamous depredations of the Duke of Cumberland after the battle of Culloden.

WHAT WILL I DO GIN MY HOGGIE DIE.
Dr. Walker, who was minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told the following anecdote concerning this air.—He said, that some gentlemen, riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Moss Platt, when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called "What will I do gin my Hoggie die?" No person, except a few females at Moss Platt, knew this fine old tune, which in all probability would have been lost had not one of the gentlemen, who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down.

I DREAM'D I LAY WHERE FLOWERS WERE SPRINGING.
These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.

AH! THE POOR SHEPHERD'S MOURNFUL FATE.
Tune—"Gallashiels,"
The old title, "Sour Plums o' Gallashiels," probably was the beginning of a song to this air, which is now lost.
The tune of Gallashiels was composed about the beginning of the present century by the Laird of Gallashiels' piper.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.
These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James McKitrick Adair, Esq., physician. She is sister to my worthy friend Gavila Hamilton, of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of the Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Herveyston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work.

MILL, MILL O.
The original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay's is still extant.—It runs thus,

CHORUS.
"The mill, mill O, and the kill, kill O,
And the coogin o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack and the sieve, and a' she did leave
And danc'd the miller's reel O—"
As I came down you waternside,
And by you shellin-hill O,
There I spied a bonnie bonnie lass,
And a' lass that I love'd right weel O."

• • ••
WE RAN AND THEY RAN.

The author of "We ran and they ran"—was a Rev. Mr. Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Dee-side.

WALY, WALY.

Is the west country I have heard a different edition of the second stanza.—Instead of the four lines, beginning with, "When cockle-shells, &c.," the other way ran thus:

"O wher'fore need I buss my head,
Or wher'fore need I kuss my hair,
Sin' my sause love has me forsook,
And says, he'll never love me mair."

DUNCAN GRAY.

Dr. Blacklock informed me that he had often heard the tradition, that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.

DUMBARTON DRUMS.

This is the last of the West-Highland airs; and from it over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweed-side, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or transaction in that part of Scotland.—The oldest Ayrshire reel, is Stewarton Lasses, which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, alias Lord Lyble; since which period there has indeed been local music in that country in great plenty.—Johnnie Faa is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive county of Ayr.

CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

This song is by the Duke of Gordon.—The old verses are,

"There's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And caustocks in Strathbogie;
When like lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my coggie.

Chorus.
My coggie, Sirs, my coggie, Sirs,
I cannot want my coggie;
I wadden gie my three-gir'd cap
For e'er a quene on Bogie.—

There's Johnnie Smith has got a wife,
That scrimp's his o' his coggie,
If she were mine, upon my life
I wad doon her in a bogie."

FOR LAKE OF GOLD.

The country girls in Ayrshire, instead of the line—
"She was forsook for a great duke,"
say,
"For Athole's duke she was forsook;"
which I take to be the original reading.

These were composed by the late Dr. Austin, physician at Edinburgh.—He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to have been married; but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the doctor.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO MY TRUE LOVE, &c.

This song is Dr. Blacklock's. He told me that tradition gives the air to our James IV. of Scotland.

HEY TUTTI TAITI.

I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

I composed these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod, of Rasa, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon; who shot himself out of sheer heart-break at some mortifications he suffered, owing to the deranged state of his finances.

TAK YOUR AULD CLOAK ABOUT YE.

A part of this old song, according to the English set of it, is quoted in Shakspeare.

YE GODS, WAS STREP'N'S PICTURE BLES'T!

Tune—"Fourteenth of October.

The title of this air shows that it alludes to the famous King Crispian, the patron of the honourable corporation of shoemakers.—St. Crispian's day falls on the fourteenth of October old style, as the old proverb tells:

"On the fourteenth of October
Was never a sutor sober."
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SINCE ROBB'D OF ALL THAT CHARM'D MY VIEWS.

The old name of this air is, "the Blossom o' the Raspberry." The song is Dr. Blacklock's.

YOUNG DAMON.

This air is by Oswald.

KIRK WAD LET ME BE.

Tradition in the western parts of Scotland tells that this old song, of which there are still three stanzas extant, once saved a covenanting clergyman out of a scrape. It was a little prior to the revolution, a period when being a Scotch covenanter was being a felon, that one of their clergy, who was at that time hunted by the merciless soldiery, fell in, by accident, with a party of the military. The soldiers were not exactly acquainted with the person of the reverend gentleman of whom they were in search; but from suspicious circumstances, they fancied that they had got one of that cloth and opprobrious persuasion among them in the person of this stranger. "Mase John" to extricate himself, assumed a freedom of manners, very unlike the gloomy strictness of his sect; and among other convivial exhibitions, sung (and some traditions say, composed on the spur of the occasion) "Kirk wad let me be," with such effect, that the soldiers swore he was a d—d honest fellow, and that it was impossible he could belong to those hellish conventicles; and so gave him his liberty.

The first stanza of this song, a little altered, is a favourite kind of dramatic interlude acted at country weddings, in the south-west parts of the kingdom. A young fellow is dressed up like an old beggar; a peruke, commonly made of carded tow, represents hoary locks; an old bonnet; a ragged plaid, or surcoat, bound with a straw rope for a girdle; a pair of old shoes, with straw ropes twisted round his ankles, as is done by shepherds in snowy weather: his face they disguise as like wretched old age as they can: in this plight he is brought into the wedding-house, frequently to the astonishment of strangers, who are not in the secret, and begins to sing—

"O, I am a silly auld man,
My name it is Auld Gleanie," &c

He is asked to drink, and by and bye to dance, which after some uncouth excuses he is prevailed on to do, the fiddler playing the tune, which here is commonly called "Auld Gleanie;" in short he is all the time so plied with liquor that he is understood to get intoxicated, and with all the ridiculous gesticulations of an old drunken beggar, he dances and staggers until he falls on the floor; yet still in all his riot, nay, in his rolling and tumbling on the floor, with some or other drunken motion of his body, he beats time to the music, till at last he is supposed to be carried out dead drunk.

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.

I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

I composed these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray. The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was the well-known Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lentrose; she was called, and very justly, "The Flower of Strathmora."

JOHNIE FAA, OR THE GYPSIE LADDIE.

The people in Ayrshire begin this song—

"The gypsies cam to my Lord Cassilis' fast."—

They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever yet saw in any printed copy. The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his lordship shut up his wayward spouse, and kept her for life.

TO DAUNTON ME.

The two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit:

"To dauntion me, to dauntion me,
O ken ye what it is that'll dauntion me?—
There's eighty-eight and eighty-nine,
And a' that I hae borne sinse isnae.
There's cess and pres and Presbytria,
I think it will do meikle for to dauntion me.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me
To see gude corn upon the rig,
And bonniest among the Whig,
And richt roar'd where right sud be,
I think it would do meikle for to wanton me.
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

THE BONNIE LASS MADE THE BED TO ME.

"The Bonnie Lass made the Bed to me," was composed on an amour of Charles II. when skulking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed une petite aventure with a daughter of the house of Portlethen, who was the "lass that made the bed to him":—two verses of it are,

"I kiss'd her lips met rosy red,
While the tear stood blinakin' in her eye;
I said, My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye ay shall make the bed to me.

She took her mother's holland sheets,
And made them a' inarks to me;
Blithe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me."

ABSENCE.

A song in the manner of Shenstone.
This song and air are both by Dr. Blacklock.

I HAD A HORSE AND I HAD NAE MAIR.

This story is founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectable farming family, who live in a place in the parish, I think, of Galston, called Bar-mill, was the luckless hero that "had a horse and had nae mair."—For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West-Highlands, where "he feed himself to a Highland Laird," for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard.—The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great-grandchild of our hero.

UP AND WARN A' WILLIE.

This edition of the song I got from Tom Neil, of facetious fame, in Edinburgh. The expression "Up and warn a' Willie," alludes to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland clan to arms. Not understanding this, the Lowlanders in the west and south say, "Up and warn them a'," &c.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruikshank, only child of my worthy friend Mr. William Cruikshank, of the High-School, Edinburgh. This air is by a David Sillar, quondam merchant, and now schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the Davis to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of the Cherry and the Slae.

AULD ROB MORRIS.

It is remark-worthy that the song of "Holy and Fairly," in all the old editions of it, is called "The Drunken Wife o' Galloway," which localises it to that country.

RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE.

The last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., writer to the signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan Corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments.

WHERE BRAVING ANGRY WINTER STORMS.

This song I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers, that was, now Mrs. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh.

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

This song I composed about the age of seven teen.

NANCY'S GHOST.

This song is by Dr. Blacklock.

TUNE YOUR FIDDLER, ETC.

This song was composed by the Rev. John Skinner, nonjuror clergyman at Linshart, near Peterhead. He is likewise author of "Tullochgorum," "Ewic' wi' the crooked Horn," "John o' Badenymond," &c., and what is of still more consequence, he is one of the worthiest of mankind. He is the author of an ecclesiastical history of Scotland. The air is by Mr. Marshall, butler to the Duke of Gordon; the first composer of strathspeys of the age. I have been told by somebody, who had it of Marshall himself, that he took the idea of his three most celebrated pieces, "The Marquis of Huntly's
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

Reel," his "Farewell," and "Miss Admiral Gordon's Reel," from the old air, "The German Lairdie"

has often told me that he composed this song
one day when his wife had been fretting o'er
their misfortunes.

GILL MORICE.

This plaintive ballad ought to have been
called Child Maurice, and not Gill Maurice. In
its present dress, it has gained immortal honour
from Mr. Home's taking from it the ground-
work of his fine tragedy of Douglas. But I am
of opinion that the present ballad is a modern
composition; perhaps not much above the age
of the middle of the last century; at least I
should be glad to see or hear of a copy of the
present words prior to 1650. That it was taken
from an old ballad, called "Child Maurice,"
now lost, I am inclined to believe; but the pre-
sent one may be classed with "Hardyknute,"
"Kenneth," "Duncan, the Laird of Wood-
houselie," "Lord Livingston," and "Binnorie,
"The Death of Monteith," and many other mo-

dern productions, which have been swallowed by
many readers as ancient fragments of old poems.
This beautiful plaintive tune was composed by
Mr. McGibbon, the selector of a collection of
Scots tunes.

In addition to the observations on Gill Morice,
I add, that of the songs which Captain Riddell
mentions, "Kenneth" and "Duncan" are juve-
nile compositions of Mr. McKenzie, "The Man
of Feeling,"—McKenzie's father showed them in
MS. to Dr. Blacklock, as the productions of his
son, from which the Doctor rightly prognosti-
cated that the young poet would make, in his
more advanced years, a respectable figure in
the world of letters.

This I had from Blacklock.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.

This tune is said to be the composition of
John McGill, fiddler, in Girvan. He called it
after his own name.

WHEN I UPON THY BOSOM LEAN.

This song was the work of a very worthy
factions old fellow, John Larpark, late of Dal-
fram, near Muirkirk: which little property he
was obliged to sell in consequence of some con-

connection as security for some persons concerned
in that vi'lin u' hubble THE AIR BANK.

Beware o' Bonnie Ann.

I composed this song out of compliment to
Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend
Allan Masterton, the author of the air of Strath-
aklan's Lament, and two or three others in this
work.

This is no mine ain house.

The first half stanza is old, the rest is Ram
say's. The old words are—

"This is no mine ain house,
My sin house, my sin house;
This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the biggin o't.
Bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
My door-cheeks, my door-cheeks;
Bread and cheese are my door-cheeks.
And pancakes the riggin o't.

Tune—"Highlander's Lament."

This oldest title I ever heard to this air, was,
"The Highland Watch's Farewell to Ireland."
The chorus I picked up from an old woman in
Dumbane; the rest of the song is mine.

THE HIGHLAND CHARACTER.

This tune was the composition of Gen. Reid,
and called by him "The Highland, or 42d
Regiment's March." The words are by Sir
Harry Erskine.

LEADER-HAUGHS AND YARROW.

There is in several collections, the old song of
"Leader-Haugh and Yarrow." It seems to
have been the work of one of our itinerant min-
strels, as he calls himself, at the conclusion of
his song, "Minstrel Burn."

THE TAILOR FELL THRO' THE BED,
THIMBLE AN' A'.

This is the march of the corporation of
tailors. The second and fourth stanzas are
mine.

Beware o' Bonnie Ann.
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

This is no my sin wean;
My sin wean, my sin wean;
This is no my sin wean,
I ken by the greezie o’t.
I’ll tak the curchie aff my head,
Aff my head, aff my head;
I’ll tak the curchie aff my head,
And row’t about the foeties o’t.”

The tune is an old Highland air, called
“Shuan truish willighan.”

LADDIE, LIE NEAR ME.
This song is by Blacklock.

THE GARDENER AND HIS PAIDLE.
This air is the “Gardener’s March.” The title of the song only is old; the rest is mine.

THE DAY RETURNS, MY BOSOM BURNS.
Tune.—“Seventh of November.”
I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world, Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddel, and his lady. At their fire-side I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life.

THE GABERLUNZIE MAN.
The “Gaberlunzie Man” is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the Fifth. Mr. Callander, of Craigforth, published some years ago an edition of “Christ’s Kirk on the Green,” and the “Gaberlunzie Man,” with notes critical and historical. James the Fifth is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady parish, and that it was suspected by his contemporaries, that in his frequent excursions to that part of the country, he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery. Three favourite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant (one of them resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighbourhood), were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following advice to his majesty, from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount, Lord Lyon.

And ride not on an Ewe-want,
For gawing o’ your gear.”

MY BONNIE MARY.
This air is Oswald’s; the first half stanza of the song is old, the rest mine.

THE BLACK EAGLE.
This song is by Dr. Fordyce, whose merits as a prose writer are well known.

JAMIE, COME TRY ME.
This air is Oswald’s; the song mine.

THE LAZY MIST.
This song is mine.

JOHNNIE COPE.
This satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope’s defeat at Preston Pans, in 1746, when he marched against the Clans. The air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was,

“Will ye go the coals in the morning.”

I LOVE MY JEAN.
This air is by Marshall; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. N. B. It was during the honeymoon.

CEASE, CEASE, MY DEAR FRIEND, TO EXPLORE.
This song is by Dr. Blacklock; I believe, but am not quite certain, that the air is his too.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.
This air was formerly called, “The bridegroom greets when the sun gangs down.” The words are by Lady Ann Lindsay, of the Balcarras family.
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

DONALD AND FLORA.
This is one of those fine Gaelic tunes, preserved from time immemorial in the Hebrides; they seem to be the groundwork of many of our finest Scots pastoral tunes. The words of this song were written to commemorate the unfortunate expedition of General Burgoyne in America, in 1777.

O WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.
This air is Oswald's; the song I made out of compliment to Mrs. Burns.

THE CAPTIVE ROBIN.
This air is called "Robie donna Gorsach."

THERE'S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY.
This air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his lament for his brother. The first half-stand of the song is old; the rest mine.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.
The first half-stand of this song is old; the rest mine.

CA' THE EWES AND THE KNOWES.
This beautiful song is in true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were in print before.

THE BRIDAL O'T.
This song is the work of a Mr. Alexander Ross, late schoolmaster at Lochlee; and author of a beautiful Scots poem, called "The Fortunate Shepherdess."

"They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,
They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,
For he grows brawner like day,
I hope we'll have abridal o't:
For yesternight ane harder game,
The heather at the side we'll o't,
He there wi' my man did mireen sound,
I hope we'll have a bridal o't."

As' we had but a bridal o't,
As' we had but a bridal o't,
We'd leave the rest unto good luck,
Aitho' there should be weel o't:
For bridal days are merry times,
And young folks like the coming o't,
And screech oers they bang up their rhymes,
And pipers they the buming o't.
The lasses like a bridal o't,
The lasses like a bridal o't,
Their braus maun be in rank and file,
Aitho' that they should guide ill o't:
The boddom o' the kist is thes,
Tum'd up into the innest o't,
The end that held the hecks see clean,
Is now become the keenest o't.
The bagester at the threasing o't,
The bagester at the threasing o't,
Afore it comes in fidgin' faln,
And ilk day's a cracking o't:
He'll sell his jerkin for a goats,
His linder for anither o't,
And e'er he want to clear his shot,
His stark'll pay the tither o't.
The pipers and the fiddlers o't,
The pipers and the fiddlers o't,
Can smell a bridal anco' far,
And like to be the middlers o't;
Fan I think and threefold they convorse:
Ilk ane envies the tither o't,
And wishes same but him slane
May ever see anither o't.
Fan they ha' done wi' eating o't,
Fan they ha' done wi' eating o't,
For dancing they gae to the green,
And ailsins to the beating o't:
He dances best that dances fast,
And loops at ilk reasing o't,
And claps his hands free hough to hough,
And faris about the feelings o't."

TODDEN HAME.
This is perhaps the first bottle song that ever was composed.

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.
This air is the composition of my friend Allan Masterton, in Edinburgh. I composed the verses on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoords leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate.

THE RANTIN' DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.
I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud.

1 For, when—the dialect of Angus.
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

THE SHEPHERD'S PREFERENCE.
This song is Dr. Blacklock's—"I don't know how it came by the name, but the oldest appellation of the air was, 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.' It has little affinity to the tune commonly known by that name.

THE BONIE BANKS OF AYR.
I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far as the road to Greencock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica. I meant it as my farewell dirge to my native land.

JOHN O' BADENYON.
This excellent song is the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner, at Linlithart.

"When first I cam to be a man
Of twenty years or so,
I thought myself a handsome youth,
And fain the world would know;
In best attire I stept abroad,
With spirits brisk and gay,
And here and there and everywhere,
Was like a morn in May;
No care had I nor fear of want,
But rambled up and down,
And for a beau I might have pass'd
In country or in town;
I still was pleas'd where'er I went,
And when I was alone,
I turn'd my pipe and pleas'd myself
Wit' John o' Badenyon.

Now in the days of youthful prime
A mistress I must find,
For love, I heard, gives one an air
And ev'n improved the mind:
On Phillipia fair above the rest
Kind fortune fixt my eyes,
Her piercing beauty struck my heart,
And she became my choice;
To Cupid now with hearty prayer
I offer'd many a vow;
And dance'd, and sung, and sigh'd, and swore,
As other lovers do;
But, when at last I breath'd my flame,
I found her cold as stone;
I left the jilt, and turn'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

When love had thus my heart beguil'd
With foolish hopes and vain,
To friendship's port I steer'd my course,
And laugh'd at love's pain
A friend I got by lucky chance
'Twas something like divine,
An honest friend's a precious gift,
And such a gift was mine:

And now, whatever might betide,
A happy man was I,
In any strait I knew to whom
I freely might apply;
A strait soon came: my friend I try'd:
He heard, and spurn'd my mean;
I by'd me home, and turn'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

Me thought I should be wiser next,
And would a prouder turn,
Began to doat on Johnny Wilks,
And cry up Parson Horns.
Their manly spirit I admir'd,
And praised their noble seal,
Who had with flaming tongue and pen
Maintain'd the public weal;
But ever a month or two had past,
I found myself betray'd,
"Twas set and party after all,
For at the stir they made;
At last I saw the factious knaves
Insult the very throne,
I cure'd them a', and turn'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon."

A WAUKRIFE MINNIE.
I picked up this old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale.—I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland.

"Where are you gaun, my bonie lass,
Where are you gaun, my hinnie,
She answer'd me right saucily,
An errand for my minnie.

O where live ye, my bonie lass,
O where live ye, my hinnie,
By you born-side, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But I foor up the glen at eve,
To see my bonie lassie;
And long before the gray morn cam,
She was as haut as a scree.

O weary fa' the waikrif minnie,
And the founart lay his crewin!
He waken'd the said wife free her sleep,
A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wot she raise,
And o'er the bed she brought her;
And wi' a mickle haste rung
She made her a weel pay'd dochter.

O fare thee well, my bonie lass!
O fare thee well, my hinnie!
Thou art a gay and a bonie lass,
But thou hast a waikrif minnie."

TULLOCHGORM.
This first of songs, is the master-piece of my old friend Skinner. He was passing the day
at the town of Cullen, I think it was, in a
friend's house whose name was Montgomery.
Mrs. Montgomery observing, en passant, that the
beautiful reel of Tullochgorum wanted words,
she begged them of Mr. Skinner, who gratified
her wishes, and the wishes of every Scottish
song, in this most excellent ballad.
These particulars I had from the author's
son, Bishop Skinner, at Aberdeen.

---

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.
This song is mine, all except the chorus.

---

AULD LANG SYNE.
Ramsay here, as usual with him, has taken
the idea of the song, and the first line, from
the old fragment which may be seen in the

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.
This air is Maitsterton's; the song mine.—
The occasion of it was this:—Mr. W. Nicol, of
the High-School, Edinburgh, during the autumn
vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan, who was
at that time on a visit to Dalswinton, and I,
went to pay Nicol a visit.—We had such a
joyous meeting that Mr. Maitsterton and I agreed,
each in our own way, that we should celebrate
the business.

---

KILLIECRANKIE.
The battle of Killiecrankie was the last stand
made by the clans for James, after his abdication.
Here the gallant Lord Dundee fell in the
moment of victory, and with him fell the hopes
of the party. General Mackay, when he found
the Highlanders did not pursue his flying army,
said, "Dundee must be killed, or he never
would have overlooked this advantage." A
great stone marks the spot where Dundee fell.

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THE EWIE WI' THE CROOKED HORN.
Another excellent song of old Skinner's.

---

 CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.
It is remarkable of this air that it is the con-
tinue of that country where the greatest part of
our Lowland music (so far as from the title,
words, &c., we can localize it) has been com-
posed. From Craigie-burn, near Moffat, until
one reaches the West Highlands, we have
scarcely one slow air of any antiquity.
The song was composed on a passion which
a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had
for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whelp-
dale. This young lady was born at Craigie-burn
Wood.—The chorus is part of an old foolish
ballad.

---

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.
I added the four last lines, by way of giving
a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is

---

HUGHIE GRAHAM.
There are several editions of this ballad.—
This, here inserted, is from oral tradition in
Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a
popular song.—It originally had a simple old
tune, which I have forgotten.

"Our lords are to the mountains gone,
A hunting o' the fallow deer,
And they have gripped Hughie Graham,
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

And they have tied him hand and foot,
And led him up, thro' Stirling town;
The lads and lasses met him there,
Cried, Hughie Graham, thou art a lout.

O lowre my right hand free, he says,
And put my bald sword in the same;
He's no in Stirling town this day,
Dare tell the tale to Hughie Graham.

Up then bespeak the brave Whitefoord,
As he sat by the bishop's knee;
Five hundred white stags I'll gie you,
If ye'll let Hughie Graham gas free.

O hand your tongues, the bishop says,
And wi' your pleading let me be;
For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Hughie Graham this day shall die.

Up then bespeak the fair Whitefoord,
As she sat by the bishop's knee;
Five hundred white peace I'll gie you,
If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.

O hand your tongues now, lady fair,
And wi' your pleading let it be;
Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
It's for my honour he must die.
They've taken him to the gallows known.
He looked to the gallows tree,
Yet never colour left his cheek,
Nor ever did he blink his eye.
REMARKS ON SCOTTISH SONG.

more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

O’ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER.
This song is the composition of a Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a whore, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the West. She was born I believe at Kilmarnock,—I took the song down from her singing, as she was strolling through the country, with a sleight-of-hand blackguard.

TO THE ROSE-BUD.
This song is the composition of a Johnstone, a joiner in the neighbourhood of Belfast. The tune is by Oswald, altered, evidently, from "Jockie’s Gray Breeks."

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.
This tune is by Oswald. The song alludes to a part of my private history, which it is of no consequence to the world to know.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONNIE FACE.
These were originally English verses:—I gave them the Scots dress.

EPPIE M’NAIR.
The old song with this title has more wit than decency.

WH'A IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR.
This tune is also known by the name of "Las an I come near thee." The words are mine.

THOU ART GANE AWA.
This tune is the same with "Haud awa frae me, Donald."

THE TEARS I SHED MUST EVER FALL.
This song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranston. It wanted four lines, to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the four first of the last stanza.

"No cold approach, no alter’d muse,
Just what would make suspicion start;
No pause the dire extremes between,
He made me blast—and broke my heart!"

THE BONIE WEE THING.
Composed on my little idol "the charming, lovely Davies."

THE TITHER MORN.
This tune is originally from the Highlands. I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was told was very clever, but not by any means a lady's song.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.
This most beautiful tune is, I think, the happiest composition of that bard-born genius John Riddell, of the family of Glencarnock, at Ayr. The words were composed to commemorate the much-lamented and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq., jun. of Craigdarroch.

DAINTIE DAVIE.
This song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamsson's begetting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching her house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the college league and covenant. The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him in bed with her own daughter, and passed the soldier as a lady, her daughter's bed-fellow. A mutilated stanza or two are found in Herd's collection, but the original consists of five or six stanzas, and were with delicacy equal to their wit and humour, would merit a place in any collection.

First stanza is

"Being pursued by the dragoons,
Within my bed he was laid down;
And weel I wad he was worth his rooms.
For he was my Dainty Davie."

Ramsay's song, "Luckie Nanny," though it calls it an old song with additions, seems to be all his own except the chorus:

"I was a telling you,
Luckie Nanny, Luckie Nanny.
THE BORDER TOUR.

Auld springs weel ding the new,
But ye wad never trow me."

Which I should conjecture to be part of a song prior to the affair of Williamson.

BOB O' DUMBELANE.

Ramsay, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which I learned on the spot, from my old hostess in the principal inn there, is—

"Leslie, lend me your brow bemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my triplins-kame;
My heckle is broken, it cannot be gotten,
And we'll sae dance the bob o' Dumbelane.

Twa gae to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
Twa gae to the wood—three came home;
An' it be a weel bobbitt, weel bobbitt, weel bobbitt.
An' it be a weel bobbitt, we'll bob it again."

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote, which I have heard well authenticated. In the evening of the day of the battle of Dumbelane (Sheriff Muir,) when the action was over, a Scots officer in Argyll's army, observed to His Grace, that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that they had gotten the victory. — "Weel, weel," returned his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, "if they think it be nae weel bobbitt, we'll bob it again."

THE BORDER TOUR.

Left Edinburgh (May 6, 1787)—Lammermuir-hills miserably dreary, but at times very picturesque. Lanton-edge, a glorious view of the Merse—Reach Berrywell—old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character; his hobbies, agriculture, natural philosophy, and politics. In the first he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with; in the other two, very intelligent. — As a man of business he has uncommon merit, and by fairly deserving it has made a very decent independence. Mrs. Ainslie, an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable old woman. — Miss Ainslie—her person a little embonpoint, but handsome; her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humour—she unites three qualities rarely to be found together; keen, solid penetration; sly, witty observation and remark; and the gentlest, most unaffected female modesty—Douglas, a clever, fine, promising young fellow. — The family-meeting with their brother; my companion, very charming; particularly the sister. The whole family remarkably attached to their menials—Mrs. A. full of stories of the sagacity and sense of the little girl in the kitchen. — Mr. A. high in the praises of an African, his house-servant—all his people old in his service—Douglas's old nurse came to Berrywell yesterday to remind them of its being his birthday.

A Mr. Dudgeon, a poet at times, a worthy remarkable character—natural penetration, a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme modesty.

Sunday.—Went to church at Dunse.— Dr. Howmaker a man of strong lungs and pretty judicious remark; but ill skilled in propriety, and altogether unconscious of his want of it.

Monday.—Coldstream—went over to England—Cornhill—glorious river Tweed—clear and majestic—fine bridge. Dine at Coldstream with howard, in search of the text. He took out a slip of paper, and with a pencil wrote the following lines on it, which he immediately presented to her.

"Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor slate the purpose.
Two maids, that he meant,—
Not angels such as you."
THE BORDER TOUR.

Mr. Ainslie and Mr. Foreman—beat Mr. F—in a dispute about Voltaire. Tea at Leniel House with Mr. Brydone—Mr. Brydone a most excellent heart, kind, joyous, and benevolent; but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance—from his situation past and present, an admirer of everything that bears a splendid title, or that possesses a large estate—Mrs. Brydone a most elegant woman in her person and manners; the tones of her voice remarkably sweet—my reception extremely flattering—sleep at Coldstream.

Tuesday.—Breakfast at Kelso—charming situation of Kelso—fine bridge over the Tweed—enchanting views and prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scotch side; introduced to Mr. Scott of the Royal Bank—an excellent, modest fellow—fine situation of its ruins of Roxburgh Castle—a holly-bush, growing where James II. of Scotland was accidentally killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin, and a fine old garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English hottentot, a maître d’hotel of the duke’s, a Mr. Cole—climate and soil of Berwickshire, and even Roxburghshire, superior to Ayrshire—bad roads. Turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements—Mr. M’Dowal, at Caverton Mill, a friend of Mr. Ainslie’s, with whom I dined to-day, sold his sheep, ewe and lamb together, at two guineas a piece—wash their sheep before shearing—seven or eight pounds of woolen wool in a fleece—low markets, consequently low rents—fine lands not above sixteen shillings a Scotch acre—magnificence of farmers and farm-houses—come up Teviot and up Jed to Jedburgh to lie, and so wish myself a good night.

Wednesday.—Breakfast with Mr. — in Jedburgh—a squabble between Mrs. — a crazed, talkative slattern, and a sister of hers, an old maid, respecting a relief minister—Miss gives Madam the lie; and Madam, by way of revenge, upbraids her that she laid snares to entangle the said minister, then a widower, in the net of matrimony—go about two miles out of Jedburgh to a roup of parks—meet a polite, solder-like gentleman, a Captain Rutherford, who had been many years through the wilds of America, a prisoner among the Indians—charming, romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens, orchards, &c., intermingled among the houses—fine old ruins—a once magnificent cathedral, and strong castle. All the towns here have the appearance of old, rude grandeur, but the people extremely idle—Jed a fine romantic little river.

Dine with Capt. Rutherford—the Captain a polite fellow, fond of money in his farming way; showed a particular respect to my hardship—his lady exactly a proper matrimonial second part for him. Miss Rutherford a beautiful girl, but so far gone woman to expose so much of a fine swelling bosom—her face very fine.

Return to Jedburgh—walk up Jed with some ladies to be shown Love-lane and Blackburn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, a very clever fellow; and Mr. Somerville, the clergyman of the place, a man and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning.

The walking party of ladies, Mrs. — and Miss — her sister, before mentioned.—N.B. These two appear still more comfortably ugly and stupid, and bore me most shockingly. Two Miss —, tolerably agreeable. Miss Hope, a tolerably pretty girl, fond of laughing and fun. Miss Lindsay, a good-humoured, amiable girl; rather short et aimable, but handsome, and extremely graceful—beautiful hazel eyes, full of spirit, and sparkling with delicious moisture—an engaging face—un tout ensemble that speaks her of the first order of female minds—her sister, a bonnie, strappan, rosy, sensie lass. Shake myself loose, after several unsuccessful efforts, of Mrs. — and Miss —, and somehow or other, get hold of Miss Lindsay’s arm. My heart is thawed into melting pleasure after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of indifference, amid the noise and nonsense of Edinburgh. Miss seems very well pleased with my hardship’s distinguishing her, and after some slight qualms, which I could easily mark, she sets the titter round at defiance, and kindly allows me to keep my hold; and when parted by the ceremony of my introduction to Mr. Somerville, she met me half, to resume my situation.—Nota Bene—The poet within a point and a half of being d—nably in love—I am afraid my bosom is still nearly as much tender as ever.

The old cross-grained, whiggish, ugly, slanderous Miss —, with all the poisonous spleen of a disappointed, ancient maid, stops me very unseasonably to ease her bursting breast, by
THE BORDER TOUR

falling abusively foul on the Miss Lindasays, particularly on my Dulcinea;—I hardly refrain from cursing her to her face for daring to mouth her calamitous slander on one of the finest pieces of the workmanship of Almighty Excellence! Sup at Mr. —'s; vexed that the Miss Lindasays are not of the supper-party, as they only are wanting. Mrs. — and Miss — still improve infernally on my hands.

Set out next morning for Wauchope, the seat of my correspondent, Mrs. Scott—breakfast by the way with Dr. Elliot, an agreeable, good-hearted, climate-beaten old veteran, in the medical line; now retired to a romantic, but rather moorish place, on the banks of the Roele—he accompanies us almost to Wauchope—we traverse the country to the top of Bochester, the scene of an old encampment, and Woolies Hill.

Wauchope—Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Pansa—very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face, and bold, critical decision, which usually distinguish female authors.—Sup with Mr. Potts—agreeable party.—Breakfast next morning with Mr. Somerville—the spirit of Miss Lindsay and my hardship, by means of the invention and malice of Miss —. Mr. Somerville sends to Dr. Lindsay, begging him and family to breakfast if convenient, but at all events to send Miss Lindsay; accordingly Miss Lindsay only comes.—I find Miss Lindsay would soon play the devil with me—I met with some little flattering attentions from her. Mrs. Somerville an excellent, motherly, agreeable woman, and a fine family.—Mr. Ainalie, and Mrs. S—inns, with Mr. —, Miss Lindsay, and myself, go to see Esther, a very remarkable woman for reciting poetry of all kinds, and sometimes making Scotch doggerel herself—she can repeat by heart almost everything she has ever read, particularly Pope's Homer from end to end—has studied Euclid by herself, and in short, is a woman of very extraordinary abilities.—On conversing with her I find her fully equal to the character given of her.1 She is very much flattered that I send for her, and that she sees a poet who has put out a book, as she says.—

She is, among other things, a great florist—and is rather past the meridian of once celebrated beauty.

I walk in Esther's garden with Miss Lindsay, and after some little chat-chat of the tender kind, I presented her with a proof print of my Nob, which she accepted with something more tender than gratitude. She told me many little stories which Miss — had retailed concerning her and me, with prolonging pleasure—God bless her! Was waited on by the magistrates, and presented with the freedom of the burgh.

Took farewell of Jedburgh, with some melancholy, disagreeable sensations. — Jed, pure be thy crystal streams, and hallowed thy sylvan banks! Sweet Isabella Lindsay, may peace dwell in thy bosom, uninterrupted, except by the tumultuous throbings of rapturous love! That love-kindling eye must beam on another, not on me; that graceful form must bless another's arms; not mine!

Kelsa. Dine with the farmers' club—all gentlemen, talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from thirty to fifty pounds value, and attends the fox-huntings in the country—go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainalie's, to lie—Mr. Ker a most gentlemanly, clever, handsome fellow, a widower with some fine children—his mind and manner astonishingly like my dear old friend Robert Muir, in Killearn—everything in Mr. Ker's most elegant—he offers to accompany me in my English tour. Dine with Sir Alexander Don—a pretty clever fellow, but far from being a match for his divine lady.—A very wet day — — — Sleep at Stodrig again; and set out for Melrose—visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruined Abbey—still bad weather—cross Leader, and come up Tweed to Melrose—dine there, and visit that far-famed, glorious ruin—come to Selkirk, up Etrick; the whole country hereabout, both on Tweed and Etrick, remarkably stony.

Monday.—Come to Inverleighing, a famous shaw, and in the vicinity of the palace of Traquair, where having dined, and drank some Galloway-whey, I here remain till to-morrow—

to a little day-school, which not being sufficient for subsistence, she is obliged to solicit the charity of her benevolent neighbours. 'Ah, who would love the lyre!'—Cromie.
saw Elibanks and Elibraes, on the other side of the Tweed.

Tuesday.—Drank tea yesternight at Pirl, with Mr. Horseburgh.—Breakfasted to-day with Mr. Ballantyne of Hollowlee—Proposal for a four-horse team to consist of Mr. Scott of Wauchope, Fittieland: Logan of Logan, Fittiefur: Ballantyne of Hollowlee, Forewynd: Horsburgh of Horsburgh.—Dine at a country inn, kept by a miller, in Earlston, the birth-place and residence of the celebrated Thomas a Rhymer—saw the ruins of his castle—come to Berrywell.

Wednesday.—Dine at Dunse with the farmers' club-company—impossible to do them justice—Rev. Mr. Smith a famous punster, and Mr. Melkle a celebrated mechanic, and inventor of the threshing-mills.—Thursday, breakfast at Berrywell, and walk into Dunse to see a famous knife made by a cutler there, and to be presented to an Italian prince.—A pleasant ride with my friend Mr. Robert Ainslie, and his sister, to Mr. Thomson's, a man who has newly commenced farmer, and has married a Miss Patty Grieve, formerly a flame of Mr. Robert Ainslie's.—Company—Miss Jacky Grieve, an amiable sister of Mrs. Thomson's, and Mr. Hood, an honest, worthy, facetious farmer, in the neighbourhood.

Friday.—Ride to Berwick—An idle town, rudely picturesque.—Meet Lord Errol in walking round the walls.—His lordship's flattering notice of me.—Dine with Mr. Clunie, merchant—nothing particular in company or conversation—Come up a bold shore, and over a wild country to Eyemouth—sup and sleep at Mr. Grieve's.

Saturday.—Spend the day at Mr. Grieve's—made a royal arch masson of St. Abb's Lodge.

——Mr. William Grieve, the eldest brother, a joyous, warm-hearted, jolly, clever fellow—takes a hearty glass, and sings a good song.—Mr. Robert, his brother, and partner in trade, a good fellow, but says little. Take a sail after dinner. Fishing of all kinds pays tithes at Eyemouth.

Sunday.—A Mr. Robinson, brewer at Ednam, sets out with us to Dunbar.
The Miss Grieves very good girls.—My hardship's heart got a brush from Miss Betsey.

Mr. William Grieve's attachment to the family-circle, so fond, that when he is out, which by the bye is often the case, he cannot go to bed till he see if all his sisters are sleeping well — Pass the famous Abbots of Coldingham, and Pease-bridge.—Call at Mr. Sheriff's where Mr. A. and I dine.—Mr. S. talkative and conceited. I talk of love to Nancy the whole evening, while her brother escort six companions like himself—Sir James Hall of Dunglass, having heard of my being in the neighbourhood, comes to Mr. Sheriff's to breakfast—takes me to see his fine scenery on the stream of Dunglass—Dunglass the most romantic, sweet place I ever saw—Sir James and his lady a pleasant happy couple.—He points out a walk for which he has an uncommon respect, as it was made by an aunt of his, to whom he owes much.

Miss —— will accompany me to Dunbar, by way of making a parade of me as a sweetheart of hers, among her relations. She mounts an old cart-horse, as huge and as lean as a house; a rusty old side-saddle without girth, or stirrup, but fastened on with an old pillion-girth herself as fine as hands could make her, in cream-coloured riding clothes, hat and feather, &c. &c. — I, ashamed of my situation, ride like the devil, and almost shake her to pieces on old Jolly—get rid of her by refusing to call at her uncle's with her.

Past through the most glorious corn-country I ever saw, till I reach Dunbar, a neat little town.—Dine with Provost Fall, an eminent merchant, and most respectable character, but undescrivable, as he exhibits no marked traits. Mrs. Fall, a genius in painting; fully more clever in the fine arts and sciences than my friend Lady Wauchope, without her consummate

Edinburgh, by James Carmichael, Wm. Graes, Daniel Dow, John Clay, Robert Grieve, &c. &c. Robert Ainslie paid one guinea admission dues; but on account of R. Burns's remarkable poetical genius, the encampment unanimously agreed to admit him gratis, and considered themselves honoured by having a man of such shining abilities for one of their companions.
assurance of her own abilities.—Call with Mr. Robinson (who, by the bye, I find to be a worthy, much respected man, very modest; warm, social heart, which with less good sense than his would be perhaps with the children of prim precision and pride, rather inimical to that respect which is man's due from man) with him I call on Miss Clarke, a maiden in the Scotch phrase, "Guid enough, but no brect new?" a clever woman, with tolerable pretensions to remark and wit; while time had blown the blushing bud of bashful modesty into the flower of easy confidence. She wanted to see what sort of force show an author was; and to let him know, that though Dunbar was but a little town, yet it was not destitute of people of parts.

Breakfast next morning at Skateraw, at Mr. Lee's, a farmer of great note. —Mr. Lee, an excellent, hospitable, social fellow, rather oldish; warm-hearted and chatty—a most judicious, sensible farmer. Mr. Lee detains me till next morning. —Company at dinner. —My Rev. acquaintance Dr. Bowmaker, a reverend, rattling old fellow. —Two sea lieutenants; a cousin of the landlord's, a fellow whose looks are of that kind which deceived me in a gentleman at Kelso, and has often deceived me: a goodly handsome figure and face, which incline one to give them credit for parts which they have not. Mr. Clarke, a much cloverer fellow, but whose looks a little cloudy, and his appearance rather ungraciously, with an every-day observer may prejudicialise the opinion against him.—Dr. Brown, a medical young gentleman from Dunbar, a fellow whose face and manners are open and engaging.

—Leave Skateraw for Dunse next day, along with collector —, a lad of slender abilities and bashfully deficient on an extreme.

Found Miss Ainslie, the amiable, the sensible, the good-humoured, the sweet Miss Ainslie, all alone at Berrywell. —Heavenly powers, who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine! What happiness must I see only to remind me that I cannot enjoy it!

Jammer-muir Hills, from East Lothian to Dunse, very wild. —Dine with the farmer's club at Kelso. Sir John Hume and Mr. Lumsden there, but nothing worth remembrance when the following circumstance is considered— I walk into Dunse before dinner, and out to Berrywell in the evening with Miss Ainslie—how well-versed, how frank, how good she is! Charming Rachel! may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrows, or by the villainy of this world's sons!

Thursday. —Mr. Ker and I set out to dine at Mr. Hood's on our way to England. I am taken extremely ill with strong feverish symptoms, and take a servant of Mr. Hood's to watch me all night—embittering remorse scares my fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death. —I am determined to live for the future in such a manner as not to be scared at the approach of death—I am sure I could meet him with indifference, but for "The something beyond the grave." —Mr. Hood agrees to accompany us to England if we will wait till Sunday.

Friday. —I go with Mr. Hood to see a room of an unfortunate farmer's stock rigid economy, and decent industry, do you preserve me from being the principal dramatis persona in such a scene of horror.

Meet my good old friend Mr. Ainslie, who calls on Mr. Hood in the evening to take farewell of my hardship. This day I feel myself warm with sentiments of gratitude to the Great Preserver of men, who has kindly restored me to health and strength once more. A pleasant walk with my young friend Douglas Ainslie, a sweet, modest, clever young fellow.

Sunday, 27th May. —Cross Tweed, and traverse the moors through a wild country till I reach Alnwick—Alnwick Castle a seat of the Duke of Northumberland, furnished in a most princely manner. —A Mr. Wilkin, agent of His Grace's, shows us the house and policies. Mr. Wilkin, a discreet, sensible, ingenious man.

Monday. —Come, still through by-ways, to Warkworth, where we dine. —Hermitage and old castle. Warkworth situated very picturesque with Coquet Island, a small rocky spot, the seat of an old monastery, facing it a little in the sea; and the small but romantic river Coquet, running through it. —Sleep at Morpeth, a pleasant enough little town, and on next day to Newcastle. —Meet with a very agreeable, sensible fellow, a Mr. Chattox, who shows us a great many civilities, and who dines and sups with us.

Wednesday. —Left Newcastle early in the morning, and rode over a fine country to Hexham to breakfast—from Hexham to Wardrue, the celebrated Spa, where we slept. —Thursday—reach
THE HIGHLAND TOUR.

25th August, 1787.

I leave Edinburgh for a northern tour, in company with my good friend Mr. Nicol, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment. — Linlithgow — a fertile improved country — West Lothian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Moray, Roxburgh, &c. For this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, a "Man of Feeling," will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds of the peasantry in Ayrshire (peasantry they are all below the justice of peace) than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when at the same time, he considers the vandalism of their plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an unclosed, half improved country is to me actually more agreeable, and gives me more pleasure as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden. — Soll about Linlithgow light and thin. — The town carries the appearance of rude, decayed grandeur — charmingly rural, retired situation. The old royal palace a tolerably fine, but melancholy ruin — sweetly situated on a small elevation, by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful, injured Mary Queen of Scots was born — a pretty good old Gothic church. The infamous stool of repentance standing, in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation.

What a poor pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship — dirty, narrow, and squamid; stuck in a corner of old popish grandeur such as Linlithgow, and much more, Melrose! Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters. — Dine.

— Go to my friend Smith's at Avon printfield find nobody but Mrs. Miller, an agreeable, sensible, modest, good body; as useful, but not so ornamental as Fielding's Miss Western — not rigidly polite à la Française, but easy, hospitable, and housewifely.

An old lady from Paisley, a Mrs. Lawson, whom I promised to call for in Paisley — like old lady W — and still more like Mrs. C — her conversation is pregnant with strong sense and just remark, but like them, a certain air of self-importance and a dureze in the eye, seem to indicate, as the Ayrshire wife observed of her cow, that "she had a mind o' her sin."

Pleasant view of Dunfermline and the rest of the fertile coast of Fife, as we go down to that dirty, ugly place, Borrowstones — see a horse race and call on a friend of Mr. Nicol's, a Bailie Cowan, of whom I know too little to attempt his portrait — Come through the rich caves of Falkirk to pass the night. Falkirk nothing
THE HIGHLAND TOUR.

remarkable except the tomb of Sir John the Graham, over which, in the succession of time, four stones have been placed.—Camelon, the ancient metropolis of the Picts, now a small village in the neighbourhood of Falkirk.—Cross the grand canal to Carron.—Come past Larbert and admire a fine monument of cast-iron erected by Mr. Bruce, the African traveller, to his wife.

Pass Dunipace, a place laid out with fine taste—a charming amphitheatre bounded by Denny village, and pleasant seats down the way to Dunipace.—The Carron running down the bosom of the whole makes it one of the most charming little prospects I have seen.

Dine at Auchinbowie.—Mr. Monroe an excellent, worthy old man—Miss Monroe an amiable, sensible, sweet young woman, much resembling Mrs. Grierson. Come to Bannockburn.—Shown the old house where James III. finished so tragically his unfortunate life. The field of Bannockburn—the hole where gloriously Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers; noble revenge, and just hate, glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe! I see them meet in gloriously triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence! Come to Stirling.—Monday go to Harrietson. Go to see Caudron linn, and Rumbling brig, and Diel's mill. Return in the evening. Supper—Messrs. Doig, the schoolmaster; Bell; and Captain Forrester of the castle.—Doig a queerish figure, and something of a pedant—Bell a joyous fellow, who sings a good song.—Forrester a merry, swearing kind of man, with a dash of the sodger.

Tuesday Morning.—Breakfast with Captain Forrester—Ochel Hills—Devon River—Forth and Tiefs—Allan River—Strathallan, a fine country, but little improved—Cross Earn to Crieff—Dine and go to Arbruchill—cold reception at Arbruchill—a most romantically pleasant ride up Earn, by Auchtertyre and Comrie to Arbruchill—Sup at Crieff.


Thursday.—Come down Tay to Dunkeld—Glenlyon House—Lyon River—Druid's Temple—three circles of stones—the outer-most sunk—the second has thirteen stones remaining—the innermost has eight—two large detached ones like a gate, to the south-east—Say prayers in it—Pass Taybridge—Aberfeldy—described in rhyme—Castle Menzies—Inver—Dr. Stewart—sup.

Friday.—Walk with Mrs. Stewart and Beard to Birnam top—fine prospect down Tay—Craigieburn hills—Hermitage on the Branwater, with a picture of Ossian—Breakfast with Dr. Stewart—Neil Gow plays—a short, stout-built, honest Highland figure, with his grayish hair shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unassuming simplicity—visit his house—Margot Gow.

Ride up Tummel River to Blair—Fascally a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Gilliecrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dundee's stone.

Blair—Sup with the Duchess—easy and happy from the manners of the family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.

Saturday.—Visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoiled with bad taste—Tilt and Gairie rivers—Falls on the Tilt—Heather seat—Ride in company with Sir William Murray and Mr. Walker, to Loch Tummel—meanderings of the Mellifluous, strong, exuberantly rich!

The Lythe Strathpey springs up, reminding some
Of lights when Gow's old arm, (nor old the tale)
Unceasing, save when reeking cans went round,
Made heart and heel leap light as bounding roe.
Alas! no more shall we behold that look
So venerable, yet so bleft with mirth,
And festive joy sedate; that ancient garb
Unvaried,—thread bare, and honest blue!
No more shall Beauty's partial eye draw forth
The full intonation of his strain;

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Rannach, which runs through quondam Struan Robertson's estate from Loch Rannach to Loch Tummel—Dine at Blair—Company—General Murray—Captain Murray, an honest tar—Sir William Murray, an honest, worthy man, but tormented with the hypochondria—Mrs. Graham, belle et aimable—Miss Catchcart—Mrs. Murray, a painter—Mrs. King—Duchess and fine family, the Marquis, Lords James, Edward, and Robert—Ladies Charlotte, Emilia, and children dance—Sup—Mr. Graham of Fintry.

Come up the Garrie—Falls of Bruar—Daldearnoch—Dalwhinnie—Dine—Snow on the hills 17 feet deep—No corn from Loch-Gairlie to Dalwhinnie—Cross the Spey, and come down the stream to Pitnin—Straths rich—for numerous picturesque—Craigow hill—Ruthven of Badenoch—Barracks—wild and magusfaste—Bothemurche on the other side, and Glenmore—Grant of Bothemurche's poetry—told me by the Duke of Gordon—Strathpey, rich and romantic—Breakfast at Aviemore, a wild spot—dine at Sir James Grant's—Lady Grant, a sweet, pleasant body—come through mist and darkness to Dulie, to lie.

Tuesday.—Findhorn river—rocky banks—come on to Castle Cawdor, where Macbeth murdered King Duncan—saw the bed in which King Duncan was stabbed—dine at Kilravock—Mrs. Rose, son, a true chieftain's wife—Fort George—Inverness.

Wednesday.—Loch Ness—Brace of Ness—General's hut—Falls of Fyers—Urquhart Castle and Strath.

Thursday.—Come over Culloch Muir—reflections on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilravock—old Mrs. Rose, sterling sense, warm heart, strong passions, and honest pride, all in an uncommon degree—Mrs. Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother—this perhaps owing to her being younger—Mr. Grant, minister at Calder, resembles Mr. Scott at Inverleigh—Mrs. Rose and Mrs. Grant accompany us to Kildrummie—two young ladies—Miss Rose, who sung two Gaelic songs, beautiful and lovely—Miss Sophia Brodie, most agreeable and amiable—both of them gentle, mild; the sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them!—Dine at Nairn—fall in with a pleasant enough gentleman, Dr. Stewart, who had been long abroad with his father in the forty-five; and Mr. Falconer, a spare, irascible, warm-hearted Morland, and a nonjuror—Brodie-house to lie.

Friday.—Forres—famous stone at Forres—Mr. Brodie tells me that the muir where Shakespeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting is still haunted—that the country folks won't pass it by night.

Venerable ruins of Elgin Abbey—A grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but not near so beautiful—Cross Spey to Fochabers—a fine palace, worthy of the generous proprietor—Dine—company, Duke and Duchess, Ladies Charlotte and Magdeline, Col. Abercrombie, and Lady, Mr. Gordon and Mr. —, a clergyman, a venerable, aged figure—the Duke makes me happier than ever great man did—noble, princely; yet mild, condescending, and affable; gay and kind—the Duchess witty and sensible—God bless them!

Come to Cullen to lie—hitherto the country is sadly poor and unimproved.

Come to Aberdeen—meet with Mr. Chalmers, printer, a facetious fellow—Mr. Ross a fine fellow, like Professor Tytler—Mr. Marshall, one of the poetae minores—Mr. Sheriff, author of "Jamie and Bess," a little decrepit body with some abilities—Bishop Skinner, a nonjuror, son of the author of "Tulliechoogum," a man whose mild, venerable manner is the most marked of any in so young a man—Professor Gordon, a good-natured, jolly-looking professor—Aberdeen, a lazy town—near Stotshive, the coast a good deal romantic—meet my relations—Robert Burns, writer, in Stotshive, one of those who love fun, a gill, and a punning joke, and have not a bad heart—his wife a sweet hospitable body, without any affection of what is called town-breeding.

Tuesday.—Breakfast with Mr. Burns—lie at Lawrence Kirk—Album library—Mrs. —, a jolly, frank, sensible, love-inspiring widow—Howe of the Mearns, a rich, cultivated, but still unenclosed country.

Wednesday.—Cross North Esk river and a rich country to Craigow.

Go to Montrose, that finely-situated handsome town—breakfast at Muthie, and sail along that wild rocky coast, and see the famous caverns, particularly the Gariepot—land and dine at Arbroath—stately ruins of Arbroath Abbey—come to Dundee through a fertile country—Dundee a low-lying, but pleasant town—old Steeple—Tayforth—Broughty Castle, a finely situated ruin, jutting into the Tay.
THE POET'S ASSIGNMENT.

Friday.—Breakfast with the Miss Scotts—Miss Bess Scott like Mrs. Greenfield.—my bardship almost in love with her.—come through the rich harvests and fine hedge-rows of the Carse of Gowrie, along the romantic margin of the Grampian hills, to Perth.—fine, fruitful, hilly, woody country round Perth.

Saturday Morning.—Leave Perth—come up Strathearn to Endermay—fine, fruitful, culti-

vated Strath—the scene of "Bessy Bell, and Mary Gray," near Perth—fine scenery on the banks of the May—Mrs. Belcher, gawacie, frank, affable, fond of rural sports, hunting, 
&c.—Lie at Kinross—reflections in a fit of the colic.

Sunday.—Pass through a cold, barren country to Queensferry—dine—cross the ferry and on to Edinburgh.

THE POET'S ASSIGNMENT OF HIS WORKS.

Know all men by these presents that I Robert Burns of Mossgiel: whereas I intend to leave Scotland and go abroad, and having acknowledgeth the father of a child named Elizabeth, begot upon Elizabeth Paton in Largie:

side: and whereas Gilbert Burns in Mossgiel, my brother, has become bound, and hereby binds and oblige himself to all that to enable the said Gilbert Burns to make good his said engagement, wit ye me to have assigned, disposed, conveyed and made over to, and in favour of, the said Gilbert Burns, his heirs, executors, and assigns, that and all other moveable effects of whatever kind that I shall leave behind me on my departure from this Kingdom, after allowing for my part of the conjunct debts due by the said Gilbert Burns and me as joint tacksmen of the farm of Mossgiel. And particularly without prejudice of the foresaid generalty, the profits that may arise from the publication of my poems presently in the press. And also, I hereby dispose and convey to him in trust for behalf of my said natural daughter, the copyright of said poems in so far as I can dispose of the same by law, after she arrives at the above age of fifteen years complete. Surrogating and substituting the said Gilbert Burns my brother and his fore-

saids in my full right, title, room and place of the whole premises, with power to him to intrust with, and dispose upon the same at pleasure, and in general to do every other thing

in the premises that I could have done myself before granting hereof, but always with and under the conditions before expressed. And I oblige myself to warrant this disposition and assignation from my own proper fact and deed alienarily. Consenting to the registration hereof in the books of Cownell and Session, or any other Judges books competent, therein to remain for preservation and constitute.

Proculars, &c. In witness whereof I have wrote and signed these presents, consisting of this and the preceding page, on stamped paper, with my own hand, at the Mossgiel, the twenty-second day of July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six years.

(Signed) ROBERT BURNS.

Upon the twenty-fourth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six years, I, William Chalmers, Notary Publick, past to the Mercat Cross of Ayr head Burgh of the Sheriff done thereof, and thereat I made due and lawful intimation of the foregoing disposition and assignation to his Majesties lieges, that they might not pretend ignorance thereof by reading the same over in presence of a number of people assembled. Whereupon William Crooks, writer, in Ayr, as attorney for the before designed Gilbert Burns, protested that the same was lawfully intimated, and asked and took instruments in my hands. These things were done betwixt the hours of ten and eleven forenoon, before and in presence of William M'Cubbin, and William Eaton, apprentices to the Sheriff Clerk of Ayr, witnesses to the premises.

(Signed)

WILLIAM CHALMERS, N. P.

WILLIAM M'CUBBIN, Witness.

WILLIAM EATON, Witness.
GLOSSARY.

"The č and ș have always the guttural sound. The sound of the English diphthong œ is commonly spelled œ. The French œ, a sound which often occurs in the Scottish language, is marked œ or œ. The œ, in genuine Scottish words, except when forming a diphthong, or followed by an œ mute after a single consonant, sounds generally like the broad English œ in world. The Scottish diphthong œ is always, and œ very often, sound like the French œ masculine. The Scottish diphthong œ sounds like the Latin œ."
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear and din</td>
<td>sullen and sallow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deuce, more prudent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dow, am or are able, can.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Doff, pilkies, wanting force.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down, worn with grief, fatigue, &amp;c., half asleep.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down, am or are not able, cannot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dogly, wearied, exhausted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domes, stupidied, the effects of age, to dous, to benumb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drab, a young female beggar; to spot, to stain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drop, a drop, to drop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dropping, dropping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dreaming, drawing, speaking with a sectarian tone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drop, to oose, to drop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry, tedious, long about it, lingering.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drip, drip, drip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driddle, dribbling, trickling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driddle, the motion of one who tries to dance but moves the middle only.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drift, a drove, a flight of fowl, snow moved by the wind.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dredden, the breek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Droze, part of a bagpipe, the chanter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Droop rump't, that droops at the crown.</td>
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<td>Drossy, wet.</td>
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<td>Drouch, thirst, drought.</td>
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<td>Drunken, drunken.</td>
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<td>Drumly, muddyly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drummock, or Drummock, meal and water mixed, raw.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drum, part of a drum, a part of a bagpipe, the chanter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dust, a small pond, a hollow filled with rain water.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duds, rags, clothes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dudsly, ragged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dung-dang, worsted, pushed, stricken.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dusty, throbbled, beaten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dust-dust, to push, or butt as a ram.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dust, overcome with superstitious fear, to drop down suddenly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dysn, bankrupt, or about to become one.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E, E, the eye.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E'en, the eyes, the evening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eechee, the eyebrow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emsin', the evening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eerie, frightened, haunted, dreading spirits.</td>
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<td>Eid, old age.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elbuck, the elbow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eldrick, ghastly, frightful, elvish.</td>
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<td>Ee', end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enbrugh, Edinburgh.</td>
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<td>Enough, and one, one, enough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Especially, especially.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ether-stone, stone formed by ad- ders, an adder bead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ettle, to try, attemp, aim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eydent, diligent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faddon's, fathomed, measured with the extended arms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faae, foose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faae, foam of the sea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fakker, forgiven or excused, absolved, a demand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatness, gladness, overcome with joy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairies, fairies, a present brought from a fair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail, fellow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fain, did find.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farl, a cake of bread; third part of a cake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, trouble, care, to trouble, to care for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashless, troublesome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, troubled.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fasten, fasten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, trouble.</td>
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<td>Fash, trouble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, trouble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faugh, a single furrow, out of lies, fallow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, and Fald, a fold for sheep, to fold.</td>
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<td>Fash, in, fault.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, decent, seemly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, loyal, steadfast.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, fearful, frightful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, affrighted.</td>
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<td>Fash, near, spruce, clever.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, to fight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashies', fighting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, and Fesh, number, quantity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fash, an under-waistcoat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashies', large, brawny, stout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashless, puny, weak, silly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fashly, mostly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig, fig.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figs, faith, an explanation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fide, feed, enmity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field, keen, biting; the flesh immediately under the skin; level moor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felly, relentless.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feed, to make a shift, contrive to live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferie or ferley, to wonder, a wonder, a term of contempt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fetch, to pull by fits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fetch, pale'd intermitently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fey, strange, one marked for death, predestined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fidge, to fidget, fidgeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fidgian-fain, tickled with pleasure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fient, fiend, a petty oasth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fien, a fiend, the devil may care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fier, sound, healthy; a brother, a friend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fierres, bustle, activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisale, to make a rustling noise, to fidget, bustle, fuss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fit, foot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fittie-lan, the nearer horse of the hindmost pair in the plough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiss, to make a hissing noise, fuss, disturbance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flatter, the motion of rages in the wind of wings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flenen, fennel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flandrecine, foreign generals, soldiers of Flanders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flong, threw with violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleec, to suplicate in a flattering manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleecin', suplicating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleec, a fleece.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flies, a kick, a random blow, a fight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flitter, to decay by fair words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flithrin, flittheis, flittering—smooth wheeling words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flies, to scare, to frighten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flicker, flickering, to flutter as young nestlings do when their dam approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finders, shreds, broken pieces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fling-tree, a piece of timber hung by way of partition between two horses in a stable; a stall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flist, flisky, to fret at the yoke.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleshe, fretted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flitter, to vibrate like the wings of small birds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flittering, fluttering, vibrating, moving tremulously from place to place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flinkie, a servant in livery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flyn, flying, scold; flying, a servant in livery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fool, hastened.</td>
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<td>Fold, a ford.</td>
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<td>Forbees, foresters.</td>
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<td>Forge, besides.</td>
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<td>Forform, distressed, worn out, jaded, forlorn, destitute.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forgetter, to meet, to encounter with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forget, to forget.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fornace, worn out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forisake, jaded with fatigue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fou, full, drunk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foughten, forfoughten, troubled, fatigued.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fou-theif, the devil, the arch-fiend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fouth, pretty, enough, or more than enough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fou, a measure, a bushel: also a pitchfork.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frou, friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frouth, froth, the frothing of ale in the tankard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frou, forefathers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frosty, the heels and feet of a horse-shoe, turned sharply up for riding on an icy road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fou, full.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fud, the scat or tail of the hare, coney, &amp;c.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuff, to blow intermittently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuff, hunt, full-handed: said of one well to live in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furse, full of merriment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fur-ahin, the hindmost horse on the right hand when ploughing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furder, further, succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furr, a form, a bench.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furturians, spiritless, without say or wind of wings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fry, trifling cares, to be in a fuss about trifles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fye, deadly, to dirty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fyl, soiled, dirtied.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY.

G.

Gibb' o' Law', a portion of ground.

Gibb's, the mouth, to speak boldly or perdy.

Gobbermisch, wallet-man, or tinker.

Goe, to go; goad, went; goe or goom, gone; goom, going.

Goes or gate, way, manner, road.

Gows, parts of a lady's gown.

Gang, to go, to walk.

Gangred, a wandering person.

Gar, to make, to force to; gar's, forced to.

Garten, a garden.

Gash, wise, sagacious, talkative, to converse.

Gatty, falling in body.

Gawdy, jolly, large, plump.

Gawd, and god, a rod or good.

Gweedeman, one who drives the horses at the plough.

Gawn, going.

Gawted, yawned, longed.

Gawsie, a thoughtless person, and something weak.

Gaylies, gayle, pretty well.

Gehr, riches, goods of any kind.

Geck, to beat the head in wanton-ness or scorn.

Ged, a pike.

Gentle, great folks.

Gentle, elegant.

Gordie, George, a guinea, called George from the head of King George.

Get and gat, a child, a young one.

Get, ghostie, a ghost.

Gie, to give; gied, gave; gies, given.

Gift, diminutive of gift.

Gipse, laughing maidens.

Glait, gillock, diminutive of gill.

Gilpey, a half-grown, half-informed boy or girl, a romping lad, a hoyden.

Gimmer, an ewe two years old, a contemptuous term for a woman.

Gin, if against.

Gipsy, a young girl.

Girdle, a round iron plate on which oat-cakes is fired.

Girn, to grin, to twist the features in rage, agony, &c.; grinning.

Gis, a periwig, the face.

Glaisit, inattentive, foolish.

Glaisie, a sword.

Glaisie, glittering, smooth, like glass.

Glazed, grasped, matched at eagerly.

Girrus, a poutherie girran, a little vigorous animal; a horse rather old, but yet active when heated.

Gled, a hawk.

Gleg, sharp, ready.

Gley, a squint; an eye, off at a side, wrong.

Gledale, an old horse.

Glee, the voice speaks smoothly and readily.

Guidman and guidwife, the master and mistress of the house.

Guidman, a man newly married.

Gull, or Glie, a large knife.

Gullan, joyous, mischieve.

Gum, muddy.

Gumption, discernment, knowl-edge, talent.

Gunty, guf's, tasteful.

 Gut-scrap, a fiddler.

 Gunter, grandair.

H.

Ha', hall.

Ha' Bible, the great Bible that lies in the hall.

Haddin', house, home, dwelling-place, a possession.

Have, to have, to accept.

Have, had (the participle of have) - haven.

Hast, first host, a petty oath of negation; nothing.

Haffit, the temple, the side of the head.

Haffins, nearly half, partly, not fully grown.

Hag, a gulf in moors and moors, moss-ground.

Haggis, a kind of pudding, boiled in the stomach of a cow, or sheep.

Hai, to spare, to save, to lay out at interest.

Hain'd, spoiled; hain'd gear, hoarded money.

Harvest, harvest.

Haith, a petty oath.

Hawter, nonsense, speaking with-out thought.

Ha', or haid, an abiding place.

Hale, or hale, whole, right, healthy.

Haller, a particular partition-wall in a cottage, or more properly a seat of turf at the outside.

Hallowee, Hallow-eve, 31st October.

Haly, holy; "haly-pool," holy well, with healing qualities.

Hame, home.

Hammered, the noises of feet like the din of hammers.

Hare's breed, hand's breadth.

Hanks, thread as it comes from the measuring reel, quantities, &c.

Harrow-throat, thorns when first occupied by a king.

Hop, an outer garment, mantle, plain, &c.; to wrap, to cover, to hop.

Harpails, heart, liver, and lights of an animal.

Hop-shackled, when a fore and hind foot of a ram are fastened together to prevent leaping, he is said to be hop-shackled. A wife is called the "kirk's hop-shackle."

Hap-a-day, a huckleberry, the hopper of a mill.
GLOSSARY.

Hopping, hopping.
Hog-stap-an'loop, hop, step, and leap.
Hurkat, heartened.
Horn, a very coarse linen.
Haak, a fellow who knows not how to act with propriety.
Hasten, hastened.
Herd, to hold.
Hougie, low-lying, rich land, valleys.
Hoir, to drag, to pull violently.
Horrin', tearing off, pulling.
Hoofer-meal, oatmeal.
Hoor, a half-witted person, half-witted, one who habitually talks in a foolish or incoherent manner.
Hoviso, good manners, decorum, good sense.
Hovekie, a cow, properly one with a white face.
Hovep, hopped.
Houlsea, healthful, wholesome.
Horse, horsees.
Horseback, to ride.
Heck, oh stranger! an exclamation during heavy work.
Heat, promised, to foretell something that is to be got or given, foretold, the thing foretold, offered.
Heed, in which are fixed a number of sharp steel prongs upright for dressing hemp, flax, &c.
Heb below, words used to soothe a child.
Heel-earr-goodie, topey-turry, turned the bottom upwards.
Hees, to elevate, to rise, to lift.
Hellem, the rudder or helm.
Herd, to tend fleeces, one who tends flocks specially in storms.
Herrin', a herring.
Herry, to plunder; most properly to plunder white ones.
Herryment, plunderment, devastation.
Hersel-kivel, a flock of sheep, also a herd of castle of any sort.
Her, hot, heated.
Hengh, a crag, a ravine; cool-kengh, a cool-pit; loewen kengh, a blazing pit.
Hilch, kitchin', to halt, halting.
Hine, honey.
Hing, to hang.
Hirple, to walk crazily; to walk lamely, to creep.
Hooie, dry, chaf, barren.
Hitch, a loop, made a knot.
Hoozie, heazy, a young girl.
Hoddin, the motion of a husbandman riding on a cart-horse, humble.
Hoddin-grin, woollen cloth of a coarse quality, made by mingling one black fleece with a dun white one.
Hoggie, a two-year-old sheep.
Hog-score, a distance line in curling drawn across the rink. When a stone fails to cross it, a cry is raised of "A hog, a hog!" and it is removed.
Hog-shouter, a kind of horse-play by justling with the shoulder; to justle.
Hoodie-crow, a blood crow, corbie.
Hool, outer skin or case, a nutshell, a pes-buck.
Hoolie, slowly, leisurely.
Hoord, a board, to hoard.
Hooriolet, hoarded.
Horn, a horn, made of horn.
Hornie, one of the many names of the devil.
Hoot, or hoist, to cough.
Hooten, coughing.
Hottke'd, turned topsey-turvy, blended, ruined, moved.
Houndagsodie, loose behaviour.
Howlet, an owl.
Housie, diminutive of house.
Hooze, heezed, to heave, to swell.
Hoodie, a midwife.
Hooze, hollow, a hollow or dell.
Hoozenkki, sunk in the back, spoken of a horse.
Hooff, a house of resort.
Hooch, to dig.
Houndit, digged.
Hoonkin', digging deep.
Hoy, hoy', to urge, urged.
Hoyize, a pull upwards; "Hoyise a creel," to raise a basket; hence "holisting creels."
Hopie, to sail crastly.
Hughie, diminutive of Hughie, as Hughie is of Hugh.
Hume and hankers, mumbles and seeks to do what he cannot perform.
Hankers, kneeling and falling back on the hams.
Harchoom, a hedgehog.
Hurdies, the loins, the crupper.
Huschoon, a cushion, also a stocking wanting the foot.
Huschooled, to move with a hitch.

J.
Jaker, a jerk of water; to jerk, as agitated water.
Janes, coarse raillery, to pour out, to shout, to jerk as water.
Jillet, a jilt, a giddy girl.
Jump, to jump, slender in the waist, handsome.
Jink, to dodge, to turn a corner; a sudden turning, a corner.
Jink on' the knee, moving to uncoil motion of a fiddler's elbow. Starling here and there with a tremendous movement.
Jinkor, that turns quickly, a gay sprightly girl.
Jinkor's, dodging, the quick motion of the bow on the fiddle.
Jirt, a jerk, the emission of water, to squirt.
Jostelo, kind of knife.
Jouk, to stoop, to bow the head, to conceal.
Joss, to joss, a verb, which includes both the swinging motion and pealing sound of a large bell; also the undulation of water.
Junctile, a punch with the elbow.

K.
Kaa, a daw.
Knaill, coewort, a kind of broth.
Knaill, the items of coewort.
Knaile, fowlie, &c., paid as rent by a farmer.
Kobor, rafter.
Kobby, a chine.
Kecchel, joyous cry; to cackle as a hen.
Keek, a keek, to peep.
Kelpies, a sort of mischievous water-spirit, said to haunt fords and ferry at night, especially in storms.
Ken, to know; ken'd or ken'n, knew.
Kenna, a small matter.
Ket-Ketty, matted, a fleece of wool.
Kisuphi, carking, anxiety, to be in a fitter.
Kilt, to truss up the clothes.
Kimmer, a young girl, a gossip.
Kine, kindred.
Kin', kind.
King's hooch, a certain part of the entrails of an ox.
Kinsii, kint, country.
Kim, the harvest supper, a brand.
Kissen, to christen, to baptize.
Kist, chest, a shop-counter.
Kitch, anything that eats with bread, to serve for soup, gravy.
Kittle, to tickle, ticklish.
Kitting, a young cat. The ace of diamonds is called among rustics the kitting's e.'e.
Knaggie, like knags, or points of rocks.
Knoppin-hammer, a hammer for breaking stones; kneep, to strike or break.
### GLOSSARY

**Kawrith**, crooked but strong, knotty.
**Knoc**, a small, round hillock, a knoll.
**Kwittle**, to cuddle; **kwittie**, cuddling, fondling.
**Kye**, a district in Ayrshire.
**Kyte**, the belly.
**Kythe**, to discover, to show one's self.

**L.**

**Labour**, thrash.
**Laddie**, diminutive of lad.
**Logies**, the angle between the side and the bottom of a wooden dish.
**Loag**, low.
**Loaring**, lairving, wading, and sinking in snow, mud, etc., miry.
**Loth**, loath, impure.
**Lothhie**, bashful, sheepish, abstemious.
**Lowans**, Scottish dialect, Lowlands.
**Lambie**, diminutive of lamb.
**Lammas**, lammas, harvest-moon.
**Lampit**, a kind of shell-fish, a limpet.
**Lass**, land, estate.
**Lass'-fore**, foremost horse in the plough.
**Lass'-kin**, hindmost horse in the plough.
**Lan**, lone; **my lane**, thy lane, etc., myself alone.
**Lonely**, lonely.
**Long**, long; to think long to long, to weary.
**Lop**, did leap.
**Late and air**, late and early.
**Lavo**, the rest, the remainder, the others.
**Laverock**, the lark.
**Lavens**, lavand.
**Lay my dead**, attribute my death.
**Leli**, loyal, true, faithful.
**Lear**, learning, lore.
**Lee-lang**, live-long.
**Leecomes**, love, happy, gladness of love.
**Loose me**, a phrase of congratulatory endorsement; I am happy in thee or proud of thee.
**Leister**, a three-pronged and barbed dart for striking fish.
**Leugh**, did laugh.
**Look**, a look, to look.
**Lobber**, castrated.
**Lock**, locket, best, thrashten.
**Lift**, sky, armament.
**Lightly**, sneersingly, to sneer at, to undervalue.
**Lilt**, a ballad, a tune, to sing.
**Lummer**, a kept mistress, a strumpet.
**Lumpit**, limped, hobbled.
**Linn**, to trip along; **linkie**, tripping along.
**Linn**, a waterfall, a cascade.

**List-white**, a linnet, flaxen.
**Loon**, the place of milking.
**Loosing**, lane.
**Loof**, the palm of the hand.
**Loed**, did let.
**Looves**, the plural of loof.
**Loose**, rustic exclamation modified from Lord man.
**Lounge**, a fellow, a ragamuffin, a woman of easy virtue.
**Loove**, leap, startled with pain.
**Loup**, the lope, the gait.
**Louder**, laud-louper, a stranger of a suspected character.
**Lox**, a flame.
**Lowlin',** flaming; **lowlus-drouth**, burning desire for drink.
**Lounie**, abbreviation of Lawrence.
**Loose**, to loose.
**Loosed**, unbound, loosed.
**Lug**, the ear.
**Log of the law**, at the judgment-seat.
**Logget**, having a handle.
**Loggie**, a small wooden dish, with a handle.
**Lum**, the chimney; **lum-head**, chimney-top.
**Lunch**, a large piece of cheese, flesh, etc.
**Lunt**, a column of smoke, to smoke, to walk quickly.
**Lyart**, a mixed colour, gray.

**M.**

**Ma**, and **mar**, more.
**Maggot's-ears**, food for the worms.
**Malcon**, Satan.
**Malies**, a farm.
**Mait**, most, almost.
**Mainly**, mostly, for the greater part.
**Mak**, to make; **makin',** making.
**Mally**, Molly, Mary.
**Many**, among.
**Manse**, the house of the parish minister is called "the Manse."
**Mantle**, a mantle.
**Mark**, marks. This and several other nouns which in English require an a to form the plural, are in Scotch, like the words sheep, deer, the same in both numbers.
**Mark, merch**, a Scottish coin, values thirteen shillings and fourpence.
**Married**, party-coloured.
**March**, the year 1715. Called **March's** year from the rebellion of Erakina, Earl of Mar.
**Martial chieft, the soldier's comrade, female companion.**
**Mauth**, mixed corn.
**Moust**, to mash, as mail, etc., to in-flute.
**Maskin-pot**, teapot.
**Maw**, a hare.
**Maws, mauns, must not**
**Maw, mail.
**Mews**, the thrash.
**Mew**, to mow.

**Maw**, mowing; **mauns**, mowed; **maun'd**, mowed.
**Maw**, a small basket, without a handle.
**Mawr**, a mare.
**Melancholious**, mournful.
**Melder**, a load of corn, etc., sent to the mill to be ground.
**Melt**, to be intimate, to meddle, also a mallet for pounding barley in a stone trough.
**Melrie**, to soil with meal.

**Men**, to mend.
**Men**, good manners, decorum.
**Menzie**, ill-bred, rude, impudent.
**Merrie**, the blackbird.
**Merrie**, a small dog.
**Middies**, a dung-hill.
**Middlin'-creels**, dung-baskets, paniers in which horses carry manure.
**Middie-hole**, a gutter at the bottom of a dung-hill.
**Milkin'-shiel**, a place where cows or swans are brought to be milked.
**Miln**, prim, affectionately mett.
**Miln-mow'd**, single-mouthed.
**Minn's**, to remember.
**Minuce**, minuet.
**Mind**, mind it, resolved, intending, remembered.
**Minnie**, mother, dam.
**Mirk**, dark.
**Miss**, to abuse, to call names; **miss'd**, abused.
**Misschater**, accident.
**Misslieud**, mischievous, unmannerly.
**Missenth**, mistook.
**Mister**, mother.
**Missie-mawrie**, confusedly mixed, mish-mash.
**Mistyfied**, mystified, to molest, to soak; moistened, soaked.
**Mose**, a large piece of ordnance, to be seen at the Castle of Edinburgh, composed of iron bars welded together and then hooped.
**Moss**, earth.
**Moss**, or mousie, many.
**Mope**, to nibble as a sheep.
**Moories**, or belonging to moors.
**Mors**, the next day, to-morrow.
**Mous**, the mouth.
**Moundowort**, a mole.
**Mousie**, diminutive of mouse.
**Mouse, or mickle**, great, big, much.
**Mouses-stand**, mouses-rill, a stank, slow-flowing water.
**Mousie**, diminutive of mouse.
**Mousie-kail**, broth, composed simply of water, shielded barley, and greens; thin poor broth.
**Muckle**, an English pint.
**Myle**, myself.

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GLOSSARY

Nothing, or nothing, nothing.
Naig, a horse, a nag.
Nan, none.
Nappy, ale, to be tires.
Naplecat, neglected.
Nectar, a neighbour.
Neb, nook.
Nest, next.
Niere, nief, the fat.
Nireg, 'a handfast.
Nifer, an exchange, to barter.
Niger, a negro.
Nose-tailed cat, a hangman's whip.
Nis, a nut.
Norland, of or belonging to the north.
Nozie's, noticed.
Noupe, black cattle.

O.

O'erong, overbearingsness, to treat with indignity, literally to tread.
O'relay, an upper cravat.
Owy, or osei, azy.
Ox, is often used for ore, before.
Orra-duddies, superfluous rags, old clothes.
O'y, of it.
Owre, dropping, shivering.
Owred, owread, ourselves.
Owers, outiers, castle unhoused.
Ower, ower, over.
Ower-hip, striking with a forehammer by bringing it with a swing on the hip.
Owser, oxen.
Oxtered, carried or supported under the arm.

P.

Pack, intimate, familiar: twelve stone of wool.
Paidle, paidlne, to walk with difficulty, as if in water.
Paidch, paunch.
Pastrick, a partridge.
Pamp, to cram.
Party, courtship.
Parishen, parish.
Parrich, oatmeal pudding, a well-known Scotch drink.
Pat, did put, a pot.
Pattle, or petty, a small spade to clean the plough.
Paughty, proud, haughty.
Pauky, cunning, Sly.
Pay't, paid, best.
Peat-rock, the smoke of burning turf, a bitter exhalation, whisky.
Peech, to fetch the breath shortly, as in an asthma.
Pechin, the crop, the stomach.
Pechin, respiring with difficulty.
Pennis, riches.
Pet, a domesticated sheep, &c., a favourite.
Pette, to cherish.
Philibeg, the kilt.
Phraize, fair speeches, flattery, to flatter.

Phraizein, flattering.
Pibroch, a martial air.
Pickle, a small quantity, one grain of corn.
Pigmy-scrapper, little fiddler; a term of contempt for a bad player.
Pint-stow, a two-quat measure.
Pin, pain, uneasiness.
Pingle, a small pan for warming children's sops.
Plack, an old Scotch coin, the third part of an English penny.
Placless, penniless, without money.
Pladde, diminutive of plaid.
Plates, diminutive of plate.
Plow, or plough, a plough.
Plinkie, a trick.
Plumber, plumber.
Pock, a meal-bag.
Poin'd, to seize on cattle, or take the goods as the laws of Scotland allow, for rent, &c.
Poorstelk, poverty.
Poise, a nosegay, a garland.
Pow, pow'd, to pull, pulled.
Powk, to pluck.
Pouer, a hare or cat.
Powe, to pluck with the hand.
Pout, a poll, a chick.
Pout's, did pull.
Pouthery,erry, active.
Pouthery, like powder.
Pou, the head, the skull.
Pouster, or pouther, gunpowder.
Preciliar, supereminent.
Preen, a pin.
Prent, printing, print.
Price, to taste; price'd, tasted.
Prye, proof.
Prig to cheatem, to dispute; priggin, cheating.
Primsie, demure, precise.
Propose, to lay down, to propose.
Pund, used o' time, pound, pound weight of the refuse of flax.
Pyet, a mapsie.
Pyed, a pyed, o' caff, a single grain of chalk.
Pytles, epistle.

Q.

Quat, quit.
Quayt, the cry of a duck.
Queech, a drinking-cup made of wood with two handles.
Quay, a cow from one to two years old, a heifer.
Quanes, quanas.
Quakins, quaking.

R.

Rapce, harp-cragwort.
Rable, to rattle, nonsense.
Reir, to roar.
Rize, to madden, to inflame.
Rumfretted, fatigued, overpower'd.
Rampin', raging.
GLOSSARY.
Spreckled, spotted, speckled.
Spring, a quick air in music, a Scottish reel.
Sprit, spret, a tough-rooted plant something like rushes, jointed-leaved rush.
Spirits, full of spirits.
Sparks, fire, mettle, wit, spark.
Spasm, mettle, some, fiery; will o’ the wisp, or ignis fatua; the devil.
Spatula, a stick used in making oatmeal pudding or porridge, a notable Scottish dish.
Squad, a crew or party, a squadron.
Squatter, to flatter in water, as a wild duck, &c.
Squall, to sprawl in the act of hiding.
Squelch, a scream, a screech, to scream.
Sacker, to stagger.
Stack, a rick of corn, hay, peats.
Stag, a stag.
Stag, a year-old horse.
Stalebread, stale, strongly.
Stomp, stinking.
Stump, to stand; stent, did stand.
Stones, stonies.
Stink, did stink, a pool of standing water, slow-moving water.
Stop, stop, steve.
Stake, stout, potent.
Starlet, to run as cattle stung by the gadfly.
Stab, stabbing, walking disdainfully, walking without an aim.
Stomach, a blackhead, half-witted.
Stare, did steal, to surfeit.
Stock, to cram the belly.
Stock, cramming.
Stock, to shut, a stitch.
Steer, to molest, to stir.
Stereo, firm, compacted.
Steel, a still.
Stem, to rear as a horse, to leap suddenly.
Strategy, wandering without an aim.
Stents, tribute, dues of any kind.
Stey, steep; steyest, steepest.
Stile, stile; stile-stile, the reaper in harvest who takes the lead.
Sticks-and-stones, totally, altogether.
Still-still, a crust; to limp, to halt; poles for crossing a river.
Stump, the eighth part of a Winchester bushel.
Stirch, a cow or bullock a year old.
Stock, a plant of colowert, cabbage.
Stockin, stock; throwing the stockin, when the bride and bridegroom are put into bed, the former throws a stock in at random among the company, and the person whom it falls on is the next that will be married.
Stock, a shock of corn, made into shocks.
Stot, a young bull or ox.
Stoam, sudden pang of the heart.
Stoves, a kind of high narrow jug or dish with a handle for holding liquids.
Stowes, dust, more particularly dust in motion; storrie, dusty.
Stowminess, by stealth.
Stolen, stolen.
Stoyle, the walking of a man.
Strach, did strike.
Stroo, straw; to die a fair death, to die in bed.
Stroak, to stroke; strait, stroke.
斯特, tall, handsome, vigorous.
Strow, low alluvial land, a holm.
Straight, straight.
Strach, stretched, to stretch.
Straddle, to straddle.
Strains, to spout, to pise.
Strap, the spout.
Straddie, the avail.
Stumpie, diminutive of stump; a grub pen.
Strumm, spiritsuous liquor of any kind; to walk sturdily, to be argumentative.
Stuff, corn or pulse of any kind.
Sturt, trouble; to molest.
Sturtie, frightened.
Stymie, a slimmer.
Sucker, sugar.
Sud, should.
Suff, the continued rushing noise of wind or water.
Sump, a pluckless fellow, with little heart or soul.
Sutham, Southern, an old name of the English.
Sword, sword.
Sword, 'tis, avelled.
Squawk, stately, jolly.
Squawkie, or squawker, a tight strapping young fellow or girl.
Spoon, an exchange, to barter.
Sweated, swooned.
Sweat, did sweat.
Sweat, a sample.
Sweat, drink, good ale, new ale or wort.
Sweer, lazy, averse; dead-sweer, extremely averse.
Swoor, swore, did swear.
Swinge, to beat, to whip.
Swirke, to labour hard.
Swirly, knaggy, full of knots.
Swirl, a curve, an eddying blast or pool, a knot in the wood.
Swit, get away.
Swit,er, to hesitate in choice, an irresolute wavering in choice.
Syen, a thick-necked onion.
Syn, since, ago, then.

T.
Tacket, broad-headed nails for the heels of shoes.
Tae, a toe; three-taed, having three prongs.
Take, to take; takie, taking.
Togie, a sea-weed used as mulch.
Top, the top.
Topplid, headless, foolish.
Torre, targe them tightly, cross-question them severely.
Towle, to murmur at one’s allowance.
Torry-breeks, a sailor.
Trannie, a small measure for liquor.
Tseid, or talse, told.
Taspie, a foolish, thoughtless young person.
Tawed, or tawse, matted together (spoken of hair and wool).
Tawse, that allows itself agreeably to be handled (spoken of a cow, horse, &c.).
Tea, a small quantity.
Teethless bawtie, toothless cur.
Teetleless gab, a mouth wanting the teeth, an expression of scorn.
Ten-hours-bite, a slight feed to the horse while in the yokes in the forenoon.
Ten, a field pulpit, heed, caution; to take heed.
Tenistic, heedful, cautious.
Tendless, heedless, careless.
Tongue, tongue.
Thack, thatch; thack on’ rope, clothing and necessaries.
That, then.
Thatrums, small guts, fiddle-stings.
Thankis, thanked.
Thankit, thatched.
Thankyer, together.
Themselves, themselves.
Thick, intimate, familiar.
Thigger, crowding, make a noise; a seeker of alms.
Thir, these.
Thirli, to thrive.
Threwd, thrilled, vibrated.
Throat, to suffer, to endure.
Throat, a thaw.
Throuble, slack, lazy.
Throng, throng, busy, a crowd.
Thrappe, throat, windpipe.
Thrun, to sprain, to twist, to contradict.
Thrunwashing, twisting, &c.
Thrust, sprained, twisted, contradicted, contradiction.
Threep, to maintain by dint of selection.
Threshin, threshing; threshless, a full.
Thretten, thirteenth.
Thristle, thistle.
Through, to go on with, to make out.
Througher, poll-mell, confusedly (through-ither).
Thrums, sound of a spinning-wheel in motion, the thread remaining at the end of a web.
Thud, to make a loud intermittent noise.
Thummart, thummart, polecat.
Thump, thumped.
Thur, thyme.
Tilt, to it.
Timmer, timber.
GLOSSARY

Two fail, twofold.  
Twin, to part.  
Twistz, twisting, the art of making a rope.  
Tyke, a dog.  
Tuesday, Tuesday.  

U.  
Unbeck'd filthy, a young mare hitherto unsaddled.  
Unce, strange, uncouth, very, very great, prodigious.  
Unseen, new.  
Unfaded, unfold.  
Unkenned, unknown.  
Unsicher, uncertain, wavering, insecure.  
Unstruck, undamaged, unhurt.  
Upo, upon.

V.  
Vap'ris, vapouring.  
Vanicous, joyous, delight which cannot contain itself.  
Vero, very.  
Virt, a ring round a column, &c.  
Vogue, vains.

W.  
W'd, wall; wo's, walls.  
Wabster, a weaver.  
Wad, would, to bet, a bet, a pledge.  
Wadna, would not.  
Wadset, land on which money is lent, a mortgage.  
Wae, woe; woe'fu, sorrowful; willingly.  
Wag's, hangman's rope.  
Wark's, Wor's me! Alas! O the pity!  
W'a, flower, wall-flower.  
W'a, w'e; the cross thread that goes from the shuttle through the web.  
W'a, your crooks, strong sheep and old swine past breeding.  
Wait, to lay out, to expend.  
Wail, to sorrow, to choose.  
Wad'd, chose, chosen.  
Wail, a blog, a blog, an example, a large, a jobby, also an explanation of distress.  
Wame, the belly.  
Wame's, a bellyful.  
Wanset, wanset's, restless, unrestful.

Work, work.  
Work's, a tool to work with.  
Wor's, a weir, a weaver.  
Worze, world, world.  
Worlock, a wizard; worlock's house, a knoll where warlocks once held tyrants.  
Worty, worldly, eager in amassing wealth.  
Warrant, a warrant, to warrant.  
Wars, wrestle.  
Warc'd, or warr'd, wrestled.  
Warrirs, prodigality.  
Wet, wet; I wet—I wet—I know.  
Wet, a man's upper dress; a sort of mantle.

Water-broe, brooe made of meal and water simply, without the addition of milk, butter, &c.  
Weltie, a twig, a wand.  
Wendie, to swing, to reel.  
Wensie, waking, watching.  
Wensie, thickened as fullers do cloth.  
Wensie's, not apt to sleep.  
Wess, worse, to worst.  
Wes't, worsted.  
Wess, a child.  
Wensie-middle, tollsome contest of life.  
Wessee, wassand, windpipe.  
Wessee's, the stockings, to knit stockings.  
Wesser, the same, the same.  
Wester-aleps, instrument for removing weeds.  
Wess, little; see things, little ones, see bin, a small matter.  
Wess, wall; see fare, welfare.  
Wess, rain, wetness; to wet.  
Wess, be, we shall.  
Wess, who.  
Wess, who, to whees.  
Whelp, to wheesel.  
Whelp, whelped.  
Whang, a leather thong, a piece of cheese, bread, &c.  
Whare, where; wherever, wherever.

Whee, to fly nimbly, to jerk, penny-wheel, small beer.  
Whass, who's, whose—who is.  
What reck, nevertheless.  
Whid, the motion of a hare running, but not frightened—a lie.  
Widden, running as a hare or convoy.  
Whitelines, whins, fancies, crochets.  
Whilk, which.  
Whisp'ing, crying, complaining, fretting.  
Whirligig, useless ornament, trifling appendages.  
Whiss, a whistle, to whistle.  
Whistle, silence; to hold one's breath, to be silent.  
Whist, whistle, to swoop, to laugh.  
Whisk' beard, a beard like the whiskers of a cat.  
Whisk'd, lashed, the motion of a horse's tail removing flies.  
Whitier, a hearted spirit of liquor.  
Whittle, a knife.  
Whittens, a whistone.  
Wit, with.  
Wick, to strike a stone in an oblique direction, a term in eruption.  
Wid'dle, twisted like a withy, one who merits hanging.  
Wid' small whirlpool.  
Wife-wheel, an armature or endearing name for wife.  
Wight, stout, enduring.  
Wight-wheel, a bewildered dis- 
mayed stare.  
Wimp' wheel, to meander, meandered, to enfold.  
Wimp' wheel, wandering.
**Glossary.**

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<tr>
<td>Winside-thread, putting thread into hanks.</td>
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<td>Win'd, wound as a bottom of yarn.</td>
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<td>Win', wind.</td>
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<td>Win, live.</td>
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<td>Wiens, will not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiensock, a window.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiensome, hearty, vauled, gay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wingle, a staggering motion, to stagger, to reel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wise, to wish.</td>
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<td>Witheless, without.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withebred, hide-bound, dried, shrunk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisse, a curse or imprecation.</td>
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<td>Wissens, a wonder, a contemptuous appellation.</td>
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<td>Wiss, wool.</td>
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<td>Woe, to court, to make love to.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widdie, a rope, more properly one of withes or willows.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woor-hose, the garter knitted below the knee with a couple of loops.</td>
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<td>Wordly, worthy.</td>
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<td>Worset, worsted.</td>
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<td>Wrench, to tense, to vex.</td>
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<td>Wred, wild, mad; mad-mad, distracted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wumble, a wimble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wraith, a spirit, a ghost, an apparition exactly like a living person, whose appearance is said to forbode the person's approaching death; also wrath.</td>
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<td>Wrong, wrong, to wrong.</td>
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<td>Wreck, a drifted heap of snow.</td>
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<td>Wyllscord, a flannel vest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyte, blame, to blame.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**X.**

Ye, this pronoun is frequently used for thou.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years, longs much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings, born in the same year, coevals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year, is used both for singular and plural years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeol, barren, that gives no milk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yerk, to lash, to jerk.</td>
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<td>Yerksun, jerked, lashed.</td>
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<td>Yeoween, yesternight.</td>
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<td>Yost, a gate.</td>
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<td>Yound, itches.</td>
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<td>Yill, sin.</td>
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<td>Yird, pirded, earth, earthed, berried.</td>
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<td>Yok'ly, yoking.</td>
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<td>Yeast, spent, beyond.</td>
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<td>Yirv, lively.</td>
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<td>Yose, an ova.</td>
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<td>Yowin, diminutive of yowes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yule, Christmas.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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