POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

KILMARNOCK AND EDINBURGH EDITIONS COLLATED.

NOTES CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ADDED.

TO THE READER.

Before perusal of these wonderful Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, it may be of importance to the general reader to have some authoritative rule for pronouncing the language. The following directions by the Author himself, although usually reserved for an Appendix, are therefore prefixed—the one from the Kilmarnock, the other from the Edinburgh Edition:—

. The terminations may be thus known; the participle present, instead of *ing*, ends, in the Scotch Dialect, in *an* or *in*; in *an*, particularly, when the verb is composed of the participle present, and any of the tenses of the auxiliary, *to be*. The past time and participle past are usually made by shortening the *ed* into 't.

The ch and gh have always the guttural sound. The sound of the English diphthong oo, is commonly spelled ou. The French u, a sound which often occurs in the Scotch language, is marked oo, or ui. The a in genuine Scotch words, except when forming a diphthong, or followed by an e mute after a single consonant, sounds generally like the broad English a in wall. The Scotch diphthongs, ae always, and ea very often, sound like the French e masculine. The Scotch diphthong ey sounds like the Latin ei.

To these may be added the following other general rules:

1. That ea, ei, ie, diphthongs, 2. That ow, final, in words at least of one syllable, = ou, English: 3. That owe, or ow-e, in like situations, . . . = ow, English: 4. That ch, initial or final, is generally soft, = ch, English; otherwise, or in such syllables as och, ach, auch, hard, . . = gh, German: 5. That d, final, after n, although printed, is scarcely ever pronounced, and, when pronounced, has generally an effect . . . = nn, as blind = blinn; in some cases, has the opposite effect of lengthening or opening the preceding vowel, as if = ne, as kind = kine; and in a very few special instances, is = nt, as behind = behint: 6. That in every doubtful syllable, a foreign reader should prefer a long, bread, deep, deliberate articulation; confining the sound as much as possible between the palate and the throat.

Too much attention cannot be paid to the observance of these rules. One might as well persist in reading Dutch or German with the liquid articulation of the Italian, as Scotch with the open symphonies of the English tongue. Its commingled force and beauty, and that peculiar untranslateable sense which is indissolubly connected with the sound, can only be conveyed together by correct pronunciation; by the neglect or infringement of which, therefore, an immense amount both of meaning and of harmony will be lost to the reader of the language, and the student of Robert Burns. In Burns himself, there are a few apparent exceptions to these very rules; but in all such cases the reader will find, that the variation in reality amounts to nothing more than the use of an occasional English form, to suit the requirements of a verse where four or five rhymes would be sacrificed together, if such temporary accommodation were denied.



PREFACE.

[FROM KILMARNOCK EDITION-1786-VERBATIM.]

The following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocrites or Virgil. To the Author of this, these and other celebrated names their countrymen are, in their original languages, 'A fountain shut up, and a book sealed.' Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing Poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners, he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a Rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately, that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of Friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his was worth showing; and none of the following works were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind; these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as 'An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth.'

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

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he is indebted to Benevolence and Friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom——to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the Learned and the Polite, who may honor him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life: but, if after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of Dulness and Nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others——let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

* Shenstone.

DEDICATION.

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

[FROM EDINBURGH EDITION-1787-VERBATIM.]

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

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

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual stile of dedication, to thank you for past favours: that path is so hackneyed by prostituted Learning, that honest Rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the Plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

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

I have the honour to be,

With the sincerest gratitude and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most devoted humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, April 4, 1787.

* See Notes-Preface and Dedication.



Drawn by J.V Brown from old Engraving

Engraved by G Cooks.

POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

The Iwa Dogs:

A TALE.

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

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

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar Shew'd him the gentleman an' scholar: But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressan,
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messan:
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,

But he wad stan't, as glad to see him, An' stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

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

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

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd an' snowket;
Whyles mice an' modewurks they howket;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
They set them down upon their arse,
An' there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.



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

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kane, an' a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach; he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonie silken purse,
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd-Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toilin, At bakin, roastin, fryin, boilin; An' tho' the gentry first are steghan, Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their peghan Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie, That's little short o' downright wastrie. Our whipper-in, wee blastet wonner, Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner, Better than ony Tenant-man His Honor has in a' the lan': An' what poor Cot-folk pit their painch in, I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh:
A Cotter howkan in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggan a dyke,
Bairan a quarry, an' sic like;
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han'-daurg, to keep
Them right an' tight in thack an' raep.

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

CÆSAR.

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

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

I see how folk live that hae riches; But surely poor-folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

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

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

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

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy Can mak the bodies unco happy: They lay aside their private cares, To mind the Kirk and State affairs;



They'll talk o' patronage an' priests, Wi' kindling fury in their breasts, Or tell what new taxation's comin, An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

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

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

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

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it:
For Britain's guid!—guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
An' saying aye or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays paradin,
Mortgagin, gamblin, masqueradin:
Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,

To mak a tour an' tak a whirl, To learn bon ton an' see the worl'.

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

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

LUATH.

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

O would they stay aback frae courts, An' please themsels wi' countra sports, It wad for every ane be better, The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter! For thae frank, rantan, ramblan billies, Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows; Except for breakin o' their timmer, Or speakin lightly o' their Limmer, Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock, The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.

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

CÆSAR.

L—d man, were ye but whyles whare I am, The gentles ye wad ne'er envy them! ON CONTRACTOR

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' Winter's cauld, or Simmer's heat;
They've nae sair-wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld-age with grips and granes:
But human-bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colledges an' schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acre's till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel;
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank an' lazy;
Tho' deil-haet ails them, yet uneasy:
Their days, insipid, dull an' tasteless;
Their nights, unquiet, lang an' restless.
An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
Their gallopin through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The Men cast out in party-matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' wh-rin,
Niest day their life is past endurin.
The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run-deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal-potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbet leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exceptions, man an' woman; But this is Gentry's life in common. By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloamin brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtan i' the loan;
When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men, but dogs;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

Scotch Brink.

(0-000)

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

Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET ither Poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drukken Bacchus,
An' crabbet names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug:
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

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

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
An' Aits set up their awnie horn,
An' Pease and Beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain:
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!



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

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

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

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

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

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

When Vulcan gies his bellys breath, An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith, O rare! to see thee fizz an' freath
I' th' lugget caup!
Then Burn-e-win comes on like Death
At ev'ry chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer;
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel,
Wi' dinsome elamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips' clatter bright,
How fumblin euifs their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree

Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,

To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason!
But mony daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that Brandy, burnan trash!
Fell source o' mony a pain an' brash!
Twins mony a poor, doylt, drukken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst'faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell:
Poor, plackless devils like mysel,
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass of whisky-punch
Wi' honest men!

O Whisky! soul o' plays an' pranks!

Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks!

When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks

Are my poor verses!

Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks

At ither's arses!

Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic-grips, an' barkin hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
Is taen awa!

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

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



THE AUTHOR'S

Earnest Cry and Prayer

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND HONORABLE, THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best——How art thou lost!——

PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
Wha represent our Brughs and Shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's pray'rs
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your Honors' hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittan on her arse
Low i' the dust,
An' scriechan out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them who hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aqua-vitæ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

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

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom?

Speak out, an' never fash your thumb!

Let posts an' pensions sink or soom

Wi' them wha grant them:

If honestly they canna come,

Far better want them.

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

Paint Scotland greetan owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin-stowp as toom's a whissle;
An' d-mn'd Excisemen in a bussle,
Seizan a stell,
Triumphant crushan't like a mussel
Or lampet shell.

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

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's pot

Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat

By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,

Trode i' the mire out o' sight!

But could I like Montgomeries fight,

Or gab like Boswell,

There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,

An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honors, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie Carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot-heat,
Ye winna bear it?

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

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;
An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;
An' ane, a chap that's d-mn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name:

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick an' Ilay;
An' Livistone, the bauld Sir Willie;
An' mony ithers,
Wham auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers:

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

This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost Militia fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her Whisky.

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

For G-d-sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
To get remead.

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

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

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
You mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

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

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

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

Postscript.

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

What the their Pheebus kinder warms,
While Fragrance blooms and Beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves;
Or hounded forth, Dishonor arms

In hungry droves?

To save their skin.

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

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

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

An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me Whisky's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Sages their solemn een may steek,





From a Photograph by James Walker

Engraved by George Cook

Scotland, my auld, respected Mither!
Tho' whyles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and Whisky gang thegither—
Tak aff your dram!

The Holy Hair.

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

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

T.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the caller air.
The rising sun, owre Galston muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintan;
The hares were hirplan down the furrs,
The lav'rocks they were chantan
Fu' sweet that day.

П.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,

To see a scene sae gay,

Three Hizzies, early at the road,

Cam skelpan up the way.

Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,

But ane wi' lyart lining;

The third, that gaed a wee a-back,

Was in the fashion shining,

Fu' gay that day.

III.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes;
Their visage wither'd, lang an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes:
The third cam up, hap-stap-an'-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonie face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, an' laughan as she spak,
An' taks me by the han's,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck
Of a' the Ten Commauns

V.

A screed some day."

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

VI.

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



Here farmers gash, in ridin graith, Gaed hoddan by their cotters; There swankies young, in braw braid-claith, Are springan owre the gutters. The lasses, skelpan barefit, thrang, In silks an' scarlets glitter; Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in mony a whang, An' farls, bak'd wi' butter, Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the 'plate' we set our nose, Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence, A greedy glowr 'Black-bonnet' throws, An' we maun draw our tippence. Then in we go to see the show: On ev'ry side they're gath'ran; Some carryan dails, some chairs an' stools, An' some are busy bleth'ran Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs, An' screen our countra Gentry; There 'racer Jess,' an' twathree wh-res, Are blinkan at the entry. Here sits a raw o' tittlan jads, Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck; An' there a batch o' wabster lads, Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock For fun this day.

X.

Here some are thinkan on their sins, An' some upo' their claes; Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins, Anither sighs an' prays: On this hand sits an Elect swatch, Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces; On that a set o' chaps, at watch, Thrang winkan on the lasses To chairs that day.

XI.

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

XII.

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

XIII.

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith Wi' rattlin and thumpin! Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath, He's stampan, an' he's jumpan! His lengthen'd chin, his turned-up snout, His eldritch squeel an' gestures, O how they fire the heart devout, Like cantharidian plaisters - On sic a day!

XIV.

But hark! the tent has chang'd it's voice; There's peace an' rest nae langer; For a' the real judges rise, They canna sit for anger. [Smith] opens out his cauld harangues, On practice and on morals; An' aff the godly pour in thrangs, To gie the jars an' barrels · A lift that day.







XV.

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

XVI.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poosion'd nostrum;
For [Peebles] frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' G—,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While Common-Sense has taen the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate
Fast, fast that day.

XVII.

Wee [Miller] niest the Guard relieves,
An' Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the birkie wants a Manse,
So, cannilie he hums them;
Altho' his carnal Wit an' Sense
Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
At times that day.

XVIII.

Now, butt an' ben, the Change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup Commentators:
Here's cryin out for bakes an' gills,
An' there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' Logic, an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

XIX.

Leeze me on Drink! it gies us mair
Than either School or Colledge:
It kendles Wit, it waukens Lear,
It pangs us fou o' Knowledge.
Be't whisky-gill or penny-wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin deep,
To kittle up our notion,
By night or day.

XX.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An' forming assignations
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the L—'s ain trumpet touts,

Till a' the hills are rairan,

An' echos back return the shouts;

Black [Russell] is na spairan:

His pierein words, like Highlan swords,

Divide the joints an' marrow;

His talk o' H—ll, whare devils dwell,

Our vera "Sauls does harrow"

Wi' fright that day!

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless Pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowan brunstane,
Whase ragin flame, an' scorchin heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roaran,
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neebor snoran
Asleep that day.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell,

How mony stories past;

An' how they crouded to the yill,

When they were a' dismist:

How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,

Amang the furms an' benches;

An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,

Was dealt about in lunches,

An' dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gawsie, gash Guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer:
The auld Guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bather;
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gies them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O Wives be mindfu', ance yoursel
How bonie lads ye wanted;
An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

XXVI.

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

XXVII.

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

Death and Dr. Hornbook:

A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n Ministers they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
Great lies and nonsense baith to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

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

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



J. O. Brown. F. Mellish. R. Wilson.

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

I there wi' Something does forgather,
That pat me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' scythe out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-danglin, hang;
A three-tae'd leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

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

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

It spak right howe—"My name is Death:
But be na' fley'd."—Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, Billie!
I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith:
See, there's a gully!"

"Gudeman," quo' he, "put up your whittle; I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle:—

To be mislear'd,
I wad na' mind it, no that spittle

Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't; Come, gie's your hand, an' sae we're gree't; We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat:

Come, gie's your news!

This while ye hae been mony a gate,

At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an' shook his head:

"It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed

Sin' I began to nick the thread,

An' choke the breath:

Folk maun do something for their bread,

An' sae maun Death.

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

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan?

Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!

He's grown sae weel acquant wi' Buchan,

An' ither chaps,

The weans haud out their fingers laughin,

An' pouk my hips.

"See, here's a scythe, an' there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
An' cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t:
D—n'd haet they'll kill!

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

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



DIR 1

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

"E'en them he canna get attended,
Altho' their face he ne'er had kend it—
Just sh— in a kail-blade and send it;
As soon's he smells 't,
Baith their disease, an' what will mend it,
At once he tells 't.

"An' then a' doctor's saws an' whittles,
O' a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True sal-marinum o' the seas;
The farina of beans an' pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

"Forbye, some new uncommon weapons—Urinus-spiritus o' capons;
Or mite-horn shavins, filins, scrapins,
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippins,
An' mony mae."

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

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh, And says, "Ye needna yoke the pleugh, Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,

Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh,

In twa-three year.

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

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

"A countra Laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurrin in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well—
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was Laird himsel.

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

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

"But hark! I'll tell you o' a plot,
Tho' dinna ye be speakin o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited Sot,
As dead's a herrin:
Niest time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin!"



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



The Brigs of Ayr:

A POEM.

Inscribed to J. B[ALLANTYNE], Esq., Ayr.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn
bush,

The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill, Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild-whistling o'er the hill;

Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed, To hardy Independence bravely bred, By early Poverty to hardship steel'd, And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field-Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes, The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes? Or labour hard the panegyric close, With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose? No! though his artless strains he rudely sings, And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings, He glows with all the spirit of the Bard, Fame, honest Fame, his great, his dear reward. Still, if some Patron's gen'rous care he trace, Skill'd in the secret to bestow with grace; When B[allantyne] befriends his humble name, And hands the rustic Stranger up to fame-With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells: The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap, And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap; Potatoe-bings are snugged up frae skaith Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath; The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer-toils Unnumber'd buds and flow'rs' delicious spoils, Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles, Are doom'd by Man, that tyrant o'er the weak, The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek: The thund'ring guns are heard on ev'ry side, The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide; The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie-Sires, mothers, children—in one carnage lie: (What warm, poetic heart but inly bleeds, And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!) Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs; Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings; Except perhaps the Robin's whistling glee, Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree: The hoary morns precede the sunny days; Mild, calm, serene, wide-spreads the noontide blaze, While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season, when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor (simplicity's reward),
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care—
He left his bed, and took his wayward rout,
And down by Simpson's wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why)—
The drowsy Dungeon-clock had number'd two,
And Wallace-Tow'r had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:

All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree;
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream—

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning Bard, The clanging sugh of whistling wings is heard;



Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air, Swift as the goss drives on the wheeling hare; Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears, The ither flutters o'er the rising piers: Our warlock Rhymer instantly descry'd The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside. (That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke, And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk; Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them, And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them). 'Auld Brig' appear'd of ancient Pictish race, The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face: He seem'd as he wi' Time had warsl'd lang, Yet, teughly doure, he bade an unco bang. 'New Brig' was buskit in a braw new coat, That he, at Lon'on, frae ane Adams got; In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead, Wi' virls an' whirly gigums at the head. The Goth was stalking round with anxious search, Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch; It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e, And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he! Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien, He, down the water, gies him this guid-een-

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me—
Tho' faith, that date, I doubt, ye'll never see—
There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

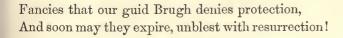
Auld Vandal! ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense:
Will your poor, narrow foot-path o' a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
Compare wi' bonie brigs o' modern time?
There's men o' taste wou'd tak the Ducat-stream,
Tho' they should cast the vera sark and swim,
E'er they would grate their feelings wi' the view
O' sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk, puff'd up wi' windy pride! This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide; And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn, I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn! As yet ye little ken about the matter, But twa-three winters will inform ye better. When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains; When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil, Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil; Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course, Or haunted Garpal draws his feeble source, Arous'd by blustering winds an' spotting thowes, In mony a torrent down the snaw-broo rowes; While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate, Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate; And from Glenbuck, down to the Ratton-key, Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea-Then down ye'll hurl, (deil nor ye never rise!) And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies! A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost, That architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine architecture, trowth, I needs must say't o't-The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't! Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices, Hanging with threat'ning jut like precipices; O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves, Supporting roofs, fantastic, stony groves; Windows and doors in nameless sculptures drest, With order, symmetry, or taste unblest; Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream, The craz'd creations of misguided whim; (Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee, And still the Second dread Command be free— Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea)— Mansions that would disgrace the building-taste Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast; Fit only for a doited Monkish race, Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace, Or cuifs of later times, wha held the notion, That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion:-



AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings, Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings! Ye worthy Proveses, an' mony a Bailie, Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay; Ye dainty Deacons, an' ye douce Conveeners, To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners; Ye godly Councils, wha hae blest this town; Ye godly Brethren o' the sacred gown, Wha meekly ga'e your hurdies to the smiters; And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers: A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo, Were ye but here, what would ye say or do! How would your spirits groan in deep vexation, To see each melancholy alteration; And, agonising, curse the time and place When ye begat the base, degen'rate race! Nae langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory, In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story; Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce, Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house; But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry, The herryment and ruin of the country— Men, three-parts made by taylors and by barbers— Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d-d new Brigs and Harbours!

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through.
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little—
Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle:
But, under favor o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel been spar'd;
To liken them to your auld-warld squad—
I must needs say, comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can have a handle
To mouth 'A Citizen,' a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins,
Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins:

If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp, Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp, And would to common-sense for once betray'd them, Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but, all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright;
Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd:
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet:
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.

O had M'Lauchlan, thairm-inspiring sage, Been there to hear this heavenly band engage, When thro' his dear Strathspeys they bore with Highland rage;

Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears, A venerable Chief advanc'd in years; His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd, His manly leg with garter tangle bound. Next came the lovliest pair in all the ring, Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring; Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy, And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye; All-chearing Plenty, with her flowing horn, Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn; Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show, By Hospitality with cloudless brow. Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride, From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide; Benevolence, with mild, benignant air, A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair;

Learning and Worth in equal measures trode,
From simple Catrine, their long-lov'd abode;
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken, iron instruments of Death:—
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling
wrath.

The Ordination.

For sense, they little owe to frugal Heav'n—To please the Mob they hide the little giv'n.

I.

K[ILMARNOCK] Wabsters, fidge an' claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations;
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

II.

Curst Common-Sense, that imp o' h-ll,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;
But O[liphant] aft made her yell,
An' R[ussell] sair misca'd her:
This day M'[Kinlay] take the flail,
An' he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

III.

Mak haste an' turn King David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up the 'Bangor:'

This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,

Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her;

For Heresy is in her pow'r,

And gloriously she'll whang her

Wi' pith this day.

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

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



Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
And owre the thairms be tryin;
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
And a' like lamb-tails flyin
Fu' fast this day!

VIII.

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

IX.

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

Χ.

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

XI.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingein thro' the city!
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!

I vow it's unco pretty:

There Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common-Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

XII.

But there's Morality himsel,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions!
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin onions!
Now there, they're packed aff to h-ll,
And banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!

Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
M'[Kinlay], R[ussell], are the boys
That Heresy can torture;
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By th' head some day.

XIV.

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





The Calf.

To the Rev. Mr. [JAMES STEVEN], on his text, MALACHI, ch. iv. vers. 2. "And ye shall go forth, and grow up, like CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it true, Tho' Heretics may laugh; For instance, there's yoursel just now, God knows, an unco Calf!

And should some Patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a Stirk.

But, if the Lover's raptur'd hour,
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, ev'ry heav'nly Power,
You e'er should be a Stot!

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

And, in your lug, most reverend J[ames],
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the Nowte.

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



Address to the Deil.

O Prince! O chief of many throned pow'rs! That led th'embattl'd Seraphim to war—

MILTON.

O THOU, whatever title suit thee!

Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,

Wha in you cavern grim an' sootie,

Clos'd under hatches,

Spairges about the brunstane cootie,

To scaud poor wretches!

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

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

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

I've heard my rev'rend Graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or whare auld, ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

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

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

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

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

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For Oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witchin skill;
An' dawtet, twal-pint 'Hawkie's' gane
As yell's the Bill.

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

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

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

When Masons' mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brither ye wad whip
Aff straught to H-ll.

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the Soul of Love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour;
Sweet, on the fragrant flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r.

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

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

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

But a' your doings to rehearse, Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce, Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,

Down to this time,
Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkan,
A certain Bardie's rantan, drinkan,
Some luckless hour will send him linkan,
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkan,
An' cheat you yet.

But fare-you-weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF

poor Mailie,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE: AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither, Was ae day nibblin on the tether, Upon her cloot she coost a hitch, An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch: There, groanin, dyin, she did ly, When 'Hughoc' he cam doytan by.

Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, wae's my heart! he could na mend it!
He gaped wide, but naething spak,
At length poor Mailie silence brak.

"O thou, whase lamentable face Appears to mourn my woefu' ease!

My dying words attentive hear, An' bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep—
O, bid him never tye them mair,
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will:
So, may his flock increase an' grow
To seores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

"Tell him, he was a Master kin',
An' ay was guid to me an' mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives, Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives! But gie them guid cow-milk their fill, Till they be fit to fend themsel; An' tent them duely, e'en an' morn, Wi' taets o' hay an' ripps o' corn.

"An' may they never learn the gaets,
O' ither vile, wanrestfu' Pets—
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail!
So may they, like their great forbears,
For mony a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

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

"An' niest my yowie, silly thing, Gude keep thee frae a tether string!



O, may thou ne'er forgather up, Wi' ony blastet, moorlan toop; But ay keep mind to moop an' mell, Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

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

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

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

Poor Mailie's Elegy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



To I. S[mith.]

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

BLAIR.

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

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
An' ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon

Just gaun to see you;
An' ev'ry ither pair that's done,

Mair taen I'm wi' you.

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

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,

My barmie noddle's workin prime,

My fancy yerket up sublime

Wi' hasty summon:

Hae ye a leisure-moment's time

To hear what's comin?

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

The star that rules my luckless lot, Has fated me the russet coat, An' damn'd my fortune to the groat;

But, in requit,

Has blest me wi' a random-shot

O' countra wit.

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

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

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

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

But why, o' death, begin a tale?

Just now we're livin sound an' hale;

Then top and maintop croud the sail,

Heave Care owre-side!

And large, before Enjoyment's gale,

Let's tak the tide.

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



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

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

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

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

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,

For which they never toil'd nor swat;

They drink the sweet and eat the fat,

But care or pain;

And haply, eye the barren hut,

With high disdain.

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

And ithers, like your humble servan', Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin;

To right or left, eternal swervin,

They zig-zag on;

Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin,

They aften groan.

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

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

"Gie dreepin roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine Life-Guards,
And Maids of Honor;
And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

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

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

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

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

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

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The ramblin squad:
I see ye upward cast your eyes—
Ye ken the road!

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,

But quat my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,

Whare'er I gang.

A Dream.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the Statute blames with reason; But surely *Dreams* were ne'er indicted Treason.

On reading, in the public papers, the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4th, 1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birth-day Levee: and, in his dreaming fancy, made the following Address.

Ī.

Guid-Mornin to your Majesty!

May heaven augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new Birth-day ye see,
A humble Bardie wisses.

My Bardship here, at your Levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae Birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

II.

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

Ш.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor.
So, nae reflection on Your Grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's mony waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
My skill may weel be doubted;
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
And now the third part o' the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation:



But faith! I muckle doubt, my Sire,
Ye've trusted 'Ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts you day.

VI.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester:
For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
Nae bargain wearin faster,
Or faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

VII.

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

VIII.

Adieu, my Liege! may Freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no negleck,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, wi' due respeck,
My fealty an' subjection
This great Birth-day.

IX.

Hail, Majesty most excellent!

While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment,
A simple Bardie gies ye?

Thae bonie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X.

For you, young Potentate o' W[ales],
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swellin sails,
I'm tauld ye're drivin rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie
By night or day.

XI.

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

XII.

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

XIII.

Young, royal Tarry-breeks, I learn, Ye've lately come athwart her; A glorious galley, stem and stern, Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter; But first hang out that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
An', large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

XIV.

Ye lastly, bonie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a' plenty!
But sneer na British-boys awa;
For kings are unco scant ay,
An' German-gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want ay
On ony day.

XV.

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

The Dision.

DUAN FIRST.

THE sun had clos'd the winter-day,
The curlers quat their rearin play,
And hunger'd Maukin taen her way,
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin-tree, The lee-lang day had tir'd me; And when the Day had clos'd his e'e,

Far i' the west,

Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,

I gaed to rest.

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

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae-thing,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme
For fools to sing.

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

I started, mutt'rin "Blockhead! Coof!"
And heav'd on high my wauket loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

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

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



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

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

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! [my bonie Jean]
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else cam near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,

My gazing wonder chiefly drew;

Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw

A lustre grand;

And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,

A well-known land.

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

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

Low, in a sandy valley spread, An ancient Borough rear'd her head; Still, as in Scottish story read,

She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,

And polish'd grace.

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

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

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

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong:
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd,
They strode along.

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

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

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

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare, I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair; A whisp'ring throb did witness bear Of kindred sweet, When with an elder sister's air She did me greet.

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

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

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

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, mid the venal Senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

["And when the Bard, or hoary Sage, Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.]

"Hence, Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence, Dempster's truth-prevailing tongue;
Hence, sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel' lays;
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The Sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic Bard, the lab'ring hind,
The artisan;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

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

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

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

"Of these am I—Coila my name: And this district as mine I claim,

Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

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

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store

Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar

Struck thy young eye.

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

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

"When youthful Love, warm-blushing, strong, Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along, Those accents grateful to thy tongue—

Th' adored Name—
I taught thee how to pour in song,

To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play
Wild-send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the light, that led astray,
Was light from Heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Address to the Anco Guid,

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

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

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

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

VIII.

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



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

Tam Samson's Elegy.

An honest man's the noblest work of God.

POPE.

Has auld K[ilmarnock] seen the deil?
Or great M'[Kinlay] thrawn his heel?
Or R[obertson] again grown weel,

To preach an' read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,

"Tam Samson's dead!"

K[ilmarnock] lang may grunt an' graen,
An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
In mournin weed;
To Death she's dearly pay'd the kane—
Tam Samson's dead!

The Brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the Lodge an unco devel—
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the loughs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speid,
Wha will they station at the 'cock'?—
Tam Samson's dead!

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

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel-kend for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in Death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crousely craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withoutten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa—
Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
Saw him in shootin graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples free'd;
But Och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld-age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns cam down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters
"Tam Samson's dead!"

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward Death behint him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims wi' tout o' trumpet,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger,
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
"L—d, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger—
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman-youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld gray stane, amang the hether,
Marks out his head;
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhymin blether,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

[There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch an' breed:
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the hether wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave,
O' pouther an' lead,
Till Echo answers frae her cave,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me:
He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man want we:
Tam Samson's dead!

THE EPITAPH.

'Tam Samson's' weel-worn clay here lies, Ye canting zealots spare him! If Honest Worth in Heaven rise, Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie;
Tell ev'ry social, honest billie
To cease his grievin;
For yet, unskaith'd by Death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin!

Halloween.

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

I.

Upon that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is taen,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove, to stray an' rove,
Amang the rocks an' streams
To sport that night:

II.

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

III.

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



From a Photograph by Jas. Walker.

Engraved by G. Cook

COLZEAN CASTLE,

David Wilson, Publisher, Glasgow.

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordet nits
Are round an' round divided,
An' mony lads an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kendle couthie, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

VIII.

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

IX.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out, wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit, it brunt it;
While Willie lap, an' swoor by 'jing,'
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

X.

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

XI.

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

XII.

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

XIII.

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

XIV.

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

XV.

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

XVI.

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

XVII.

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

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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





XX.

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

XXI.

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen,

To winn three wechts o' naething;
But for to meet the Deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red cheeket apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples

That yera night.

XXII.

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

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

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

XXV.

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

XXVI.

Amang the brachens, on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The Deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an' ga'e a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
Near lav'rock-height she jumpet,
But mist a fit, an' in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpet,
Wi' a plunge that night.

XXVII.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,

The 'luggies' three are ranged;

An' ev'ry time great care is ta'en

To see them duly changed:

Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys

Sin' 'Mar's-year' did desire,

Because he gat the toom dish thrice,

He heav'd them on the fire,

In wrath that night.

XXVIII.

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

THE AULD FARMER'S

Aew-Pear Morning Salutation

TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,

On giving her the accustomed Ripp of Corn to hansel in the New-year.

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

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff an' crazy,

An' thy auld hide as white's a daisie,

I've seen thee dappl't, sleek an' glaizie,

A bonie gray:

He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,

Ance in a day.

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

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

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

That day ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride:
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could bragget wide,
For sic a pair.

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

When thou an' I were young an' skiegh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skriegh,
An' tak the road!
Town's-bodies ran, an' stood abiegh,
An' ca't thee mad.

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

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



COTTAR'S SATURDAY NEGHT

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

Thou never braing't, an fetch't, an' flisket;
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whisket,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' power;
Till sprittie knowes wad rair't an' risket,
An' slypet owre.

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

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

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

That thou hast nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,

The vera warst.

Mony a sair daurg we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' mony an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

An' think na', my auld trusty Servan', That now perhaps thou's less deservin, An' thy auld days may end in starvin;

For my last fow,

A heapet stimpart, I'll reserve ane

Laid by for you.

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

The Cotter's Saturday Right.

INSCRIBED TO R. A[IKEN], Esq.

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

GRAY.

T.

My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!

No mercenary Bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways,
What A[iken] in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I
ween!

II.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end;



Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlan, stacher through
To meet their 'Dad,' wi' flichterin noise and glee.
His wee bit-ingle blinkan bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The youngkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;

"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!

And mind your duty, duely, morn and night!

Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,

Implore his counsel and assisting might:

They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

VII.

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

VIII.

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;

A strappan youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe, Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks o' horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What maks the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the laye.

IX.

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



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

XI.

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

XII.

The chearfu' supper done, wi' serious face,

They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;

The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,

The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride:

His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,

His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare:

Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,

He wales a portion with judicious care;

And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

XIII.

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

XIV.

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

XV.

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

XVI

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

XVII.

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

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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

XX.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!

For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent!

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil

Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!

And O! may heaven their simple lives prevent

From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!

Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,

And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

XXI.

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

<>>0€>>

To a Mouse.

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

Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickerin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'rin pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,

At me, thy poor, earth-born companion, An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve; What then? poor beastie, thou maun live! A daimen-icker in a thrave

'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit-housie, too, in ruin!

It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!

An' naething, now, to big a new ane,

O' foggage green!

An' bleak December's winds ensuin,

Baith snell an' keen!

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

That wee bit-heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!



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

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

A Minter Aight.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are, That bide the pelting of this pityless storm! How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides, Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you From seasons such as these.

SHAKESPEARE.

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

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked;
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked;
While burns, wi'snawy wreeths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl;
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl:

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

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

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

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

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now, united shows
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man
bestows!

"See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o'er a land!
Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show—
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin'd,
Plac'd for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below!

"Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe
With lordly Honor's lofty brow—
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honor turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down, Feel not a want but what yourselves create, Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate, Whom friends and fortune quite disown! Ill-satisfy'd keen Nature's clam'rous call, Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep; While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall, Chill, o'er his slumbers, piles the drifty heap! Think on the dungeon's grim confine, Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine! Guilt, erring man, relenting view! But shall thy legal rage pursue The wretch, already crushed low By cruel Fortune's undeserved blow? Affliction's sons are brothers in distress; A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook aff the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

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



Epistle to Davie,

A BROTHER POET.

January, -

I.

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker, and canker,
To see their cursed pride.

II.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,

To keep, at times, frae being sour,

To see how things are shar'd;

How best o' chiels are whyles in want,

While coofs on countless thousands rant,

And ken na how to wair't:

But Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,

Tho' we hae little gear;

We're fit to win our daily bread,

As lang's we're hale and fier:

"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"

Auld-age ne'er mind a feg;

The last o't, the warst o't,

Is only but to beg.

III.

To lye in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd and bluid is thin,
Is doubtless great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile:
An' mind still, you'll find still
A comfort this na sma';
Nae mair then we'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'.

IV.

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

V.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank,
To purchase peace and rest:
It's no in makin muckle, mair;
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest:
If Happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet and dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;

Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless and fearless
Of either heaven or hell;
Esteeming, and deeming
It's a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us chearfu' acquiesce,
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state:
And, ev'n should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of Age to Youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Tho' losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

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

IX.

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear Immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief,
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

Χ.

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

XI.

O, how that Name inspires my style!
The words come skelpan, rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phoebus and the famous Nine
Were glowran owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hilch, and stilt, and jimp,
And rin an unco fit:

But least then the beast then Should rue this hasty ride, I'll light now, and dight now His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

The Lament.

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself!

And sweet Affection prove the spring of Woe!

HOME

1.

O THOU pale Orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch, who inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With Woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream!

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked, distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill.
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-feign'd, poetic pains
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim:
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame.



The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Pow'rs above;
The promis'd father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,

How have the raptur'd moments flown!

How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,

For her dear sake, and her's alone!

And, must I think it! is she gone,

My secret heart's exulting boast?

And does she heedless hear my groan?

And is she ever, ever lost?

V.

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

VI.

Ye winged Hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd:
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her, too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd;
And not a wish, to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn, that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen Recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, Fancy, chief,
Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

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

X.

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

Despondency:

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I set me down and sigh:
O Life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!



K E

Dim-backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

II.

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

Ш.

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

IV.

Than I, no lonely Hermit plac'd Where never human footstep trac'd, Less fit to play the part; The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art:
But ah! those pleasures, loves and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The Solitary can despise;
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate;
Whilst I here must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

V

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

Man was Made to Mourn:

<->OC>

A DIRGE.

I.

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wand'red forth
Along the banks of Aire,
I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.





trawn by JO brown



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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

"Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!

More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!

And Man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn—

Man's inhumanity to Man

Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII.

"See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

IX.

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

X.

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

XI.

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

Minter:

A DIRGE.

I.

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

II.

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

III.

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfill;
Here, firm, I rest: they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!

Then all I want (Oh, do thou grant This one request of mine!) Since to enjoy Thou dost deny, Assist me to resign!

A Praper,

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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



Stanzas,

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?

Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?

Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between;

Some gleams of sunshine mid renewing storms.

Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?

Or Death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?

For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;

I tremble to approach an angry God,

And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say "Forgive my foul offence!"

Fain promise never more to disobey:
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair Virtue's way;
Again in Folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man:
Then how should I for Heavenly Mercy pray,
Who act so counter Heavenly Mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, Great Governor of all below!

If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,

Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:

With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong, furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line;
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!



Derses:

A PRAYER.

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING VERSES IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT:—

I.

O Thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above, I know Thou wilt me hear; When for this scene of peace and love, I make my pray'r sincere.

II.

The hoary Sire—the mortal stroke, Long, long be pleas'd to spare; To bless his little filial flock, And show what good men are.

III.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears—
O bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

IV.

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush—
Bless him, Thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish.

V.

The beauteous, seraph Sister-band—With earnest tears I pray;
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
Guide Thou their steps alway.

VI.

When soon or late they reach that coast, O'er Life's rough ocean driven; May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost, A Family in Heaven!

The Kirst Psalm.

The man, in life where-ever plac'd,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful Pride Casts forth his eyes abroad; But with humility and awe Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt Shall to the ground be cast, And, like the rootless stubble, tost Before the sweeping blast.

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

A Prayer,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

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

Thy creature here before Thee stands, All wretched and distrest; Yet sure those ills that wring my soul Obey Thy high behest. Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act From cruelty or wrath! O, free my weary eyes from tears, Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,

To suit some wise design;

Then, man my soul with firm resolves

To bear and not repine!

THE

Hirst Six Derses of the Ainetieth Psalm.

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

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

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

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

Thou giv'st the word; Thy creature, Man, Is to existence brought:

Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"





Drawn by J.O. Brown.

Engraved by & Cook



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

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

To a Mountain Daisy,

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

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

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

Cauld blew the bitter-biting North
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet chearfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the Parent-earth
Thy tender form.

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

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

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

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

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

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



To Ruin.

I.

ALL hail, inexorable lord!

At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!

Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of Grief and Pain,
A sullen welcome, all!

With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;

For one has cut my dearest tye,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring, and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning, and black'ning,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou grim Pow'r, by Life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day?
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold-mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face,
Enclasped, and grasped,
Within thy cold embrace!



To Miss L[ogan],

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS FOR A NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

JAN. 1, 1787.

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv'n,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile, and faithless love, Is charg'd, perhaps too true; But may, dear Maid, each lover prove An Edwin still to you.

Epistle to a Young Kriend.

May ----, 1786.

T.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento:
But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang;
Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

II.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad; And, Andrew dear, believe me, Ye'll find mankind an unco squad, And muckle they may grieve ye: For care and trouble set your thought, Ev'n when your end's attained; And a' your views may come to nought, Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justify'd by Honor:
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

VIII.

The fear o' Hell's a hangman's whip,

To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your Honor grip,
Let that ay be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side-pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.

The great Creator to revere,

Must sure become the Creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,

And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X.

When ranting round in Pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on Life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
Is sure a noble anchor!

XI.

Adieu, dear, amiable Youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May Prudence, Fortitude, and Truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!



In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may ye better reck the rede,
Than ever did th' Adviser!

On a Scotch Bard.

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

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

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

The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the Sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle,
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as onie wumble,
That's owre the Sea!

Auld, cantie Kyle may weepers wear, An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear: 'Twill mak her poor, auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee:
He was her Laureat monie a year,
That's owre the Sea!

He saw Misfortune's cauld Nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A Jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the Sea.

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

He ne'er was gien to great misguidin,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin;
He dealt it free:
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the Sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel:
Ye'll find him ay a dainty chiel,
An' fou o' glee:
He wad na wrang'd the vera Deil,
That's owre the Sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonilie!
I'll toast you in my hindmost gillie,
Tho' owre the Sea!





To a Haggis.

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie face, Great Chieftan o' the Puddin-race! Aboon them a' ye tak your place, Painch, tripe, or thairm: Weel are ye wordy o' a 'grace' As lang's my arm.

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

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

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an' strive: Deil tak the hindmost! on they drive, Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve Are bent like drums; Then auld Guidman, maist like to rive. 'Bethanket!' hums.

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

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

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed, The trembling earth resounds his tread: Clap in his walie nieve a blade. He'll mak it whissle; An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned, Like taps o' thrissle.

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

A Dedication

TO G[AVIN] H[AMILTON], ESQ.

EXPECT na, Sir, in this narration, A fleechan, fleth'ran Dedication, To roose you up, an' ca' you guid, An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid; Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace, Perhaps related to the race: Then, when I'm tir'd—and sae are ye, Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie, Set up a face, how I stop short, For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do-maun do, Sir, wi' them wha Maun please the great-folk for a wamefou; For me! sae laigh I need na bow, For, Lord be thanket, I can plough; And when I downa yoke a naig, Then, Lord be thanket, I can beg; Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin, It's just sic Poet an' sic Patron.

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

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

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

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt Nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos, and Pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of Orth-d-xy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
It's no thro' terror of D-mn-t-n;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane, Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain! Vain is his hope, whase stay and trust is In moral Mercy, Truth and Justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' the winnock frae a wh-re,
But point the rake that taks the door;
Be to the poor like onic whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane;
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces, Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry faces; Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan, And damn a' Parties but your own; I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver, A steady, sturdy, staunch Believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin!
Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression: I maist forgat my Dedication; But when Divinity comes 'cross me, My readers still are sure to lose me.

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

"May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark, Howl thro' the dwelling o' the Clerk! May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart, For that same gen'rous spirit smart! May K[ennedy]'s far-honor'd name Lang beet his hymeneal flame, Till H[amilton]s, at least a diz'n, Are frae their nuptial labors risen:



Five bonie lasses round their table,
And sev'n braw fellows, stout an' able,
To serve their King an' Country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May Health and Peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;
Till his wee, curlie John's ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

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

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent) That iron-hearted carl, Want, Attended, in his grim advances, By sad mistakes and black mischances, While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him, Make you as poor a dog as I am, Your 'humble servant' then no more; For who would humbly serve the poor? But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n! While recollection's pow'r is giv'n-If, in the vale of humble life, The victim sad of Fortune's strife, I, thro' the tender-gushing tear, Should recognise my Master dear; If friendless, low, we meet together, Then, Sir, your hand—my Friend and Brother!



To a Louse,

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

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

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

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

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' gray as onie grozet:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum—
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

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



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

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n devotion!

Address to Edinburgh.

T.

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs;
Where once, beneath a Monarch's feet,
Sat Legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatt'red flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd;
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honor'd shade.

II.

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labours plies;
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendor rise:
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

III.

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale:

Attentive still to Sorrow's wail, Or modest Merit's silent claim; And never may their sources fail! And never envy blot their name!

IV.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy, milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy!
Fair B[urnet] strikes th' adoring eye:
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine!

V.

There, watching high the least alarms,

Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold vet'ran, gray in arms,

And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,

Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,

Have oft withstood assailing war,

And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

VI.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome;
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes! had their royal home:
Alas, how chang'd the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
Tho' rigid Law cries out, "'twas just!"

VII.

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And fac'd grim Danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!





VIII.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat! All hail thy palaces and tow'rs; Where once, beneath a Monarch's feet, Sat Legislation's sov'reign pow'rs! From marking wildly-scatt'red flow'rs, As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd, And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours, I shelter in thy honor'd shade.

Epistle to I. C[aprai]k,

AN OLD SCOTCH BARD.

April 1, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green, An' paitricks scraichan loud at e'en, An' morning poossie whiddan seen, Inspire my Muse, This freedom, in an unknown frien', I pray excuse.

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

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

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel, What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel; Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele, Or Beattie's wark?" They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel About Muirkirk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

What's a' your jargon o' your Schools, Your Latin names for horns an' stools?



If honest Nature made you fools,

What sairs your Grammars?
Ye'd better taen up spades and shools,

Or knappin-hammers.

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

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My-Muse, tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' Allan's glee,
Or Ferguson's, the bauld an' slee,
Or bright L[aprai]k's, my friend to be,

If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me,

If I could get it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle,
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing or whissle,
Your friend and servant.





To the Same.

April 21, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake, An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik, This hour on e'enin's edge I take, To own I'm debtor To honest-hearted, auld L[aprai]k, For his kind letter.

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

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie, She's saft at best an' something lazy: Quo' she, "Ye ken we've been sae busy This month an' mair, That trowth, my head is grown right dizzie, An' something sair."

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

"Shall bauld L[aprai]k, the king o' hearts, Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes, Roose you sae weel for your deserts, In terms sae friendly; Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts An' thank him kindly?"

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

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

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

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

Now comes the sax-an'-twentieth simmer I've seen the bud upo' the timmer, Still persecuted by the limmer Frae year to year; But yet, despite the kittle kimmer, I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent, Behint a kist to lie an' sklent; Or purse-proud, big wi' cent per cent An' muckle wame, In some bit Brugh to represent A Bailie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal Thane, Wi' ruffl'd sark an' glancin cane, Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane, But lordly stalks; While caps and bonnets aff are taen, As by he walks?

"O Thou wha gies us each guid gift! Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,

Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,

Thro' Scotland wide;

Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,

In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n, that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal Mandate ran,
When first the human race began;
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be—
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he."

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

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless nievefu' of a soul
May in some future carcase howl,

The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl

May shun the light.

Then may L[aprai]k and B[urns] arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes an' joys,
In some mild sphere;
Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
Each passing year!



To W. S[impso]n, Ochiltree.

May---, 1785.

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

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ramsay an' famous Ferguson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings;
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
Naebody sings.

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

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

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

O sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant among the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy;
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me, When winds rave thro' the naked tree; Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree

Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,

Dark'ning the day!

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

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

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

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

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

Postscript.

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bad me write you what they mean
By this 'New-light,'
'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

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

In thae auld times, they thought the Moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Woor by degrees, till her last roon
Gaed past their viewin;
An' shortly after she was done
They gat a new ane.

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

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

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The herds an' hissels were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies

Should think they better were inform'd,

Than their auld daddies.

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

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' auld-light cadies bure sic hands,
That faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks;
Till Lairds forbad, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But new-light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe;
Till now, amaist on ev'ry knowe
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their new-light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the auld-light flocks are bleatan;
Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatan;
Mysel, I've even seen them greetan
Wi' girnan spite,
To hear the Moon sae sadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns!

Some auld-light herds in neebor touns

Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,

To tak a flight;

An' stay ae month amang the moons

An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch;
An' when the new-light billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we Bardies ken some better,
Than mind sic brulzie,



Epistle to I. R[ankin],

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

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

Ye hae sae mony cracks an' cants,
And in your wicked, drukken rants,
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
An' fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
Spare't for their sakes, wha aften wear it,
The lads in black;
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked Sinner, wha ye're skaithing:
It's just the 'Blue-gown' badge an' claithing
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen,
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhymin ware, A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair;

Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect,
You sang ye'll sen't, wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!

My Muse dow scarcely spread her wing:

I've play'd mysel a bonie spring,

An' danc'd my fill!

I'd better gaen an' sair't the king,

At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a rovin wi' the gun,
An' brought a paitrick to the grun',
A bonie hen;
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor, wee thing was little hurt;
I straiket it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkan they wad fash me for't;
But, Deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

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

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pouther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!
The game shall pay, owre moor an' dail,
For this, niest year.

As soon's the clockin-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—d, I'se hae sportin by an' by,
For my gowd guinea;
Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
For't, in Virginia!

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame?

'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,

But twa-three draps about the wame,

Scarce thro' the feathers;

An' baith a 'yellow George' to claim,

An' thole their blethers!

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

John Barleycorn.

A BALLAD.

I.

There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

II.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

III.

But the chearful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

IV.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

V.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

VI.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

VII.

They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

VIII.

They laid him down upon his back, And cudgell'd him full sore; They hung him up before the storm, And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

IX.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heaved in John Barleycorn—
There, let him sink or swim.

X.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

XI.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.



XII.

And they hae taen his very heart's blood, And drank it round and round; And still the more and more they drank, Their joy did more abound.

XIII.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold, Of noble enterprise; For if you do but taste his blood, 'Twill make your courage rise.

XIV.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

XV.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn, Each man a glass in hand; And may his great posterity Ne'er fail in old Scotland!



A Fragment.

Tune-"Gillicrankie."

I.

When Guilford good our pilot stood,
An' did our hellim thraw, man;
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
An' did nae less, in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

II.

Then thro' the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man;
Down Lowrie's burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man:
But yet, whatreck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man,
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies a', man.

III.

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage
Was kept at Boston-ha', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;
But at New-York, wi' knife an' fork,
Sir Loin he hacked sma', man.

IV.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,
An' did the Buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

V.

Then Montague, an' Guilford too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville doure, wha stood the stoure,
The German Chief to thraw, man:
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
An' Charlie Fox threw by the box,
An' lows'd his tinkler jaw, man.

VI.

Then Rockingham took up the game;
Till Death did on him ca', man;
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to Gospel law, man:



Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise, They did his measures thraw, man; For North an' Fox united stocks, An' bore him to the wa', man.

VII.

Then Clubs an' Hearts were Charlie's cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the Diamond's Ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair faux pas, man:
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,
On Chatham's Boy did ca', man;
An' Scotland drew her pipe an' blew,
"Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

VIII.

Behind the throne then Granville's gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee Dundas arous'd the class
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
An' Chatham's wraith, in heav'nly graith
(Inspired Bardies saw, man),
Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, "Willie, rise!
Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

IX.

But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.
Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man;
Till Suthron raise, an' coost their claise
Behind him in a raw, man:
An' Caledon threw by the drone,
An' did her whittle draw, man;
An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid,
To mak it guid in law, man.



Song.

Tune-"Corn Rigs are Bonie."

T.

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

II.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley:
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

III.

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

IV.

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

CHORUS.

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





Song.

COMPOSED IN AUGUST.

Tune-"I had a Horse, I had nae mair."

T.

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

II.

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

TIT.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

Song.

Tune-"My Nanie, O."

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

\mathbf{v}

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



VI.

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

VII.

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

VIII.

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

Green Grow the Rashes.

∞

A FRAGMENT.

CHORUS.

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

I.

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

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

Song.

1000

Tune-" Jockey's Gray Breeks."

I.

AGAIN rejoicing Nature sees

Her robe assume its vernal hues:

Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,

All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

CHORUS.

And maun I still on Menie doat, And bear the scorn that's in her e'e? For it's jet, jet black, an' it's like a hawk, And it winna let a body be!

II.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me, in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.
And maun I still, &c.





The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks;
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.
And maun I still, &c.

IV.

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And ev'ry thing is blest but I.
And maun I still, &c.

V.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,
And owre the moorlands whistles shill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.
And maun I still, &c.

VI.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.
And maun I still, &c.

VII.

Come Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my chearless soul,
When Nature all is sad like me!

And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet black, an' it's like a hawk,
And it winna let a body be!



Song.

Tune-" Roslin Castle."

T.

THE gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain:
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatt'red coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

II.

The Autumn mourns her rip'ning corn By early Winter's ravage torn; Across her placid, azure sky, She sees the scowling tempest fly: Chill runs my blood to hear it rave; I think upon the stormy wave, Where many a danger I must dare, Far from the bonie banks of Ayr.

III.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in ev'ry shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpiere'd with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonie banks of Ayr.

IV.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched Fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those:
The bursting tears my heart declare—
Farewell, the bonie banks of Ayr!



Song.

Tune-"Gilderoy."

I.

From thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore:
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar:
But boundless oceans, roaring wide,
Between my love and me—
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee.

II.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no more!
But the latest throb that leaves my heart,
While Death stands victor by—
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!

The Harewell.

TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE, TARBOLTON.

Tune-"Goodnight, and Joy be wi' you a'."

T.

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tye!
Ye favored, 'enlighten'd' Few,
Companions of my social joy!
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba';
With melting heart and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, tho' far awa.

TT.

Oft have I met your social Band,
And spent the chearful, festive night;
Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the Sons of light:
And by that Hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but Craftsmen ever saw!
Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes, when far awa!

III.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the grand Design,
Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious Architect Divine!
That you may keep th' unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till Order bright completely shine,
Shall be my Pray'r when far awa.

IV.

And You, farewell! whose merits claim
Justly that highest badge to wear:
Heav'n bless your honour'd, noble Name,
To Masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here—
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa.

Song.

Tune—"Prepare, my dear Brethren, to the Tayern let's fly," &c.

I.

No churchman am I for to rail and to write, No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight, No sly man of business contriving a snare, For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my carc.

II.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow; I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low; But a club of good fellows, like those that are there, And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

III.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse; There centum per centum, the cit with his purse; But see you the Crown how it waves in the air? There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

IV.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die; For sweet consolation to church I did fly; I found that old Solomon proved it fair, That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all care.

V.

I once was persuaded a venture to make; A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck; But the pursy old landlord just waddl'd up stairs, With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

VI.

"Life's cares they are comforts"—a maxim laid down By the Bard, what d'ye call him? that wore the black gown;

And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair; For a big-belly'd bottle's a heav'n of a care.

A STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow, And honours masonic prepare for to throw; May ev'ry true Brother of the Compass and Square Have a big-belly'd bottle when pressed with care.



Epitaphs.

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.

HERE Sowter [Hood] in death does sleep:
To H-ll if he's gane thither—
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep;
He'll haud it weel thegither.



ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

Below thir stanes lie Jamie's banes;
O Death, it's my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin b-tch
Into thy dark dominion!



ON WEE JOHNIE.

Hic jacet wee Johnie.

Whoe'en thou art, O reader, know,
That Death has murder'd Johnie!
An' here his body lies fu' low—
For saul he ne'er had ony.



FOR THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

O YE whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the gen'rous friend.
The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's side."



FOR R. A., Esq.

Know thou, O stranger to the fame Of this much lov'd, much honour'd name! (For none that knew him need be told) A warmer heart Death ne'er made cold.



FOR G. H., Esq.

The poor man weeps—here G[avi]n sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam'd;
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be sav'd or d——d!



A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,

Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,

Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool?

Let him draw near;

And owre this grassy heap sing dool,

And drap a tear.

Is there a Bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng?
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave?
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor Inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! Whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious, self-controul
Is Wisdom's root.



EDITOR TO THE READER AND STUDENT

OF

THE TEXT.

Before proceeding to the Annotations required for the correction and elucidation of our Author's Text, a word of explanation is due to the reader, and especially to the student or critic of the Text itself: and as two extremely opposite views of editorial authority in general are sometimes advocated, it may be necessary in the first place to distinguish these. By one school, the mere mechanical reproduction of an author's text, irregularities, almost incongruities themselves included, is insisted upon: by another, not only the revision of the letter of the text, to correct and regulate it, but the right of altering or improving the text itself, by the change, the suppression, or the substitution of terms and even entire phrases at the editor's discretion, has been claimed, and in the highest instances, from Bishop Percy downwards, has been acted upon. From both of these extreme views, we equally dissent. On the one hand, we maintain that a careful and conscientious revision of the letter is indispensable, to remedy oversights and errors, whether of the press or of the pen, that the Author may appear as perfect in his own style as possible; but on the other hand, all interference beyond this, by alteration of the text itself where clearly defined, we as conscientiously disapprove of. With respect to Robert Burns, it has been alleged that both sorts of editorship are equally required and they have certainly both been applied since his death with unlimited freedom: but to the revision of the letter alone we most scrupulously confine ourselves, believing that neither literary, nor moral, nor religious good will ever accrue from further intermeddling with the original.

In the preceding pages, the reader will find that there are two distinct intermingled varieties of style and orthography before him—that which characterised the Kilmarnock, and that which was introduced in the Edinburgh Edition—both by the Author himself. To present Robert Burns as he was at the very earliest date, a reprint would be indispensable; which for various reasons could not with propriety be attempted here. The utmost, therefore, on which we could venture, was as close a reproduction as possible of the original forms; and of the extreme difficulty and delicacy of this, in a mere

literary point of view, the general reader can have but a very slight conception. So great indeed does the difficulty attending this apparently simple process seem to be, that the best editions, so far as we are aware, from Currie's time to our own, can make very slight pretensions to absolute reliability or perfection in such, or even far more important details.

We propose hereafter, in Appendix, to discuss this topic fully, in our remarks upon the language of Burns: but for the present, a brief summary of the obstacles to a perfectly accurate text may be given: (1) There can be no doubt that Burns's own manuscript copies frequently varied; (2) That his text did not always perhaps correspond to his manuscript; (3) That in the text itself numerous capricious variations from his own standard of orthography, sometimes on the same page, sometimes in the same poem, sometimes even in the same verse, occur; (4) That there are occasional slight variations between his own text and his own vocabulary; and (5) in addition to all these, many manifest typographical blunders appear. In such circumstances, to produce anything like a fair and true uniform edition of his original text, the utmost editorial diligence is required, and some editorial discretion also must be permitted. To reproduce mere incongruities or errors cannot be desirable; yet from the Author's letter to Lord Woodhouselee, December, 1795, recently published, it is now evident how often this may have been the case. If that letter indeed refers to the Edition of 1794, or the prospective reprint of 1797, it is sufficiently plain that the Author himself, from indifference or painful pre-occupation, had scarcely ever looked at the text: a fact which explains many things hitherto inexplicable. To neither of Burns's original editions was any table of Errata attached, although much required in both: in consequence of which, the existing errors, in sense or in orthography, had to be rectified by the reader at discretion, or remain as they were.* But prefixed to his glossaries were certain very definite instructions, both as to the pronunciation

* Some of the *misprints*, attributable to this source alone, which deface the carlier editions of his works, and have been unconsciously reproduced in later editions of these, or in his glossaries, are almost incredible. As for errors in *punctuation*, they are beyond number.

and the spelling of his words, which to a certain extent supplied the deficiency in question. These instructions have already been quoted for the reader's information, and prefixed to the text of his Poems. In revising the text, therefore, two means of attaining comparative accuracy are available; either diligent and conscientious comparison of words themselves; or where their actual form seems doubtful, then strict adherence to the Author's concluding directions. By both these means the Editor has done his best not only to correct the errors, but, in a few isolated instances, to restore the orthography: and so to present, as far as possible, a kind of uniformity in the text. His object, in addition to this, has been to present a characteristic and progressive edition to the reader; in which the Author's own style from the first, and in its natural development or change, from epoch to epoch, may be recognised and discriminated. In most recent editions, this seems not to have been thought of. The Author's works themselves have with more or less propriety been arranged in the order of their production, in some cases with exemplary care; but not always as they originally appeared under his own hand, either in order or in orthography. The words have almost invariably been 'dressed' anew on the latest model—which borders most closely on the English; and so Burns from the beginning appears to speak and write under the supervision of Dr. Blair, or the editorial corrections of George Thomson—an idea which is absolutely inconsistent both with

It may be objected, however, that since these precautions for mere literal accuracy are applicable chiefly to the earliest edition, and not even to every poem contained in it, so much anxiety in the way of revision is practically uncalled for, and the few variations or discrepancies which undoubtedly exist, should be quietly adjusted, or passed over in silence, as if they were not there; but on the other hand it must be remembered, that in the earliest edition, and in the poems by which it is characterised, we have the last grand illustration of the original Scottish tongue, and in Burns himself the grand vital link between the old and the new forms of that language; and if we attach any importance to this fact, it becomes our duty then to be as solicitous as possible to preserve every fragment that remains of his original articulation.

nature and with fact.

As for the mode in which this should be done, there can be no reasonable doubt—the simplest and most natural method being, to reproduce such forms where they originally appear.

This we have endeavoured, on the principles above explained, to do; and our readers will easily distinguish for themselves the poems so characterised, as they successively fall under their notice. This rule, it must be observed, refers exclusively to the mere spelling of certain forms, and chiefly terminational forms, in the oldest poems: not the slightest infringement on words themselves, far less on phraseology, being either thought of, or consciously tolerated by us. As an example, the following illustration at present may suffice:—Among terminational forms, in the Kilmarnock Edition, —ing, —in, and —an occur promiscuously, in many cases inconsistently. Of these, in accordance with the principles already indicated, —an has been preserved wherever it appears, and in two solitary instances restored, according to the Author's rule, where the context seemed to require it. Of the remaining forms, -in, as being the simplest, most natural, and almost invariable, has been preferred in all Scotch terms or compounds; —ing being of course retained in every English word, or in cases where the g was manifestly intended to be heard against the succeeding letter; whilst -in', as being absolutely false, has been entirely rejected.* By this simple process of revision, in strict compliance with the Author's own example and authority, something like regularity among the most capricious forms of the language has been attained; without infringing in any degree on the meaning of a single word from beginning to end. Where various readings in the original do occur, we have selected those which, in our humble judgment, seemed the best or truest—our reasons for selection being generally very fully appended in the following Notes: and that both the text may appear with as little encumbrance as possible, and the reader may have the easiest method of satisfying himself, all the most important variations made by the Author in his own editions, up till his death, will be found arranged in their proper order, as to time and place, on a distinct page uniform with the text, at the end of Part II. of the Poems; all that remains beyond that being necessarily untouched by him.



^{*} It may satisfy the reader's curiosity, in the meantime, to mention, that this particular form of —in', so common in modern editions of the Poet, occurs only once in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh Editions, and manifestly by an error in that special case; whereas —in occurs in the Kilmarnock Edition one hundred and eleven times, and in the Edinburgh Edition no fewer than two hundred and twelve times—and that, by no means always in the same words—a fact which should be conclusive on the subject. The truth is, —in is a purely Scottish form; —in' a mere typographical corruption from the English language.

NOTES,

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL,

TO FIRST EDITIONS.

ABBREVIATIONS:—p. PAGE; c. COLUMN; s. STANZA; 1. LINE.

In presenting a revised edition of the Works of Robert Burns to the world, we have adopted, without hesitation, for the text of this division, the Poet's own authorised editions, first of Kilmarnock and then of Edinburgh; and where they differ, have carefully collated them. Such collation, of course, could extend only as far as their contents correspond, but to that extent it has been interesting and instructive. The Kilmarnock Edition, printed in 1786, contains forty-four pieces; is in the simplest and broadest vernacular, and although disfigured by a few unmistakeable typographical inaccuracies, is incomparably the finest groundwork for a characteristic edition of the great Poet. So far as it goes, with the above exceptions, it has been almost literally adhered to. The Edinburgh Edition, by Creech, 1787, under Burns's own superintendence, contains sixty-three pieces, and presents, besides a few commendable alterations in the text, a very extensive revision of orthography. This revision, suggested undoubtedly by publishers or critics in the metropolis, was acceded to by Burns in an evil hour, as we think, for the originality and grandeur of his mother tongue. It may be said to mark the middle era of his authorship: but in the songs and poems which have been recovered since his death, and which were written before his visit to the capital, the grand old simplicity of the native dialect may re-appear again to refresh us. This question of orthography is a curious one in the history, both literary and social, of Robert Burns. By the mere spelling of a word he is transported from epoch to epoch; and the reader sees distinctly the transition of his mind, as in a phonetic gauge, backwards and forwards, by the choice and collocation of the mere letters as they run. It extends indeed beyond himself to the language of his country, as we have already hinted, and must be more fully treated of hereafter.

KILMARNOCK EDITION:—This most wonderful venture in the annals of literature contained a title page with motto, a preface, a table of contents, two hundred and twenty-seven pages of poetry, and a glossary. It was printed on good strong corded paper, demy octavo, by John Wilson—"Wee Johnie"—and was issued to the world in coarse blue wrappers. The

edition consisted of six hundred and twelve copies, it appears. at three shillings each; three hundred and fifty were subscribed for, and the remainder disposed of within a few weeks. The entire sale realised for the Author about twenty pounds. At the present moment, a perfect copy, in good condition, may be valued, without extravagance, at five guineas.

The TITLE PAGE stood as follows, with motto doubtless from the Author's own hand:—

POEMS,

CHIEFLY IN THE

SCOTTISH DIALECT,

BY

ROBERT BURNS.

THE Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart:
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire;
Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire.

Anonymous.

KILMARNOCK: PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON.

M,DCC,LXXXVI.

The Preface, which we print in this edition precisely as it appears in the original, has been somewhat vulgarised by misquotation elsewhere. In a composition like this, which is just balanced on the difficult edge between dignity and the want of it, and in which the youthful hand of a great master is adjusting itself for work, the misplacing of a single comma, much more the unwarrantable introduction of a word at the wrong place, may be fatal to its credit with the world. Such liberties, nevertheless, we observe, have been taken in the reprint, so early as the days of Currie (who quoted from Gilbert Burns, who transcribed from memory apparently, and without consulting the original): the effect of which has been to debase this Preface considerably in style. The

University reader will of course detect an oversight in orthography, and the grammarian a slight misconstruction in syntax—neither of which we think it proper to disguise. The reference to Theocritus and Virgil is manifestly a ruse a sort of pardonable compliance with the way of the worldon the youthful Author's part, who scarcely needs after that to inform his educated readers, that the Doric of the distinguished Greek at least was a "sealed book" to him in the original. It is questionable, indeed, if he knew anything of that author at all either in Greek or English at the time, unless through some sorrowful misprint, or the medium of an ill-spelt dictionary. So slight a hint, as an e for a u, tells curious tales of unnecessary deference to authority, and a desire to look well with the world, on the part of an aspirant to immortality who had room enough under the shadow of his hand for a score of writers like Theocritus.

EDINBURGH EDITION:—This enlarged, and for the time very handsome re-issue of the Author's works, took place under the highest auspices in the spring of 1787, about nine months after the publication at Kilmarnock. It was undertaken by Creech, a bibliopole of the first rank; was very liberally subscribed for both by the gentry and nobility of Scotland, and even by many colleges or associations of Scotchmen abroad; was enriched with a portrait of the Author, engraved con amore by Beugo from the picture by Nasmyth;* was dedicated by special permission to the Caledonian Hunt, and upon the whole was presented to the world as advantageously as possible. It appeared on the 21st of April, and bore upon its title page the following words:—

POEMS,

CHIEFLY IN THE

SCOTTISH DIALECT.

BY

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD BY WILLIAM CREECH.

M,DCC,LXXXVII.

The Dedication, for effect, was printed throughout in *Italic* characters. The volume, large octavo, presented the whole very long list of subscribers, a table of contents, three hundred and thirty-five pages of poetry, and an enlarged glossary appended. The list of subscribers seems to have been made up at the last moment, and is inserted, with no great taste, between the Dedication and the body of the book, so as to derange the natural order of the paging. The edition was unprecedentedly large; of which, at five shillings, no less than two thousand eight hundred copies were subscribed for. In his advertisement, Mr. Creech announced that the sale was exclusively for the benefit of the Author; but it was only after

* See Appendix-Kerry Miniatures.

long and unpleasant discussion that a settlement could be obtained with Mr. Creech at all. The profits ultimately aceruing to Burns amounted to five hundred pounds, of which nearly one half was allocated by him, in the form of a loan or otherwise, for the benefit of his relatives at Mossgiel. The printing of this edition took place in the establishment of Mr. Smellie, who was at once printer, philosopher, and literateur; one of those characters for which Edinburgh at the time was remarkable, and which connect that city in our imaginations still with the old literary capitals of Europe. In Smellie's office there were frequent interviews of the most distinguished men of their day; and with one of these, at least, as we learn from Mr. Chambers, on the authority of Mr. Smellie's son, Burns himself, when revising proofs for this edition, had an awkward rencontre. Sir John Dalrymple was correcting some essay of his own then in progress of publication, and occupied the stool which Burns was accustomed to sit upon. Burns would sit on no other; Sir John declined to give it up "to yon impudent staring fellow;" but upon being informed who the staring fellow was, exclaimed—"Good gracious! give him all the seats in your house!" and immediately withdrew. Burns thereupon, in his accustomed seat, proceeded with his corrections. In this office, it is also said, that whilst waiting for proofs, he was accustomed to stride to and fro, among the printing presses, occasionally cracking a long whip which he carried in his hand, much to the surprise of the compositors.

The principal additions in this volume were—'Death and Doctor Hornbook,' 'Brigs of Ayr,' 'Ordination,' 'The Calf,' 'Address to the Unco Guid,' 'Tam Samson's Elegy,' 'A Winter Night,' 'Address to Edinburgh,' with Stanzas, Prayers, Translations of Psalms, a few additional Songs, &c.; many of these indicating in a most singular manner the religious, moral, and social sympathies of the Author. Indeed, with regard to the contents of this volume, we may even venture to affirm, that although written at various and often distant dates, they have been arranged by the Author in a certain sequence, manifestly suggested by his own personal or domestic relationships at the time; a sequence which, in our humble opinion, ought never to have been disturbed. With reference to one special painful event indeed, of his private life, as we shall hereafter see, that silent but significant arrangement is worth a hundred commentaries.

The DEDICATION prefixed to this edition, as the occasion perhaps demanded, was a more ambitious performance than the original Kilmarnock Preface; conceived in an entirely different style, and expressed with studied emphasis and formality. A sort of acknowledgment of this, by the Author himself, will by and by be found in the introductory verses to 'The Brigs,' as if he did not feel quite satisfied on the subject. The typography itself, with its capital letters indicating poetic abstractions, is suggestive of much; and the change of orthography, both in Dedication and throughout the volume, bespeaks a change also on the Author's part in relation to the literary world. He was now to some extent under tutorage, and had been listening deferentially to the literati of the metropolis. The original -or, for example, gives place to the then fashionable -our, in Latin derivatives; -an gives place to -in, and -et to -it; whilst one or perhaps two other slight



variations which, if not by design, are certainly by mistake, seem to show that, with all the care bestowed by Burns on this edition, the text as it left his own hand at that moment was not by any means free from imperfections. Examples of the same sort of inadvertencies, or momentary predilections for one form over another, in these two editions, might easily be multiplied; but enough has been said to satisfy the reader that absolute accuracy cannot be maintained for Burns's own revisions, and that the utmost diligence is required to purify the letter of his text from such typographical blemishes.

p. 5. THE TWA Dogs: A Tale.—This inimitable fable, unparalleled for truthfulness and beauty, has been wisely set by Burns himself (in compliance, it is said, with the original printer's advice) in front of all his writings. To expatiate on its excellence before an intelligent reader would be a waste of words. There is wisdom and sagacity in it deeper than most philosophies of life, charity and religion broader than any creed, artistic simplicity and power like the finest painting. It was written in the year 1786, whilst the first edition of his poems was already in the press, and in the midst of the most humiliating domestic annoyance to which a man could be subjected. Its immediate object was to commemorate the death of a favourite dog; its ultimate object, to prophesy to the people on the folly of discontent and the sin of selfishness.

-c. l, l. 1. 'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle
That bears the name o' auld king Coil:

Kyle or Coil, the central division of Ayrshire, is separated from Carrick on the south by the river Doon, and from Cunningham on the north by the Irvine. Within this district Burns was born and lived, except the few months he was boarded at Kirkoswald, until he went to reside permanently in Dumfriesshire. The reader will find a poetical outline of this region, as depicted in the Muse's robe of Coila, in the 'Vision.' Its name is derived traditionally from Coilus - a pre-historic sovereign of the Picts, who was entombed, according to common belief, somewhere about the old mansion of Coilsfield. In the year 1837, after laborious excavations on the spot to which tradition pointed, calcined remains in ancient earthen urns were certainly discovered; which represented unquestionably some distinguished hero, or heroes, of the primitive race. Coilsfield, the Bloody Burn, and the Dead Man's Holm, are names attached to the locality still, with which Burns himself, as we know, was familiar during his residence in that neighbourhood, and which he has immortalised under the more poetic designation of the Castle of Montgomery.—[See his own notes to Edinburgh Edition of the 'Vision.']

— c. 2, l. 6. And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's 'Fingal.'-R. B.

The reference here made to the indefinite antiquity of Highland song seems to indicate not only Burns's own passing faith in the originality of Ossian, but his acquaintance at the time with the discussion that had been raised on the subject.

-- l. 23. Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
They set them down upon their arse,

In the edition of 1793, these two simple, natural, and graphic lines were superscded, and the two following took their place:

Until wi' daffin weary grown, Upon a knowe they sat them down;

more polished certainly, but neither so descriptive nor truthful as the plain original.

p. 6, c. 1, l. 1. I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

The exquisite juxta-position here of the 'poor dogs' and the 'poor bodies,' and the simplicity of Cæsar's observation as a foreigner, require only to be pointed out. This was rural philosophy on the state of our 'populations,' by an unprejudiced observer about a hundred years ago. The 'poor body' must have the 'poor dog;' and how both or either of them contrived to eke out an existence, was the gravest problem for this kind-hearted favourite of fortune.

— — l. 28. Bairan a quarry, an' sic like:

In Edinburgh Edition-Baring a quarry, &c.

altered, by some typographical oversight doubtless, in Chambers (Ed. 1856), to 'Barring a quarry'—which can only mean stopping up the entrance to a quarry, a process almost quite unknown in Scotland, except under the operation of a police act; and which could not, at the uttermost, take more than an hour to do. 'Bairan,' i.e. baring a quarry, means the clearing away of soil and rubbish from the face of the rock, to allow the quarrymen to begin operations—which preliminary process is not only common, but indispensable, may occupy days or even weeks, and is invariably the work of the common labourer, the 'delver,' the 'ditcher,' or the 'cot-man' of the neighbourhood.

— - l. 31. An' nought but his han-daurg to keep
Them right an' tight in thack an' raep.

'Han-daurg,' or 'daurk,' what a man with his own hand can do from dark to dark—a day's work.

The sun ariseth man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour, until the evening.—Ps. civ. 22, 23.

'Thack and raep'—thatch and fastening of straw and ropes for a cottage, or stack of corn or hay (see 'The Brigs,' l. 25)—used figuratively here for the shelter of roof and clothing, on the simplest conditions imaginable.

And why take ye thought for raiment ?-Mat. vi. 28.

— - l. 35. Ye maist wad think a wee touch langer, And they maun starve o' cauld and hunger.

It is not uncommon to quote from other authors passages or expressions, which seem to have been models for Burns, or at least to have suggested his language. In Ferguson and Ramsay both, who were avowedly models in some things, such passages are, no doubt, to be found; and such we shall have frequent occasion also to quote; but it is not allowable on mere coincidence of phraseology, to allege imitation, or indebtedness of any kind at all. Innumerable instances of such coincidence might be discovered, in which no previous knowledge, on any reasonable ground, could be imagined. In Dante's description of that dread wood of poverty and exile, for example, in which so much of his own life was lost, and so much of his inspiration found, an expression almost identical with the above occurs. Inferno: Can. I. l. 7.

Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte. So dire it was, a 'touch' were almost death Instances of such casual correspondence, as they occur from time to time, we shall note hereafter as we proceed.

p. 6, c. 1, l. 37. But how it comes, I never kent yet, misprinted in Currie's edition—I never kend it,

c. 2, l. 19. They're no sae wretched's ane wad think:
 Tho' constantly on poortith's brink,
 They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

misprinted also in Currie, and elsewhere, thus-

They're no sac wretched's ane wad think, (or—;) Tho' constantly on poortith's brink: They're sac, &c.

by which reading, both the sense and the authority of the original are equally set aside. According to the original, the metaphor begins with the second, and goes on to the end of the fourth line—founded on the fact, that the oftener and longer we look over a precipice, the safer we feel upon the brink of it. The eyesight adapts itself by degrees to the position, and the sense of giddiness diminishes in proportion. Danger begets daring; daring gradually mellows into self-control and security; till the worst abyss can be confronted with composure or indifference. Blessed, indeed, are the poor: for theirs is that life of faith which is next to the kingdom of heaven!

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?—Mat. vi. 31.

-- 1. 27. The dearest comfort o' their lives'
Their grushie weans and faithfu' wives;

these two lines appear, both in the original and other editions, so far as we are aware, with a different punctuation, thus—

The dearest comfort o' their lives, Their grushie weans and faithfu' wives;

which leaves the sentence without a conclusion, and is undoubtedly a misprint. As this is the first correction of the kind which occurs, it may be proper to quote what the Author at so late a date as 1790, and after so much intervening experience, says upon the subject. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, November of that year, he casually observes—"As to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press, you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly: as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves." He was in general very careful in such matters; in his prose correspondence, scrupulously so: but that the printers occasionally relieved him of that trouble in their own way, is sufficiently manifest from several examples.

In the present instance, there can hardly be a doubt that a comma has been inserted instead of an apostrophe. Another instance, about which there can be no doubt at all, occurs elsewhere. The lines, as we have ventured to print them, read not only with perfect sequence, but with a very beautiful antithetic relation, and interchange of numbers, singular and plural alternately; which demonstrates, more clearly than anything else could, the delicate perception which Robert Burns had of such recondite principles in language. The relative words we now italicise, to point out this harmony of construction to the reader:

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

To the grammarian we need offer no apology for the extent

of this note; to the general reader we have only to say, that this explanation is intended, once for all, to illustrate our revision of the text where it appears necessary, and that in future, the results of that revision will be given without any such lengthened commentary.

p. 7, c. 1, l. 17. The cantie auld folks crackan crouse.

Thus, A gray-hair'd knight set up his head,
And cracket right crousely;—Auld Maitland.

Also, And yet for all his cracking crouse—Raid o' Reidswire.

— l 19. My heart has been sae fain to see them, That I for joy hae barket wi' them.

This surely is one of those divine touches of nature that 'make the whole world kin':—

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!—Rom. vii. 21.

-- l. 37. Or may be in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft, &c.

By no means an uncommon complaint in those days:-

But when the young Laird became vain, And went away to France and Spain, Rome raking, wand'ring here and there: O then began our bootless care!

Speech of Fife Laird, Newly Come from the Grave.

p. 8, c. 1, l. 11. A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acro's till'd he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel:

Cæsar's sagacious contrast here supplies the deficiency of Luath's observation: but by the most singular misapprehension, founded on practical ignorance, these lines both in Currie's and several other editions since his, have not only been altered from the original, but robbed entirely of their sense and importance as statistical authority in rural affairs.

His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;

Her dizzens done, she's unco weel,

is an edition not only false but meaningless. To 'till an acre' was a fair day's work for man and horse; to 'spin a dozen cuts,' a fair day's work, among other household concerns, for a girl at the wheel; which being done in either case, the labourer was entitled to credit. To do much more, even in favourable circumstances, was worthy of record:

Aft thee and I, in aught hours' gaun,
On guid March weather,
Hae turned sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither:

that is, an acre and a half; but acres and dozens would be illimitable labour, without rest or satisfaction to any one concerned. If an alteration that would more distinctly express the sense of the original could be tolerated, it would be to strike out the 's altogether; when His acre till'd, . Her dizzen done, would render future mistakes on the subject impossible.

It may be interesting for some of our readers to know the exact proportion of such work expected from peasant girls in Ayrshire: we subjoin accordingly, on the authority of an experienced matron, the following local standards of woollen weft:—120 threads = 1 cut: 4 cuts = 1 hank: 12 hanks = 1 spindle: 1 spindle and 2 hanks, less or more, according to strength, = 1 pair blankets. To spin 12 cuts a day, in addition to other household work, is excellent performance; to spin more than that in the circumstances, is uncommon; to spin twice that quantity would require the uninterrupted labour of



the most accomplished spinster from morning till night: about five days therefore, of ordinary work at the wheel, would be required to furnish thread for one pair of blankets.

p. 8, c. 2, l. 1. By this, the sun was out o' sight,

The greatest masters of landscape and animal painting, by combined efforts for weeks, could produce no finer representation than what follows in the three succeeding lines. There is not in the whole compass of Shakspear a more perfect picture, including figure, colour, action, time, and sound, with moral sense conjoined, than is here presented to the reader in two score words: yet the whole concluding portion of this wonderful work was dashed off most probably during an evening's walk or ride from Kilmarnock to Mossgiel, in child-like acquiescence with the suggestions of a printer, and to meet the requirements of the compositor when his operations began.

p. 8. Scotch Drink:—Written most probably in the spring of 1785, at a time when Burns was remarkable for sobriety rather than for excess. Such eulogiums, therefore, as this, and such lamentations as those of the succeeding poem, are no evidence at all of any disorder in the Author's tastes or habits at the time. They are simply poetical exaggerations of the national tastes and feelings, in regard to the cheapest and most invigorating stimulant then in use. Let those who doubt this observe, that the very first stanza contains a protest against inebriety; that the strongest alcohol, in the shape of brandy, is denounced with a curse as "burning trash;" and that the very climax of enjoyment here quoted is the simple relish of heated ale, mixed with a little ardent spirits and sweetened with sugar, on a new-year's morning! The idea of intoxication does not once appear in the whole composition. Mr. Chambers quotes the seventh stanza, in its reference to "the poor man's wine," as an indication of humanity which atones for much else "that is objectionable in the poem." We do not consider any atonement of this kind required; but if a quotation with that object is to be made at all, we should prefer to make it from the stanza immediately preceding,

Thou even brightens dark despair, &c.,

which embodies a truth as well known to philosophers like Solomon, as to Burns, and that lies at the root of one half of the sorrowful excess in which the hopeless and the destitute, in most communities, take refuge!

We shall have frequent occasion hereafter to compare with Horace, between whom and Burns there was much in common. In the meantime, let the student read along with 'Scotch Drink' Horace's Ad Amphoram, Car. III. xxi., and judge where the superiority in humour and genial humanity lies.

Thus— Thou even brightens dark despair
Wi' gloomy smile—

Tu spem reducis mentibus anxiis, Viresque; et addis cornua pauperi, &c.

Wine with fresh Hope the coward cheers; Revives the wretched and undone, And makes the slave his lord disown:—Creech.

Again-

p. 9, c. 1, s. 5. Even godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspired,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fired.

Non ille, quamquam Socraticis madet Sermonibus, te negliget horridus: Narratur et prisci Catonis Saepe mero caluisse virtus.

Wine kept old Cato's virtue warm;
This whets the dull, and wit inspires;
The grave with sprightly vigour fires,
And, by a never-failing eharm,
Unlocks the mind, and all its gay desires.—Creech.

These quotations we give as specimens. The resemblance between the two originals, Scotch and Latin, can be fully appreciated only by the reader who happens to understand them both. No translation in this respect does justice to Horace, or could do justice to Burns. The one, in fact, is the best translator of the other unconsciously; but with an admixture on Burns's side of a deep and gentle charity, that makes his humour like a pungent balm to the consciences of mankind. Of this, more hereafter.

There is some uncertainty about the date of the 'Holy Fair,' which we shall by and by consider. In the meantime, the above reference to "public haunts," and "fairs and rants," and "godly meetings o' the saunts," "when gaping they besiege the tents," seems to indicate that all these topics were associated at the moment in the Poet's mind by rather more than accidental connection. Was the 'Holy Fair' already, as a literary sketch, upon the easel?

p. 9, c. 1 s. 6. An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
An' gusty sucker!

old Scottish form of that word from French sucre. This mixture was a favourite potation among our forefathers in the humbler ranks of life. The intense enjoyment here manifest, of so simple a luxury, is proof enough how strongly Burns could relish the poorest pleasures of life, and how easily he could be contented with the humblest provisions of existence; how humiliating, therefore, it must have been for him at last to accept an office which required him to interfere with these humble luxuries of the poor, may be imagined.

—— s. 7. When Vulcau gles his bellys breath,
And ploughmen gather wi' their graith,

For anecdotes of Burns's colloquial and story-telling powers on such occasions, see App.: Orig. Remin.

— c. 2, s. 3. When skirlin weanies see the light, Thou maks the gossips' clatter bright, How fumblin cuifs their dearies slight; Wae worth the name! Nae howdie gets a social night, Or plack frae them.

Both in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions, the second line of this stanza reads as if 'clatter' were a verb, very much to the weakening of the sense; the omission in these editions of the apostrophe after 'gossips,' was no doubt an accident. In the Kilmarnock edition the concluding lines of the stanza stood thus—

Was worth them for't!

Wae worth them for't!
While healths gae round to him wha, tight,
Gies famous sport.—

on which the change in the Edinburgh edition is unquestionably an improvement.

p. 10, c. 1, s. 3. Thee, Ferintosh! O sadly lost!

For loyal Forbes' ehartered boast Is ta'en awa! In an elaborate note on this place, Mr. Chambers details the particulars of the transaction here referred to. It amounted, in fact, to a monopoly of free distillation granted to the Forbeses of Culloden by Act of Scottish Parliament, 1690, purchased up by Government, 1785 (shortly before the writing of this poem), for £21,580—an arrangement which of course would very soon tend to raise the price of distilled spirits; and which, in connection with Excise impositions immediately following, inflamed the Scottish people against such fiscal enactments to a point that menaced the Government—with reference to which the 'Earnest Cry and Prayer' appeared.

p. 10. EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER: -- "Was wrote," says Burns, in his Edinburgh edition, "before the Act anent Scotch Distilleries, of Session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks." The Kilmarnock edition, which contained this poem, appeared in July of 1786; the poem itself, therefore, must have been written in the spring of that year. So far as Burns's moral habits are concerned, the same remarks apply here as have already been made on the foregoing. The poems belong to the same year, most probably to the same half-year. The political references with which this piece abounds were all familiar enough at the time, but are now not of much importance. The number of them, however, and their discriminating point, indicate clearly the Author's acquaintance with the political proceedings and chief political personages of the hour. It is strange enough to reflect on the unhappy influence that one of these, at least-"yon Premier Youth" and "yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnocks"—was at last to exert on his own later destinies. Mr. Pitt, as Mr. Chambers informs us, was of the Cornish house of Boconnocks. The only other parties not distinctly named are Sir Adam Ferguson of Kilkerran, Bart., and the Marquis of Graham, the "Highland Baron," afterwards third Duke of Montrose. In the original manuscript, an additional stanza is found, quoted by Currie in his Appendix, and inserted by Chambers in his text. It stood last in the list of appellations, and immediately before the apostrophe, "Arouse, my boys!—"

Thee, Sodger Hugh, my watchman stented, If Bardies e'er are represented; I ken if that your sword were wanted, Ye'd lend a hand; But when there's ought to say anent it, Ye're at a stand.

The gentleman here referred to was Colonel Hugh Montgomery of Coilsfield, then representative of Ayrshire, and subsequently twelfth Earl of Eglintoune. He served as an officer in the American war. The stanza above quoted was omitted, no doubt, from the unpleasantness of the allusion to his defective utterance. A portrait was lately pointed out to us, as that of the very individual in question. It was at least an original, and represented a very manly aristocratic person in antique military uniform; and strange to say, with a mouth so small, and so curiously indented in the upper lip, that perfect articulation must have been impossible. If this were really the portrait of "Sodger Hugh" (and it was identified as such by an old retainer of the family), then his speech must have been between a lisp, a whistle, and a stammer.

p 10, c. 2, s. 2. Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!

"A person at the last stage of a cold in the throat is said in

Scotland to be roopit. The word is not in Jamieson."—Chambers. This is a correct enough illustration of the secondary sense of the word, but not at all applicable in the present case. The word signifies originally that peculiar hoarseness which is the result of over-straining the voice by loud crying, or 'scriechan,' and comes directly from the Dutch roepen, roept. "The voice of one die roept, who cries, in the wilderness." It may not be in Jamieson (who overlooks the Dutch derivatives occasionally), but is nevertheless authentic Scotch. For the explanation of all similar terms, phrases, and expressions, the reader is respectfully referred in future to the Glossary, in which they will be found arranged under distinctive heads.

p. 11, c. 1, s. 3. And cheek-for-chow, a chuffle vintner, Colleaguing join,

that is, "join in your representation the chuffle vintner (the seller of wines or brandies) colleaguing with the black-guard smuggler (the importer of wines or brandies)."

- c. 2, s. 5. (Deil na they never mair do guid-)

So printed, because the expression so stands both in the Kilmarnock and in the Edinburgh editions. But the correct form is undoubtedly "Deil nor—" as it occurs subsequently in 'The Brigs,' "Deil nor ye never rise!"—that is, "Deil care, although ye never rise!"

p. 12, c. 1, s. 2. Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's, I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks, An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's,*
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

 $^{\circ}$ A worthy old hostess of the Author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studies politics over a glass of guid audd Scotch drink.—R. B.

"Nine times a week" is of course a mere poetical exaggeration. Besides which, the reader must remember that the usual potations under that old lady's roof were confined to common home-brewed ale, of which both lads and lasses were partakers—the entire expense of an evening's entertainment amounting perhaps to a few coppers! The reference in this stanza is to the compromise of the duty on tea by the imposition of a tax on windows, introduced by Mr. Pitt, as Chancellor of Exchequer, in 1784.

p. 12. Postscript—Contains a strong but truthful contrast between two extreme types of the race, existing under extremely different conditions; and, in its vigorous concluding stanzas, touches not incorrectly on the philosophy of much that is accepted among ourselves on a higher hypothesis. At the same time, it would be both ungenerous and false to identify courage in its highest forms, on the field of battle, with anything approaching to mere alcoholic stimulus. Recent events in the history of our own campaigns have demonstrated the very reverse of this.

p. 13. Holy Fair:—On this, as one of the most important satires on religious indecorum ever written, a few reflections beyond the scope of mere annotation are required; and all the more, because its own moral tendency and even truthfulness have been seriously questioned. So lately as the year 1863, we find the reverend and accomplished editor of 'Good Words,' Dr. Norman Macleod of the Barony Parish, Glasgow, sometime also a minister in Ayrshire, in the last chapter of his 'Reminiscences of a Highland Parish,' after a most edifying





FIRST READING OF MOLY PAIR

account of a similar occasion in the churchyard of Iona, making the following commentary:—

"It has been the fashion indeed, of some people who know nothing about Scotland or her church, to use Burns as an authority for calling such meetings 'holy fairs.' What they may have been in the days of the poet, or how much he may himself have contributed to profane them, I know not. But neither in Ayrshire nor anywhere else, have I ever been doomed to behold so irreverent and wicked a spectacle as he pourtrays."—Good Words, Vol. for 1863, p. 837.

On the above insinuation, we have to remark, in the First place, That Burns did not originate such a designation at all. It was common in his own day, over the West of Scotland (as he himself expressly declares in a note at the place, in his Edinburgh Edition), as the most descriptive term that could be found for such religious gatherings; and at Mauchline it was peculiarly appropriate, in as much as the 'tent-preachings' were held in the open churchyard, on the very spot where the cattle market or common fair at other times was held, with houses of public entertainment on all sides-'Nanse Tinnock's' in the rear, 'Poosie Nansie's,' 'Johnny Dow's,' &c., in front, and the 'Cowgate' facing the Tent. Whatever may have been the spiritual condition of this neighbourhood at the time in question, we happen to be aware, from the incontestable evidence of the Session Books, that its physical condition, a few years before the date of the poem, was scandalous, almost revolting. The heritors, who were overtured on the subject, for their own credit at last improved it, by the erection of a substantial wall, 'two ells' in height; which seems to have been done shortly before the date of the poem.

In the Second place: Dr. Macleod should be aware that Robert Burns's habits at this time were by no means as he here insinuates, or in any other way, such as to increase the profanation he exposes. On the contrary, it is the notorious fact, that Burns was not only comparatively a sober, but an exemplary youth, as morals then went; a devout attender on religious ordinances himself, and a critic of admitted authority on all questions of theology, at that very date and for years before. But although he had been the most influential young profligate in the three kingdoms, does Dr. Macleod mean to affirm that his solitary presence or example could have so debased the morals of an entire region, as to convert a pure and holy ordinance into a scene of riot and dissipation? The Prince of Wales himself of that date, if he had been living in Ayrshire, could not, with all his monstrous indecencies, have produced an effect like that in three years. Let Dr. Macleod be well assured of it;—such indecencies were the growth of generations, fostered, if not created, by the folly and incapacity of the Church herself.

In the Third place: As to the fact itself, which Dr. Macleod seems to question—it is surprising to us that a man with such an eye for the natural, both in reality and in description, as the Rev. Doctor certainly enjoys, should hesitate an instant about accepting it, even through the haze of a professional meerschaum among the ruins of Iona. The truth of that description is, if possible, more certain than the Doctor's own interesting position in the Turkish bath, or on the steps of an Egyptian pyramid. The description, in fact, is so indubitably real, that it must have been the result of repeated observations. Mr. Chambers has been at pains to demonstrate the truth of it; and quotes, among other things, part of a remonstrance

addressed to the Church for the remedying of such evil, whilst Burns was yet in his cradle; and by reference to the Session Books of Mauchline shows, that the actual attendance at the 'tables' ranged from twelve to fourteen hundred in these very years, whilst the whole population of the parish did not exceed fifteen hundred. What else could such a gathering in one village from the whole surrounding district be, but a fair? Let a single testimony on the subject suffice. The first reading of the 'Holy Fair' was over a chair-back in Nanse Tinnock's parlour, in presence of two or three young friends, including the Poet's own brother William, with their sweethearts, Jean Armour herself being of the number. That little company was convulsed with laughter, and Robert himself was 'in great glee'-effects which no patent forgery or falsehood could ever have produced in him or them. Copies of the poem were very soon distributed, and circulated from hand to hand without reserve. Among others, the Rev. Mr. Reid of New Cumnock (an honest enough man, but sadly afflicted with an orthodox whine), who had been affectionately warning his parishioners against such unsanctified literature as that which was now emanating from Mauchline, had nevertheless so much curiosity on this particular subject as to request a perusal of the manuscript. It was accordingly submitted to the rev. gentleman, who studied it attentively; and on being asked whether he approved of it, declared in his usual tone of tearful sorrow, with his hand upon his eyes, "that the warst thing about it was, it was just owre true." From the above facts, which we have on the best authority—as to the 'reading' from an eyewitness, as to the circulation of the manuscript from the son of a most intimate friend of the Poet's-[see App.: Orig. Remin.-Mr. Reid's -we are inclined to believe that the 'Holy Fair' must be dated at least twelve months earlier than is commonly supposed. The 'first reading' in such circumstances, the presence of Jean Armour on that occasion, and the subsequent circulation of the manuscript, seem to be all incompatible with that supposition, with facts in the history of the parties concerned, and with the publication of the poem itself in the month of July, 1786. If it was not written in that year, therefore, it must have been in the summer of the year before, a supposition that is consistent with everything; and consequently at a time, when Burns himself was still less liable to any charge of personal immorality as the author of it.

In the Fourth place: The reader will observe that Burns's description is occupied entirely with the scenes which occurred out of doors, and were obvious to any passenger on the highway. With admirable modesty, and with a sense of religion which Dr. Macleod does not seem to credit in the author, he avoids all reference whatever to the administration of the Ordinance itself within the House of God; but we could inform the Rev. Doctor, if necessary, that worse scenes of immorality, than anything Burns describes outside, have been witnessed at the very Table of the Lord, and among the officiating clergy themselves, in more than one landward parish in the Lowlands of Scotland, at a much later date. How such matters in the last generation might be in that 'Highland Parish,' where everything was purity and perfection otherwise, with a little allowable infusion, perhaps, of couleur du rose for tho occasion, we do not know; but we do know, on testimony as



unquestionable as that of the Rev. Doctor himself, what the state of matters was for a generation or two about Burns's time, not only in Ayrshire, but in Stirlingshire, and Linlithgowshire, and Berwickshire, and generally south of the Forth; and take the liberty of affirming, that if Dr. Macleod, in the parish of Loudon, or in its neighbourhood, could discover no trace of the profanities recorded in the 'Holy Fair,' he was more indebted to that very satire for such blessed immunity, than to all the sermons that were ever preached upon the subject by any presbytery in Ayrshire. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Do men gather grapes of thorns? or figs of thistles? Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

That Burns was indebted for the model of this satire to the 'Leith Races' of Robert Fergusen, is indisputable. In the opening stanzas themselves there is considerable resemblance; and the allegorical personage who introduces Ferguson to the 'Races,' is identical with Burns's imaginary companion at the 'Holy Fair.' It is remarkable even, that as soon as the scene of action in either case is reached, these imaginary companions both vanish or mingle with the crowd, and the poets respectively are left alone. In these respects, however, and in the versification, is the only resemblance; in all others, in style, in details, in solemnity and importance; above all, in the spirit of wisdom and truth, for the rectifying of abuses and the purification of morals, the superiority and originality of the 'Holy Fair' are conspicuous at a single glance.

p. 13, c. 1, s. 1.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An's snuff the caller air. &c.

The celebration of the Communion at Mauchline was in the month of August; but from the language of this stanza, which is descriptive of a much earlier period of the year, one is disposed to conclude, either that the terms of description here employed were suggested directly by the corresponding stanza in 'Leith Races,' or that the 'Holy Fair' itself was written, after many observations, piecemeal; and that the introductory stanzas were noted down in anticipation, not later than the month of June preceding the veritable occasion: in which case we may also conclude, that in the composition of these stanzas Burns was actually abroad, enjoying the early sunshine and celestial melodies of a Sabbath morn, in sympathy and in harmony with all animated nature.

— c. 2, s. IV. Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck Of a' the Ten Commauns A screed some day.

What? At the age of twenty-five or under, when your friends are zealously defending you against all such calumnies, to make a confession like this! Of the Fourth Commandment, which is here under dispute, and knowing how matters stand elsewhere, we shall say nothing; but the Fifth, and the Sixth, and the Seventh, and the Eighth, and the Ninth,—surely that was an exaggeration, Robert? And yet the Ten Commandments, since your day—but this is a topic too delicate perhaps, or sacred, for discussion in these pages. We gladly resign it, therefore, for investigation elsewhere, to presbyteries and pulpits or religious periodicals; protesting

only against any further liberties being taken with the name and character, or with the religion of Robert Burns.

p. 14, c. 1, s. viii. When by the 'plate' we set our nose,
 Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
 A greedy glowr 'Black-bonnet' throws,
 And we maun draw our tippence.
 Then in we go to see the show: &c.

'Black-bonnet'—a familiar designation of questionable respect for the officiating elder, whose duty it might be to superintend the 'collection.' The 'plate' was a large, flat, circular pewter dish, usually stamped with the name of the parish, and the date of its own presentation or purchase. On such occasions it was set upon a chair, or high three-legged stool, covered with a white cloth, at the gate of the churchyard, or outermost entrance of the church, to receive the offerings of all who might approach the sanctuary. In one Highland parish of fashionable resort, we have seen it outside altogether, on the very street. At Mauchline, it would most probably stand on the very verge of the highway also; so that, after 'drawing their tippence,' the worshippers, as here represented, went 'in,' not necessarily to the church itself, where the Communion was to be administered, but only to the churchyard, where the tent-preachings were conducted. We repeat, there is singular religious modesty in this circumstance, that Burns neither intrudes himself nor introduces his readers into the House of God, nor makes the slightest reference to any religious ceremony conducted there, but confines his observations exclusively to what occurs without.

- c. 2, s. x1. O happy is that man, an' blest! &c.

The naïve reality and truthfulness of this description cannot possibly be doubted; but how far Burns himself was from any such indulgence, the following anecdote, on unquestionable authority, will prove: On a similar occasion at Tarbolton, or one of the neighbouring parishes, Burns was a hearer. Two young ladies of good position, and slightly at that time acquainted with the Poet, were seated on the opposite side of the congregation in the open air. A heavy shower passed over the audience, when there was no available 'shed' perhaps 'to screen the countra gentry.' Burns, who happened to have an umbrella, rare enough in those days, walked deliberately round to shelter the ladies, who had none: this he did by standing respectfully behind their chair, and holding the umbrella over their heads. When the rain ceased, and a gaping crowd expected to see him take advantage of his situation by remaining in their neighbourhood, he quietly closed the umbrella, and walked deliberately round again to his original identical position, where he remained a devout and attentive listener till the conclusion of the service. highest-bred chivalry and piety combined could surpass that. The ladies in question were two of the Misses Renalds, of Bennals—one of them remarkable for her piety, and a subsequent correspondent of Burns himself, on topics connected with religion.—[See App.: Orig. Remin.—Mr. Reid's.]

- - s. xII. Wi' tidings o' salvation.

So in Kilmarnock Edition: altered by advice of Dr. Blair to— Wi' tidings o' damnation,

unfortunately; for the satire of the original edition is infinitely superior. 'Salvation,' in great swelling words, is professedly





the theme of such preachers; 'damnation,' the mere consequence of refusing it! They ascend the pulpit always with tidings of salvation: they guit it almost invariably with the reverse. Burns is said to have accepted this alteration with great readiness; at the same time, he made the significant request for leave to publish the Doctor's name, as the author of it, which the Dector dexterously but decidedly refused. This request has been considered by some of his editors a liberty unbecoming on his part. Why so? If a distinguished rhetorician and dignitary of the church chooses to suggest expressive but indecorous terms to a young, and presumably inexperienced friend, for publication, why should he be ashamed or afraid to adopt the responsibility? Dr. Blair was wise in his generation. Both words, we may mention, were originally printed almost entirely blank, as if the Poet himself did not wish to prenounce them: and with respect not only to this, but some other alterations, our decided conviction is, that they were acquiesced in by the Author with great reluctance. "Dr. Gregory," says he, concerning another of his critics, "is a good man: but he crucifies me."

p. 15, c. 1, s. xvi. For [Peebles] frae the water-fit,

The names of the reverend gentlemen referred to, throughout, were originally suggested only by the appropriate number of asterisks: in the present edition, they have been placed as above, in brackets. Of some of the gentlemen themselves, many a curious characteristic anecdote, if it were for edification, could be related. Our space, however, must be otherwise occupied. The individual above referred to, subsequently Dr. Peebles, signalised himself afterwards by reprisals on the Poet in an anonymous pamphlet entitled 'Burnomania,' now rare, and curious for its illiberality and misjudgment. . 'Waterfit' was a local designation for the town of Newton-upon-Ayr, where the reverend gentleman was incumbent; but is printed in both the early editions with a small letter, as in the text, manifestly to disguise the reference to an individual.

While Common-Sense has taen the road, -- e. xvi. An' aff, an' up the Cowgate Fast, fast that day.

Mr. Chambers mentions, on the authority of intelligent persons in Mauchline, that Mr. Mackenzie, surgeon in the village, and a friend of Burns, had recently written on some controversial topic under the title of 'Common-Sense,' hence the soubriquet: and that on the day in question he was "seen to leave the assembly and go off along the Cowgate on his way to Ballochmyle, exactly as Peebles ascended the rostrum," and that to this accident the passage refers. Mr. Chambers himself does not homologate this view. Such a thing may possibly have occurred; but 'Common-Sense,' in caricature or in earnest, is an impersonation that Burns elsewhere employs with reference to more than one occasion, where Dr. Mackenzie could not be present, and where his presence could never be imagined: it is quite unnecessary, therefore, to restrict the application of it to any individual whatever.

- c. 2, s. xxI. His talk o' H-ll, whare devils dwell, Our vera "Sauls does harrow" Wi' fright that day!

* Shakespeare's Hamlet .- R. B.

This, and a few other distinct acknowledgments of obligations

or quotations so very slight, which occur here and there under his own hand, are sufficient proofs of Burns's scrupulous honesty in all such matters; and leave no doubt whatever, that where any correspondence of ideas or of language, between him and others, occurs, without such acknowledgment, the Author himself was unconscious of it.

p. 16, c. 1, s. xxvi. Now 'Clinkumbell,' wi' rattlan tow, Begins to jow an' croon; Variation-

Now Robin Gib, &c.

The old church-bell of Mauchline was rung originally with a rope having a fathom or two of an iron chain at the end of it, to prevent its being cut away by the schoolboys. After the fall of the crazy belfry, it was removed to the cleft of an ashtree, at the north-west gable of the church. In this new position, as we are informed, two curious accidents befell it: first, the tongue dropped out, striking the ringer on the head, and almost depriving him of life; second, the branch itself on which it hung gave way one stormy winter night, and the instrument of parochial summons came to the ground. The old church itself has since been replaced, however, by an edifice of handsome proportions, in whose tower, the identical bell, surviving so many misfortunes, still does duty. Indecorums in public worship, we may presume, are not likely to occur in that neighbourhood again; but the world will look with curious, perhaps suspicious interest, on the now celebrated scene, for many a generation to come.

p. 16. DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK:—This wonderful poem, which was written in the spring, or 'seed-time,' of 1785, as the Author himself intimates, did not appear in the original edition of his works. It was introduced for the first time to public notice in the edition at Edinburgh. The subject of the satire, as is well known, was John Wilson, parochial teacher in Tarbolton, and self-constituted administrator of medicine for the district; a man of excellent disposition, and irreproachable character, but self-complacent possibly to an extent which provoked the mirth or antipathy of Burns. Notwithstanding the strange immortality conferred upon him by this world-famous satire, he was an enthusiastic admirer of its author, and has been known, in the very latest years of his life, to sing Burns's songs or rehearse his poems, with the highest sympathetic appreciation of their beauty. Not long after the appearance of this satire he left Tarbolton, and settled as a teacher in Glasgow, where he became Session-Clerk of the Gorbals, and died at an advanced age in the year 1839. The cause of his removal to Glasgow is said to have been a discussion with the heritors of Tarbelton about salary; but that the satire itself had rendered his continued residence there unpleasant, perhaps impossible, need hardly be questioned. Yet his therapeutic services, if modestly and carefully conducted, might have been of much importance in the village; where, and in the surrounding districts, anything like regular medical attendance up till that period, and long after, was an advantage unknown. One gentleman we have heard of in that neighbourhood, at that time, who, for twenty years of his life never saw a physician—fortunately did not require to see one; but had no other immediate adviser in extremity, than the village sheemaker. Some personal pique at the Freemasons' Lodge, as Gilbert distinctly tells us, lay, doubt-



less, at the bottom of the lampoon. These facts, with respect to Hornbook, are sufficiently notorious; it is not, however, we believe, understood at all, that there was any antitype for Death. By the same authority we are told, that it was one of those floating apparitions that sometimes crossed Burns's mind: but from a respectable resident in the neighbourhood, we lately learned, much to our surprise and amusement, that there was believed to be a real Death as well as a real Hornbook. "It was nae Death," said our respected informant, enlarging on the subject; "Nae Death, but Hugh Reid o' the Lochlans, he forgather'd wi' that nicht, abune Willie's Mill." "But how do you know that?" "How do I know? The folk a' about kent that, as weel's they kent they war leevin; and Burns himsel kent wha it was fu' brawly. He was na sae fou, but he kent Hugh Reid. Hugh was a lang ghaist-like body, wi' howe chafts, and sma' shank banes; wha's deformities were weel seen, for he wure short knee-breeks, and thin stockings, and muckle shoon. Burns kent him in the moonlicht fu' brawly, and syne caa'd him Death. We a' kent that." "But what said Hugh?" "Hoot, him? He ne'er heeded!" Burns, if we mistake not, had some slight antipathy, for reasons of his own, in Hugh's direction also; so that the rencontre of that evening, which he himself explicitly notes as a reality "in the seed time of 1785," afforded his satirical powers an opportunity of two-fold exercise, at one and the same moment.

p. 16, c. 2, s. 1. Great lies and nonsense baith to vend,

altered, in subsequent editions of much later date, to-

A rousing whid at times to vend,

a reading which is commonly preferred, and which will be found in its place hereafter: [see Various Readings.] It is possibly a little more forcible, but by no means so dignified or suggestive. All 'great lies' are not necessarily 'nonsense;' nor all 'nensense' necessarily a 'lie:' but ministers, in holy rapture, have been known occasionally to utter and combine both—the simple and melancholy truth. Besides, in original, the climax rises from 'lies,' through 'great lies,' to 'great lies and nonsense,' with addition of scriptural authority. Much, therefore, may be said on both sides.

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

The moon, in fact, in that position, could have no horns at all, being full moon; so that the complex and ridiculous error of counting her horns, and not being able to settle whether she had three or four, when by possibility she could only have two, and in reality had none, sufficiently indicates the supposed condition of the observer. But whoever imagines that Robert Burns was that night the worse of liquor, must be hopelessly misled by the vividness of his own description. The truth is, no higher tribute to his genius can be imagined, than this persistent belief in his dissipation, founded entirely on his most graphic but fictitious delineations. He writes in quaintest character, and the world, to his own disadvantage, accepts it all as a reality. The probability is, that that night he was not only sober, but in a temporary fit of very solemn, serious anger.

p. 17, c. 1, s. 1. I was come round about the hill, An' todlin down on Willie's mill, &c.

The spot pointed out as the veritable scene of this imaginary encounter, is about half way between the old 'Danish Camp,' or Justiciary Mound of Tarbolton, and the Parish Mill on the banks of the Fail below, to which the descent is still steep, and must then have been difficult. The mill at that time was tenanted by Mr. William Muir, one of Burns's oldest and kindest friends, and a "wonderful judge of sermons;" of whom, and of his wife, in their friendship for the Poet, several interesting reminiscences will be found in the Appendix. scene itself is most admirably and faithfully represented in our Illustration. On the hill in question, which occupies the middle distance, the open Courts of Justice, or Justice-Aires, were regularly held—the judges being seated on the uppermost round; the jury and the criminals, and other parties concerned, standing immediately below; and the general public around. The present high road sweeps round that hill on the opposite side from that on which the Poet would compass it, and is not visible in the picture; but his footsteps may almost be traced between the steeple and the tree, in our representation.

— s. 4. "Guid-ecn," quo' I; "Frien"! hae ye been mawin, When ither folk are busy sawin?" *

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.—R. B.

A curious correspondence in phraseology, to this, occurs in two most opposite directions; with neither of which, at that date, Burns could have any acquaintance, and with one of them, in all human probability, never. Thus—

> And round about a' thae castels, You may baith plow and saw; And on the fifteenth day of May The meadows they will maw.

"O hold your tongue, lady Marg'ret," he said, "For loud I hear you lie!

"And round about a' thae castels,
You may baith plow and saw:
But on the fifteenth day of May
The meadows will not maw!"—Proud Lady Margaret.

The meadows of the Fail above Willie's Mill, flooded during winter, were drained also, at a certain season in spring, in preparation for the hay-harvest, in June or July.

Again, in the old Dutch Version, John iv. 39,

De een säeyt, ende de ander mäeyt: that is, The ane saweth, and the ither maweth:

one of the best illustrations we could desire, of the original intimate connection of the Scottish language with the oldest and simplest forms of the Dutch.

—— s. 6.

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

This stanza, in both the original editions, is punctuated thus:-

But if I did, I wad be kittle

To be mislear'd,
I wad na' mind it, &c.,

on which Mr. Chambers observes, justly, that according to the true meaning of the words, it is scarcely intelligible. "To be kittle to be mislear'd," indeed, is not only not intelligible in



the usual sense of the words, but extremely unlike everything else in Burns's syntax. The confusion seems to us to have arisen simply from an oversight in the punctuation. As we have ventured, on conjecture, to amend and print it, the sense and the syntax are both restored:—

But if I did, I wad be kittle:—
To be mislear'd,
I wad na' mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard!

i.e., dangerous:—
i.e., to be rude,
[Spits.]

On any other supposition, we must not only do violence to the sense of the terms, but suppose that Death himself, so shrewd and civil, was no better than a constant slavering idiot.

p. 18, c. 1, s. 6. "Wae's me for Johnny Ged's Hole now,"
Quoth I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw ealf-ward whare gowans grew,
Sae white an' bonie—
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi the plew;
They'll ruin Johnie!"

'Johnny Ged's Hole,' the grave; the stomach of the voracious fish; the inexorable maw of the pike—that illacrimabilis Pluto. The reader will observe the strange variation of orthography between 'Johnny' and 'Johnie,' in the same stanza, which we carefully preserve. The terms themselves are not here necessarily applied to the same person; nor do they signify the same thing, whether so applied or not. Johnny indicates familiarity and possible contempt; Johnie, familiarity and affectionate regard: without observing which, the exquisite humour and tenderness combined, and yet distinct in a single breath, by the mere selection of letters, would be entirely lost.

p. 19, c. 1, s. 1. But just as he began to tell,

The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,

Which rais'd us baith:

I took the way that pleas'd mysel,

And sae did Death.

Ber.—The bell then beating one,—
Mar.—Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!—Hamlet, I. i.

But, no: it will never come again! What an interruption, and *aposiopesis* of provoking mystery, on the very verge of revelation! The schemes and the disappointments of Death, henceforth, shall be equally impenetrable.

p. 19. THE BRIGS OF AYR: - This brilliant satirical fiction was written in the interval between the publication of the Kilmarnock Edition and the Poet's appearance in Edinburgh. It was intended originally to grace the proposed second edition at Kilmarnock, which, however, was abandoned from want of courage in the publisher. It is dedicated, with elaborate but affectionate formality, to his friend and patron, Mr. Ballantyne, then Provest of Ayr; and from the style of the dedication, one can hardly help surmising that the Author had some slight misgivings as to the genuineness, or at least the dignity, of another more important dedication to higher patrons in the metropolis-to wit., The Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt. The poem itself is remarkable for three things: (1) The beauty of its impersonations, the vividness of its descriptions, and the humour of its morals; (2) The considerable intermixture of the English idiom, with the richest and most expressive Scotch; and (3) The singular fact, that it finishes without an appropriate close, and dies away like a dream-in nothing.

p. 20, c. 2, l. 13. Arous'd by blustering winds an' spotting thowes, Iu mony a torrent down the snaw-broo rowes; &c.

Such speats, or great river floods, seem to have been more frequent in the country about that date than now. By a chiselled memorandum on the rocks at Bothwell Castle, it appears that the Clyde rose in flood to an unprecedented height, March 12, 1782. Such overflows elsewhere were also remarkable.

Compare Thomson's Winter-l. 990.

The frost resolves into a trickling thaw; Spotted the mountains shine; loose sleet descends, And floods the country round. The rivers swell, Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills, O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown eataraets, A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once; And where they rush, the wide resounding plain Is left one slimy waste. &c.

It is not at all impossible that Burns's memory was familiar with this magnificent sketch; but on examining the two passages entire, it will be seen that Thomson's accumulated outline does not contain one twentieth part of the activity and vital force of Burns's picture. In Thomson, the whole scene pauses and delays its action, to be described; in Burns, it breaks loose, and rushes headlong, bearing its own description with it foaming on the surge, and with multiplicity and variety of desolation overwhelms and deafens the spectator. To one vehement objurgation in the lips of the 'Auld Brig,' our University readers may remember a parallel also in Horace:—

p. 21, c. 1, l. 22. Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,
 Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house;
 But staumrel, eorky-headed, graceless Gentry,
 The herryment and ruin of the country—
 Men, three-parts made by taylors and by barbers—
 Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on d——d new Brigs and
 Harbours!

Jam pauca aratro jugera regiae
Moles relinquent;
Non ita Romuli
Præscriptum et intonsi Catonis
Auspiciis, veterumque norma.—Car. II., Ode xv.

Our squares still rise, our fields decrease, And now the ploughs must rust in ease;

Was this by Romulus allowed?
Was this the way our fathers showed
To rise to Empire, and extend our sway?—Creech.

The whole Ode, in fact, although brief, is like an antique gem of denunciation for the exasperated hero of the night. For an additional correspondence, the student is referred to Car. III. xxiv.

The two aspirants to architectural immortality still survive in each other's presence, but not intact. To the New Bridge, which was erected 1786-8, from designs by Robert Adams, Esq., a considerable addition in breadth has since been made; and the Old Bridge, degraded now from the dignity of a highway, has been for some time restricted to the use of pedestrians. It corresponds, both in this and in other respects, very much to Dame Devorgoila's Bridge over the Nith at Dumfries; and was built also, if we do not mistake, by the charitable benefaction of two sister ladies. By comparison with Blind Harry, it would seem to have been somewhere between the sites of these two bridges, or close in that neighbourhood, that the immortal William Wallace was cast out from prison as dead, and thence rescued by his nurse. From expressions which occur in the Auld Brig's first salutation, it appears that the

poem must have been written whilst the New Bridge was in process of erection, and not yet "streekit owre frae bank to bank." We find in some recent editions a few variations on the text, from different manuscripts—unimportant and decidedly inferior, which the Author himself did not retain. His own brief annotations, with a few additional words, follow.

p. 19, c. 2, l. 28. And down by Simpson's * wheel'd the left about:

- * A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.
- l. 33. The drowsy Dungeon-clock+ had number'd two,
 And Wallace-Tower+ had sworn the fact was true:

+ The two Steeples. [Both buildings have since been removed, and one of them, the Tower, replaced by a handsome modern edifice with the same designation. The original lock and key of the old Dungeon or Jail of Ayr, objects of much antiquarian interest, arc at present (1867) in possession of Thomas Cuthbert, Esq., Burnock Holms, Ochiltree.]

p. 20, c. 1, l. 2. Swift as the goss trives on the wheeling hare;

- ‡ The gos-hawk, or falcon.
- — l. 39. There's men o' taste wou'd tak the Ducat-stream, €

A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.

— c. 2, l. 13. Or haunted Garpal || draws his feeble source,

|| The banks of Garpal Water is one of the few places in the West of Scotland where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of 'Ghaists,' still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

- l. 18. And from Glenbuck, ¶ down to the Ratton-key, ¶
- The source of the river Ayr. * A small landing place above the large key.

p. 21, c. 2, l. 15. O had M'Lauchlan, + thairm-inspiring sage,

- + A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin—[who, in company with Matthew Hall, another great performer, in whose family the gift seems to be hereditary, used to travel over the West of Scotland, delighting the highest comoisseurs with their melody. Montgomery of Coilsfield was about this time his special patron: with complimentary allusions to whom, to Mrs. Stewart of Stair, and to Professor Dugald Stewart of Catrine, the poem concludes.]
- p. 22. The Ordination—as a literary performance, is of much interest only in so far as it indicates the liberal tendency and advanced views of its Author-views which are every day now receiving an accession of supporters, and are destined ultimately to obtain supremacy in the Christian world. Let the advocates of such views, in our church-courts to-day, thank Robert Burns devoutly for having borne the odium bravely of their first publication, and defied their adversaries to open combat with the only appropriate weapons of ridicule and scorn. Historically, the 'Ordination' is also a document of some interest, as a record of the state of parties at the moment, and of the questions of ecclesiastical polity then beginning to be seriously agitated, which resulted finally in the disruption of the Established Church, and still provide topics of scandalous litigation in so many parishes and presbyteries within its bounds. Poetically, it is remarkable as an illustration of the Author's most caustic style, and of his inimitable gift of discomfiting antagonists by the quiet reproduction of their own views. It is not Robert Burns so much who here speaks, as the bigots themselves whose intolerance he exposes; and the poem has thus conferred an immortality of judgment on offenders who would have been otherwise doomed to perpetual oblivion. The reverend incumbent, whose installation is the theme of the satire, lived to become a Doctor of Divinity in much repute as a popular preacher in the West, into whose history there is no occasion at present farther to inquire; and was sarcastically known, among some of his more accomplished but less favoured brethren, as 'The Eidol.' One of these, a man of much learning and originality, whose

services were sometimes interrupted and his people disturbed by a sudden influx of hearers from the Laigh Kirk, when the light of that sanctuary was absent, has been known on such occasions to stop calmly in the midst of his own address, and exclaim—"Mak way, my frien's, mak way for the fleein host; the Eidol's no at hame the day!" and then resume his services. The 'Ordination' was written early in 1786, possibly before the ecclesiastical ceremony itself took place, and appeared for the first time in the Edinburgh Edition. The proper names, as a matter of delicacy, were all supplied by asterisks, and a few unimportant notes appended by the Author, thus:—

p. 22, c. 1, s. 11. Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;*

- * Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend and worthy Mr. I.— to the Laigh Kirk. [Rev. Mr. Lindsay was married to a Margaret Lauder, by whose influence it was supposed he obtained that benefice.]
- c. 2, s. iv. How graceless Ham+ leugh at his Dad, + Genesis, ch. ix. vers. 22.
- - 8. IV. Or Phineas trove the murdering blade, Numbers, ch. xxv. vers. 8.
- s. iv. Or Zipporah, the scauldin jad, ₹ Exodus, ch. iv. vers. 25.
- p. 23, c. 2, s. xiv. To ev'ry New-light | mother's son,

|| New-light is a cant phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.

- p. 24. The Calf—was a satire provoked by the ostentatious delivery of a then young and possibly self-sufficient preacher; and was written, it is said, in Gavin Hamilton's parlour, at the close of the service—in answer to a challenge on Mr. Hamilton's part, that such a thing could not be done. The reverend gentleman himself seems to have profited by the hint so unceremoniously addressed to him. He subsequently tried his fortune as a pulpit orator in London, not without some success and consolation, let us hope; and was finally installed as minister of a parish in Ayrshire. It is curious enough, that the text on which the satire is founded was incorrectly quoted by Burns. The verse in Malachi reads as we have printed it; but in Burns's own edition it stands—"And they shall go forth," &c.
- p. 24. Address to the Deil:—It is difficult, on so grand an effusion as this, in which ridicule, solemnity, humour, pathos, and philosophy, with the most consummate daring and the purest charity, are all commingled, to say a word. It sounds like eternal teaching, and will go on to purify and liberate the priest-ridden human conscience for generations and centuries to come. That Burns was not unconscious of his own tenderness and true Christian philanthropy, in this marvellous outpouring of expostulation and pity on the Prince of Evil, is manifest from what is elsewhere said—

He wad na wrang'd the vera Deil, That's owre the Sea—

much less any human being purposely; and that faith in the supreme goodness and infinite love of God was the foundation of all religion in Burns, is as certain as that he was the author of these lines. No more wonderful, or effective, or beneficial treatment of an idea that has engrossed and terrified the world for ages has ever been vouchsafed; nor any sermon on such a subject preached, that has so lightened the gloom of centuries. It is the purest Christian philosophy in the quaintest and the grandest fable, attractive, rich, and wholesome. For this purpose was the Son of God himself made manifest, that He might destroy the works of the Devil; and however much the



sense of decorum in some of us may be alarmed, such poetry for the popular ear is the most efficient agency in that Godlike work of destruction—a thousand times more efficient than the loftiest conceptions of a mind like Milton's-indicating, in fact, a greater mind, by the very ease and daring with which it is delivered. The accumulation of details, partly humorous and partly superstitious, throughout the piece, is due no doubt to the Author's acquaintance with traditionary lore, of waterkelpies, sprites, &c.; among which may possibly have been included a Border ballad referred to by Sir Walter Scott: but of this there is no evidence. It might as well be affirmed, on the ground of mere similarity, that Robert Burns at the age of twenty-five, in the solitudes of Ayrshire, had been a diligent student of Montaigne. It was written, or composed, in the afternoon of a winter day in 1786, and rehearsed by Burns to his brother Gilbert next morning, as they went together with their carts for coals. Let the reader compare with the two first verses of this 'Address,' Cantos XXI. and XXII. entire of Dante's Inferno (in which he will find many figures and expressions almost identical, but which Burns certainly never saw), and judge how far in tenderness, strength, and humour these dozen lines surpass them both. Throughout the whole Inferno, in fact, there is scarcely one gleam of humour; and from beginning to end of that inspired work, not a thought to be compared with the concluding stanza of this wonderful 'Address:' or if a thought, then but the shadow of it-

> Tuttochè questa gente maladetta In vera perfezion giammai non vada, Di là, più che di qua, essere aspetta.—*Infer. Can.* vi. Though ne'er to true perfection var arrive This race accurst, yet nearer then, than now, a They shall approach it.—*Cary*.

p. 25, c. 2, s. 3. Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard, &c.

This stanza, it appears, stood originally otherwise, which we quote almost with reluctance on account of its inferiority: but as editorial curiosity from the first has insisted on dragging every concealed line to light, let the world have its reprint—

Lang syne in Edon's happy scene, When strappin Adam's days were green, And Eve was like my bonie Jean— My dearest part; A dancin, sweet, young, handsome quean Wi' guileless heart.

p. 26, c. 1, s. 1. Sin' that day Michael * did you pierce,

* Vide Milton, Book VI.—R. B. [More exactly still, had Burns been aware of it, in Dante, Inferno, Can. VII.,

. là dove Michele Fé la vendetta del superbo strupo.]

p. 26. Death and Dying Words of Poor Maille:—This charming little domestic idyl and fable, so beautifully humane and human, is one of the Poet's earliest compositions; and, according to Gilbert's testimony, was written at Lochlea in 1782. It originated not in a real, but only an impending catastrophe, from which Hughoc's timely warning was the means of saving poor Mailie. It appears that the lad's awkward look and gestures, in announcing the misfortune to Burns and his brothers, had inspired the Poet with amusement as well as anxiety, which accounts for the half-ludicrous turn of the 'unco mournfu' tale.' He is stated by Burns in a brief note to have been "A neighbour herd callan;" but is described in another copy of the piece, in the late

Miss Aiken's possession, as "an odd, glowran, gapin callan, about three-fourths as wise as other folk." His name was Hugh Wilson. The poem itself was composed at the plough that day, and rehearsed, nearly as it now stands, the same evening. It is pleasant to reflect that this is one of the poems which William Burness had the privilege of hearing, ere he left this earthly scene; and that it afforded a worthy foreshadowing of a reputation that was to be distinguished by tenderness and truth.

The poem itself, in composition, is unequal; and has more than one unfinished passage: but whether this is to be attributed to the Author's early inexperience as a writer, and the haste of its composition, or is in simple character, as reporting the speech of a perplexed and breathless dying beast, may fairly be disputed. We incline to the latter supposition. Burns's innate love of all animated helpless beings, and their supposed reciprocal attachment to him, are most beautifully interwoven throughout; and these correlative ideas of love and gratitude may be accepted, without hesitation, as the characteristic features of his own life from the beginning to the end. Nothing but conscious benevolence in himself could have suggested the idea of so much confidence, attachment, and gratitude towards him on the part of a dumb creature.

p. 26, c. 2, l. 15. O, bid him save their harmless lives Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!

An old story this—as old as the days of Nathan the Prophet—and more than once reiterated in ancient Scottish song:—

There cam a tod to the hought-door,
The like I never saw:
And ere he had taen the lamb he did,
I had lourd he had taen them a'.—Cowden Knowes

— l. 35. An' no to rin an' wear his cloots, Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

See the 'Ordination' also, Stanza V., for the Poet's opinion on such characters. This whole topic seems to have excited always the strongest feelings of scorn and rage in Burns's mind; yet was the very point in which his own self-command was feeblest. It was by no premeditation, therefore, we may be sure of it, that he so sinned.

p. 27, c. 1, l. 12. An' for thy pains thou'se get my blather.

Our worthy English friend, who would interpret 'blather' here to be a 'long-winded harangue,' was certainly never present at a Martinmas ploy, or the blowing of a country school-boy's football. Besides, 'blather' and 'blether,' as he will find, are two distinct and distinguishable words.

p. 27. The Elegy—which is of a piece with the 'Dying Words,' both in style and the intermixture of tenderness with humour, requires no further remark. It contains, however, two lines which are confessedly imperfect and a little obscure, and which have been printed not only with a different punctuation in almost every edition, but even with an alteration of the text in some. With the utmost deference, and not without doubt, we have printed them as they here stand—

--- s. 1. The last, sad cap-stane o' his woe's [is]

Poor Mailie's dcad! == violent death:

to which we find parallels elsewhere sufficiently clear, thus-

Or lasses gie my heart a screed— As whiles they're like to be my dead, &c. The same sort of reading we venture also to propose in the two last lines—

 $\begin{aligned} \text{His heart will never get aboon} \\ \text{His Mailie's dead!} &= \text{violent death.} \end{aligned}$

If any reader, however, should doubt the propriety of this punctuation, we respectfully reproduce the originals:—

The last sad, cap-stane o' his woes; Poor Mailie's dead!

His heart will never get aboon!
His Mailie's dead!

Stanza VI. stood in original manuscript, by variation, thus-

She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo like goats, and legs like trams;
She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs,
A famous breed;
Now Robin, greetin, chows the hams
O' Mailie dead.

which the Author's good taste, however, superseded even in his first edition. The only point for which the above is still worth preserving, is the allusion to Fairlie, where, if it be the same place, William Burness was originally gardener, and in connection with which the pedigree of Mailie and her two lambs would have a domestic interest for the Poet; who purchased the little fleecy family one day in a frolic.

p. 27, c. 2, s. 4. Wae worth that man wha first did shape That vile, wanehancie thing—a raep! &c.

In Edinburgh Edition-Wae worth the man . . .

But between the original in its strong emphasis, and the denunciation of Anacreon against the usurer, there is a singular and vivid correspondence worth observing:—

' Απόλοιτο πρώτος αὐτὸς 'Ο τὸν ἄργυρον Φιλήσας. Διὰ τοῦτον οὐκ ἀδελφὸς, Διὰ τοῦτον οὐ τοκῆες' Πόλιμοι, φόνοι δὶ αὐτόν. Τὸ δὶ χεῖρον, ὀλλύμεσθα Διὰ τοῦτον οἱ φιλοῦντες. ΕΙΣ ΕΡΩΤΑ.

Which we may Scotticise for the occasion, thus-

Wae worth that man wha siller bright
Did first consider wi' delight!
His wyte, nae brither's to the fore;
His wyte, auld folk gang to the door;
His wyte, wars, murthers [ding the law];
And his wyte, what is warst of a',
Lovers, like us, maun pine awa!—TO LOVE.

p. 28. To J. S[MITH]:—In these Epistles, of which the present is the earliest specimen in this edition, the foundation of style is no doubt to be recognised in the models of Hamilton, Ramsay, Ferguson, and others: but a type of a much higher kind, although certainly unknown to Burns, is recognisable in the Odes of Horace. The metre itself most favourite with him, although not exactly the same, is very similar to that of Burns in his Epistles; but the similarity of style, in thought, in sententious philosophy, in epigrammatic reflection, in discursive sally, converting themselves insensibly to proverbial utterances, is so remarkable, that it could be fairly illustrated only by parallel quotations of entire passages. Such resemblance is possibly unknown to ninety-nine in a hundred of the most devoted readers of either author respectively. The humble peasant, or busy tradesman, who rejoices in the wisdom of his darling bard, suspects not that much similar wisdom may be found embalmed in the numbers of the Roman sage; still less does the scholar engrossed with classic lorethe elderly gentleman at home, among his annotated volumes,

like our old friends at Auchmleck; or the student over his midnight lamp, aspiring to degrees and fellowships-imagine that all this philosophy has been reproduced and broadened by an Ayrshire ploughman, in a rude northern dialectdiversified by endless variety of observation, enriched with a geniality of humour of which Horace was utterly incapable, sweetened with a tenderness of sympathy absolutely foreign to his selfish Roman nature, and flooded with a harmony of articulation to which the highest efforts of his polished muse never attained. Yet, in critical verity, the case is even so. Only where striking coincidences occur, shall we make actual quotations; but the remarkable similarity referred to seemed to justify an annotation like this, on the subject of the Epistles generally; and for the benefit of the student who may have leisure or inclination to prosecute the inquiry farther, we shall indicate the points of correspondence as we proceed.

James Smith, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a Mauchline man, and linendraper there; subsequently a calico printer at Linlithgew, in affectionate correspondence with the Poet still; and finally, after misfortunes at home, an emigrant to the West Indies, where he died. The epistle itself, written in 1785, refers to some unfulfilled intention on the Author's part, of immediate publication—a subject on which we hope to throw some new and interesting light hereafter, in the Appendix. In spirit, it is characterised by more than Horatian abandon; and in execution, by the most felicitous ease: yet the indifference that seems to prevail throughout was, after all, but a transitory relaxation of the mind from anxieties and pain. Burns, ere this, had been 'wounded,' as we know; and the wound, though 'puny,' was secretly driving him to distraction.

p. 28, c. 2, s. 6.

But why, o' death, begin a tale? Just now we're livin sound an' hale; Then top and maintop croud the sail, Heave Care owre-side! And large, before Enjoyment's gale, Let's tak the tide.

Thus Herace,

Musis amicus, tristitiam et metus Tradam protervis in mare Creticum Portare ventis;—Car. I. Ode xxvi. I, I, the Muses' merry friend, Deliver all my busic cares Unto the wanton wind:—Creech.

p. 29, c. 2, s. 2.

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

Of this sentiment numerous variations may be found in Horace: we select the following. Speaking of Fortune, he says—

Laudo manentem : si eeleres quatit
Pennas, resigno quae dedit, et mea
Virtute me involvo, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quaero.—Car. III. Ode xxix.

I can enjoy her while she's kind;
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away:
The little or the much she gave, is quietly resigned:
Content with poverty, my soul I arm;
And virtue, tho', in rags, will keep me warm.—Dryden.

In the above, as in many other cases, the superior closeness between Burns and Horace is observable, to that between Horace and his own most accomplished translators.



p. 29, c. 2, s. 6.

While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down owre my seanty meal,
Be't water-brose or muslin-kail,
Wi' ehearfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace.

Again, Horace to Apollo, as Burns here to the Powers, says-

Me paseant olivae,
Me chicorea, levesque malvae, &c.—Car. I. Ode xxxi.
Me chicory and olives feed,
Me loos'ning mallows nobly feast;

Grant this, Apollo, and I ask no more.—Creech.

Finally, of these parallels, take concluding stanza-

v. 30, c. 1, s. 4. Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,

But quat my sang,

Content wi' you to mak a pair,

Whare'er I gang.

Horace, to Mæcenas unwell-

. Non ego perfidum Dixi sacramentum : ibimus, ibimus, Uteunque præcedes, supremum Carpere iter comites parati.—Car. II. Ode xvii.

[The same black day shall seize on both;]
It is a fixt and solemn oath:
We'll go, I've sworn, we both will go;
Tho' you may first begin the race,
I'll follow with a nimble pace,
And join you ere you reach the waves below!—Creech.

In stanza immediately before, for—The ramblin squad; Edinburgh Edition has—The rattlin squad;

p. 30. A DREAM:—More truly a political prophecy, is said, on various authorities, to have given offence at Court; and the Author was affectionately urged to withdraw it, by some of his most devoted friends, in vain. How little even Mrs. Dunlop understood his character, or could measure his inheritance of fame or power, a request like this from her may show. Burns treats His Majesty and the Royal Family with no greater familiarity, nor with less faithfulness, than he would have treated Apollo and the Muses. Did courtiers misunderstand, or undervalue such a compliment? Their successors may have lived to comprehend it. Let the reader compare with this Address Horace's entire Ode Ad Rempublicam, Car. I. xiv. The circumstances of the crisis are by no means dissimilar, and the fidelity of speech on his part remarkable. The familiarity alone is wanting-but a reigning Family and an entire Commonwealth are different, and could not be addressed in precisely similar terms. Nevertheless, gentlemen at Court in those days, who were such admirers of the classics, might have detected the resemblance, which is most conspicuous; and known better than they seem to have done, how to estimate the fearless loyalty and courage of a self-constituted and pensionless Laureate. To the poem itself he adds only two brief notes, which appear below. The public events alluded to-American war, proposed reduction of navy, with additional taxation, &c., and the domestic scandals of the royal household, so freely and affectionately handled, are too well known to require elucidation here. The Laureate of the day was Thomas Wharton.

p. 32, c. 1, s. xv. God bless you a'! Consider now, Ye're unco muckle dautet; &c.

A sweet enough unconscious commentary on this sadly prophetic stanza occurs in the well-known verses attributed to the

Princess Amelia—herself one, and the fairest, of these very "blossoms" and "royal lasses dainty:"—

Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,
I laughed, and danced, and talked, and sung;
And, proud of health, of freedom vain,
Dreamed not of sorrow, care, or pain;
Coneluding, in those hours of glee,
That all the world was made for me.
But when the hour of trial came,

But when the hour of trial came,
When sickness shook this trembling frame,
When folly's gay pursuits were o'er,
And I could sing and danee no more,—
It then occurred, how sad 'twould be
Were this world only made for me.

The Author's annotations are subjoined:—

p. 31, c. 2, s. xi. There, him* at Agineourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,+
He was an unco shaver
For mony a day.

and hong t

* King Henry: + Sir John Falstaff: see Shakspeare.

- s. xIII. A glorious galley,* stem and stern,
 Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.

p. 32. The Vision:—As this is a poem confessedly of great importance in many ways, but chiefly as indicative of the Author's character and prospects, or rather of his prophetic instincts, we may take the opportunity of observing here, once for all—(1) That Burns in early life, perhaps always, was much addicted to passionate adjurations, and to "rash aiths,"-"by the celestial powers," "by a' yon starry roof," "by a' that's guid," "by heaven and earth," &c .- indicating not only the vehemence of his constitution, but his habit of involuntary devotion, bordering sometimes in his haste on irreverence or indecorum; but by no means to be confounded with either. This constitutional tendency was one of the highest elements of his poetic nature. It brought him into perpetual contact with agencies or principles beyond himself, and made the "oft-attested powers" the absolute arbiters of his destiny. (2) That he was habitually prone to fling himself for relief on the future, and for satisfaction on possibilities; with or without reason in so doing. In some cases this resulted in the divinest practical prophecy, as in the very poem before us; in others it assumed the less dignified form of mere speculative risks, or calculation of the chances; and engendered the characteristic habit of 'wagering,' or 'wadding,' as the case might be, 'boddles,' 'groats,' 'pleugh pettles,' &c.; a habit which he did not scruple, with the utmost familiarity, to ascribe to Death himself. (3) That he was essentially most observant and contemplative, and to all mere passing indulgence, where passion or where intellect was not concerned, most self-denied. His observation extended not merely to all natural and social phenomena—to habits, customs, occupations, and important facts; but to sounds, and sights, and trivial incidents, to the amusements and the peculiarities of his neighbours—in a word, to everything; yet, in none of these latter did he take any farther concern, than to note them as realities in connection with human life, except where they appealed to his sympathies, or touched the strongest passions of his soul. This phase of his character is illustrated everywhere, but nowhere more beautifully than in the opening stanzas of the 'Vision.' Of all imaginable field sports, those

of curling, and coursing, and fowling, are the most seductive to thoroughbred Scotsmen, of which Burns was, no doubt, aware; but these had no attractions at all for him, whatever Professor Wilson, in his celebrated Essay, without the slightest evidence, may have assumed on the subject. On the contrary, coursing and fowling, because they implied pain and the loss of life to helpless creatures, he regarded with abhorrence; and curling, although the most innocent and exhilarating, as well as scientific of all manly social amusements, seems to have been a variety of idleness unsuitable to him. He heard (as one may hear at the distance of a mile or two, in clear, calm weather) the ringing noise, with cracks and shouts intermingled, of the "roaring play," although he did not see it; on the other hand, he saw, but could not hear the "hunger'd maukin" in her stealthy raid on "kail-yards green," and would most probably have parted with all his garden stock, rather than disturb her. His occupation all day had been the "weary flingin-tree," in the dusty barn; and his solace now among "hoast-provokin smeek," under the humble thatch, hearing and seeing all that was going on around him, was to speculate in lofty daring mood on a destiny of poverty and renown possible only for a few, and scarcely equalled in one for a thousand years.

From expressions which occur at the commencement, it is evident, either that this poem was written in the dead of winter, when frosts were intense and daylight closed "far in the west;" or that the vision itself was a sort of real dream which occurred at that season, and was afterwards committed, in more elaborate detail, to writing—a view of the matter which we suggest without hesitation. Such sort of visions, or, as the world would call them, hallucinations, were common with him. The poem, in its original form, is dated by biographers early in 1786. It was written most probably in the spence at Mossgiel (not quite so poor an apartment, however, as here represented), and appeared in the Kilmarnock Edition, in its simplest and most dignified form. A considerable number of stanzas were subsequently added, with notes by the Author himself, in his Edinburgh Edition, complimentary to the friends who patronised him there. These stanzas we have enclosed within brackets, and the Author's notes explanatory will be found below. There was also another slight change indicative of much, which we have bracketed also; and, as it seems to us of greater importance in a moral point of view than all the rest, we shall remark upon it in a word.

p. 33, c. 1, s. 3. And such a leg! [my bonic Jean]

Could only peer it.

In the Kilmarnock Edition the lines stood thus-

And such a leg, my Bess, I ween, Could only peer it.

The compliment itself was originally intended, it is said, for Jean Armour; but in consequence of the misunderstanding which occurred with her in the interval, it was transferred to another; and afterwards, upon reconciliation, restored to her again. But who was this other? we naturally enquire. Without any direct authority on the subject, we need not hesitate much in saying that it was Elizabeth Paton, mother of the Poet's illegitimate child. There was, in fact, no other. But during this very interval of alienation from Jean Armour, Burns, as the world is aware, was solemnly betrothed to Mary

Campbell. Why, then, should not the compliment rather have been transferred to her? Only one sufficient reason can be assigned—that Burns's love for Mary Campbell was too sacred, and Mary's own character too elevated and her fate too sad, to suffer him to associate any such publicity with her name. Both Jean and Elizabeth had compromised their own dignity already, and might so be referred to without offence; Mary, never: and Burns's own sense of moral delicacy, as well as his profoundest love, prohibited the reference. Such silent omission is more eloquent than a thousand words. A-kin to this is that exquisite compliment of James the First of Scotland to the virgin English goddess, and subsequent Queen, of his idolatry—

And for to walk that fresche Maye's morowe,
Ane huke she had upon her tissew quhite;
That gudeliar had not bene sene to forowe,
As I suppose; and girt she was alight:
Thus halfling lowse for haste, to such delight,
It was to see her youth in gudeliheid,
That for rudeness to speke thereof I drede!

King's Quair: s. xxx.

We have only farther to note the moral modesty, united with the high prophetic instinct, which characterises this remarkable piece; the fine discrimination, at so early a date, of his own genius and the probable sphere of his triumphs; his apprehensions, his regrets, his choice of destiny; and his lofty Christian faith, and child-like dependence "with soul erect," on the Universal Plan for protection. No finer peroration could be delivered from any professorial chair, or from any pulpit. In the 'Vision' alone we have a whole spiritual autobiography included; with all the strange relationships of Earth, and Air, and Heaven combined with an individual human constitution; and an unerring forecast of the temptations, the sorrows, and the glorious achievements that were in store for the individual man. The Morning, the Mid-day, the Gloaming, the Night itself, and the After-Night of an unprecedented existence are all prefigured here.

The only critical observations to be made, before subjoining the Author's annotations, are, that the English idiom prevails to a considerable extent in the 'Vision,' and is employed with wonderful effect in some of the finest passages; that some of the stanzas introduced at Edinburgh seem to be unnecessary, or at least redundant; and that for a fastidious or jealous reader, "the Bard," the "rustic Bard," occurs perhaps a little too frequently throughout. A few additional complimentary stanzas have since been discovered by Mr. Chambers—but these, most wisely, were omitted by the Poet.

Two curious accidental coincidences remain to be noticed:-

p. 32, c. 1, s. 1. And hunger'd Maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step hetray
Whare she has been.

Tho' timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want.—Thomson's Winter: 1. 257.

p. 33, c. 1, s. 1. Green, slender, leaf-elad holly-boughs
Were twisted, graeefu', round her brows;

There's the picture of a knight, and a ladye bright,
And the grene hollin abune their brie.—Border Minstrelsy.



Author's annotations:-

DUAN FIRST.*

* Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem.—[Sec his 'Cath-Loda,' vol. 2, M'Pherson's Translations.]

p. 33, c. 2, s. 3. To see a race * heroic wheel,

* The Wallaces.

His Country's Saviour, + mark him well! + Wm. Wallace. Bold Richardton's ; heroic swell; The Chief on Sark who glorious fell,

‡ Adam Wallace of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish Independence.

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

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish || shade

|| Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to have taken its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Moutgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial place is still shown.-[See Notes on 'Twa Dogs.']

- s. 6. Thro' many a wild, romantic grove, 9

¶ Barskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice Clerk.

With deep-struck, reverential awe,* _ - 8, 7,

* Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart.

p. 34, c. 1, s. 1. Brydon's brave Ward + I well could spy, + Col. Fullarton.

p. 36. Address to the Unco Guid—was written probably in the spring of 1786, and is one of the most perfect of Burns's moral writings, for humour, charity, and truth combined. A more beautiful blending of humour, with the purest charity and wisdom, is perhaps not to be found in any similar composition, in any language. The very look of the Author's face may be descried, and the profoundest revelation of his character, in these simple, but grand philosophie stanzas, as they roll along. It is a curious enough coincidence, and not to be overlooked, that the 'Address to the Deil' and this 'Address to the Unco Guid' commence precisely in the same style-

O Thou! whatever title suit thee, | O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee, An' let poor damned bodies be;

Hear me, ye venerable Core, As counsel for poor mortals,

In one stanza alone, the sixth, commencing

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames, &c.,

there seems to be a little unnecessary harshness, and a little unnecessary license: but let none complain. A standard authority on such matters, before Burns, in a passage tenfold more dangerous and seductive, had the hardihood in his own polished way to make similar insinuations:-

> A delicate refinement, known to few, Perplexed his breast and urged him to retire: But love forbade. Ye prudes in virtue, say; Say, ye severest, what would you have done?

Damon and Musidora: Thomson's Summer.

p. 37. Tam Samson's Elegy.—The model of this admirable jest was unquestionably the 'Life and Death of Habbie Simson, Piper of Kilbarchan'—a rude descriptive elegy, by no means destitute of merit, but deficient in that characteristic vital humour which marks the relaxation of higher genius. A man's epitaph may be thus inscribed with a tenpenny nail on a tombstone, or cut with polished steel on monumental granite; which, in fact, is the difference between the two. The story of its composition, and of its first recital in presence of the hero himself at some convivial meeting, are well known. During the recital, amidst roars of laughter, Samson ejaculated repeatedly, "Ou ay, but I'm no deid yet!" The 'Per Contra,' in consequence, was produced immediately to pacify his alarm, and propitiate his friendship. "Thomas Samson was one of the Poet's Kilmarnock friends-a nursery and seedsman of good credit, a zealous sportsman, and a good fellow."-Chambers. He died, it appears, on the 12th of December, 1795, about six months before the Poet himself. He was then in his seventy-third year; and as the poem seems to have been written in the autumn of 1786, he would be in his sixty-fourth year at the reading of his elegy. The epitaph has been inscribed on his tombstone in the churchyard of Kilmarnoek. The stanza enclosed in brackets did not appear in the original edition. On this stanza, James Hogg, who speaks of 'Halloween' as a "rather trivial poem," and of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' as a "dull, heavy, lifeless poem," has a weak misplaced jubilant commentary, concluding with "Match this who can?" The fact is, the stanza is by no means equal to many others in the piece, and seems to have been an after-thought altogether, infringing on the continuity of the original composition, and interrupting the quiet repose into which the exuberance of the satire was gradually subsiding. We have inserted it where it now stands, because it has been associated with the others from 1794 at least; but as a general rule, it may be affirmed that what Burns deliberately omitted from a composition was inferior; and that subsequent additions, even by his own masterly hand, to any finished performance, were rarely improvements. His first glance of any theme was generally the right glance, and his first finished effort was perfection on the subject. To one line in the poem we find a coincident elsewhere than in 'Habbie Simson,' and with which Burns, at the date of composition, could hardly be familiar:-

p. 37, c. 1, s. 2. To Death she's dearly paid the kane:

> I'd paid my kane seven times to hell Ere you'd been won away!-Tamlane.

The identical expression, however, occurs in Ferguson, with whom Burns certainly was familiar:

Tho' they should dearly pay the kane, &c .- Leith Races.

The Author's annotations follow:-

p. 37, c. 1. TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*

When this worthy old sportsman went out last muir-fowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint, the Author composed his elegy and epitaph.

— - s. 1.

Or great M'[Kinlay]* thrawn his heel? Or R[obertson]+ again grown weel,

To preach an' read?

* A certain preacher, a great favourite with the Million. Vide the 'Ordination,' [p. 22.]

+ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the Few, who was at that time ailing. For him see also 'Ordination,' stanza 1x.

p. 38.

PER CONTRA.

Thro' a' the streets and neuks o' Killie, "

* Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for the name of a certain town in the west. [Kilmarnock.]

In addition to the above, it may be observed, that although Burns himself was neither a sportsman nor a curler, he was manifestly acquainted with all the terms and rules of such amusements, and represents them here with a humorous pictorial grace, not to be looked for in any more studied or elaborate description.

p. 38. HALLOWEEN was written most probably in the winter of 1785; and a sort of model has been found for it by Mr. Chambers, in a poem on the same subject, although in different versification, by a Mr. John Mayne, in Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine for 1780. It is possible Burns may have looked at this composition, pretty much as the highest artist at his easel might look for a moment at some school-boy's effort on a slate or drawing-board-not otherwise. The scene itself is pre-eminently Ayrshire, the immediate locality is in Kyle—most likely at Mount Oliphant—with a friendly glance along the Carrick shore, in the direction of Turnberry and the Bruce's land; with which the traditionary ballads he had listened to in his infancy, from his mother's lips and those of the minstrel beggars, connected his imagination and his memory. A whole early lifetime, impregnated and beautified with the superstitions of the soil, is thus at once illustrated, revived, and immortalised together. The Author's own notes on this admirable idyl are sufficient: two correspondences only, in addition, we think proper to quote.

Upon that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance; &c.

Thus— The night it is good Hallowe'en,

When fairy-folk will ride;
And they, that wad their true love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide.—Tamlane.

Elsewhere we find this nocturnal array more minutely and graphically described:—

In the hinder-end of harvest on All-hallow-e'en, When our Good Neighbours dois ride, if I read right, Some buckled on a Bunewand and some on a Been, Ay trottand in troups from the Twilight:

Some saidled a shee Ape, all graithed into green,
Some hobland on a hemp stalk, hovand to the hight;
The King of Pharie and his Court, with the Elf Queen,
With many elfish Incubus was ridand that night.

Montgomery's Reply to Polwart.

In Stanza X., we have in the orginal, 'Rob in,' rhyming with 'sobbin;' but the same name appears distinctly both before and after, and in the former case applied to the same person, as 'Rab.' There seems therefore to be an oversight somewhere: but as the Author prefers 'Rab' in these two distinct cases, we have retained it in the present case also, for that reason alone. In Stanza XXV., the grammarian will observe a curious intermingling of different tenses, without necessity, and it must be admitted without advantage; but as the words stand distinctly and invariably so printed, they remain. The stanza itself, otherwise, is remarkable for its great pictorial beauty.

[PREFATORY NOTE BY AUTHOR.]

The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unaequainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, Notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the West of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of Human Nature, in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such honour the Author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more enlightened in our own.

HALLOWEEN.*

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

- p. 38, c. 1, s. 1. On Cassilis Downans+ dance,
- + Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.
 - --- s. I. There, up the Cove, to stray an' rove,
- ‡ A noted eavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed, in country story, for being a favourite haunt of the fairies. [A spot frequented, in his youth, by Burns.]

§ The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great delivered of his country, were Earls of Carriek.

p. 39, c. 1, s. iv. Their 'stocks' | maun a' be sought ance;

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

- - s. vi. To pou their stalks o' corn; ¶
- ¶ They go to the barnyard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the 'top-pickle,' that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.
 - -- s. vi. When kiutlan in the 'fause-house' *
- When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a 'fause-house.'
 - - s. vii. The auld guidwife's weel-hoorded nits+
- + Burning the nuts is a favourite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.
 - --- s. xI. And in the 'blue-clue' throws then,
- ‡ Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions:—Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the 'pot' a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread: demand, "Wha hauds?" i.e. who holds? and answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.
 - p. 40, c. 1, s. xiii. I'll eat the apple at the glass,
- ¿ Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.
 - -c. 2, s. xvi. He gat hemp-seed, | I mind it weel,
- || Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat, now and then—"Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. 'Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case, it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow thee."
 - p. 41, c. 1, s. xxI. To winn three wechts o' naething; ¶
- ¶ This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible: for there is danger, that the heing, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a 'weeht,' and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time, an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.
 - --- s. xxIII. It chanc'd the stack he faddom't thrice,*
- * Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a 'bear-stack,' and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.
 - c. 2, s. xxiv. Whare three lairds' lan's met at a burn,+
- + You go out, one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south-running spring or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to

bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

p. 41, c. 2, s. xxvii. The 'luggies' three are ranged; ;

* Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future (husband or) wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

p. 42, c. 1, s. xxviii. Till butter'd sow'ns, wi' fragrant lunt,

§ Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween Supper.

p. 42. THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALU-TATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE—referable possibly to the beginning of 1786, is a purely imaginative colloquy, with many most beautiful descriptive touches, and still more beautiful touches of humanity, both equally characteristic of the Author's genius and of his innate benevolence of heart. The occasion of the address is peculiarly significant of this:—On new-year's morning, every human inmate of the household enjoyed the "hansel bite and soupe"-"in cog or bicker," and in Burns's household, the dumb brute must be partaker of the universal hospitality; all the more, if that dumb brute had been a "trusty servan'," or associated in any way with the higher joys of his own existence. "A righteous man," says Solomon, "regardeth the life of his beast." There are many peculiar expressions in this peem, which we could wish much to interpret for the general reader here; but for conciseness' sake must refer him to the Glossary. By any one who understands the language, a long series of the most perfect illustrations of rural life might be sketched from this poem alone. In Edinburgh Edition, the first line stands thus:-

A guid new-year I wish thee Maggie.

p. 43. THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT, written about the beginning of winter in 1785, and dedicated to his friend Robert Aiken, Esq., is said by Gilbert to have been suggested to his brother Robert by the solemn invocation, commonly used in Scottish households, at the commencement of domestic devotion -"Let us worship God." The scene is manifestly laid in the Cottage at Alloway, where William Burness and his wife began housekeeping, and where the Author himself and several other of their children were born; but other circumstances are added. to constitute the representation general. On the exquisite moral and poetical beauties of this immortal work, no criticism can any longer be required. Burns is said, by himself, to have written it with tears in his eyes; * and the man who can read through it, even as a critic, without emotion, may safely be pronounced unfit for the highest functions of his art. The model of the work itself was 'The Farmer's Ingle' of Ferguson, which the Ettrick Shepherd, alas! seems to prefer. The external resemblance of versification, and of some figures here and there, may be frankly admitted; but beyond this, the whole scope, object, and execution, to say nothing of the spirit of the two poems, are entirely different. The 'Farmer's Ingle' has

* Conversing with a boy who had read his Poems, Burns asked him which of them he liked best. The boy "liket the 'Twa Dogs' and 'Death and Dr. Hornbook' weel; but he liket the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' better; but it made him greet when his father bade him read it to his mother." "At'weel, my callant," said Burns, laying his hand on the boy's head, "it made me greet whiles mysel, when I was at the writing o't." Not difficult to believe: difficult rather, not to believe.

but an outside glow, with a little heat for chilly fingers on a winter night, and idle gossip for idle ears, at the uttermost. The 'Cotter's Saturday Night' is full of radiance and warmth, as the sanctuary of God; where the tenderest sympathies of humanity may take refuge, and the loftiest aspirations of the soul may rise; where the double vistas of time and of eternity converge, and the Deity himself, concerned in the welfare of his immertal creatures, seems to look in upon their humblest affairs through the screen of smoke and poverty. To read lectures on the Author's morality and religion here, we hold to be utterly out of place and character. The man who coolly questions these, within hearing of such harmony, must be essentially disqualified, by some secret imperfection in his own nature, for the society of the wise and the good. On one point alone we quote an exquisite parallel, with which, in all human probability, Burns had no acquaintance; but which testifies, better than any argument could, to the inherent generosity and tenderness of both writers—the royal and the rustic bards:-

p. 45, c. 1, s. x. Is there in human form that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villian! lost to love and truth—
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts, dissembling smooth!
Are honor, virtuc, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

Thus Robert Burns, the peasant in Ayrshire; and thus James I. of Scotland, prisoner in the Tower of London, 360 years before:

Fy on all such! fy on thaire doubilnesse!
Fy on thaire lust, and bestly appetite!
Thaire wolfis hertis, in lambis likenesse;
Thaire thoughtis blak, hid under wordis quhite:
Fy on thaire labour! fy on thaire delyte!
That feynen outward all to her honour,
And in thaire hert her worship would denour.

King's Quair: s, CXII.

Of Robert Aiken, Esq., to whom the immortal performance is dedicated; who seems to have been eminently worthy of such an honour, and to whom much of the most valued correspondence of the Author was subsequently addressed; we shall have more, and much that is interesting, hereafter to say. [See General Correspondence.]

p. 46. To A Mouse:—The field, where the incident occurred which gave occasion to this exquisite monologue, is still pointed out, and almost in the same condition as it then was, to the south-east of the steading at Mossgiel, between the house and the high road from Mauchline to Kilmarnock. Some story has been current of the Author's reading or rehearing the poem itself in the evening to the boy Blane, who was 'gadsman' at the plough when the little catastrophe happened, as if for the purpose of obtaining his approbation. It is certain enough, that Burns did occasionally rehearse his compositions for the gratification of friends; and the boy may have heard him so rehearing it that evening—but nothing more. Blane, in fact, seems to have been addicted semewhat to romance in these matters; and when strictly catechised on the subject, could not maintain his own accuracy either in this, or in certain other statements relating to the domestic arrangements at Mossgiel, to which probably far too much importance has been

attached in some quarters. The sweet, almost divine tenderness, and prophetic foresight of this wonderful composition have secured for its author the universal sympathetic admiration of mankind. Only one weak line—

I'm truly sorry man's dominion-

occurs in the whole of it; but the affectionate condescension of the speaker, as if accommodating his language to the capacity of his tiny "fellow-mortal," is no doubt the just explanation of it.

p. 47, c. 1, s. 2.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward east my e'e
On prospects drear?
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

How different from the poco-curante, Horatian Epicurean sentiment in the Epistle to Smith—

An anxious e'e I never throws Behint my lug, or by my nose: &c.;

but let any reflective reader judge for himself which of the two declarations, though, in relation to circumstances, they might both be true at different moments, was most in accordance with the man's moral constitution and the sad realities of his anticipated fate. He confided, in fact, to the hearing of a mouse, a deeper secret in his own destiny, than he would to the most acceptable and cherished of all his boon companions!

p. 47. A WINTER NIGHT—consists of three unequal parts, the beginning, the middle, and the end—or the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode, or conclusion—of which the first and the last correspond to one another, representing the Author himself directly; and are infinitely superior to the middle part, which is in the English language, and avowedly in imitation of Shakspear. The introductory stanzas, although slightly disfigured by some inequalities of syntax, are replete with a poetic beauty and an almost inexpressible tenderness of feeling, to which we know of no parallel in any language; and the concluding stanza alone is worth a hundred homilies on charity and the grace of love. Do not all intelligent men, who can read or write on the subject, say the same?

— c. 2, s. 1.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing!

That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?

Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy c'e?

God bless thee, Robert Burns, wheresoever thou now art, for a thought so exquisitely kind; and for glorifying the Scottish language, by embalming such tenderness as this among its rude and solemn accents! How feeble, after an apostrophe like this, sounds the eloquent philosophy of Cowper!

The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their num'rous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts; self-buried cre they die.

Task: Book V., l. 85.

p. 48, c. 1, s. 3. I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer Shook aff the pouthery snaw, And hailed the morning with a cheer, A cottage-rousing craw.

Beattie, at such an interruption as this, would have been in an ecstasy of horror. Burns had no antipathies in the world but rogues, fools, and tyrants. Shakspear's allusion to the cock, for descriptive beauty, will not bear comparison here—

. . . . The early village cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn:—Rich. III., v. iii.

p. 48, c. 1, s. 4. But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God!

This, reverend and right reverend friends, is it not a sermon for some of us—who have been too long accustomed perhaps to anathematise one another? "The Lord is good to all," says David, "and his mercies are over all his works:" yea, "Blessed are the merciful," says a still higher authority, "for they shall obtain mercy:" which has been rehearsed again in another poetical form, not without the consciousness of imitation perhaps, by one nearer our own time, the man Coleridge—

He prayeth best, who loveth best
Both man, and bird, and beast.—Ancient Mariner.

When were these stanzas indited? In the winter, mid-winter, most likely, of 1785: but who cares, where or when? Thoughts and words like these are from everlasting.

p. 48. Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet:—This glorious effusion of melody, wisdom, and love, which was among the earliest of Burns's epistolary efforts, being written in the winter of 1784-5, was addressed to one David Sillars, who in another copy of the roem, as Mr. Chambers mentions, is designated "A brother Poet, Lover, Ploughman, and Fiddler." He was the lover, in fact, of a girl named Margaret Orr, in domestic service with Mrs. Stewart of Stair; through which accident Burns himself obtained an introduction to that lady—who became subsequently his own friend and patroness, as we shall hereafter learn. The epistle itself, so remarkable for the dignity of its sentiments, and the surpassing ease of its composition, is remarkable also for another circumstance—that solemn prayer for Jean's temporal and eternal happiness; which breaks in, like a flood of invocation in a foreign language, through the rapid continuity of speech, before and after, in the native tongue. This prayer, so heartfelt and beautiful, is followed, in the text of his works at least, by a flood of despondency in the very next poem, 'On the Unfortunate Issue of a Friend's Amour,' and "faithless woman's broken vow;" where the anguish of disappointment seems to deprive him of all hope in the world; a feeling which re-appears, but with less intensity, in 'The gloomy Night is gathering fast:' this again gives place, in a few pages, to the language of indifference and scorn, with reference to the same personage, in the prospect of his own self-banishment for her sake, or through her offence-

which sentiment of aversion is finally swallowed up in the very ecstasies of music and love, with which he welcomed this same mistress of his affections and of his home into Nithsdale:

O were I on Parnassus' hill! &c.

Between the despondency and the scorn, however, the solemnising and purifying influence of Mary Campbell's love occurs, of which we have no trace whatever here, and of which we seek in vain for any glimpse in present circumstances. That effusions at this date dedicated to her were in existence, we come by and by to learn; but such revelations were not made till near his own death, or after it. 'To Mary in Heaven' was the first public ayowal of this absorbing grief: for what was



actually written at the moment concerning it, men must wait. But in the four epochs now alluded to, all thus distinctly recorded with their varying sentiments and passions—from the deepest devotional love, to despondency, to scorn, and again to ecstasy in reconciliation; with the silent interlude of unutterable sorrow—we have an involuntary revelation of the Author's inmost life, so far as the world at that date had any right to know it; and which should satisfy the most inquisitive inquirers into that mystery, for the time. It is for this, as we have already intimated, among other reasons, that we prefer to adhere to the Author's own arrangement of his poems as they appear, after such events, in the Edinburgh Edition.

p. 48, c. 2, s. 1. While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw, And bar the doors wi' driving snaw, And hing us owre the ingle, &c.

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus Silvae laborantes :- Hor. Car. I. Ode ix.

See how Soracte shines in deep-laid snow, And labouring woods are bowing low: &c.

But let the reader compare, at his leisure, the entire heathen Ode with this magnificent, almost divine Epistle.

— - s. II. "Mair spier na, nor fear na," Ramsay .- R. B. Auld-age ne'er mind a feg; The last o't, the warst o't, Is only but to beg.

That is, as an itinerant minstrel, or story-teller, as the case might be. But higher parallels than this we find elsewhere:

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.-Phil. iv. 6, 7.

p. 49, c. 1, s. IV. What tho', like Commoners of air, We wander out we know not where, But either house or hal'?

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head .- Luke ix. 58.

Let these suffice by way of interpretation. The whole epistle, in fact, is but a metrical adaptation, in the simplest and grandest style, of the loftiest precepts of Christian philosophy. In its rough draft, it was rehearsed by Burns to his brother Gilbert in the garden at Mossgiel, and first suggested comparison of the Poet's unpublished works with Ramsay's. The second Epistle to Davie was published by Sillars himself, in the edition of his poems at Kilmarnock. Like the third Epistle to Lapraik, it will not bear comparison with the first, but will be found among the posthumous works of the Author, in its place.

p. 50. The Lament—refers so manifestly to his own circumstances after his separation from Jean; and the expressions which occur in it point so distinctly to the avowed relationship of marriage between them, that no farther commentary on this sad soliloguy is required. In any other view, it were a sham lamentation, utterly unworthy of its Author.

p. 51. DESPONDENCY: an Ode; and the stanzas addressed (p. 58) To Ruin: seem to have been written about the same date, and are characterised by the same sentiments of personal anguish and despair, originating doubtless in the same or similar causes; but

p. 52. MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN: a Dirge—which appears in connection with them, was a much earlier composition, referable to a date at least eight or ten months previous; and

was intended more as a philosophical effusion, than as a personal complaint, by its Author. It is, in fact, the result of constitutional melancholy and of partial observation, not unjustified by fact; a modernised metrical edition of the sorrows of Job and the semi-discontent of Ecclesiastes: nor need such authorities complain at all, that their philosophy has been thus adopted by a commentator like Robert Burns.

p. 54. WINTER: a Dirge—is but the reiteration, with descriptive adjuncts, of the same oppressive thought; to which (p. 54) A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH: with STAN-ZAS ON THE SAME OCCASION (p. 55), of a much earlier date, as far back as 1784, follow by his own arrangement immediately in succession as they stand; and, together with the rest, indicate the continued prevalence of anxiety and pain, verging on distraction, through the entire epoch of his youth. 'Man was made to Mourn' seems to have been suggested by an old recital of his mother's, entitled 'The Life and Age of Man;' and is stated, on some local authority, to have been composed in the holm at Barskimming Old Bridge on the Ayr-a sweet, deep shaded spot. 'The Prayer in the prospect of Death' was extorted by the strong alarm occasioned by nightly palpitation of the heart, to which he was always subject, but which occurred with great violence shortly after his residence at Mossgiel; and the 'Stanzas on the Same Occasion' embodied the anguish of his soul for a moral irregularity, the first transgression of his life, which could no longer be hidden from the world. Written at a time when the world as yet knew nothing of the case, these verses are indicative of a contrition for sin, that in the mouth of any other confessor, young or old, would be attributed by the most scrupulous judges to the influence of the Holy Ghost: St. Augustine has nothing finer. We venture to affirm, however, that no reader can fully comprehend the depth of inward agony embodied in such lines, who has not seen and studied that wonderful likeness of the man himself, when actually approaching death. What the suffering of his lifetime must have been with such a constitution, no uninitiated soul can imagine. A perpetual warfare it was, between the flesh and spirit, and perilous conflict for ever raging between the animal and almost angelic principles of the man. This is indicated from the beginning in a hundred casual sentences, but nowhere so distinctly or so painfully enunciated as here. As a matter of mere criticism, it may be observed, that in such pieces as prayers and translations, his language is not always up to its own highest level; but there are one or two lines in the 'Stanzas' where certain involutions of thought appear, which indicate the conscious latent power, and future mastery of the most difficult expression: for example-

p. 55, c. 1, s. 1. Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?

If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee, &c., which, in an earlier manuscript, stands thus-

If one so black with crimes dare on thee call.

In a much later edition the line

For all unfit I feel my powers be, was extended and weakened by the addition of a syllable-For all unfit I feel my powers to be,



another instance in which second thoughts by the Author were no improvement on the first.

p. 55. Verses: a Prayer—for a reverend friend's household, are in strange and beautiful contrast with such outpourings of supplication for himself. In these, the reader will observe the whole strain of petition, and exercise at the throne of grace is altered. He intercedes now, not for himself as a sinner, but for those who in his humble belief were already children of God. Hence his confidence and boldness on their behalf, because he "makes intercession for saints, according to the will of God." In most significant juxta-position, the arrangement of his own hand, come the whole of these early devotional pieces: and let us no longer, after reading and reflecting on them, question the religion of Robert Burns. The family here referred to was that of the Rev. George Lawrie, of Newmilns; from whom Burns had enjoyed much beautiful and unexpected hospitality. Mr. Lawrie himself, as a literary man and a critic of discernment, had already been instrumental in promoting the publication of Ossian, and was now anxiously engaged in forwarding the prospects of our youthful Author, whose Kilmarnock Edition had attracted his attention. He it was who introduced Burns's name to Dr. Blacklock, who in turn communicated, at Lawrie's request on his behalf, with Dr. Blair. Burns's relation to the family, in consequence of these attentions, assumed the character at once of affectionate and respectful friendship, as may be seen by his subsequent correspondence. On the occasion immediately in question (as we learn from Gilbert Burns), the evening had been spent with much innocent hilarity, in music and dancing, as seems to have been the wont at Loudon Manse; and Burns is said to have heard the sound of a spinnet there for the first time in his life. Next morning, being late for breakfast, Mr. Archibald Lawrie was sent to inquire for him. He replied affectionately that he had slept but little, having been engaged during the most of the night in prayer; and that his petitions would be found lying on the table. The manuscript of the 'Verses' was accordingly found there. The date, by careful comparison, in which Mr. Chambers exerts his usual diligence, seems to have been the 29th or 30th day of August, 1786. [See Note on Songs.]

p. 57. To a Mountain Daisy:—Written about six months later, but most probably in the same field where the address 'To the Mouse' had been composed. Wordsworth's sympathies seem to have been profoundly excited by this and similar moral effusions of our Author, particularly as they foreshadowed the destiny of the writer. Sacred enough, indeed, is the verdure of the soil that was text for such a prophecy.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not .- Job xiv. 1, 2.

Allan Cunningham states, on the authority of a manuscript in his hands, that the original title of this poem was 'The Gowan:' and that the Author changed both that title and the spelling of his own name about the same time. Possibly: but there seems to be no connection at all between the two facts; and from 'The Gowan' to the 'Mountain Daisy' was a beautiful change at all events.

p. 57, c. 1, s. 2.

Wi's spreekl'd breast!

altered in subsequent editions to

Wi' spreckl'd breast,

p. 57, c. 2, s. 3.

And whelm him o'er!

Corresponding use of a compound term may be found in Shakspear :-

. . Can such things be, And overcome us like a summer's cloud, Without our special wonder ?- Macbeth, III., v.

p. 58. To Miss L[ogan], with Beattie's Poems:—Burns seems to have been a sincere admirer of Beattie's genius as a poet and philosopher, as is testified by the allusion to him both in the 'Vision' and in the 'Epistle to Lapraik;' the compliment, although doubtful, which occurs in the 'Ordination,' where

Common-Sense is gaun, she says, To mak to Jamie Beattie Her plaint this day.

seems to indicate that his views as a theologian also were not distasteful. The lady here referred to was a sister of Major Logan's-the "thairm inspirin, rattlin Willie"-to whom an epistle had been previously addressed by the Author.

p. 58. Epistle to a Young Friend—was addressed to a son of Mr. Aiken's, the early friend and patron of the Poet, to whom the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' was inscribed. According to Mr. Chambers, "the late Mr. Niven of Kilbride, the 'Willie' of the Kirkoswald anecdotes, alleged that Burns addressed this epistle to him." Of this gentleman's connection with Burns, we shall find more hereafter to say in Appendix. It is indeed very likely he might urge a claim to such a distinction; but it is extremely unlikely that Burns would throw away such an epistle on an acquaintance whose own worldly sagacity so little required it.

I'll no say men are villains a'; p. 59, c. 1, s. 111.

I said when I was in my haste, All men are liars: what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me.-Ps. exvi. 11, 12.

Stanza V., on the propriety of self-hiding from indiscriminate observation, has been a good deal criticised by some, we think undeservedly: but surely stanza VI., on

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love,

is beyond criticism. Let every reader again refer to it; let every youth inshrine it, as a most precious golden maxim, in his soul. Horace, in very nearly the same terms, as if he had been epitomising both stanzas, but with what an inferior sense of moral and religious consequences, says-

> . . . Quidquid habes, age, Depone tutis auribus.—Ah miser, Quanta laborabas Charybdi! Digne puer meliore flamma. Quae saga, quis te solvere Thessalis Magus venenis, quis poterit Deus? Vix illigatum te triformi Pegasus expediet Chimera.—Car. I. Ode xxvii.

Thus Horace, at a drinking 'bout,' to his young friend: of which the only tolerable, yet most inadequate translation we can find, is by Francis-

> Then safely whisper in my car, For all such truths are sacred here. Ah worthy of a better flame! Unhappy youth! is she the dame? Unhappy youth! how art thou lost, In what a sea of troubles tost! What drugs, what witcheraft, or what charms, What God ean free thee from her arms? Searce Pegasus ean disengage Thy heart from this Chimera's rage !

Such is the nearest approach of the illustrious Roman lyrist to "the simple but sublime morality of Robert Burns." We need not pursue this argument farther. If farther, then; in Horace at least, we come on totally unreadable ground. Andrew Aiken, it appears, after being some time a merchant in Liverpool, was appointed Britannic Consul at Riga, where he enjoyed the highest social distinction, and where he died, October, 1832. His only surviving child, P. F. Aiken, Esq., is now a banker in Bristol. The 'Address' seems to have been written in May, 1786. The original was gifted by Mr. Aiken, we are told, to an intimate personal friend of his in Liverpool; and is now said to be in possession of a gentleman (name unknown) in Ayrshire. A duplicate, in Author's handwriting, is also in existence; which may possibly have given rise to Mr. Niven's claim.

p. 60. On a Scotch Bard, gone to the West Indias:—We reserve the discussion of this West Indian project, with previous prospects of publication as already hinted, for the Appendix. The reader may also refer, for a moment, to our remarks on the 'Epistle to Davie.'

p. 61. To A HAGGIS—needs almost no commentary at all, except on the single line,

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an' strive :

which is descriptive of the occasional awkward, but exciting contest, of supping together with horn spoons from one central dish on the table. Hence the proverb, pithy and true enough—

He should hae a lang-shankit spune, that sups wi' the Deil.

p. 61, c. 1, s. 4. 'Bethanket' hums.

"Bethanket," defined in Author's glossary to be "grace after meat:" in reality, it is but the devotional sigh of satisfaction after a hearty meal. In concluding stanza, the word in brackets was an after-thought, or more probably a correction. In the Edinburgh Edition it reads 'stinking,' which may fairly be considered a typographical mistake. The poem, it appears, was first published in the Scots' Magazine of 1787. where the concluding verse, entirely different, stood thus:—

Ye Powers wha gie us a' that's guid, Still bless auld Caledonia's brood Wi' great John Barleycorn's heart's bluid In stoups or luggies; And on our board the King o' food, A glorious Haggis!

p. 61. A DEDICATION TO G[AVIN] H[AMILTON], Esq., for dignity, honesty, and manliness, is worthy of ten times more extended notice than our space will afford. Burns was under many obligations to this early friend and benefactor; but the relationship between them does not seem in the slighest degree to have affected, or to have been intended to affect, the moral independence of the Author. Burns's relationship to the Caledonian Hunt, and the formal dedication of his works to that distinguished body, although excusable, are scarcely so pleasant to contemplate.

— c. 2, l. 1. Expect na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleechan, fleth'ran Dedication,
To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid;
Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace,
Perhaps related to the race:

Gavin Hamilton, in fact, represented an elder branch of the race, and did not scruple to say so. But what a noble contrast

does this commencement show, not only to the wretched nauseating stuff in the shape of begging epistles, full of lies and self-degradation, prefixed to every volume almost of verse or prose in Burns's own day; but to the finer flattery of a higher kind, from the lips of men like Pope and Horace.

Awake my St. John, leave all meaner things To low ambition and the pride of kings!—Essay on Man. Mæccnas, atavis edite regibus, O et præsidium et dulce decus meum!—Car. Mæcenas, born of royal blood, My joy, my guard, my sweetest good!—Francis.

In Kilmarnock Edition, the passage beginning "But then, nae thanks to him for a' that"—concludes with triplet, thus:—

p. 62, c. 1, l. 25. It's no thro' terror of D—mnation:

It's just a carnal inclination

And och! that's nac regeneration!

both scriptural words being printed almost entirely blank.

p. 62, c. 2, l. 30. For prayin, I hae little skill o't:
I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't;

as if it had been literally translated from the Latin,

Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens-Hor. Car. I. xxxiv.:

and yet this was a reproach upon himself, which was far from being justified by the fact. His prayers, as the conductor of family devotion at Mossgiel, were not only the most earnest and heart-felt, but the richest and most eloquent ever heard by the inmates there, or by any who were privileged to join with them in such services.

p. 63. To a Louse:—This immortalisation of an unlucky incident, in which no real blame after all might be attachable to the fair one (as all must be aware, who have found themselves in ill-swept churches), was solemnly protested against in vain by the Poet's most affectionate advisers. The composition of it was prompted, perhaps, by a little spleen, and it was written in Gavin Hamilton's parlour, it is said, during the interval between sermons; and might have been allowed to drift away forgotten: but the Author had ingrafted a moral on it that could never die, and he was right to resist all importunity against its publication. There is one singular and beautiful moral trait in this strange sonnet, which we do not know has been hitherto remarked—viz., that the verses themselves are addressed to the Louse and not to the Lady.

p. 64. On the Address to Edinburgh—his first poetical effusion, apparently, after his reception in the metropolis, a simple remark shall here suffice; and it is on the curious, but not unnatural change in his sentiments towards mankind and the world, which took place with his altered circumstances. In his epistle to W. Simpson, which was written about a year and a half before, we have, in allusion to Ferguson's fate—

My curse upon your whunstane hearts, Ye Enbrugh gentry!

doubtless sincere, as well as vehement enough. Nor did his admiration for Ferguson, or the sense of the neglect under which that gifted youth had suffered, ever decline: but his own experience of the world's favour had not yet begun. When that is realised, we have naturally a different strain—

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind, With open arms the stranger hail: &c.

But Burns, even in Ayrshire, should have remembered that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country

and in his own house." Burns's situation in Edinburgh, in fact, and his celebration of its hospitalities and favours with his prospects of the future, are so similar to Virgil's in Rome, that one can hardly forbear referring to the well-known Eclogue in which the rescue of the shepherd from obscurity, and the patronage of Augustus are so devoutly sung:—

Edina, Scotia's darling seat, All hail thy palaces and tow'rs!

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, &c .- Ecl. 1. l. 20.

The pasteral prosperity foreshadowed in the one case, it is true, did not precisely harmonise with the farming speculations and the miserable gaugership in the other: but there was an Augustus on the one hand, and a Caledonian Hunt, and above all a Glencairn, on the other—great although the difference between them might be—to whom corresponding vows of gratitude and attachment, in almost identical terms, are still before the world.

p. 65. THE EPISTLE TO J. L[APRAI]K, and that which follows, to W. S[IMPSO]N, belong to the period between 1784-86, remarkable for such a flood of harmony and wisdom—of which only a portion was as yet revealed to the world. They are of fifteen months' later date than that addressed to David Sillars: how much earlier or later than that addressed to J. Smith, will require investigation to determine—which we reserve, as formerly hinted, to the Appendix. But they are distinguished by the same richness, freedom, and beauty; on which farther comment is unnecessary. Lapraik's poetical genius was unquestionably overrated by Burns; and from the general tone of the third Epistle addressed to him, it may be conjectured that Burns had begun to discover that. The man himself was the worthy representative of a respectable stock, and proprietor of a small freehold estate, called Dalfram, in the moorlands of Ayrshire, near Muirkirk. His circumstances, by repeated misfortunes through banking speculations, became so seriously involved, that he was not only ferced to relinquish this patrimony, but to suffer the additional hardship of imprisonment for debt. So we are informed in a volume entitled 'The Contemporaries of Burns,' by Mr. Hugh Paton, Edin. 1840. The song itself, which so much interested Burns, is understood, on the same authority, to have been written at that time in jail. It appears also that Burns afterwards visited Lapraik, and spent a cheerful night under the old man's hospitable roof. In 1788, he published a small volume of his own poems, containing among other pieces an address to Burns.

p. 67. To THE SAME:--

- c. 1, s. 2. Forjesket sair, with weary legs, Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs, &c.

Mr. Chambers states that Lapraik's reply to Burns's first Epistle was delivered to Burns when in the act of cornsowing at Mossgiel; and that in his eagerness to read the communication, he neglected to secure the sowing-sheet, so that the grain itself was poured upon the ground. The messenger who delivered this letter was Lapraik's own son, whose testimony is the authority on which the fact is stated. We entirely sympathise with Mr. Chambers's delight in the rehearsal of such an anecdote.

- c. 2, s. 3. Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;

that is, in harvest, when so much of the labour, as we have seen, depended on himself, even as a boy.

p. 67, c. 2, s. 7. O Thou wha gies us each guid gift! Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.—James i. 17.

p. 68, c. 1, s. 2. Were this the charter of our state, "On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"—

Much otherwise, indeed, is the divine charter;

For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.—I. Tim. vi. 10.

- s. 4. The followers o' the ragged Nine,

altered in Blackie's edition, on what authority we know not, to

The ragged followers o' the Nine-

by which a loss of sense occurs. The idea is not that the Poet and his friends were ragged followers of the Muses, but that the Muses themselves had never much to boast of in the way of worldly wealth, and were sharers together with their most gifted sons in dilapidation and poverty.

-- s. 6. Then may L[aprai]k and B[urns] arise, &c.,

with more modesty, and certainly not less prophetic instinct than Horace's farewell to mortality—

Non usitata nec tenui ferar Penna, &c.—Car. II. xx.

No weak nor common wing shall bear My rising body through the air, &c.—Creech.

p. 68. To W. S[IMPSO]N, OCHILTREE:—William Simpson, who seems to have introduced himself to Burns, and to whom the Epistle in reply is here addressed, was one of three brothers, all men of more than average ability and accomplishments. William, in addition to his other qualifications as a friend and correspondent, had the gift of versifying at least to such an extent, as to be acceptable on that ground alone to the Poet. He went so far in the indulgence of this faculty, as on one occasion to personate Burns; and an epistle of his in Burns's name, 'To a Tailor,' obtained circulation for many years as a genuine production, and may be found at this day in some of the most popular editions of his works. [See App.-Note on spurious pieces.] He had been educated for the ministry, but abandoned that profession, and at this date was Parochial Teacher at Ochiltree. His correspondence with Burns originated in his accidental perusal of the 'Twa Herds,' the first copy of which, it appears, or at least an early copy, had been brought by his brother Patrick one night from Mauchline to their father's house at Ochiltree. Simpson, we understand, on a reverend friend's authority, has left a considerable volume of poetry in manuscript behind him. The names referred to in the Epistle, as those with whom Simpson had compared the author, are those of Ramsay, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, and Ferguson; from whom Burns no doubt adopted models of epistolary writing, but raised their style by his own originality far beyond its rank or efficiency in their hands. His reference to the 'Hills of Ochiltree,' in writing to a correspondent who lived there, is full of great taste; and the succeeding apostrophe to Nature truly exquisite. Compare Horace's ode Ad Manutium Plancum, Car. I. vii., throughout; also the more celebrated Ad Aristium Fuscum, xxii.; particularly with

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

Namque me silva lupus in Sabina,
Dum meam canto Lalagen, et ultra
Terminum curis vagor expeditus,
Fugit inermem.—Car. I. Ode xxii.

For musing on my lovely maid,
While careless in the woods I stray'd,
A wolf—how dreadful! cross'd my way,
Yet fled—he fled from his defenceless prey.—Francis.

Another singular correspondence, in the same style, may be found in his Ode Ad Melpomenen, Car. IV. iii.

Sed quae Tibur aquae fertile præfluunt, Et spissae nemorum comae Fingent Æolio carmine nobilem.

But him the streams which warbling flow Rich Tibur's fertile vales along, And shady groves, his haunts, shall know The master of th' Æolian song.—Francis.

And equally remarkable, perhaps, in the passionate extravagance of Petrarch, as he too wanders disconsolate in love through the forest of Ardenne, solacing himself with song:

E vò cantando (O pensier' miei non saggi!) Lei che 'l ciel non porria lontana far me: Parte Prima, Son. exliii.

I wander on, (O, my distracted thoughts!)
Singing her praise whom not the heavens can hide:

Of parallels between Petrarch and Burns, more hereafter.

On the Postscript scarcely any remark can be required, beyond the Author's own reference to his note on the 'Ordination' for the sense of the cant phraseology about Auld and New Lights. Dr. Taylor of Norwich, who is there identified with the origin of the New Light, published his first work on the subject in 1740; a third edition appeared in 1750; and Burns's father is said not only to have been acquainted with, but to have imbibed his views. His chief heresy seems to have been that he admitted the use of reason in the interpretation of the Bible, and denied the transmission of original sin. We do not know how far such views are still considered heretical or dangerous. The first experiments of Montgolfier, Lunardi, and other aeronauts, in France and Great Britain, had just occurred, or were then occurring.

p. 71. The EPISTLE TO J. R[ANKIN], as our readers are doubtless aware, is the first public protest by the Author against a system of religious discipline which he conceived to be utterly at variance with the dignity of manhood, and under which he had then to brook the scandal of exposure in the neighbourhood. That such procedure could have any good effect on a moral constitution like his, was impossible; and that the discernment of our forefathers did not discover its ruinous tendency in every case, may well be a matter of astonishment. Rankin himself, to whom it was addressed, was no doubt cognisant of all the circumstances, and his own modes of revenge in similar cases, glanced at in the second stanza,

Ye mak a devil o' the saunts, An' fill them fou;

are only too literally and graphically described in such terms; for proof of which, the reader may refer hereafter to the Ap-

pendix. The Epistle must have been written in the summer of 1784, and about the same time doubtless as the 'Address to an Illegitimate Child.' We shall by and by, in our Appendix, see how Burns was accustomed to distribute his poems. On the present occasion, he seems to have sent a specimen or two to Rankin for his amusement. This the reader, of course, remembers was at a date when publication had not yet been thought of. The notes by the Author are as under:—

p. 71, c. 1, s. 1. Your dreams * an' tricks

* A certain humorous *dream* of his was then making a noise in the country-side. [Narrated by Cunningham—see Appendix.]

- c. 2, s. 1. Yon sang ye'll sen't,† wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

+ A song he had promised the Author.

p. 72. John Barleycorn:—"This is partly composed," says the Author, "on the plan of an old song known by the same name," and is a very early composition of his own. The original on which it is founded (or possibly two originals, for there are ideas in each of them separately which are here united by Burns) was an old Northern Ballad Song, preserved from memory by Jamieson, and published by him in the second volume of his 'Popular Ballads;' along with which he gives also five other pieces, most of them English apparently, on the same subject, but under different designations—such as 'Allan-a-Maut,' and 'Master Mault,' and 'Sir John Barleycorn.'

-c. 1, s. 1. There was three kings into the east,
has been altered, we observe, in most recent editions to
There were three kings into the east,

but we retain the text as it stands in the Author's own editions, because it has the Author's own recognition, and is much more in the irregular style of the genuine old ballad.

p. 73. THE FRAGMENT, which follows, is but a pasquinade on the political difficulties of the crisis connected with the American War; for particulars of which we must refer the reader to the common page of history. From all the dates included, 1784 (in which Pitt's Parliament assembled) being the last, we may presume that this was a comparatively youthful and certainly unfinished production. Mr. Chambers, a little too seriously, perhaps, speaks on this occasion of Burns as being "in a raw and unenlightened state as a politician," and further quotes with approbation Dr. Blair's remark, that his politics "smelt of the Smithy." That may be so, for he was the oracle of the smithy, as well as the delight and ornament of the drawing-room: but it appears that the politics of the Smithy were destined ultimately to triumph; to supersede the politics of the Pulpit, and of the Professor's Chair; to intrude into Cabinets, and to alter the aspect of the British Constitution: in which period of progress, not yet concluded by any means, the voice of Robert Burns, to quote the words of an intelligent correspondent, "has done more than that of any other individual man to save the nation itself from slavery, and the world from stagnation." The 'Fragment' appears as a song at the commencement of the second volume of Johnson's 'Musical Museum;' where it is stated to have been "Written for this Work by R. Burns. Tune, 'M. Friecedan.'" The compliment here assumed may have been allowed in friendship by Burns; but the Fragment itself had already appeared a twelvemonth before, in the Edinburgh Edition of his works.

p. 74. Of the Songs which follow, only four appeared in the original Edition-viz., 'It was upon a Lammas Night,' 'Now Westlin Winds,' 'From thee, Eliza, I must go,' and 'Farewell to the Brethren of St. James's Lodge.' The others appeared for the first time in the Edinburgh Edition, although several of them, and many others as beautiful, were then, and had been for some time, in manuscript; of which the world as yet knew nothing. Of this first sample of Burns's genius as a song-writer, we may say briefly now, that it indicates the highest lyric qualities by which he was subsequently distinguished in that department of poetry. In the eight or nine specimens here before us, we find the utmost tenderness, pathos, passion, and delicacy; with touches of descriptive eloquence, such as alone are appropriate to songs, and of which he was so great a master, all illustrated and typified; with that additional concentrated emphasis in every verse complete, and in the whole transporting, by which such compositions are discriminated from every other. On this subject, however, we shall have more to say immediately hereafter: for the present, such hint must suffice. For most of his songs Burns had individual heroines or occasions: according to different authorities, there have been several different names and occasions assigned for those now before us—Burns's own declarations being sometimes even controverted by those of his friends and relations. For the honour of the 'Lammas Night' two Annes have made claim—Anne Ronald; and Anne Blair, the same, we presume, who was subsequently Mrs. Anne Mirry in Cumnock, and who persisted in maintaining to the end of her life, that she was the true and only inspirer of it. The Peggy addressed in the next song, 'Now Westlin Winds,' is, upon Burns's own declaration, to be identified with Margaret Thomson, whose noonday vision at Kirkoswald interrupted his mathematical studies there; but other names have been mentioned. This song, as it now appears in Thomson's Collection, is reduced to three stanzas—the first and two last—and has been slightly altered in the first and one of the concluding lines. The first line stands-

Now westlin winds and sportsmen's guns,

and the other, I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest, reads thus—

I'll grasp thy waist, and fondly press't,

which not only changes the meaning, but interferes with the grammatical construction of the verse: a circumstance which should direct attention to the necessity of careful examination in all such cases. The exquisite lyric which follows, of 'My Nanie, O,' has been assigned, on very reliable evidence, to the praise of Agnes Fleming, a farmer's daughter, or servant in a farmer's household, in the neighbourhood of Tarbolton; and is one of the early songs which the Author's father lived to hear, and which he extolled (no wonder) with admiration and pride! Nanie herself, it is said, was, after all, no great beauty. The next, one of the most celebrated of all Burns's productions, was an unfinished fragment in his common-place book, under date, August, 1784; and is given as "the genuine language of his heart," which, beyond the possibility of doubt, it was.

p. 76, c. 2, s. iv. The wisest man the warl' saw,

The line stands thus both in original Edinburgh Edition, and

in Johnson's Museum, and in Thomson's Collection; but seems to have been altered subsequently, and as it appears to us, much weakened, by the addition of a word—

The wisest man the warl' e'er saw.

'Again Rejoicing Nature,' which follows immediately, appeared for the first time in Edinburgh Edition—although when written, is not quite certain—and seems to have been without a heroine. The 'Menie' of the chorus, and the chorus itself, have no connection with the authorship; and were admitted by Burns condescendingly at the request of a friend in Edinburgh, himself the writer. In the song itself, some of the most beautiful descriptive touches imaginable, conveying, as almost all Burns's pictures do, both sound and figure, occur. Stanza IV., for example,

p. 77, c. 1, s. IV. The wanton coot the water skims,

is so entirely Anacreontic (see Ode to the Spring), that one might affirm it had been borrowed (as the last verse in 'Green Grow the Rashes, O' is said also to have been borrowed elsewhere), if we did not know the folly of such an assertion. But the 'cry of the ducklings' among the reeds, and the passage of 'the stately swan,' which are all combined in the same verse, put Anacreon at discount immediately. So also the shepherd in the next stanza, who

. stecks his faulding slap, And owre the moorlands whistles shill;—

no most artistic labour on canvas, by the cunningest hand, will ever represent that. 'Shill,' in this verse, has been corrupted in some recent editions to 'shrill,' which differs both in sense and orthography from the original. Shill indicates a clear, continuous, liquid sound; but shrill, an acute reverberation—as in 'The Brigs,' p. 19, l. 5—

The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill.

For a strange and beautiful counterpart, in some respects almost literal, to the whole of this song, but of necessity more sad, let the reader at his leisure turn to Petrarch's exquisite Sonnet, XLII. of the Second Part, on the death of Laura—beginning

Zefiro torna, e'l bel tempo rimena, &c., Zephyr returns, and fetches the sweet time, &c.

of which composition Burns, in all human probability, was absolutely ignorant.

'The Gloomy Night' speaks for itself, as a heartrending farewell in the prospect of self-banishment; an event already referred to elsewhere in connection with his publishing prospects. The season of the year at which this song seems to have been written has a curious bearing on the whole question: but Mr. Chambers, by an elaborate comparison of facts and dates, has demonstrated that it must have been written on his way home from Loudon Manse, on 30th August, 1786; and that the aspect of the weather is to be accounted for by a terrible thunderstorm, which passed over Ayrshire at that very time. To similar circumstances the next song also refers; but the 'Eliza,' to whom it is dedicated, has not been satisfactorily identified—the preponderance of evidence, in Mr. Chambers's opinion, being in favour of "Miss Betty, one of the Mauchline Belles."

Such is a brief analysis of dates and personages connected

with these earliest amatory effusions: But in reality, it is a matter of almost absolute indifference to whom they were addressed, or when they were written. They belong to every man who loves, and cares to celebrate the praises of a beloved; to every man who has failed in loving, and knows the agony of loss, or the anguish of betrayal; to every man and woman who sees and sympathises with the beauty, the tenderness, and the truth of nature. Of the two which follow, 'The Farewell,' and 'The Cure for all Care,' little or nothing requires to be said: They both relate to friendships external to the man himself, and are both much more conventional than real; the latter of the two, being among the least dignified or worthy of all his compositions.

p. 79, c. 1, s. vi. "Life's cares they are comforts" —a maxim laid down
By the Bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the black gown.

* Young's Night Thoughts .- R. B.

p. 79. EPITAPHS:—According to the fullest editions of his collected works, Burns seems to have written in all no fewer than eighty-four Epitaphs and Epigrams. To this list spurious additions have been attempted, and it is not impossible that in the list itself a few may be found whose authenticity is questionable. In this species of composition, in which he indulged not a little and always impromptu, the highest dignity is neither aimed at, nor perhaps attainable: but as compared with the writings of professed epigrammatists in other respects—such as those of Martial-the Epitaphs and Epigrams of Burns will be found to have quite as much point, and a great deal less indecency. It is a singular fact, indicative of the immense influence of the Author's name and of the affectionate veneration in which it is held, that most of the persons who survived such satire were vain of the distinction, and considered it a lasting honour to have been noticed, even with abuse, by Robert Burns. Of such compositions then extant, only a few specimens were selected by the Author for publication. Of these, three-The 'Epitaph on a Henpecked Husband' and two 'Epigrams on the Same Occasion,' which appeared in the Kilmarnock Edition, seem to have been purposely excluded both from the Edinburgh and succeeding editions; and as they certainly do not add much to the dignity of the original publication, we retain them for insertion among 'Minor Pieces.' The remainder are now before us: and during his entire lifetime not another, se far as we are aware, was committed by himself to print. Published they might be on window-panes or in newspapers, to his own disadvantage; but not otherwise. On the three satirical Epitaphs a word of commentary is required. Kirk Session of Mauchline at that time consisted of three ruling elders, or co-assessors, with the minister, Rev. William Auld. Of these three lay-rulers in that court (which is the foundation of the Presbyterian system, capable of much good when wisely conducted, and of infinite mischief otherwise), one was a mere cipher, another an inquisitorial busybody, the third a pharisaical imposter, of suspicious henesty, better known to the world afterwards as 'Holy Willie.' Hood,' who assumed the office of inquisitor, is the 'Celebrated Ruling Elder' here recommended to the patronage and confidence of Satan. The entire court, in a succeeding Epitaph, is stigmatised as an assembly of 'canting wretches;' although we are bound to believe there was at least one respectable

man among them, though perhaps a little too much addicted to the assertion of his own clerical authority, or too much under the influence of rogues and fools. James Humphrey, the 'Noisy Polemic,' was a well-known native character, the botheration and laughing-stock of the district. By trade he was a mason, by assumption a doctrinaire, in conduct, to say the least of it, an indiscret. He was afflicted with an endless gift of speech, and at the same time with a defective utterance -occasioned, we believe, by some malformation of the upper lip, resembling 'hairsh'-which rendered his oratory perhaps more irksome than it might otherwise have been. Many ridiculous stories are still related of his complacent monologues. In declining years, he obtained admission to the privileges of some charitable institution in the neighbourhood; and was besides gratified with a weekly allowance of the best beer, at the expense of the late Sir James Boswell, last Baronet of Auchinleck—on consideration solely of his identity as the subject of this Epitaph—of which, with some symptoms of imbecility, he boasted to the end of his life. 'Wee Johnie,' the John Wilson of Kilmarnock, by whom the first edition of Burns's Poems, in which the Epitaph appeared, was printed, and who seems to have doubted the success of a second, is said never to have suspected the application of the words to himself-simple and soulless enough, indeed! It is a coincidence worth mentioning, that this same tradesman was occasionally employed to print sermons for the Rev. John Russel-'Black Russel' of the 'Holy Fair'-who, as our readers have already been informed, was one of the ministers of Kilmarnock; and still more curious that these sermons should have been printed from the identical types, and with the same typographical ornaments, which were used in presenting to the world the first edition of our Author's Poems. Russel's aspect, we believe, was grim; but, according to an esteemed correspondent, he was an able, although theologically a narrow-minded man.

Of the subjects of the remaining Epitaphs, scarcely any information is required. That for the Author's father, most truly descriptive, is now engraved upon his tombstone: the compliment to R[obert] A[iken], Esq., most richly deserved: and the vindication of G[avin] H[amilton's] benevolence most amply justified. Gavin's chief offence seems to have been a little laxity of Sabbath observance, and the use of such emphatic language in presence of the minister, as the printer has signalised by a blank in the epitaph. The discipline to which these liberties gave rise, ended in a miserable ecclesiastical process; in which 'Holy Willie,' as a defender before the Presbytery, to which the case was appealed, appears suitably enough, as our readers will doubtless remember, who have read his celebrated 'Prayer,' in the character of a quaking partizan; and in which Gavin himself was ultimately triumphant.

As for the concluding Epitaph of all, that epitaph of epitaphs—which in grandeur and pathos rises above anything of the sort on record, we reverently abstain from saying a word more, than that it should be regarded rather as the appropriate and prophetic *finale* of a magnificent overture to the world, than as a part of any collection of mere epitaphs or epigrams whatever. Sophocles alone, so far as we remember, in his exquisite lamentation for the fate of Œdipus, approaches

it; with the obvious advantage, of course, that he speaks there for another, and a royal sufferer, not for himself: see *Œdip*. *Tyran*. *Concluding Chorus*—of which we venture to introduce here the following, almost literal, translation:—

Children all of Thebes' old city,
The lot of Œdipus you scan:
Who the famed enigmas fathom'd,
And was our very noblest man;
Who your fortunes never envied,
Smiling when he saw them rise;
To what a depth of dread undoing
He hath fallen before your eyes!
O then, never mortal living—
Looking still to see the end,
Blessed call, till he hath quitted
Life's last ledge, to heaven admitted,
Wrong'd by neither foe nor friend!

So early then, it appears—in his own battle, like Œdipus with the Sphinx of Life—so early as the year 1786, if not earlier, and at the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven, a character was thus clearly defined, and a destiny for the Author by himself foreseen; which more than any other character or destiny, in this our modern world (that of Œdipus himself, the great diviner of the old, in its moral aspects not excepted), have excited the wonder and absorbed the sympathies of mankind: and not more truly does Horace say of his entire works, than Burns might say of this epitaph alone—

Exegi monumentum are perennius.

SINCE the foregoing pages were in type, our attention has been directed to a question of alleged plagiarism on Burns's part, particularly in reference to Thomson, which has been raised in some quarters. Without attaching any serious importance to such an idea, we may be excused for adding a single remark or two on the subject in conclusion here. Of Burns's acquaintance with Thomson, we have ourselves supplied more than one unquestionable instance already; and of his high admiration for Thomson, we have the clearest proof under his own hand: but we are by no means at liberty, on such grounds, to assume that he abstracted from Thomson, or anyone else, phrases or ideas that were not originally his own. Some of the coincidences quoted by us are certainly most striking, and to others of the same sort reference will in due time be made, with sufficient explanation; but even if they had been more suspiciously exact than they are, we have produced coincidences of language as decided from the highest authors in Greek, Latin, and Italian, as well as the oldest Scotch, with whose writings-with whose words, at least-Burns, on any rational conjecture, could not be affirmed, at the date of his own inspiration, or perhaps at any date, to

have had acquaintance. That he adopted models from Ramsay and Ferguson, is known and admitted; that he was partially acquainted with Milton, Shakspear, and Ossian, with Pope and Young, he himself also avows-with the frankest acknowledgment of his slightest obligation to any of them, even for a word; but it cannot be affirmed that he was at all conversant with Homer, with Anacreon, with Horace, with Dante, with Petrarch, or even with James I. of Scotland. Yet there are ideas, words, and even lines in most of them, for which Burns's own original language would be the best translation ever offered. His resemblance to Horace, in particular, is so striking as to have occasioned universal remark. So early as the appearance of his first editions it became manifest: but when Dr. Moore, who specially refers to it, compliments him on "the Horatian elegance" of his Epistle to J. Smith, he is as far as possible from implying the slightest idea of plagiarism —which would have been an insult and not a compliment. Our quotations from Horace, to illustrate this unconscious resemblance, have been very numerous; and we could have doubled the number with ease, if it had been necessary. From Petrarch and Dante both, we shall produce several hereafter in addition, and have concluded the present division of our Notes with a quotation from Sophocles, to ourselves by far the most affecting and beautiful of all; with which, however, we may safely affirm that Burns, during his entire lifetime, was utterly unacquainted. That resemblances should occur between him and such writers, is by no means astonishing; for they occur among all great and true poets-who see all with the same eyes of truth and love, who are baptized all with the same baptism of passion, and speak all with the same tongue of fire. If it were otherwise, it would be strange indeed: for Nature then would contradict or belie herself. On one point farther we take leave to congratulate ourselves —that in this First Part of our Edition, we have reproduced as nearly as possible the simple original words and native dialect of Robert Burns, so rapidly vanishing both from memory and from sight. On this subject, some of our critics have kindly advised us otherwise. But the facts just referred to seem amply to justify the course we have adopted; for no impartial reader, we are sure, who looks at, or listens to this rich, old, broad, expressive and beautiful Doric of the Soil, can possibly believe that the author of it was, or could be, in any conscious sense, a plagiarist. So great, in fact, was his conscientiousness and self-respect in such matters, that he did not even quote from himself without indicating the repetition, of which we have more than one instance; how much less then should be quote surreptitiously from Thomson, whom he admired and loved, and with whose language every scholar of the day was as familiar as a schoolboy is with his alphabet?

