

Fair Bessy Bell I lo'ed yestreen,  
 And thought I ne'er could alter,  
 But Mary Gray's twa pawky een,  
 They gar my fancy falter.

Now Bessy's hair's like a lint tap;  
 She smiles like a May morning,  
 When Phœbus starts frae Thetis' lap,  
 The hills wi' rays adorning:  
 White is her neck, saft is her hand,  
 Her waist and feet's fu' genty,  
 Wi' ilka grace she can command,  
 Her lips, O wow! they're dainty.

And Mary's locks are like the craw,  
 Her een like diamonds glances;  
 She's aye sae clean redd up, and braw,  
 She kills whene'er she dances:  
 Blythe as a kid, wi' wit at will,  
 She blooming, tight, and tall is;  
 And guides her airs sae gracefu' still,  
 O Jove! she's like thy Pallas.

Dear Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,  
 Ye unco sair oppress us,  
 Our fancies jee between ye twa,  
 Ye are sic bonnie lasses:  
 Waes me, for baith I canna get,  
 To ane by law we're stented;  
 Then I'll draw cuts, and take my fate,  
 And be wi' ane contented.

#### THE YELLOW-HAIR'D LADDIE.

In April, when primroses paint the sweet plain,  
 And summer approaching rejoiceth the swain,  
 The yellow-hair'd laddie would oftentimes go  
 To woods and deep glens where the hawthorn-  
 trees grow.

There, under the shade of an old sacred thorn,  
 With freedom he sung his loves, evening and  
 morn:

He sung with so soft and enchanting a sound,  
 That sylvans and fairies, unseen, danced around.

The shepherd thus sung: "Though young Maddie  
 be fair,

Her beauty is dash'd with a scornful proud air;  
 But Susie was handsome, and sweetly could sing;  
 Her breath's like the breezes perfumed in the  
 spring.

"That Maddie, in all the gay bloom of her youth,  
 Like the moon, was inconstant, and never spoke  
 truth;

But Susie was faithful, good-humour'd, and free,  
 And fair as the goddess that sprung from the sea.

"That mamma's fine daughter, with all her great  
 dowry,

Was awkwardly airy, and frequently sour."  
 Then sighing, he wished, would but parents agree,  
 The witty sweet Susie his mistress might be.

## ROBERT CRAWFORD.

BORN 1690—DIED 1733.

ROBERT CRAWFORD, author of the beautiful pastoral ballad of "Tweedside," was born about the year 1690. He was a cadet of the family of Drumsoy, and is sometimes called William Crawford of Auchinames, a mistake in part arising from Lord Woodhouselee misapplying an expression in one of Hamilton of Bangour's letters regarding a *Will* Crawford. His father, Patrick Crawford (or Crawford), was twice married, first to a daughter of a Gordon of Turnberry, by whom he had two sons—Thomas, and Robert the poet; second to Jean, daughter of Crawford of Auchinames, in Renfrewshire, by whom he had a large family. Hence the mistake of making the poet belong to the

Auchinames family. He was on terms of intimacy with Allan Ramsay and William Hamilton of Bangour. He assisted the former in "the glory or the shame" of composing new songs for many old Scottish melodies, which appeared in Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, published in the year 1724, and is one of the "ingenious young gentlemen" of whom the editor speaks as contributors to his *Miscellany*.

Crawford is said to have been a remarkably handsome man, and to have spent many years in Paris. Mr. Ramsay of Ochertyre, in a letter to Dr. Blacklock, dated Oct. 27, 1787, says: "You may tell Mr. Burns when you see him that Colonel Edmonston told me t'other

day that his cousin Colonel George Crawford was no poet, but a great singer of songs: but that his eldest brother Robert (by a former marriage) had a great turn that way, having written the words of 'The Bush aboon Traquair' and 'Tweedside.' That the Mary to whom it was addressed was Mary Stewart, of the Castlemilk family, afterwards wife of Mr. John Belches. The colonel (Edmonston) never saw Robert Crawford, though he was at his burial fifty-five years ago. He was a pretty young man, and lived long in France." According to Sir Walter Scott, the Mary celebrated in "Tweedside" was of the Harden family, a descendant of another famed beauty, Mary Scott of Dryhope, in Selkirkshire, known by the name of "the Flower of Yarrow." Harden is an estate on the Tweed, about four miles from Melrose. Mr. Ramsay's letter fixes Crawford's death in the year 1732, while according to information obtained by Robert Burns from another source, he was drowned in coming from France in 1733. Such are the few details we possess concerning one of Scotland's sweetest singers.

Of the many beautiful songs written by Crawford the most celebrated are "Tweedside" and "The Bush aboon Traquair." Speaking of the last-mentioned lyric, Dr. Robert Chambers, a native of Peebles, says:—"The Bush aboon Traquair" was a small grove of birches

that formerly adorned the west bank of the Quair water, in Peeblesshire, about a mile from Traquair House, the seat of the Earl of Traquair. But only a few spectral-looking remains now denote the spot so long celebrated in the popular poetry of Scotland. Leafless even in summer, and scarcely to be observed upon the bleak hill-side, they form a truly melancholy memorial of what must once have been an object of great pastoral beauty, as well as the scene of many such fond attachments as that delineated in the following verses." Crawford, who has genuine poetical fancy and great sweetness of expression, gives us many beautiful images of domestic life. His pipe, like the pipe of Ramsay, is

"A dainty whistle with a pleasant sound,"

and it summons to modest love and chaste joy. Like the voice of the cuckoo, it calls us to the green hills, the budding trees, and the rivulet bank; to the sound of water and the sight of opening flowers. "The true muse of native pastoral," says Allan Cunningham, "seeks not to adorn herself with unnatural ornament; her spirit is in homely love and fireside joy; tender and simple, like the religion of the land, she utters nothing out of keeping with the character of her people and the aspect of the soil—and of this spirit, and of this feeling, Crawford is a large partaker."

## THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

Hear me, ye nymphs, and every swain,  
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;  
Tho' thus I languish, thus complain,  
Alas! she ne'er believes me.  
My vows and sighs, like silent air,  
Unheeded, never move her;  
At the bonnie bush aboon Traquair,  
'Twas there I first did love her.

That day she smiled, and made me glad,  
No maid seem'd ever kinder;  
I thought myself the luckiest lad,  
So sweetly there to find her.  
I tried to soothe my amorous flame  
In words that I thought tender;  
If more there pass'd, I'm not to blame,  
I meant not to offend her.

Yet now she scornful flees the plain,  
The fields we then frequented;  
If e'er we meet, she shows disdain,  
She looks as ne'er acquainted.  
The bonnie bush bloom'd fair in May,  
In sweets I'll aye remember;  
But now her frowns make it decay,  
It fades as in December.

Ye rural powers, who hear my strains,  
Why thus should Peggy grieve me?  
Oh! make her partner in my pains,  
Then let her smiles relieve me.  
If not, my love will turn despair,  
My passion no more tender,  
I'll leave the bush aboon Traquair,  
To lonely wilds I'll wander.

## ONE DAY I HEARD MARY.

One day I heard Mary say, How shall I leave thee?  
Stay, dearest Adonis, stay; why wilt thou grieve  
me?

Alas! my fond heart will break, if thou should  
leave me:

I'll live and die for thy sake, yet never leave thee.

Say, lovely Adonis, say, has Mary deceived thee?  
Did e'er her young heart betray new love, that  
has grieved thee?

My constant mind ne'er shall stray, thou may  
believe me.

I'll love thee, lad, night and day, and never leave  
thee.

Adonis, my charming youth, what can relieve  
thee?

Can Mary thy anguish soothe? This breast shall  
recede thee.

My passion can ne'er decay, never deceive thee;  
Delight shall drive pain away, pleasure revive  
thee.

But leave thee, leave thee, lad, how shall I leave  
thee?

Oh! that thought makes me sad; I'll never leave  
thee!

Where would my Adonis fly? why does he grieve  
me?

Alas! my poor heart will die, if I should leave thee.

## LEADER HAUGHS AND YARROW.

The morn was fair, saft was the air,  
All nature's sweets were springing;  
The buds did bow with silver dew,  
Ten thousand birds were singing;  
When on the bent with blythe content,  
Young Jamie sang his marrow,  
Nae bonnier lass e'er trod the grass  
On Leader Haughs and Yarrow.

How sweet her face, where every grace  
In heav'nly beauty's planted!  
Her smiling een and comely mien,  
That nae perfection wanted.  
I'll never fret nor ban my fate,  
But bless my bonnie marrow:  
If her dear smile my doubts beguile,  
My mind shall ken nae sorrow.

Yet though she's fair, and has full share  
Of every charm enchanting,  
Each good turns ill, and soon will kill  
Poor me, if love be wanting.

O, bonnie lass! have but the grace  
To think ere ye gae further,  
Your joys maun flit if you commit  
The crying sin of murder.

My wand'ring ghaist will ne'er get rest,  
And day and night affright ye;  
But if ye're kind, with joyful mind,  
I'll study to delight ye.

Our years around, with love thus crown'd,  
From all things joy shall borrow:  
Thus none shall be more blest than we,  
On Leader Haughs and Yarrow.

O, sweetest Sue! 'tis only you  
Can make life worth my wishes,  
If equal love your mind can move,  
To grant this best of blisses.  
Thou art my sun, and thy least frown  
Would blast me in the blossom:  
But if thou shine and make me thine,  
I'll flourish in thy bosom.

## TWEEDSIDE.

What beauties does Flora disclose!  
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed!  
Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those,  
Both nature and fancy exceed.  
Nor daisy nor sweet-blushing rose,  
Not all the gay flowers of the field,  
Not Tweed gliding gently through those,  
Such beauty and pleasure does yield.

The warblers are heard in the grove,  
The linnet, the lark, and the thrush,  
The blackbird and sweet-cooing dove,  
With music enchant ev'ry bush.  
Come, let us go forth to the mead,  
Let us see how the primroses spring;  
We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,  
And love while the feather'd folks sing.

How does my love pass the long day?  
Does Mary not tend a few sheep?  
Do they never carelessly stray,  
While happily she lies asleep?  
Should Tweed's murmurs lull her to rest,  
Kind nature indulging my bliss,  
To relieve the soft pains of my breast,  
I'd steal an ambrosial kiss.

'Tis she does the virgins excel,  
No beauty with her may compare;  
Love's graces all round her do dwell,  
She's fairest where thousands are fair.

Say, charmer, where do thy flocks stray?  
 Oh! tell me at noon where they feed?  
 Shall I seek them on sweet winding Tay,  
 Or the pleasanter banks of the Tweed?

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MY DEARIE, IF THOU DEE.

Love never more shall give me pain,  
 My fancy's fixed on thee,  
 Nor ever maid my heart shall gain,  
 My Peggy, if thou dee.  
 Thy beauty doth such pleasure give,  
 Thy love's so true to me,  
 Without thee I can never live,  
 My dearie, if thou dee.

If fate shall tear thee from my breast,  
 How shall I lonely stray:  
 In dreary dreams the night I'll waste,  
 In sighs the silent day.  
 I ne'er can so much virtue find,  
 Nor such perfection see;  
 Then I'll renounce all womankind,  
 My Peggy, after thee.

No new-blown beauty fires my heart  
 With Cupid's raving rage;  
 But thine, which can such sweets impart,  
 Must all the world engage.  
 'Twas this, that like the morning sun,  
 Gave joy and life to me;  
 And when its destin'd day is done,  
 With Peggy let me dee.

Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,  
 And in such pleasure share;  
 You who its faithful flames approve,  
 With pity view the fair:  
 Restore my Peggy's wonted charms,  
 Those charms so dear to me!  
 Oh! never rob them from these arms—  
 I'm lost if Peggy dee.

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DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.

When trees did bud, and fields were green,  
 And broom bloom'd fair to see;  
 When Mary was complete fifteen,  
 And love laugh'd in her e'e;  
 Blythe Davie's blinks her heart did move  
 To speak her mind thus free;  
 Gang down the burn, Davie, love,  
 And I will follow thee.

Now Davie did each lad surpass  
 That dwelt on this burnside;  
 And Mary was the bonniest lass,  
 Just meet to be a bride:  
 Her cheeks were rosie, red, and white;  
 Her een were bonnie blue;  
 Her looks were like the morning bright,  
 Her lips like dropping dew.

As doun the burn they took their way,  
 And through the flow'ry dale;  
 His cheek to hers he aft did lay,  
 And love was aye the tale;  
 With, Mary when shall we return,  
 Sic pleasure to renew?  
 Quoth Mary, Love, I like the burn,  
 And aye will follow you.<sup>1</sup>

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WHEN SUMMER COMES.

When summer comes, the swains on Tweed  
 Sing their successful loves;  
 Around the ewes and lambkins feed,  
 And music fills the groves.

But my lov'd song is then the broom  
 So fair on Cowdenknowes;  
 For sure so sweet, so soft a bloom  
 Elsewhere there never grows.

There Colin tun'd his oaten reed,  
 And won my yielding heart;  
 No shepherd e'er that dwelt on Tweed  
 Could play with half such art.

He sung of Tay, of Forth, and Clyde,  
 The hills and dales all round,  
 Of Leader-haughs and Leader-side—  
 Oh! how I bless'd the sound!

Yet more delightful is the broom  
 So fair on Cowdenknowes;  
 For sure so fresh, so bright a bloom  
 Elsewhere there never grows.

Not Teviot braes, so green and gay,  
 May with this broom compare;  
 Not Yarrow banks in flow'ry May,  
 Nor the bush aboon Traquair.

More pleasing far are Cowdenknowes,  
 My peaceful, happy home  
 Where I was wont to milk my ewes,  
 At ev'n among the broom.

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<sup>1</sup> The last stanza was added by Burns.—Ed.

Ye powers that haunt the woods and plains,  
 Where Tweed with Teviot flows,  
 Convey me to the best of swains,  
 And my lov'd Cowdenknowes.

PEGGY, I MUST LOVE THEE.

Beneath a beech's grateful shade  
 Young Colin lay complaining;  
 He sigh'd and seem'd to love a maid,  
 Without hopes of obtaining;  
 For thus the swain indulg'd his grief:  
 Though pity cannot move thee,  
 Though thy hard heart gives no relief,  
 Yet, Peggy, I must love thee.

Say, Peggy, what has Colin done,  
 That thou thus cruelly use him?  
 If love's a fault, 'tis that alone  
 For which you should excuse him:

'Twas thy dear self first rais'd this flame,  
 This fire by which I languish;  
 'Tis thou alone can quench the same,  
 And cool its scorching anguish.

For thee I leave the sportive plain,  
 Where every maid invites me;  
 For thee, sole cause of all my pain,  
 For thee that only slights me:  
 This love that fires my faithful heart  
 By all but thee's commended.  
 Oh! would thou act so good a part,  
 My grief might soon be ended.

That beauteous breast, so soft to feel,  
 Seem'd tenderness all over,  
 Yet it defends thy heart like steel  
 'Gainst thy despairing lover.  
 Alas! tho' it should ne'er relent,  
 Nor Colin's care e'er move thee,  
 Yet till life's latest breath is spent,  
 My Peggy, I must love thee.

## ALEXANDER ROSS.

BORN 1699—DIED 1784.

ALEXANDER ROSS was born at Torphins, in the parish of Kincardine O'Neil, Aberdeenshire, April 13, 1699. He was the son of Andrew Ross, a small farmer in easy circumstances, and received his education at Marischal College, Aberdeen, where he took the degree of Master of Arts in 1718. Soon after leaving the university he was engaged as tutor in the family of Sir William Forbes, of Craigievar and Fintray, and then as teacher at the parish school of Aboyne, subsequently at that of Laurencekirk. In 1726 he married Jane Catanach, the daughter of an Aberdeenshire farmer, and descended by her mother from the old family of Duguid of Auchinhove. In 1732 he was appointed schoolmaster of Lochlee, a wild and thinly-peopled district in Forfarshire, where he spent the remainder of his simple and uneventful life in the discharge of the duties of his humble office. It was not until he had resided here for thirty-six years, that, in the year 1768, when he was nearly seventy, Ross appeared before the public as a

poet. So early as his sixteenth year he had commenced writing verse; a translation from the Latin of Buchanan, composed at that age, having been published by his grandson, the Rev. Alexander Thomson, in a memoir of the poet, prefixed to an edition of his first work "Helenore, or the Fortunate Shepherdess," printed at Dundee in 1812. This beautiful pastoral poem and some songs, among which were "The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow," and "Woo'd and Married and a'," was first published at Aberdeen in 1768. A second edition appeared in 1778, dedicated to the Duchess of Gordon, and the work has since been frequently reprinted. On its first publication a letter highly laudatory of the poem appeared in the *Aberdeen Journal*, under the fictitious signature of Oliver Oldstile, accompanied by an epistle in verse to the author, from the pen of the poet Dr. Beattie, being the latter's only attempt in the Scots vernacular. We append the first stanza, of which there are sixteen in the epistle:—

"O Ross, thou wale of hearty cocks,  
Sae crouse and canty with thy jokes!  
Thy hamely auld-wa'ld muse provokes  
    Me for awhile  
To ape our guid plain countra folks  
    In verse and stile."

In the north of Scotland, where the Buchan dialect is spoken, "The Fortunate Shepherdess" continues to be as popular as the productions of Ramsay and Burns, while some of his lyrics are universal favourites. In 1779, when eighty years of age, he was invited by the Duke and Duchess of Gordon to visit them at Gordon Castle. He accepted the invitation, extended to him through his friend Dr. Beattie, remaining at the castle some days. Says his grandson and biographer, "he was honoured with much attention and kindness both by the duke and duchess, and was presented by the latter with an elegant pocket-book, containing a handsome present, when he returned to Lochlee, in good health and with great satisfaction." The next year he lost his wife, who died at the advanced age of eighty-two, and to whose memory he erected a tombstone with a poetical epitaph. He himself did not long survive her: on May 20th, 1784, "worn out with age and infirmity, being in his eighty-sixth year, he breathed his last, with the com-

posure, resignation, and hope becoming a Christian." He left in manuscript eight small volumes of poems and other compositions, an account of which is given in Campbell's *Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*.

Ross's reputation must, however, rest upon his "Fortunate Shepherdess," and the songs which were published with it, rather than upon his unpublished writings, which his friend Beattie advised should be suppressed. Burns has written of our author, "Our true brother Ross of Lochlee was a wild warlock;" and the celebrated Dr. Blacklock, says Irving, "as I have heard from one of his pupils, regarded it ('The Fortunate Shepherdess') as equal to the pastoral of Ramsay." On the first appearance of Ross's principal poem Beattie predicted—

"And ilka Mearns and Angus bairn  
Thy tales and sangs by heart shall learn."

The prediction has been verified, and a hope which he expressed in one of his unpublished poems has been fully realized:—

"Hence lang, perhaps, lang hence may quoted be,  
My hamely proverbs lined wi' blythesome glee;  
Some reader then may say, 'Fair fa' ye, Ross,  
When, aiblinks, I'll be lang, lang dead and gane,  
An' few remember there was sic a name."

## THE ROCK AND THE WEE PICKLE TOW.

There was an auld wife had a wee pickle tow,  
And she wad gae try the spinnin' o't;  
She louted her down, and her rock took a-low,  
And that was a bad beginnin' o't.  
She sat and she grat, and she flat and she flang,  
And she threw and she blew, and she wriggled  
and wrang,  
And she chokit and boakit, and cried like to mang,  
Alas! for the dreary beginnin' o't.

I've wanted a sark for these aught years and ten,  
And this was to be the beginnin' o't;  
But I vow I shall want it for as lang again,  
Or ever I try the spinnin' o't.  
For never since ever they ca'd as they ca' me,  
Did sic a mishap and mishanter befa' me;  
But ye shall ha'e leave baith to hang and to draw me  
The neist time I try the spinnin' o't.

I've keptit my house now these threescore years,  
And aye I kept frae the spinnin' o't;  
But how I was sarkit, foul fa' them that speirs,  
For it minds me upo' the beginnin' o't.

But our women are now-a-days a' grown sae braw,  
That ilkane maun ha'e a sark, and some ha'e twa—  
The warlds were better where ne'er ane ava  
Had a rag, but ane at the beginnin' o't.

In the days they ca' yore, gin auld fouks had but  
won

To a surcoat, hough-syde, for the winnin' o't,  
Of coat-raips weel cut by the cast o' their bum,  
They never socht mair o' the spinnin' o't.  
A pair o' gray hoggers weil cluikit benew,  
Of nae other lit but the hue of the ewe,  
With a pair o' rough mullions to scuff through  
the dew,  
Was the fee they socht at the beginnin' o't.

But we maun ha'e linen, and that maun ha'e we,  
And how get we that but by spinnin' o't?  
How can we ha'e face for to seek a great fee,  
Except we can help at the winnin' o't?  
And we maun ha'e pearlins, and mabbies, and  
cocks,  
And some other things that the ladies ca' smocks;

And how get we that, gin we tak' na our rocks,  
And pow what we can at the spinnin' o't?

'Tis needless for us to mak' our remarks,  
Frae our mither's miscookin' the spinnin' o't.  
She never kenn'd ocht o' the gueed o' the sarks,  
Frae this aback to the beginnin' o't.  
Twa-three ell o' plaiden was a' that was socht  
By our auld-wairld bodies, and that bude be  
bought;  
For in ilka town siccan things wasna wrocht—  
Sae little they kenned o' the spinnin' o't.

### THEY SAY THAT JOCKEY.

They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,  
They say that Jockey'll speed weel o't,  
For he grows braver ilka day;  
I hope we'll ha'e a bridal o't:  
For yester-night, nae farther gane,  
The back house at the side-wa' o't,  
He there wi' Meg was mirdin' seen;  
I hope we'll ha'e a bridal o't.

An we had but a bridal o't,  
An we had but a bridal o't,  
We'd leave the rest unto good luck,  
Although there might betide ill o't.  
For bridal days are merry times,  
And young fouk like the coming o't,  
And scribblers they bang up their rhymes,  
And pipers play the bumming o't.

The lasses like a bridal o't,  
The lasses like a bridal o't;  
Their brows maun be in rank and file,  
Although that they should guide ill o't.  
The boddom of the kist is then  
Turn'd up into the inmost o't;  
The end that held the keeks sae clean,  
Is now become the teemest o't.

The bangster at the threshing o't,  
The bangster at the threshing o't,  
Afore it comes is fidgin fain,  
And ilka day's a clashing o't:  
He'll sell his jerkin for a groat,  
His linder for another o't,  
And ere he want to clear his shot,  
His sark'll pay the tother o't.

The pipers and the fiddlers o't,  
The pipers and the fiddlers o't,  
Can smell a bridal unco far,  
And like to be the middlers o't:

Fan thick and three-fauld they convene,  
Ilk ane envies the tother o't,  
And wishes nane but him alane  
May ever see another o't.

Fan they ha'e done wi' eating o't,  
Fan they ha'e done wi' eating o't,  
For dancing they gae to the green,  
And aiblins to the beatin' o't:  
He dances best that dances fast,  
And loupes at ilka reeing o't,  
And claps his hands frae hough to hough,  
And furls about the freezings o't.

### WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

The bride cam' out of the byre,  
An' O as she dighted her cheeks!  
"Sirs, I'm to be married the night,  
And ha'e neither blankets nor sheets;  
Ha'e neither blankets nor sheets,  
Nor scarce a coverlet too;  
The bride that has a' thing to borrow  
Has e'en right mickle ado."  
Woo'd and married and a',  
Married and woo'd and a'.  
And was she na very weel aff,  
That was woo'd and married and a'?

Out spake the bride's father,  
As he cam' in frae the pleugh;  
"O haud your tongue, my dochter,  
And ye's get gear enough;  
The stirk stands i' th' tether,  
And our bra' bawsint yade  
Will carry ye hame your corn;  
What wad ye be at, ye jade?"

Out spake the bride's mither,  
"What deil needs a' this pride:  
I had nae a plack in my pouch  
That night I was a bride;  
My gown was linsy-woolsy,  
And ne'er a sark ava';  
An' ye ha'e ribbons an' buskins,  
Mae than ane or twa."

Out spake the bride's brither,  
As he cam' in wi' the kye;  
"Poor Willie wad ne'er ha'e ta'en ye,  
Had he kent ye as weel as I;  
For ye're baith proud and saucy,  
And no for a poor man's wife;  
Gin I canna get a better,  
Ise ne'er tak' ane i' my life."

Out spake the bride's sister,  
 As she cam' in frae the byre;  
 "O gin I were but married,  
 It's a' that I desire!  
 But we poor fook maun live single,  
 And do the best we can:  
 I dinna ken what I shou'd want,  
 If I cou'd get but a man."

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WHAT AILS THE LASSES AT ME?

I am a young bachelor winsome,  
 A farmer by rank and degree,  
 And few I see gang out more handsome  
 To kirk or to market than me.  
 I've outsgit and insight, and credit,  
 And frae onie eelist I'm free;  
 I'm weel enough boarded and bedded,—  
 What ails the lasses at me?

My bughts of good store are na scanty,  
 My byres are weel stock'd wi' kye;  
 Of meal in my girnels there's plenty,  
 And twa or three easements forby.  
 A horse to ride out when they're weary,  
 And cock wi' the best they can see;  
 And then be ca't dantie and deary,—  
 I wonder what ails them at me?

I've tried them, baith highland and low-  
 land,  
 Where I a fair bargain could see;  
 The black and the brown were unwilling,  
 The fair anes were warst o' the three.  
 With jooks and wi' scrapes I've addressed  
 them,  
 Been with them baith modest and free;  
 But whatever way I caressed them,  
 They were cross and were canker'd wi' me.

There's wratacks, and cripples, and cran-  
 shanks,  
 And a' the wandoghts that I ken,  
 Nae sooner they smile on the lasses,  
 Than they are ta'en far enough ben.  
 But when I speak to them that's stately,  
 I find them aye ta'en wi' the gee,

And get the denial fu' flatly;—  
 What think ye can ail them at me?

I have a gude offer to make them,  
 If they would but hearken to me;  
 And that is, I'm willing to take them,  
 Gin they wad be honest and free.  
 Let her wha likes best write a billet,  
 And send the sweet message to me;  
 By sun and by moon I'll fulfil it,  
 Though crooked or crippled she be.

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THE BRAES OF FLAVIANA.

Of all the lads that be  
 On Flaviana's braes,  
 'Tis Colin bears the gree,  
 An' that a thousand ways;  
 Best on the pipe he plays,  
 Is merry, blyth, an' gay,  
 "An' Jeany fair," he says,  
 "Has stown my heart away.

"Had I ten thousand pounds,  
 I'd all to Jeany gee,  
 I'd thole a thousand wounds  
 To keep my Jeany free:  
 For Jeany is to me,  
 Of all the maidens fair,  
 My jo, and ay shall be,  
 With her I'll only pair.

"Of roses I will weave  
 For her a flow'ry crown,  
 All other cares I'll leave,  
 An' busk her haffets round;  
 I'll buy her a new gown,  
 Wi' strips of red an' blew,  
 An' never mair look brown,  
 For Jeany'll ay be new.

"My Jeany made reply,  
 Syn ye ha'e chosen me,  
 Then all my wits I'll try,  
 A loving wife to be.  
 If I my Colin see,  
 I'll lang for naething mair,  
 Wi' him I do agree  
 In weal an' wae to share!"

## ROBERT BLAIR.

BORN 1699—DIED 1746.

The gifted author of "The Grave" was a son of the Rev. David Blair, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and grandson of the Rev. Robert Blair, chaplain to Charles I., and one of the most zealous and distinguished clergymen of the period in which he lived. Robert was born in the year 1699 at Edinburgh; was educated for the church at the university of his native city, and afterwards travelled for pleasure and improvement on the Continent. In January, 1731, he was ordained minister of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian, where he passed the remainder of his life, "bosomed in the shade." He was an animated preacher, an accomplished scholar, and a botanist and florist, as well as a man of scientific and general knowledge. His first poem was one dedicated to the memory of Mr. William Law, professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh—whose daughter Isabella he afterwards married—which was first published in Dr. Anderson's collection. Possessing a private fortune independent of his stipend as a parish minister, Blair, we are told, lived in the style of a country gentleman, associating with the neighbouring gentry, among whom were Sir Francis Kinloch, and the lamented Colonel Gardiner, who was killed at the battle of Prestonpans in 1745;—both Blair's warmest friends.

It was Gardiner who appears to have been the means of his opening a correspondence with the celebrated Isaac Watts—a name never to be uttered without reverence by any lover of pure Christianity or by any well-wisher of mankind—and Dr. Doddridge, on the subject of "The Grave." February 25, 1741–42, Blair addresses a letter to the latter, the following extract from which contains interesting information as to the composition and publication of his poem:—"About ten months ago Lady Frances Gardiner did me the favour to transmit to me some manuscript hymns of yours, with which I was wonderfully delighted. I wish I could on my part contribute in any measure to your entertainment, as you have

sometimes done to mine in a very high degree. And that I may show how willing I am to do so, I have desired Dr. Watts to transmit to you a manuscript poem of mine, entitled 'The Grave,' written, I hope, in a way not unbecoming my profession as a minister of the gospel, though the greatest part of it was composed several years before I was clothed with so sacred a character. I was urged by some friends here, to whom I showed it, to make it public; nor did I decline it, provided I had the approbation of Dr. Watts, from whom I have received many civilities, and for whom I had ever entertained the highest regard. Yesterday I had a letter from the doctor signifying his approbation of the piece in a manner most obliging. A great deal less from him would have done me no small honour. But, at the same time, he mentions to me that he had offered it to two booksellers of his acquaintance, who, he tells me, did not care to run the risk of publishing it. They can scarcely think, considering how critical an age we live in with respect to such kind of writings, that a person living 300 miles from London could write so as to be acceptable to the fashionable and polite. Perhaps it may be so, though at the same time I must say, in order to make it more generally liked, I was obliged sometimes to go cross to my own inclinations, well knowing that whatever poem is written upon a serious argument must, upon that very account, be under peculiar disadvantages; and, therefore, proper arts must be used to make such a piece go down with a licentious age, which cares for none of these things. I beg pardon for breaking in upon moments precious as yours, and hope you will be so kind as to give me your opinion of the poem."

It was first printed in London, "for Mr. Cooper," in 1743, and again in Edinburgh in 1747. Blair died of a fever, February 4, 1746, and was succeeded at Athelstaneford by John Home, the author of "Douglas." He left a numerous family; and his fourth son,

a distinguished lawyer—Robert Blair of Avon-  
toun—rose to be Lord-president of the Court  
of Session. A handsome obelisk was erected  
to the memory of the poet at Athelstane-  
ford in 1857. "The Grave" is a complete  
and powerful poem, now esteemed as one of  
the standard classics of English poetical liter-  
ature. Pinkerton says "it is the best piece of  
blank verse we have save those of Milton;"  
while Southey carelessly stated in his *Life of  
Cowper* that it was the only poem he could  
call to mind which had been composed in  
imitation of the "Night Thoughts." "The  
Grave" was written prior to the "Night  
Thoughts," and has no other resemblance to  
the work of Young than that it is of a serious  
devout cast, and is in blank verse. This poem,  
which the two wise booksellers "did not care  
to run the risk of publishing," proved to be  
one of the most popular productions of the  
eighteenth century.

The only exception that can be taken to  
Blair's poem—which contains many corusca-  
tions of true genius, many images character-  
ized by a Shaksperian force and picturesque fancy,  
as when he says men see their friends

"Drop off like leaves in autumn, yet launch out  
Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers  
In the world's hale and undegenerate days  
Would scarce have leisure for;"

or in his two lines concerning suicides:—

"The common damned shun their society,  
And look upon themselves as fiends less foul"—

is, that the author has in some instances had  
the good taste to enrich his memory with  
many fine expressions and thoughts from other  
poets, the appropriation of which he failed to  
acknowledge. A single instance will suffice:  
Man, sick of bliss, tries evil, and as a result—

"The good he scorned  
Stalked off reluctant, like an ill-used ghost,  
Not to return; or if it did, in visits,  
Like those of angels, short and far between."

The idea was borrowed from Norris of Bemer-  
side, who, prior to Blair, wrote a poem, "The  
Parting," which contains the following stanza:

"How fading are the joys we dote upon;  
Like apparitions seen and gone;  
But those who soonest take their flight,  
Are the most exquisite and strong,  
Like angels' visits short and bright—  
Mortality's too weak to bear them long."

The simile seems to have been appropriated  
from Blair by Thomas Campbell, in his "Plea-  
sures of Hope," with one slight verbal alter-  
ation:

"What though my winged hours of bliss have been  
Like angel visits, few and far between."

"But," adds a critic, "however much Blair  
may have been indebted to his reading for the  
materials of his poem, it must still be allowed  
that he has made a tasteful use of them; nor  
can any plagiarism-hunter ever deprive him  
of the honour of having contributed largely  
from his own stores to our poetical wealth."

## THE GRAVE.<sup>1</sup>

"The house appointed for all living."—JOB.

Whilst some affect the sun, and some the shade,  
Some flee the city, some the hermitage;  
Their aims as various as the roads they take  
In journeying through life;—the task be mine  
To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb;  
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all  
These travellers meet.—Thy succours I implore,  
Eternal King! whose potent arm sustains  
The keys of hell and death.—The grave, dread  
thing!

10 Men shiver when thou'rt named: Nature, appall'd,

Shakes off her wonted firmness.—Ah! how dark  
Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes!  
Where nought but silence reigns, and night, dark  
night,  
Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun  
Was rolled together, or had tried his beams  
Athwart the gloom profound.—The sickly taper  
By glimmering through thy low-brow'd misty  
vaults,  
Furr'd round with mouldy damps, and ropy slime,  
Lets fall a supernumerary horror,

<sup>1</sup> Campbell in his "Essay on English Poetry" remarks:  
"The eighteenth century has produced few specimens  
of blank verse of so familiar and simple a character as

that of "The Grave." It is a popular poem, not merely  
because it is religious, but because its language and  
imagery are free, natural, and picturesque."—ED.

20 And only serves to make thy night more irksome.  
Well do I know thee by thy trusty yew,  
Cheerless, unsocial plant! that loves to dwell  
Midst skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms;  
Where light-heel'd ghosts, and visionary shades  
Beneath the wan cold moon (as fame reports)  
Embodied, thick, perform their mystic rounds.  
No other merriment, dull tree, is thine.

See yonder hallow'd fane! the pious work  
Of names once famed, now dubious or forgot,  
30 And buried 'midst the wreck of things which  
were;  
There lie interr'd the more illustrious dead.  
The wind is up: hark! how it howls! Methinks  
Till now, I never heard a sound so dreary:  
Doors creak, and windows clap, and night's foul

bird,  
Rook'd in the spire, screams loud; the gloomy  
aisles,  
Black plaster'd, and hung round with shreds of  
scutcheons,  
And tatter'd coats of arms, send back the sound,  
laden with heavier airs, from the low vaults.  
The mansions of the dead,—Roused from their  
slumbers,

40 In grim array the grisly spectres rise,  
Grin horrible, and, obstinately sullen,  
Pass and repass, hush'd as the foot of night.  
Again the screech-owl shrieks: ungracious sound!  
I'll hear no more; it makes one's blood run chill.

Quite round the pile, a row of rev'rend elms,  
50 Coöval near with that,) all ragged show,  
Long lash'd by the rude winds: some rift half down  
Their branchless trunks: others so thin a top,  
That scarce two crows could lodge in the same  
tree.

Strange things, the neighbours say, have hap-  
pen'd here:

✓ Wild shrieks have issued from the hollow tombs;  
Dead men have come again, and walk'd about;  
And the great bell has toll'd, unring, untouched.  
(Such tales their cheer, at wake or gossiping,  
When it draws near to witching time of night.)

Of, in the lone churchyard at night I've seen,  
By glimpse of moonshine, chequering thro' the  
trees,

The school-boy, with his satchel in his hand,  
Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,  
60 And lightly tripping o'er the long flat stones,  
(With nettles skirted, and with moss o'ergrown,)  
That tell in homely phrase who lie below.  
Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,  
The sound of something purring at his heels;  
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,  
Till, out of breath, he overtakes his fellows;  
Who gather round, and wonder at the tale  
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,  
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand

O'er some new-open'd grave; and, strange to tell! 70  
Evanishes at crowing of the cock. ✓

The new-made widow, too, I've sometimes spied,  
Sad sight! slow moving o'er the prostrate dead:  
Listless, she crawls along in doleful black,  
While bursts of sorrow gush from either eye,  
Fast-falling down her now untasted cheek.  
Prone on the lowly grave of the dear man  
She drops; while busy meddling memory,  
In barbarous succession, musters up  
The past endearments of their softer hours, 80  
Tenacious of its theme. Still, still she thinks  
She sees him, and, indulging the fond thought,  
Clings yet more closely to the senseless turf,  
Nor heeds the passenger who looks that way.

Invidious grave! how dost thou rend in sunder  
Whom love has knit, and sympathy made one!  
A tie more stubborn far than nature's band.  
Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!  
Sweetener of life, and solder of society!  
I owe thee much. Thou hast deserved from me 90  
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay.

oft have I proved the labours of thy love,  
And the warm efforts of the gentle heart,  
Anxious to please. Oh! when my friend and I  
In some thick wood have wander'd heedless on,  
Hid from the vulgar eye, and sat us down  
Upon the sloping cowslip-cover'd bank,  
Where the pure limpid stream has slid along  
In grateful errors through the underwood,  
Sweet murmuring; methought, the shrill-tongued  
thrush

Mended his song of love; the sooty blackbird  
Mellow'd his pipe, and soften'd every note;  
The eglantine smell'd sweeter, and the rose  
Assumed a dye more deep; whilst every flow'r  
Vied with its fellow-plant in luxury  
Of dress.—Oh! then, the longest summer's day  
Seem'd too, too much in haste; still the full heart  
Had not imparted half; 'twas happiness  
Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,  
Not to return, how painful the remembrance! 110

Dull grave! thou spoil'st the dance of youthful  
blood,

Strik'st out the dimple from the cheek of mirth,  
And ev'ry smirking feature from the face;  
Branding our laughter with the name of madness.  
Where are the jesters now? The men of health ✓  
Complexionally pleasant? Where the droll ✓  
Whose ev'ry look and gesture was a joke  
To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,  
And made ev'n thick-lipp'd musing melancholy  
To gather up her face into a smile 115  
Before she was aware? Ah! sullen now,  
And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

Where are the mighty thunderbolts of war? ✓  
The Roman Cæsars, and the Grecian chiefs,

✓ The boast of story? Where the hot-brained youth,

Who the tiara at his pleasure tore  
From kings of all the then discover'd globe;  
And cried, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,

And had not room enough to do its work?

170 Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim!

And cramm'd into a space we blush to name.  
Proud royalty! how alter'd in thy looks!  
How blank thy features, and how wan thy hue!  
Son of the morning! whither art thou gone?

Where hast thou hid thy many-spangled head,  
And the majestic menace of thine eyes,  
Felt from afar? Pliant and powerless now,  
Like new-born infant wound up in his swathes,  
Or victim tumbled flat upon his back,

140 That throbs beneath the sacrificer's knife:  
Mute must thou bear the strife of little tongues,  
And coward insults of the base-born crowd,  
That grudge a privilege thou never hadst,  
But only hoped for in the peaceful grave,  
Of being unmolested and alone.

Arabia's gums, and odoriferous drugs,  
And honours by the herald duly paid  
In mode and form, ev'n to a very scruple;  
O cruel irony! these come too late;

150 And only mock whom they were meant to honour.  
Surely, there's not a dungeon-slave that's buried  
In the highway, unshrouded and uncoffin'd,  
But lies as soft, and sleeps as sound as he.

✓ Sorry pre-eminence of high descent,  
Above the baser born, to rot in state!

But see! the well-plumed hearse comes nodding on,

Stately and slow; and properly attended  
By the whole sable tribe, that painful watch  
The sick man's door, and live upon the dead,

160 By letting out their persons by the hour  
To mimic sorrow when the heart's not sad!  
How rich the trappings, now they're all unfurl'd  
And glitt'ring in the sun! Triumphant entries  
Of conquerors, and coronation pomps,  
In glory scarce exceed. Great gluts of people  
Retard th' unwieldy show; whilst from the casements

And houses' tops ranks behind ranks, close wedged,

Hang belying o'er. But tell us, why this waste?

110 That's fallen into disgrace, and in the nostril

Smells horrible?—Ye undertakers, tell us,  
'Mids all the gorgeous figures you exhibit,  
Why is the principal conceal'd for which  
You make this mighty stir?—'Tis wisely done:  
What would offend the eye in a good picture  
The painter casts discreetly into shades.

Proud lineage, now how little thou appear'st!  
Below the envy of the private man!

Honour, that meddlesome, officious ill,  
Pursues thee e'en to death, nor there stops short. 180  
Strange persecution! when the grave itself  
Is no protection from rude sufferance.

Absurd! to think to overreach the grave,  
And from the wreck of names to rescue ours!  
The best concerted schemes men lay for fame  
Die fast away: only themselves die faster.  
The far-famed sculptor, and the laurel'd bard,  
Those bold insurers of deathless fame,  
Supply their little feeble aids in vain.  
The tap'ring pyramid, th' Egyptian's pride, 190  
And wonder of the world, whose spiky top  
Has wounded the thick cloud, and long out-liv'd  
The angry shaking of the winter's storm;  
Yet spent at last by th' injuries of heaven,  
Shatter'd with age, and furrow'd o'er with years,  
The mystic cone, with hieroglyphics crusted,  
At once gives way. O lamentable sight!  
The labour of whole ages lumbers down, 200  
A hideous and misshapen length of ruins.  
Sepulchral columns wrestle, but in vain, 200  
With all-subduing Time; her cank'ring hand,  
With calm, deliberate malice wasteth them:  
Worn on the edge of days, the brass consumes,  
The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,  
Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge.  
Ambition, half-convicted of her folly,  
Hangs down the head, and reddens at the tale.

Here all the mighty troublers of the earth,  
Who swam to sov'reign rule through seas of blood;

Th' oppressive, sturdy, man-destroying villains, 210  
Who ravaged kingdoms and laid empires waste,  
And in a cruel wantonness of power  
Thinn'd states of half their people, and gave up  
To want the rest; now, like a storm that's spent,  
Lie hush'd, and meanly sneak behind thy covert.  
Vain thought! to hide them from the gen'ral scorn

That haunts and dogs them, like an injur'd ghost  
Implacable. Here, too, the petty tyrant,  
Whose scant domains geographer ne'er noticed,  
And, well for neighb'ring grounds, of arm as short, 220

Who fixed his iron talons on the poor,  
And gripp'd them like some lordly beast of prey,  
Deaf to the forceful cries of gnawing hunger,  
And piteous, plaintive voice of misery;  
(As if a slave were not a shred of nature,  
Of the same common nature as his lord;)

Now tame and humble, like a child that's whipp'd,  
Shakes hands with dust, and calls the worm his kinsman;  
Nor pleads his rank and birthright. Under ground

Precedency's a jest; vassal and lord, 230  
Grossly familiar, side by side consume.

When self-esteem, or others' adulation,  
Would cunningly persuade us we are something  
Above the common level of our kind;  
The grave gainsays the smooth-complexion'd  
flatt'ry,  
And with blunt truth acquaints us what we are.

Beauty! thou pretty plaything, dear deceit,  
That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,  
And gives it a new pulse unknown before,  
240 The grave discredits thee; thy charms expunged,  
Thy roses faded, and thy lilies soil'd,  
What hast thou more to boast of? Will thy lovers  
Flock round thee now, to gaze and do thee homage?  
Methinks I see thee with thy head low laid,  
Whilst, surfeited upon thy damask cheek,  
The high-fed worm, in lazy volumes roll'd,  
Riots unscared. For this, was all thy caution?  
For this thy painful labours at thy glass?  
T' improve those charms, and keep them in repair,  
250 For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul  
feeder!

Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,  
And leave as keen a relish on the sense.  
Look how the fair one weeps! the conscious tears  
Stand thick as dew-drops on the bells of flowers:  
Honest effusion! the swollen heart in vain  
Works hard to put a gloss on its distress.

Strength, too—thou surly, and less gentle boast  
Of those that laugh loud at the village ring!  
A fit of common sickness pulls thee down  
260 With greater ease than e'er thou didst the strip-  
ling  
That rashly dared thee to th' unequal fight.  
What groan was that I heard? deep groan indeed!  
With anguish heavy laden; let me trace it;  
From yonder bed it comes, where the strong man,  
By stronger arm belabour'd, gasps for breath  
Like a hard-hunted beast. How his great heart  
Beats thick! his roomy chest by far too scant  
To give the lungs full play! what now avail  
The strong-built sinewy limbs, and well-spread  
shoulders?

270 See how he tugs for life, and lays about him,  
Mad with his pain! Eager he catches hold  
Of what comes next to hand, and grasps it hard,  
Just like a creature drowning! hideous sight!  
Oh! how his eyes stand out, and stare full ghastly,  
Whilst the distemper's rank and deadly venom  
Shoots like a burning arrow cross his bowels,  
And drinks his marrow up. Heard you that  
groan?

It was his last. See how the great Goliath,  
Just like a child that braw'd itself to rest,  
280 Lies still.—What mean'st thou then, O mighty  
boaster,  
To vaunt of nerves of thine! What means the  
bull,

Unconscious of his strength, to play the coward,  
And flee before a feeble thing like man;

That, knowing well the slackness of his arm,  
Trusts only in the well-invented knife?

With study pale, and midnight vigils spent,  
The star-surveying sage, close to his eye  
Applies the sight-invigorating tube;  
And travelling thro' the boundless length of space,  
Marks well the courses of the far-seen orbs, 290  
That roll with regular confusion there,  
In ecstasy of thought. But ah! proud man, ~  
Great heights are hazardous to the weak head;  
Soon, very soon, thy firmest footing fails;  
And down thou dropp'st into that darksome place,  
Where nor device nor knowledge ever came.

Here the tongue-warrior lies, disabled now,  
Disarm'd, dishonour'd, like a wretch that's gagg'd,  
And cannot tell his ails to passers by.  
Great man of language, whence this mighty  
change? 300  
This dumb despair, and drooping of the head?  
Though strong persuasion hung upon thy lip,  
And sly insinuation's softer arts  
In ambush lay about thy flowing tongue:  
Alas! how chop-fall'n now! Thick mists and  
silence

Rest, like a weary cloud, upon thy breast  
Unceasing.—Ah! where is the lifted arm,  
The strength of action, and the force of words,  
The well-turn'd period, and the well-tuned voice,  
With all the lesser ornaments of phrase? 310  
Ah! fled for ever, as they ne'er had been!  
Razed from the book of fame; or, more provoking,  
Perchance some hackney, hunger-bitten scribbler  
Insults thy memory, and blots thy tomb  
With long flat narrative or duller rhymes,  
With heavy halting pace that draw along;  
Enough to rouse a dead man into rage,  
And warm with red resentment the wan cheek.

Here the great masters of the healing art, ~  
These mighty mock defrauders of the tomb! 320  
Spite of their juleps and catholicons,  
Resign to fate. Proud Æsculapius' son!  
Where are thy boasted implements of art,  
And all thy well-gramm'd magazines of health?  
Nor hill, nor vale, as far as ship could go,  
Nor margin of the gravel-bottom'd brook,  
Escaped thy rifling hand: from stubborn shrubs  
Thou wrung'st their shy retiring virtues out,  
And vex'd them in the fire; nor fly, nor insect,  
Nor writhy snake, escaped thy deep research. 330  
But why this apparatus? why this cost?  
Tell us, thou doughty keeper from the grave!  
Where are thy recipes and cordials now,  
With the long list of vouchers for thy cures?  
Alas! thou speak'st not.—The bold impostor  
Looks not more silly when the cheat's found out.

Here, the lank-sided miser, worst of felons! ~  
Who meanly stole (discreditable shift!)

340 From back and belly too, their proper cheer;  
Eased of a tax it irk'd the wretch to pay  
To his own carcass, now lies cheaply lodged;  
By clam'rous appetites no longer teased,  
Nor tedious bills of charges and repairs.  
But ah! where are his rents, his comings in?  
Ay! now you've made the rich man poor indeed:  
Robb'd of his gods, what has he left behind?  
✓ O cursed lust of gold! when for thy sake  
The fool throws up his int'rest in both worlds!  
First starved in this, then damn'd in that to  
come.

350 How shocking must thy summons be, O Death!  
To him that is at ease in his possessions;  
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,  
Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come!  
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,  
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks  
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!  
A little longer, yet a little longer,  
360 Oh! might she stay to wash away her stains,  
And fit her for her passage!—Mournful sight!  
Her very eyes weep blood;—and every groan  
She heaves is big with horror. But the foe,  
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,  
Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;  
Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

Sure, 'tis a serious thing to die! my soul!  
370 What a strange moment must it be, when near  
Thy journey's end thou hast the gulf in view!  
That awful gulf no mortal e'er repass'd  
To tell what's doing on the other side.  
Nature runs back, and shudders at the sight,  
And every life-string bleeds at thoughts of part-  
ing;  
For part they must: body and soul must part;  
Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair.  
4 This wings its way to its Almighty Source,  
380 The witness of its actions, now its judge:  
That drops into the dark and noisome grave,  
Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

If death were nothing, and nought after death;  
If, when men died, at once they ceased to be,  
Returning to the barren womb of nothing  
Whence first they sprung; then might the  
debauchee

Untrembling mouth the heavens; then might  
the drunkard

Reel over his full bowl, and when 'tis drain'd  
Fill up another to the brim, and laugh  
At the poor bugbear Death; then might the  
wretch

390 That's weary of the world, and tired of life,  
At once give each inquietude the slip,

By stealing out of being when he pleased,  
And by what way; whether by hemp or steel;  
Death's thousand doors stand open. Who could  
force

The ill-pleas'd guest to sit out his full time,  
Or blame him if he goes? Sure he does well  
That helps himself as timely as he can,  
When able. But if there's an *hercrafter*,—  
(And that there is, conscience, uninfluenced,  
And suffer'd to speak out, tells ev'ry man,— 400  
Then must it be an awful thing to die;  
More horrid yet to die by one's own hand!  
Self-murder! name it not; our island's shame,  
(That makes her the reproach of neighb'ring  
states.

Shall nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,  
Self-preservation, fall by her own act?  
Forbid it, Heav'n! Let not, upon disgust,  
The shameless hand be foully crimson'd o'er  
With blood of its own lord. Dreadful attempt!  
Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage, 410  
To rush into the presence of our Judge;  
As if we challenged him to do his worst,  
And matter'd not his wrath! Unheard-of tor-  
tures

Must be reserved for such: these herd together;  
The common damn'd shun their society,  
(And look upon themselves as fiends less foul.  
Our time is fix'd, and all our days are number'd;  
How long, how short, we know not: this we know,  
(Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,  
Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission; 420  
Like sentries that must keep their destined stand,  
And wait th' appointed hour, till they're relieved.  
Those only are the brave that keep their ground,  
And keep it to the last. To run away  
Is but a coward's trick: to run away  
From this world's ills, that at the very worst  
Will soon blow o'er, thinking to mend ourselves  
By boldly vent'ring on a world unknown,  
And plunging headlong in the dark; 'tis mad:  
No frenzy half so desperate as this. 430

Tell us, ye dead; will none of you, in pity  
To those you left behind, disclose the secret?  
Oh! that some courteous ghost would blab it out;  
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be.  
I've heard, that souls departed have sometimes  
Forewarn'd men of their death: 'twas kindly  
done

To knock and give the alarm. But what means  
This stinted charity?—'Tis but lame kindness  
That does its work by halves. Why might you  
not

Tell us what 'tis to die? Do the strict laws 440  
Of your society forbid your speaking  
Upon a point so nice? I'll ask no more;  
Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your shrine  
Enlightens but yourselves: Well—'tis no matter;  
A very little time will clear up all,  
And make us learn'd as you are, and as close.

✓ Death's shafts fly thick:—Here falls the village swain,  
And there his pamper'd lord.—The cup goes round,

And who so artful as to put it by?

'Tis long since death had the majority; 450

✓ Yet, strange! the living lay it not to heart.

See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,  
The sexton, hoary-headed chronicle!  
Of hard unmeaning face, down which ne'er stole  
A gentle tear; with mattock in his hand,  
Digs thro' whole rows of kindred and acquaintance,

By far his juniors.—Scarce a skull's cast up,  
But well he knew its owner; and can tell  
Some passage of his life. Thus hand in hand  
The sot has walk'd with death twice twenty years; 460

And yet ne'er younker on the green laughs louder,

Or clubs a smuttier tale:—When drunkards meet,  
None sings a merrier catch, or lends a hand  
More willing to his cup. Poor wretch! he minds not,

That soon some trusty brother of the trade  
Shall do for him what he has done for thousands.

On this side, and on that, men see their friends  
Drop off, like leaves in autumn; yet launch out  
Into fantastic schemes, which the long livers  
In the world's hale and undegen'rate days 470  
Could scarce have leisure for.—Fools that we are,  
Never to think of death and of ourselves  
At the same time; as if to learn to die

Were no concern of ours. O more than sottish!  
For creatures of a day, in gamesome mood,  
To frolic on eternity's dread brink,  
Unapprehensive; when, for aught we know,  
The very first swollen surge shall sweep us in.  
Think we, or think we not, time hurries on  
With a resistless, unremitting stream; 480  
Yet treads more soft than e'er did midnight thief,

That slides his hand under the miser's pillow,  
And carries off his prize. What is this world?  
What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,  
Strewed with death's spoils, the spoils of animals,  
Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.

The very turf on which we tread once lived;  
And we that live must lend our carcasses  
To cover our own offspring; in their turns  
They too must cover theirs. 'Tis here all meet 490  
The shivering Iceland, and sun-burnt Moor;  
Men of all climes, that never met before;  
And of all creeds, the Jew, the Turk, the Christian.

Here the proud prince, and favourite yet prouder,  
His sovereign's keeper, and the people's scourge,  
Are huddled out of sight. Here lie abash'd  
The great negotiators of the earth,  
And celebrated masters of the balance,

Deep read in stratagems, and wiles of courts.  
Now vain their treaty-skill; Death scorns to  
treat. 500

Here the o'erloaded slave flings down his burthen  
From his gall'd shoulders; and, when the stern  
tyrant,

With all his guards and tools of pow'r about him,  
Is meditating new unheard-of hardships,  
Mocks his short arm, and, quick as thought,  
escapes

Where tyrants vex not, and the weary rest.

Here the warm lover, leaving the cool shade,  
The tell-tale echo, and the bubbling stream,  
(Time out of mind the fav'rite seats of love,)  
Fast by his gentle mistress lays him down, 510  
Unblasted by foul tongue. Here friends and  
foes

Lie close, unmindful of their former feuds.

The lawn-robed prelate, and plain presbyter,  
Erewhile that stood aloof, as shy to meet,  
Familiar mingle here, like sister streams  
That some rude interposing rock has split.  
Here is the large-limb'd peasant; here the child  
Of a span long, that never saw the sun,  
Nor press'd the nipple, strangled in life's porch. 520

Here is the mother, with her sons and daughters; 520  
The barren wife, and long-demurring maid,

Whose lonely unappropriated sweets  
Smiled like yon knot of cowslips on the cliff,  
Not to be come at by the willing hand.

Here are the prude severe, and gay coquette,  
The sober widow, and the young green virgin,  
Cropp'd like a rose before 'tis fully blown,  
Or half its worth disclosed. Strange medley here!

Here garrulous old age winds up his tale;  
And jovial youth, of lightsome vacant heart, 530  
Whose every day was made of melody,  
Hears not the voice of mirth.—The shrill-tongued  
shrew,

Meek as the turtle-dove, forgets her chiding.

Here are the wise, the generous, and the brave;  
The just, the good, the worthless, the profane;  
The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred;  
The fool, the churl, the scoundrel, and the mean;  
The supple statesman, and the patriot stern;  
The wrecks of nations, and the spoils of time,  
With all the lumber of six thousand years. 540

Poor man! how happy once in thy first state,  
When yet but warm from thy great Maker's hand,  
He stamp'd thee with his image, and, well pleased,  
Smiled on his last fair work.—Then all was well:  
Sound was the body, and the soul serene;  
Like two sweet instruments ne'er out of tune,  
That play their several parts. Nor head, nor heart  
Offer'd to ache; nor was there cause they should;  
For all was pure within: no fell remorse, 550  
Nor anxious castings up of what might be,  
Alarmed his peaceful bosom. Summer seas  
Show not more smooth when kissed by southern  
winds,

Just ready to expire. Scarce importuned,  
The generous soil, with a luxuriant hand,  
Offer'd the various produce of the year,  
And everything most perfect in its kind.  
Blessed, thrice blessed days! but ah! how short!  
Bless'd as the pleasing dreams of holy men,  
But fugitive, like those, and quickly gone.  
O slippery state of things! What sudden turns!  
What strange vicissitudes, in the first leaf  
Of man's sad history! To-day most happy,  
And ere to-morrow's sun has set, most abject.  
How scant the space between these vast extremes!  
Thus fared it with our sire: not long he enjoy'd  
His paradise.—Scarce had the happy tenant  
Of the fair spot due time to prove its sweets  
Or sum them up, when straight he must be gone,  
Ne'er to return again.—And must he go?

570 Can nought compound for the first dire offence  
Of erring man? Like one that is condemn'd,  
Fain would he trifle time with idle talk,  
And parley with his fate. But 'tis in vain.  
Not all the lavish odours of the place,  
Offer'd in incense, can procure his pardon,  
Or mitigate his doom. A mighty angel,  
With flaming sword, forbids his longer stay;  
And drives the loiterer forth; nor must he take  
One last and farewell round.—At once he lost

580 His glory and his God. If mortal now,  
And sorely maim'd, no wonder! Man has sinn'd;  
Sick of his bliss, and bent on new adventures,  
Evil he would needs try; nor tried in vain.  
(Dreadful experiment! Destructive measure!  
Where the worst thing could happen is success)  
Alas! too well he sped; the good he scorn'd  
Stalk'd off reluctant, like an ill-used ghost,  
Not to return; or if it did, its visits,  
Like those of angels, short and far between:

590 Whilst the black demon, with his hell-'scap'd train,  
Admitted once into its better room,  
Grew loud and mutinous, nor would be gone;  
Lording it o'er the man; who now, too late,  
Saw the rash error which he could not mend—  
An error fatal not to him alone,  
But to his future sons, his fortune's heirs.  
Inglorious bondage! Human nature groans  
Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel,  
And its vast body bleeds through every vein.

600 What havoc hast thou made, foul monster, sin!  
Greatest and first of ills! The fruitful parent  
Of woes of all dimensions! But for thee  
Sorrow had never been. All-noxious thing,  
Of vilest nature! Other sorts of evils  
Are kindly circumscribed, and have their bounds.  
The fierce volcano, from its burning entrails  
That belches molten stone and globes of fire,  
Involved in pitchy clouds of smoke and stench,  
Mars the adjacent fields, for some leagues round,  
610 And there it stops. The big-swollen inundation,  
Of mischief more diffusive, raving loud,  
Buries whole tracts of country, threat'ning more;

But that too has its shore it cannot pass.  
More dreadful far than those! sin has laid waste,  
Not here and there a country, but a world;  
Despatching, at a wide-extended blow,  
Entire mankind; and, for their sakes, defacing  
A whole creation's beauty with rude hands;  
Blasting the fruitful grain and loaded branches,  
And marking all along its way with ruin. 620  
Accursed thing! Oh! where shall fancy find  
A proper name to call thee by, expressive  
Of all thy horrors! pregnant womb of ills!  
Of temper so transcendantly malign,  
That toads and serpents of most deadly kind,  
Compared to thee, are harmless. Sickneses  
Of every size and symptom, racking pains,  
And bluest plagues, are thine! See how the fiend  
Profusely scatters the contagion round!  
Whilst deep-mouth'd slaughter, bellowing at her  
heels, 630  
Wades deep in blood new-spilt; yet for to-morrow  
Shapes out new work of great uncommon daring,  
And inly pines till the dread blow is struck.

But, hold! I've gone too far; too much discover'd  
My father's nakedness and nature's shame.  
Here let me pause—and drop an honest tear,  
One burst of filial duty and condolence,  
O'er all those ample deserts Death has spread,  
This chaos of mankind. O great man-eater!  
Whose ev'ry day is carnival, not sated yet! 640  
Unheard-of epicure, without a fellow!  
The veriest gluttons do not always cram;  
Some intervals of abstinence are sought  
To edge the appetite: thou seekest none.  
Methinks the countless swarms thou hast de-  
vour'd,  
And thousands that each hour thou gobble up,  
This, less than this, might gorge thee to the full.  
But, ah! rapacious still, thou gap'st for more;  
Like one, whole days defrauded of his meals,  
On whom lank hunger lays her skinny hand, 650  
And whets to keenest eagerness his cravings.  
As if diseases, massacres, and poison,  
Famine, and war, were not thy caterers.

But know, that thou must render up the dead,  
And with high interest too.—They are not thine,  
But only in thy keeping for a season,  
Till the great promised day of restitution;  
When loud diffusive sound from brazen trump  
Of strong-lung'd cherub, shall alarm thy captives,  
And rouse the long, long sleepers into life, 660  
Daylight and liberty.—  
Then must thy gates fly open, and reveal  
The mines that lay long forming underground,  
In their dark cells immured; but now full ripe,  
And pure, as silver from the crucible,  
That twice has stood the torture of the fire  
And inquisition of the forge. We know  
The illustrious Deliverer of mankind,  
The Son of God, thee foil'd. Him in thy power

Thou couldst not hold; self-vigorous he rose, <sup>670</sup>  
 And, shaking off thy fetters, soon retook  
 Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent:  
 (Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!)  
 Twice twenty days he sojourn'd here on earth,  
 And show'd himself alive to chosen witnesses,  
 By proofs so strong that the most slow-assenting  
 Had not a scruple left. This having done,  
 He mounted up to heaven. Methinks I see him  
 Climb the aerial heights, and glide along  
 Athwart the severing clouds; but the faint eye, <sup>672</sup>  
 Flung backwards in the chase, soon drops its  
 hold,

Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.  
 Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in;  
 Nor are his friends shut out: as a great prince  
 Not for himself alone procures admission,  
 But for his train: it was his royal will,  
 That where he is there should his followers be.  
 Death only lies between, a gloomy path! <sup>673</sup>  
 Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears!  
 But nor untrod, nor tedious, the fatigue <sup>670</sup>  
 Will soon go off. Besides, there's no by-road  
 To bliss. Then why, like ill-conditioned children,  
 Start we at transient hardships in the way  
 That leads to purer air and softer skies,  
 And a ne'er-setting sun? Fools that we are!  
 We wish to be where sweets unwith'ring bloom,  
 But straight our wish revoke, and will not go.  
 So have I seen, upon a summer's even,  
 Fast by the riv'let's brink, a youngster play:  
 How wishfully he looks to stem the tide! <sup>700</sup>  
 This moment resolute, next unresolved:  
 At last he dips his foot; but, as he dips,  
 His fears redouble, and he runs away  
 From th' inoffensive stream, unmindful now  
 Of all the flowers that paint the further bank,  
 And smiled so sweet of late. Thrice-welcome  
 death!

That, after many a painful bleeding step,  
 Conducts us to our home, and lands us safe  
 On the long-wish'd-for shore. Prodigious change!  
 Our bane turn'd to a blessing; death, disarm'd, <sup>710</sup>  
 Loses its fellness quite. All thanks to Him  
 Who scourg'd the venom out. Sure the last end  
 Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!  
 Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,  
 Nor weary worn-out winds expire so soft.  
 Behold him in the evening-tide of life,  
 A life well spent, whose early care it was  
 His riper years should not upbraid his green:  
 By unperceived degrees he wears away;  
 Yet, like the sun, seems larger at his setting! <sup>720</sup>

High in his faith and hope, look how he reaches  
 After the prize in view! and, like a bird  
 That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get away;  
 Whilst the glad gates of sight are wide expanded  
 To let new glories in, the first fair fruits  
 Of the fast-coming harvest. Then, O then,  
 Each earth-born joy grows vile, or disappears,  
 Shrunk to a thing of nought. O how he longs  
 To have his passport sign'd, and be dismissed!  
 'Tis done, and now he's happy. The glad soul <sup>770</sup>  
 Has not a wish uncrown'd. E'en the lag flesh  
 Rests too in hope of meeting once again  
 Its better half, never to sunder more.  
 Nor shall it hope in vain: the time draws on  
 When not a single spot of burial earth,  
 Whether on land or in the spacious sea,  
 But must give back its long-committed dust  
 Inviolate: and faithfully shall these  
 Make up the full account; not the least atom  
 Embezzled or mislaid of the whole tale. <sup>770</sup>  
 Each soul shall have a body ready furnish'd;  
 And each shall have his own. Hence, ye pro-  
 fane!

Ask not how this can be. Sure the same pow'r  
 That rear'd the piece at first, and took it down,  
 Can reassemble the loose scatter'd parts,  
 And put them as they were. Almighty God  
 Has done much more; nor is his arm impair'd  
 Thro' length of days; and what he can he will:  
 His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.  
 When the dread trumpet sounds, the slumb'ring  
 dust, <sup>750</sup>

Not unattentive to the call, shall wake;  
 And ev'ry joint possess its proper place,  
 With a new elegance of form, unknown  
 To its first state. Nor shall the conscious soul  
 Mistake its partner; but, amidst the crowd  
 Singling its other half, into its arms  
 Shall rush, with all the impatience of a man  
 That's new come home, and, having long been  
 absent,  
 With haste runs over every different room,  
 In pain to see the whole. Thrice happy meeting! <sup>760</sup>  
 Nor time, nor death shall ever part them more.

'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;  
 We make the grave our bed, and then are gone!

Thus, at the shut of even, the weary bird  
 Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake  
 Cow'rs down, and dozes till the dawn of day;  
 Then claps his well-fledged wings, and bears  
 away.

## JAMES THOMSON.

BORN 1700—DIED 1748.

The parish of Ednam, near Kelso, Roxburghshire, has the honour of having given birth to the poet of "The Seasons." He was the son of the Rev. Thomas Thomson, minister of that parish, and was born September 11, 1700; being one of nine children. His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter, the co-heiress of a small estate called Widhope. A few years after his birth his father removed to the parish of Southdean in the same county, a primitive and retired district of the Cheviots. Here he spent his boyish years, and at an early age gave indications of poetic genius. The following lines written by Thomson when a school-boy of fourteen show how soon his manner was formed:—

"Now I surveyed my native faculties,  
And traced my actions to their teeming source;  
Now I explored the universal frame,  
Gazed nature through, and with interior light  
Conversed with angels and unbodied saints  
That tread the courts of the eternal King!  
Gladly I would declare in lofty strains  
The power of Godhead to the sons of men,  
But thought is lost in its immensity;  
Imagination wastes its strength in vain,  
And fancy tires and turns within itself,  
Struck with the amazing depths of Deity!  
Ah! my Lord God! in vain a tender youth,  
Unskilled in arts of deep philosophy,  
Attempts to search the bulky mass of matter,  
To trace the rules of motion, and pursue  
The phantom Time, too subtle for his grasp;  
Yet may I from thy apparent works  
Form some idea of their wondrous Author."

After receiving the usual course of school education at the neighbouring town of Jedburgh, Thomson was sent to the University of Edinburgh, and induced by the wishes of his family and friends to study for the ministry; but he soon relinquished his views of the church, and devoted himself to literature. In the second year of his attendance at the university he lost his father, when his mother realized as much as she could from her inheritance, and removed with her family to Edinburgh. While at college he acted for some time as tutor to Lord Binning, son of the Earl

of Haddington, and the author of the song "Robin and Nanny;" to whom he had probably been introduced by his mother's friend Lady Grizzel Baillie, mother-in-law to his lordship, and whose "Memoirs" possess so much interest; who, finding the young poet unlikely to do well in any other pursuit, advised him to try his fortune in London as a man of letters, and promised him such assistance as she could render. Accordingly in the spring of 1725 he took leave of his mother, whom he was never more to behold, and proceeded by sea to London. On arriving at the metropolis he sought out his college friend David Mallet, who then acted as preceptor to the two sons of the Marquis of Montrose. Here he wrote the poem of "Winter," which was purchased through the friendly intervention of Mallet by a bookseller named Millar, for the small sum of three guineas; and was published in 1726, and dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton. Though unnoticed for some time it gradually attained that estimation in which it has ever since been held, and procured for the author the friendship of numerous men of letters. Among others his acquaintance was sought by Dr. Rundle, afterwards Bishop of Derry, who recommended him to the Lord-chancellor Talbot, from whose patronage he afterwards derived the most essential benefit.

In 1727 he brought out "Summer;" three editions of "Winter" having appeared the previous year, and inscribed it to Mr. Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe. The same year he produced "A Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton," and his "Britannia," a poetical appeal designed to rouse the nation to the assertion of its rights against the Spaniards, for their interruptions to British trade. In the beginning of 1728 appeared "Spring," addressed to the Countess of Hertford, afterwards Duchess of Somerset, which procured the poet an invitation to pass a summer at Lord Hertford's country-seat. In 1730 his "Autumn" was issued in a quarto edition of

his works, in which "The Seasons" are placed in their natural order. It was published by subscription at a guinea a copy. Among the 387 subscribers was Alexander Pope (to whom Thomson had been introduced by Mallet), who took three copies. In the same year was produced at Drury Lane his tragedy of "Sophonisba," the success of which was not at all commensurate with the expectation which had been raised. The public discovered that splendid diction and poetic imagery, on the faith of which all their anticipations of a good play were founded, did not necessarily imply a high degree of dramatic talent. Slight accidents, too, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, will operate upon the taste of pleasure. There is a feeble line in the tragedy—

O, Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!

which gave rise to a waggish parody—

O, Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, O!

and for a while was echoed through London.

Having been selected as the travelling companion of the Hon. Charles Talbot, eldest son of the lord-chancellor, he made a tour on the Continent with that young gentleman, visiting most of the courts of Europe. With what pleasure the poet must have passed or sojourned among classic scenes which he had often viewed in imagination! They spent some time during November, 1731, at Rome, and Thomson no doubt indulged the wish expressed in one of his letters, "to see the fields where Virgil gathered his immortal honey, and tread the same ground where men have thought and acted so greatly." On his return the chancellor appointed him his secretary of briefs, which was almost a sinecure. Soon after he published his poem of "Liberty," which, though but coldly received, he himself thought the best of all his writings.

By the death of Lord Talbot, Thomson lost his post of secretary. A poem by our author, dedicated to the memory of the chancellor, is one of the most enviable tributes ever paid by poetry to the virtues of the judicial office. Thomson was reduced once more to dependence on his talents for support, and preferring rather to trust to the chapter of accidents than to change his style of life, which joined to elegance some degree of luxury, became in-

involved in debt, and exposed himself more than once to the gripe of the law. One of these occasions furnished Quin, the eminent actor, with an opportunity of displaying at once his generous disposition and his friendship for genius. Being informed that the author of "The Seasons" was in confinement for a debt of about £70, he hastened to the place, although personally unacquainted with the poet, and desired to be introduced to him. On being admitted to Thomson he said, "Sir, you don't know me, I believe; but my name is Quin." The poet replied that though he could not boast of the honour of a personal acquaintance, he was no stranger either to his name or his talents, and invited him to take a seat. Quin then told him that he had come to sup with him, but that, as he presumed, it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper prepared in the place they were in, he had taken the liberty of ordering it to be sent from an adjacent tavern. The supper accordingly soon made its appearance, with a liberal supply of good wine. After the cloth had been removed, and the bottle had moved briskly between them, Quin took occasion to explain the cause of his visit by saying "it was now time to enter upon business." Thomson, supposing that he desired his poetical assistance in some dramatic matter, expressed his readiness to do anything in his power to serve him. "Sir," said Mr. Quin, "you mistake my meaning. Soon after I had read your 'Seasons' I took it into my head that as I had something in the world to leave behind me when I died, I would make my will; and among the rest of my legatees, I set down the author of 'The Seasons' for one hundred pounds; and to-day, hearing that you were in this place, I thought I might as well have the pleasure of paying the money myself as to order my executors to pay it, when, perhaps, you might have less need of it. And this, Mr. Thomson, is the business I came about." Saying which, he laid before him a bank-note for £100, and without giving the astonished bard time to express his gratitude, took his leave.

By the good offices of Mr. (afterwards Lord) Lyttleton, Thomson about this time was introduced to the Prince of Wales; and being questioned as to the state of his affairs, he answered "that they were in a more poetical posture

than formerly," which induced Frederick to bestow upon him a pension of £100. In 1738 Thomson produced a second tragedy, entitled "Agamemnon," which, although not very favourably received, brought him a handsome sum. In the year following he offered to the stage another tragedy called "Edward and Eleonora," but the dramatic censor withheld his sanction from its representation in consequence of its political complexion. In 1740, in conjunction with Mallet, he composed the masque of "Alfred," by command of the prince, for the entertainment of his court at Cliefden, his summer residence. In this piece appeared the national song of "Rule Britannia," written by Thomson. In 1745 the most successful of his plays, entitled "Tancred and Sigismunda," founded on a story in "Gil Blas," was brought out, and received with great applause; and it is still occasionally performed. His friend Lyttleton being now in office, procured for him the situation of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands, with a salary of £300, the duties of which were performed by deputy. In 1746 appeared his admirable poem of "The Castle of Indolence," which exhibits throughout a high degree of moral, poetical, and descriptive power.

Thomson was now in comparative affluence, and his beautiful cottage at Kew Lane, near Richmond, was the scene of social enjoyment and lettered ease; his house was elegantly furnished, as is seen by the sale catalogue of his effects prepared after his death, which enumerates the contents of every room, and fills eight pages of print. While engaged in the preparation of another tragedy for the stage the poet was seized with an illness which terminated his career. One summer evening, in walking home from London, as was his custom, he overheated himself by the time he had reached Hammersmith, and imprudently taking a boat to go the rest of the way by water he caught cold; next day he was in a high fever, and, after a short illness, died August 27, 1748. He was buried in the church at Richmond, where the Earl of Buchan many years afterwards erected a tablet to his memory. In 1762 a monument was erected to him in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. His tragedy of "Coriolanus," which he left behind him, was brought on the

stage for the benefit of his sisters, to whom through life he had always shown the most brotherly affection. In 1843 a "Poem to the Memory of Mr. Congreve, inscribed to Her Grace Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough," was reprinted for the Percy Society of London, as a genuine though unacknowledged production of Thomson, first published in 1729. As there appears to be no doubt of the genuineness of this poem, possessing as it does all of the characteristics of his style, we give it a place among our selections from the poet of "The Seasons."

Perhaps no poet was ever more deeply mourned. The celebrated Collins, who had also chosen Richmond for his place of residence, and between whom and Thomson the most tender intimacy existed, mourned his loss in the ode beginning—

"In yonder grave a Druid lies."

With this ode Collins bade adieu to Richmond; which, without his lamented friend, had for his gentle spirit no longer any charms.

"But thou, lorn stream! whose sullen tide  
No sedge-crown'd sisters now attend,  
Now waft me from the green hill's side,  
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend.

"And see, the fairy valleys fade,  
Dun Night has veil'd the solemn view!  
Yet once again, dear parted shade,  
Meek nature's child, again adieu!"

Of Thomson's "Seasons," which has kept its place as an English classic for upwards of a century, Dr. Johnson has said:—"As a writer Thomson is entitled to one praise of the highest kind—his mode of thinking, and of expressing his thoughts, is original. His blank verse is no more the blank verse of Milton or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers, his pauses, his diction are of his own growth, without transposition, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train; and he always thinks as a man of genius; he looks round on nature and on life with the eye which nature only bestows on a poet, the eye that distinguishes in everything presented to its view whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vast and attends to the minute. The reader of 'The Seasons' wonders that he never saw before what Thomson shows him, and that he

never yet felt what Thomson impresses. His descriptions of extended scenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of spring, the splendour of summer, the tranquillity of autumn, and the horrors of winter, take, in their turn, possession of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearance of things as they are successively varied by the vicissitudes of the year; and imparts to us so much of his own enthusiasm that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his sentiments. Nor is the naturalist without his share in the entertainment; for he is assisted to recollect and to combine, to arrange his discoveries, and to amplify the sphere of his contemplation."

We cannot better conclude this sketch than in the words of an "Address to the Shade of Thomson," written by Burns on crowning the poet's bust at Ednam with a wreath of bays,—

and the prophetic truth of whose words every revolving season only tends to confirm:—

- "While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,  
Unfolds her tender mantle green,  
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,  
Or tunes Eolian strains between;
- "While Summer, with a matron grace,  
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade;  
Yet off, delighted, stops to trace  
The progress of the spiky blade;
- "While Autumn, benefactor kind,  
By Tweed erects her aged head;  
And sees, with self-approving mind,  
Each creature on her bounty fed;
- "While maniac Winter rages o'er  
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,  
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,  
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:
- "So long, sweet poet of the year,  
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;  
While Scotia, with exulting tear,  
Proclaims that Thomson was her son."

## SHOWERS IN SPRING.

(FROM THE SEASONS.<sup>1</sup>)

The north-east spends his rage; he now, shut up  
Within his iron cave, the effusive south  
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven  
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distant.

At first, a dusky wreath they seem to rise,  
Scarce staining ether, but by swift degrees,  
In heaps on heaps the doubling vapour sails  
Along the loaded sky, and, mingling deep,  
Sits on the horizon round, a settled gloom;  
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,  
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,  
And full of every hope, and every joy;  
The wish of nature. Gradual sinks the breeze  
Into a perfect calm, that not a breath

<sup>1</sup> Are then "The Seasons" and "The Task" great poems? Yes. Why? We shall tell you in two separate articles. But we presume you do not need to be told that that poem must be great which was the first to paint the rolling mystery of the year, and to show that all its Seasons were but the varied God? The idea was original and sublime; and the fulfilment thereof so complete that, some 6000 years having elapsed between the creation of the world and that of the poem, some 60,000, we prophesy, will elapse between the appearance of that poem and the publication of another, equally great, on a subject external to the mind, equally magnificent.—*Professor Wilson.*

Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,  
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves  
Of aspen tall. The uncurling floods, diffused  
In glassy breadth, seem, through delusive lapse,  
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all,  
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks  
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploing, eye  
The falling verdure. Hushed in short suspense,  
The plummy people streak their wings with oil,  
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,  
And wait the approaching sign, to strike at once  
Into the general choir. Even mountains, vales,  
And forests seem impatient to demand  
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks  
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,  
And looking lively gratitude. At last,  
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields,  
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool  
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow  
In large effusion o'er the freshened world.  
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard  
By such as wander through the forest-walks,  
Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.

## SUMMER EVENING.

(FROM THE SEASONS.)

Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,  
Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds  
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,

In all their pomp attend his setting throne.  
 Air, earth, and ocean smile immense. And now,  
 As if his weary chariot sought the bowers  
 Of Amphitrite, and her tending nymphs  
 (So Grecian fable sung), he dips his orb;  
 Now half immersed; and now a golden curve  
 Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.

Confessed from yonder slow-extinguished  
 clouds,

All ether softening, sober Evening takes  
 Her wonted station in the middle air;  
 A thousand shadows at her beck. First this  
 She sends on earth; then that of deeper dye  
 Steals soft behind; and then a deeper still,  
 In circle following circle, gathers round,  
 To close the face of things. A fresher gale  
 Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,  
 Sweeping with shadowy gust the fields of corn:  
 While the quail clamours for his running mate.  
 Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,  
 A whitening shower of vegetable down  
 Amusive floats. The kind impartial care  
 Of nature nought disdains: thoughtful to feed  
 Her lowest sons, and clothe the coming year,  
 From field to field the feathered seeds she wings.

His folded flock secure, the shepherd home  
 Hies merry-hearted; and by turns relieves  
 The ruddy milkmaid of her brimming pail;  
 The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart—  
 Unknowing what the joy-mixed anguish means—  
 Sincerely loves, by that best language shown  
 Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.  
 Onward they pass o'er many a panting height,  
 And valley sunk, and unfrequented; where  
 At fall of eve the fairy people throng,  
 In various game and revelry, to pass  
 The summer night, as village stories tell.  
 But far about they wander from the grave  
 Of him whom his ungentle fortune urged  
 Against his own sad breast to lift the hand  
 Of impious violence. The lonely tower  
 Is also shunned; whose mournful chambers hold—  
 So night-struck fancy dreams—the yelling ghost.

Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,  
 The glowworm lights his gem; and thro' the dark  
 A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields  
 The world to Night; not in her winter robe  
 Of massy Stygian woof, but loose arrayed  
 In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,  
 Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,  
 Flings half an image on the straining eye;  
 While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,  
 And rocks, and mountain tops, that long retained  
 The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,  
 Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to heaven  
 Thence weary vision turns; where, leading soft  
 The silent hours of love, with purest ray  
 Sweet Venus shines; and from her genial rise,  
 When daylight sickens till it springs afresh,  
 Unrivalled reigns, the fairest lamp of night.

## AUTUMN EVENING SCENE.

(FROM THE SEASONS.)

But see the fading many-coloured woods,  
 Shade deepening over shade, the country round  
 Imbrown; a crowded umbrage dusk and dun,  
 Of every hue, from wan declining green  
 To sooty dark. These now the lonesome muse,  
 Low whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,  
 And give the season in its latest view.

Meantime, light-shadowing all, a sober calm  
 Fleeces unbounded ether: whose least wave  
 Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn  
 The gentle current: while illumined wide,  
 The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,  
 And through their lucid veil his softened force  
 Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,  
 For those whom virtue and whom nature charm,  
 To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,  
 And soar above this little scene of things:  
 To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;  
 To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;  
 And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,  
 Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead,  
 And through the saddened grove, where scarce  
 is heard

One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.  
 Haply some widowed songster pours his plaint,  
 Far, in faint warblings, through the tawny copse;  
 While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,  
 And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late  
 Swelled all the music of the swarming shades,  
 Robbed of their tuneful souls, now shivering sit  
 On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock:  
 With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,  
 And nought save chattering discord in their note.  
 O let not, aimed from some inhuman eye,  
 The gun the music of the coming year  
 Destroy; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,  
 Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey  
 In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground!

The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,  
 A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf  
 Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;  
 Oft startling such as studious walk below,  
 And slowly circles through the waving air.  
 But should a quicker breeze among the boughs  
 Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams;  
 Till choked, and matted with the dreary shower,  
 The forest walks, at every rising gale,  
 Roll wide the withered waste, and whistle bleak.  
 Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields;  
 And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race  
 Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remained  
 Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree;  
 And woods, fields, gardens, orchards all around,  
 The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

The western sun withdraws the shortened day,  
 And humid evening, gliding o'er the sky,  
 In her chill progress, to the ground condensed  
 The vapours throw. Where creeping waters ooze,  
 Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind,  
 Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along  
 The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the moon,  
 Full-orbed, and breaking through the scattered  
 clouds,  
 Shows her broad visage in the crimsoned east.  
 Turned to the sun direct her spotted disk,  
 Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,  
 And caverns deep, as optic tube describes,  
 A smaller earth, gives us his blaze again,  
 Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.  
 Now thro' the passing clouds she seems to stoop,  
 Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.  
 Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild  
 O'er the skied mountain to the shadowy vale,  
 While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam;  
 The whole air whitens with a boundless tide  
 Of silver radiance trembling round the world.

The lengthened night elapsed, the morning  
 shines  
 Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,  
 Unfolding fair the last autumnal day.  
 And now the mounting sun dispels the fog;  
 The rigid hoar-frost melts before his beam;  
 And hung on every spray, on every blade  
 Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

### A WINTER LANDSCAPE.

(FROM THE SEASONS.)

Through the hushed air the whitening shower  
 descends,  
 At first thin-wavering, till at last the flakes  
 Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day  
 With a continual flow. The cherished fields  
 Put on their winter robe of purest white:  
 'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts  
 Along the mazy current. Low the woods  
 Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun,  
 Faint from the west, emits his evening ray,  
 Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,  
 Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide  
 The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox  
 Stands covered o'er with snow, and then demands  
 The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,  
 Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around  
 The winnowing store, and claim the little boon  
 Which Providence assigns them. One alone,  
 The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,  
 Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,  
 In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves  
 His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man  
 His annual visit. Half afraid, he first

Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights  
 On the warm hearth; then hopping o'er the floor,  
 Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
 And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is:  
 Till more familiar grown, the table crumbs  
 Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds  
 Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,  
 Though timorous of heart, and hard beset  
 By death in various forms, dark snares and dogs,  
 And more un pitying men, the garden seeks,  
 Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kine  
 Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening  
 earth,  
 With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispersed,  
 Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.

As thus the snows arise, and foul and fierce  
 All winter drives along the darkened air,  
 In his own loose revolving fields the swain  
 Disastered stands; sees other hills ascend,  
 Of unknown joyless brow, and other scenes,  
 Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain;  
 Nor finds the river nor the forest, hid  
 Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on  
 From hill to dale, still more and more astray,  
 Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,  
 Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts  
 of home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth  
 In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!  
 What black despair, what horror fills his heart!  
 When for the dusky spot, which fancy feigned  
 His tufted cottage rising through the snow,  
 He meets the roughness of the middle waste,  
 Far from the track and blest abode of man;  
 While round him night resistless closes fast,  
 And every tempest howling o'er his head,  
 Renders the savage wilderness more wild.  
 Then through the busy shapes into his mind  
 Of covered pits, unfathomably deep,  
 A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;  
 Of faithless bogs, of precipices huge  
 Smoothed up with snow; and what is land un-  
 known,

What water of the still unfrozen spring,  
 In the loose marsh or solitary lake,  
 Where the fresh fountain from the bottom boils.  
 These check his fearful steps, and down he sinks  
 Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,  
 Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,  
 Mixed with the tender anguish nature shoots  
 Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,  
 His wife, his children, and his friends, unseen.  
 In vain for him the officious wife prepares  
 The fire fair blazing, and the vestment warm:  
 In vain his little children, peeping out  
 Into the mingling storm, demand their sire  
 With tears of artless innocence. Alas!  
 Nor wife nor children more shall he behold,  
 Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve  
 The deadly winter seizes, shuts up sense,

And o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,  
Lays him along the snows a stiffened corse,  
Stretched out, and bleaching in the northern  
blast.

### HYMN OF THE SEASONS.

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these  
Are but the varied God. The rolling year  
Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring  
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.  
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;  
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;  
And every sense and every heart is joy.  
Then comes thy glory in the Summer months,  
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun  
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year:  
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks,  
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,  
By brooks and groves in hollow-whispering gales.  
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,  
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.  
In Winter awful thou! with clouds and storms  
Around thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled,  
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing  
Riding sublime, thou bidst the world adore,  
And humblest nature with thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! what skill, what force  
divine,

Deep-felt, in these appear! a simple train,  
Yet so delightful mixed, with such kind art,  
Such beauty and beneficence combined;  
Shade unperceived, so softening into shade;  
And all so forming a harmonious whole,  
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.  
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,  
Man marks not thee, marks not the mighty hand  
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;  
Works in the secret deep; shoots steaming thence  
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the spring;  
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;  
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth,  
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,  
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature, attend! join, every living soul  
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,  
In adoration join; and ardent raise  
One general song! To him, ye vocal gales,  
Breathe soft, whose spirit in your freshness  
breathes.

Oh! talk of him in solitary glooms,  
Where o'er the rock the scarcely waving pine  
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.  
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,  
Who shake the astonished world, lift high to  
heaven

The impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.  
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;  
And let me catch it as I muse along.

Ye headlong torrents, rapid and profound;  
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze  
Along the vale; and thou majestic main,  
A secret world of wonders in thyself,  
Sound his stupendous praise, whose greater voice  
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.  
Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits and flow'rs,  
In mingled clouds to him whose sun exalts,  
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil  
paints.

Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave to him;  
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,  
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.  
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep  
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams;  
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,  
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.  
Great source of day! best image here below  
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,  
From world to world, the vital ocean round,  
On nature write with every beam his praise.  
The thunder rolls; be hushed the prostrate world,  
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.  
Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks  
Retain the sound; the broad responsive low,  
Ye valleys, raise; for the great Shepherd reigns,  
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.  
Ye woodlands all awake; a boundless song  
Burst from the groves; and when the restless day,  
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,  
Sweetest of birds! sweet Philomela, charm  
The listening shades, and teach the night his  
praise.

Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles;  
At once the head, the heart, the tongue of all,  
Crown the great hymn! in swarming cities vast,  
Assembled men to the deep organ join  
The long-resounding voice, oft breaking clear,  
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base;  
And as each mingling flame increases each,  
In one united ardour rise to heaven.  
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,  
And find a fane in every sacred grove,  
There let the shepherd's lute, the virgin's lay,  
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,  
Still sing the GOD OF SEASONS as they roll.  
For me, when I forget the darling theme,  
Whether the blossom blows, the summer ray  
Russets the plain, inspiring autumn gleams,  
Or winter rises in the blackening east—  
Be my tongue mute, my fancy pain no more,  
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

Should fate command me to the farthest verge  
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,  
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun  
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam  
Flames on the Atlantic isles, 'tis nought to me;  
Since God is ever present, ever felt,  
In the void waste as in the city full;  
And where he vital breathes, there must be joy.  
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,

And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,  
 I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,  
 Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go  
 Where universal love not smiles around,  
 Sustaining all yon orbs and all their suns;  
 From seeming evil still educating good,  
 And better thence again, and better still,  
 In infinite progression. But I lose  
 Myself in Him, in light ineffable!  
 Come then, expressive silence, muse his praise.

THE CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.<sup>1</sup>

(EXTRACT.)

O mortal man, who livest here by toil,  
 Do not complain of this thy hard estate;  
 That like an emmet thou must ever mool,  
 Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;  
 And, certes, there is for it reason great;  
 For, though sometimes it makes thee weep  
 and wail,  
 And curse thy star, and early drudge and late,  
 Withouten that would come a heavier bale,  
 Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,  
 With woody hill o'er hill encompassed round,  
 A most enchanting wizard did abide,  
 Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.  
 It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground:  
 And there a season atween June and May,  
 Half pranked with spring, with summer half  
 imbrowned,  
 A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,  
 No living wight could work, ne cared even for  
 play:

Was nought around but images of rest:  
 Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns be-  
 tween;  
 And flowery beds that slumberous influence  
 kest,  
 From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant  
 green,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Byron said, "The 'Seasons' of Thomson would have been better in rhyme, although still inferior to his 'Castle of Indolence,'" and William Hazlitt remarked, "It has been supposed by some that the 'Castle of Indolence' is Thomson's best poem: but that is not the case. He has in it, indeed, poured out the whole soul of indolence, diffuse, relaxed, supine, dissolved into a voluptuous dream; and surrounded himself with a set of objects and companions in entire unison with the listlessness of his own temper. . . . But still there are no passages in this exquisite little production of sportive ease and fancy equal to the best of those of the 'Seasons.'" — Ed.

Where never yet was creeping creature seen.  
 Meantime unnumbered glittering streamlets  
 played,  
 And hurled everywhere their waters sheen,  
 That, as they bickered through the sunny  
 glade,  
 Though restless still themselves, a lulling mur-  
 mur made.

Joined to the prattle of the purling rills  
 Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,  
 And flocks loud bleating from the distant hills,  
 And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:  
 And now and then sweet Philomel would wail,  
 Or stock-doves 'plain amid the forest deep,  
 That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;  
 And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;  
 Yet all these sounds yblent inclined all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale above,  
 A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,  
 Where nought but shadowy forms were seen to  
 move,  
 As Idlesse fancied in her dreaming mood:  
 And up the hills, on either side, a wood  
 Of blackening pines, aye waving to and fro,  
 Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;  
 And where this valley winded out below  
 The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely  
 heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,  
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye:  
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,  
 For ever flushing round a summer sky:  
 There eke the soft delights that witchingly  
 Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,  
 And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;  
 But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest  
 Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

The landskip such, inspiring perfect ease,  
 Where Indolence—for so the wizard high—  
 Close hid his castle mid embowering trees,  
 That half shut out the beams of Phœbus  
 bright,  
 And made a kind of checkered day and night.  
 Meanwhile, unceasing at the massy gate,  
 Beneath a spacious palm, the wicked wight  
 Was placed; and to his lute, of cruel fate  
 And labour harsh complained, lamenting man's  
 estate.

Thither continual pilgrims crowded still,  
 From all the roads of earth that pass there by;  
 For, as they chanced to breathe on neighbour-  
 ing hill,  
 The freshness of this valley smote their eye,  
 And drew them ever and anon more nigh;  
 Till clustering round the enchanter false  
 they hung,

Ymolten with his syren melody;  
While o'er the enfeebling lute his hand he  
flung,  
And to the trembling chords these tempting  
verses sung:

“Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!  
See all but man with unearned pleasure gay:  
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,  
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of  
May!

What youthful bride can equal her array!  
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie!  
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,  
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,  
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky.

“Behold the merry minstrels of the morn,  
The swarming songsters of the careless grove,  
Ten thousand throats! that from the flowering  
thorn  
Hymn their good God, and carol sweet of love,  
Such grateful kindly raptures them move:  
They neither plough nor sow; ne, fit for flail,  
E'er to the barn the nodding sheaves they drove;  
Yet theirs each harvest dancing in the gale,  
Whatever crowns the hill, or smiles along the vale.

“Outcast of nature, man! the wretched thrall  
Of bitter dropping sweat, of sweltry pain,  
Of cares that eat away thy heart with gall,  
And of the vices an inhuman train,  
That all proceed from savage thirst of gain:  
For when hard-hearted Interest first began  
To poison earth, Astræa left the plain;  
Guile, violence, and murder seized on man,  
And, for soft milky streams, with blood the rivers  
ran!

“Come, ye who still the cumbrous load of life  
Push hard up hill; but as the furthest steep  
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,  
Down thunders back the stone with mighty  
sweep,  
And hurls your labours to the valley deep,  
For ever vain; come, and, withouten fee,  
I in oblivion will your sorrows steep,  
Your cares, your toils, will steep you in a sea  
Of full delight: O come, ye weary wights, to me!

“With me you need not rise at early dawn,  
To pass the joyless day in various stounds;  
Or, louting low, on upstart fortune fawn,  
And sell fair honour for some paltry pounds;  
Or through the city take your dirty rounds,  
To cheat, and dun, and lie, and visit pay,  
Now flattering base, now giving secret wounds;  
Or prowl in courts of law for human prey,  
In venal senate thief, or rob on broad highway.

“No cocks, with me, to rustic labour call,  
From village on to village sounding clear:

To tardy swain no shrill-voiced matrons squall;  
No dogs, no babes, no wives, to stun your ear;  
No hammers thump; no horrid blacksmith fear;  
No noisy tradesmen your sweet slumbers  
start,

With sounds that are a misery to hear:  
But all is calm, as would delight the heart  
Of Sybarite of old, all nature, and all art.

“Here nought but candour reigns, indulgent  
ease,

Good-natured lounging, sauntering up and  
down:

They who are pleased themselves must always  
please;

On others' ways they never squint a frown,  
Nor heed what haps in hamlet or in town;  
Thus, from the source of tender indolence,  
With milky blood the heart is overflown,  
Is soothed and sweetened by the social sense;  
For interest, envy, pride, and strife are banished  
hence.

“What, what is virtue but repose of mind,  
A pure ethereal calm, that knows no storm;  
Above the reach of wild ambition's wind,  
Above the passions that this world deform,  
And torture man, a proud malignant worm?

But here, instead, soft gales of passion play,  
And gently stir the heart, thereby to form  
A quicker sense of joy—as breezes stray  
Across the enlivened skies, and make them still  
more gay.

“The best of men have ever loved repose:  
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray;  
Where the soul sours, and gradual rancour  
grows,

Imbittered more from peevish day to day.  
Even those whom Fame has lent her fairest ray,  
The most renowned of worthy wights of yore,  
From a base world at last have stolen away:  
So Scipio, to the soft Cumæan shore  
Retiring, tasted joy he never knew before.

“But if a little exercise you choose,  
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here.  
Amid the groves you may indulge the muse,  
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year;  
Or softly stealing, with your watery gear,  
Along the brook, the crimson-spotted fry  
You may delude; the whilst, amused, you hear  
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's  
sigh,

Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

“Oh, grievous folly! to heap up estate,  
Losing the days you see beneath the sun;  
When, sudden, comes blind unrelenting fate,  
And gives the untasted portion you have  
won,

With ruthless toil, and many a wretch undone,  
To those who mock you gone to Pluto's reign,  
There with sad ghosts to pine, and shadows  
dun:

But sure it is of vanities most vain,  
To toil for what you here untolling may obtain."

He ceased. But still their trembling ears  
retained

The deep vibrations of his 'witching song;  
That, by a kind of magic power, constrained  
To enter in, pell-mell, the listening throng,  
Heaps poured on heaps, and yet they slipped  
along,

In silent ease; as when beneath the beam  
Of summer moons, the distant woods among,  
Or by some flood all silvered with the gleam,  
The soft-embodied fays through airy portal  
stream.

Strait of these endless numbers, swarming round  
As thick as idle motes in sunny ray,

Not one eftsoons in view was to be found,  
But every man strolled off his own glad way,  
Wide o'er this ample court's blank area,

With all the lodges that thereto pertained;  
No living creature could be seen to stray;

While solitude and perfect silence reigned:  
So that to think you dreamt you almost was  
constrained.

As when a shepherd of the Hebrid isles,  
Placed far amid the melancholy main—

Whether it be lone fancy him beguiles,  
Or that aerial beings sometimes deign  
To stand embodied to our senses plain—

Sees on the naked hill, or valley low,  
The whilst in ocean Phœbus dips his wain,

A vast assembly moving to and fro;  
Then all at once in air dissolves the wondrous  
show.

The doors, that knew no shrill alarming bell,  
Ne cursed knocker plied by villain's hand,  
Self-opened into halls, where, who can tell

What elegance and grandeur wide expand,  
The pride of Turkey and of Persia land?

Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets  
spread,

And couches stretched around in seemly band;  
And endless pillows rise to prop the head;

So that each spacious room was one full-swelling  
bed.

And everywhere huge covered tables stood,  
With wines high flavoured and rich viands  
crowned;

Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food  
On the green bosom of this earth are found,  
And all old ocean genders in his round;

Some hand unseen these silently displayed,

Even undemanded by a sign or sound;  
You need but wish, and, instantly obeyed,  
Fair ranged the dishes rose, and thick the glasses  
played.

The rooms with costly tapestry were hung,  
Where was inwoven many a gentle tale;  
Such as of old the rural poets sung,  
Or of Arcadian or Sicilian vale:

Reclining lovers, in the lonely dale,  
Poured forth at large the sweetly tortured  
heart;

Or, sighing tender passion, swelled the gale,  
And taught charmed echo to resound their  
smart;

While flocks, woods, streams, around, repose and  
peace impart.

Those pleased the most, where, by a cunning  
hand,

Depainted was the patriarchal age;  
What time Dan Abraham left the Chaldee land,  
And pastured on from verdant stage to stage,  
Where fields and fountains fresh could best  
engage.

Toil was not then. Of nothing took they  
heed,

But with wild beasts the sylvan war to wage,  
And o'er vast plains their herds and flocks  
to feed;

Blest sons of nature they! true golden age indeed!

Sometimes the pencil, in cool airy halls,  
Bade the gay bloom of vernal landscapes rise,  
Or autumn's varied shades imbrown the walls;

Now the black tempest strikes the astonished  
eyes,

Now down the steep the flashing torrent flies;  
The trembling sun now plays o'er ocean blue,  
And now rude mountains frown amid the skies;

Whate'er Lorraine light-touched with soften-  
ing hue,

Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew.

A certain music, never known before,  
Here lulled the pensive melancholy mind,  
Full easily obtained. Behoves no more,

But sidelong, to the gently waving wind,  
To lay the well-tuned instrument reclined;

From which with airy flying fingers light,  
Beyond each mortal touch the most refined,  
The god of winds drew sounds of deep  
delight;

Whence, with just cause, the harp of Æolus it  
hight.

Ah me! what hand can touch the string so fine?  
Who up the lofty diapason roll

Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,  
Then let them down again into the soul?

Now rising love they fanned; now pleasing dole  
 They breathed, in tender musings, through  
 the heart;  
 And now a graver sacred strain they stole,  
 As when seraphic hands a hymn impart:  
 Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art!

Such the gay splendour, the luxurious state  
 Of caliphs old, who on the Tigris shore,  
 In mighty Bagdad, populous and great,  
 Held their bright court, where was of ladies  
 store;  
 And verse, love, music, still the garland wore;  
 When sleep was coy, the bard in waiting  
 there  
 Cheered the lone midnight with the muse's lore;  
 Composing music bade his dreams be fair,  
 And music lent new gladness to the morning air.

Near the pavilions where we slept, still ran  
 Soft tinkling streams, and dashing waters  
 fell,  
 And sobbing breezes sighed, and oft began—  
 So worked the wizard—wintry storms to  
 swell,  
 As heaven and earth they would together mell;  
 At doors and windows threatening seemed  
 to call  
 The demons of the tempest, growling fell,  
 Yet the least entrance found they none at  
 all;  
 Whence sweeter grew our sleep, secure in massy  
 hall.

And hither Morpheus sent his kindest dreams,  
 Raising a world of gayer tinct and grace;  
 O'er which were shadowy cast Elysian gleams,  
 That played in waving lights, from place to  
 place,  
 And shed a roseate smile on nature's face.  
 Not Titian's pencil e'er could so array,  
 So fierce with clouds, the pure ethereal space;  
 Ne could it e'er such melting forms display,  
 As loose on flowery beds all languishingly lay.

No, fair illusions! artful phantoms, no!  
 My muse will not attempt your fairy land;  
 She has no colours that like you can glow;  
 To catch your vivid scenes too gross her hand.  
 But sure it is, was ne'er a subtler band  
 Than these same guileful angel-seeming  
 sprights,  
 Who thus in dreams voluptuous, soft, and  
 bland,  
 Poured all the Arabian heaven upon her  
 nights,  
 And blest them oft besides with more refined  
 delights.

They were, in sooth, a most enchanting train,  
 Even feigning virtue; skilful to unite

With evil good, and strew with pleasure pain.  
 But for those fiends whom blood and broils  
 delight,  
 Who hurl the wretch, as if to hell outright,  
 Down, down black gulfs, where sullen waters  
 sleep;  
 Or hold him clambering all the fearful night  
 On beetling cliffs, or pent in ruins deep;  
 They, till due time should serve, were bid far  
 hence to keep.

Ye guardian spirits, to whom man is dear,  
 From these foul demons shield the midnight  
 gloom;  
 Angels of fancy and of love be near,  
 And o'er the blank of sleep diffuse a bloom;  
 Evoke the sacred shades of Greece and Rome,  
 And let them virtue with a look impart:  
 But chief, awhile, O lend us from the tomb  
 Those long-lost friends for whom in love we  
 smart,  
 And fill with pious awe and joy-mixt woe the  
 heart.

#### TO THE MEMORY OF MR. CONGREVE.

What art thou, Death! by mankind poorly feared,  
 Yet period of their ills. On thy near shore  
 Trembling they stand, and see through dreaded  
 mists

The eternal port, irresolute to leave  
 This various misery, these air-fed dreams  
 Which men call life and fame. Mistaken minds!  
 'Tis reason's prime aspiring, greatly just;  
 'Tis happiness supreme, to venture forth  
 In quest of nobler worlds; to try the deeps  
 Of dark futurity, with Heaven our guide,  
 The unerring hand that led us safe through time;  
 That planted in the soul this powerful hope,  
 This infinite ambition of new life,  
 And endless joys, still rising, ever new.

These Congreve tastes, safe on the ethereal  
 coast,  
 Joined to the numberless immortal quire  
 Of spirits blest. High-seated among these,  
 He sees the public fathers of mankind,  
 The greatly good, those universal minds  
 Who drew the sword, or planned the holy scheme,  
 For liberty and right; to check the rage  
 Of blood-stained tyranny, and save a world.  
 Such, high-born Marlbro', be thy sire divine  
 With wonder named; fair freedom's champion he,  
 By Heaven approved, a conqueror without guilt;  
 And such on earth his friend, and joined on high  
 By deathless love, Godolphin's patriot worth,  
 Just to his country's fame, yet of her wealth  
 With honour frugal; above interest great.  
 Hail, men immortal! social virtues, hail!

First heirs of praise! But I, with weak essay,  
 Wrong the superior theme; while heavenly choirs,  
 In strains high warbled to celestial harps,  
 Resound your names; and Congreve's added voice  
 In heaven exalts what he admired below.  
 With these he mixes, now no more to swerve  
 From reason's purest law; no more to please,  
 Borne by the torrent down a sensual age.  
 Pardon, loved shade, that I, with friendly blame,  
 Slight note thy error; not to wrong thy worth,  
 Or shade thy memory—far from my soul  
 Be that base aim—but haply to deter,  
 From flattering the gross vulgar, future pens  
 Powerful like thine in every grace, and skilled  
 To win the listening soul with virtuous charms.

TELL ME, THOU SOUL.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,  
 Ah! tell me whither art thou fled;  
 To what delightful world above,  
 Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou free at random roam,  
 And sometimes share thy lover's woe;  
 Where, void of thee, his cheerless home  
 Can now, alas! no comfort know?

Oh! if thou hover'st round my walk,  
 While under every well-known tree,  
 I to thy fancy'd shadow talk,  
 And every tear is full of thee:

Should then the weary eye of grief,  
 Beside some sympathetic stream,  
 In slumber find a short relief,  
 Oh! visit thou my soothing dream.

FOR EVER, FORTUNE.

For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove  
 An unrelenting foe to love?  
 And when we meet a mutual heart  
 Come in between and bid us part?  
 Bid us sigh on from day to day,  
 And wish and wish the soul away,  
 Till youth and genial years are flown,  
 And all the life of love is gone?

But busy, busy still art thou  
 To bind the loveless, joyless vow—  
 The heart from pleasure to delude,  
 And join the gentle to the rude.

For once, O Fortune, hear my prayer,  
 And I absolve thy future care;  
 All other blessings I resign—  
 Make but the dear Amanda mine.

HARD IS THE FATE.

Hard is the fate of him who loves,  
 Yet dares not tell his trembling pain,  
 But to the sympathetic groves,  
 But to the lonely list'ning plain!  
 Oh, when she blesses next your shade,  
 Oh, when her footsteps next are seen  
 In flow'ry tracks along the mead,  
 In fresher mazes o'er the green;

Ye gentle spirits of the vale,  
 To whom the tears of love are dear,  
 From dying lilies waft a gale,  
 And sigh my sorrows in her ear!  
 Oh, tell her what she cannot blame,  
 Though fear my tongue must ever bind:  
 Oh, tell her that my virtuous flame  
 Is as her spotless soul refin'd!

Not her own guardian-angel eyes  
 With chaster tenderness his care,  
 Not purer her own wishes rise,  
 Not holier her own thoughts in prayer.  
 But if at first her virgin fear  
 Should start at love's suspected name,  
 With that of friendship soothe her ear—  
 True love and friendship are the same.

RULE BRITANNIA.

When Britain first at Heaven's command  
 Arose from out the azure main,  
 This was the charter of the land,  
 And guardian angels sung the strain:  
 Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves!  
 Britons never shall be slaves.

The nations not so blest as thee,  
 Must in their turn to tyrants fall,  
 Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,  
 The dread and envy of them all.  
 Rule Britannia, &c.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,  
 More dreadful from each foreign stroke;  
 As the loud blast that tears the skies,  
 Serves but to root thy native oak.  
 Rule Britannia, &c.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;  
All their attempts to bend thee down  
Will but arouse thy generous flame,  
And work their woe and thy renown.  
Rule Britannia, &c.

To thee belongs the rural reign;  
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;  
All shall be subject to the main,  
And every shore it circles thine.  
Rule Britannia, &c.

The Muses, still with freedom found,  
Shall to thy happy coast repair;  
Blest isle, with matchless beauty crowned,  
And manly hearts to guard the fair.  
Rule Britannia, &c.

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### AGAINST THE CRUSADES.

(FROM EDWARD AND ELEONORA.)

I here attend him,  
In expeditions which I ne'er approved,  
In holy wars. Your pardon, reverend father.  
I must declare I think such wars the fruit

Of idle courage, or mistaken zeal;  
Sometimes of rapine, and religious rage,  
To every mischief prompt.

Sure I am, 'tis madness,  
Inhuman madness, thus from half the world  
To drain its blood and treasure, to neglect  
Each art of peace, each care of government;  
And all for what? By spreading desolation,  
Rapine, and slaughter o'er the other half;  
To gain a conquest we can never hold.  
I venerate this land. Those sacred hills,  
Those vales, those cities, trode by saints and prophets,  
By God himself, the scenes of heavenly wonders,  
Inspire me with a certain awful joy.  
But the same God, my friend, pervades, sustains,  
Surrounds, and fills this universal frame;  
And every land, where spreads his vital presence,  
His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.  
Excuse me, Theald, if I go too far:  
I meant alone to say, I think these wars  
A kind of persecution. And when that—  
That most absurd and cruel of all vices,  
Is once begun, where shall it find an end?  
Each in his turn, or has or claims a right  
To wield its dagger, to return its furies,  
And first or last they fall upon ourselves.

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## DAVID MALLET.

BORN 1700—DIED 1765.

DAVID MALLET is believed to have been a descendant of the clan Macgregor, so celebrated for its misdeeds and its misfortunes. When, under the chieftainship of Rob Roy, the race was proscribed by an act of parliament, and the few who escaped from the fearful massacre of Glencoe were compelled to hide themselves in the Lowlands under fictitious names, the ancestor of the poet assumed that of Malloch. His father kept a public-house at Crieff, in Perthshire, where David was born about the year 1700. F. Dinsdale, the editor of "Ballads and Songs by David Mallet," states that he belonged to the Mallochs of Dunrochan, an old and respectable family of Perthshire, who were concerned in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and were thereby reduced to poverty. Where David received the rudiments of his education is not known, but probably at the parish school of Crieff. We know that he

studied under Professor Ker of Aberdeen, and then at the University of Edinburgh. In 1723 he was recommended by the professors as a tutor to the two sons of the Duke of Montrose, with whom he the same year proceeded to London, and soon after made the tour of Europe. On his return he continued to reside with his noble pupils, and from his station in so illustrious a family gained admission into the most polished circles of society.

In 1724 Mallet published in Hill's periodical named *The Plain Dealer* his ballad of "William and Margaret," which, with one or two lyrics, have given him more fame than all his elaborate productions. It at once won for him a place among the poets of the day, and he soon numbered among his friends Pope, Young, and other eminent men, to whom his assiduous attentions, his agreeable manners, and literary taste recommended him. In the