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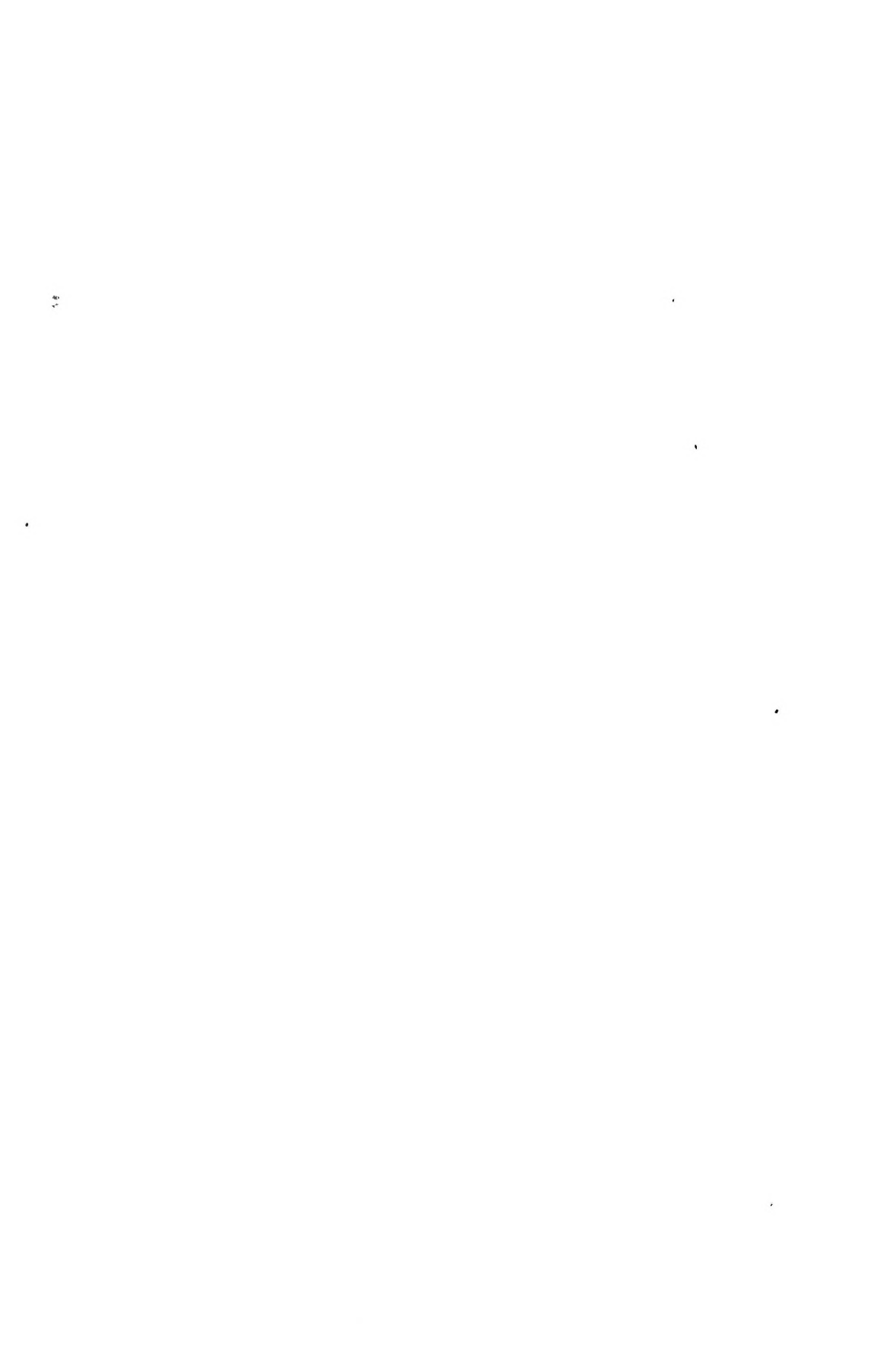
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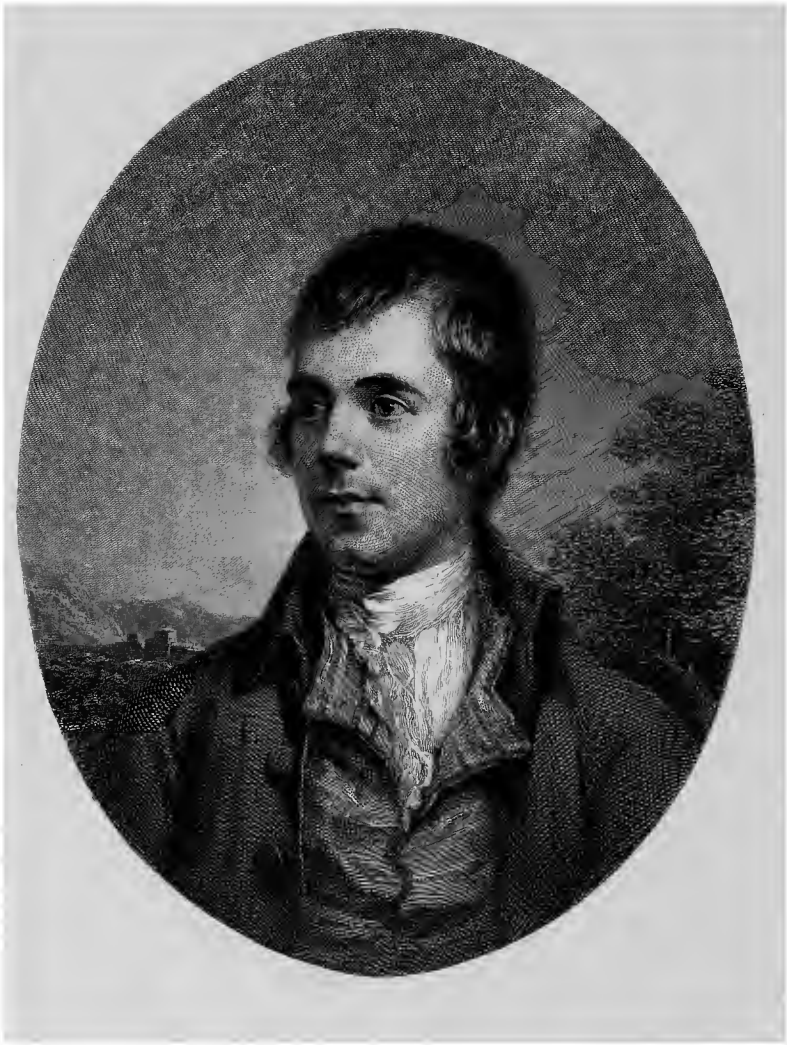


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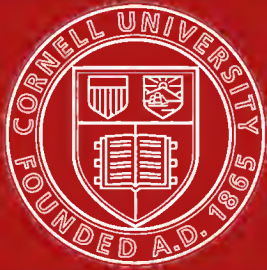
THE WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BURNS.











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THE WORKS  
OF  
ROBERT BURNS



VOLUME FIRST

*POETRY*

EDINBURGH: WILLIAM PATERSON

MDCCLXXVIII

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THESE VOLUMES ARE  
Dedicated  
TO  
THOMAS CARLYLE,  
THE COUNTRYMAN OF  
ROBERT BURNS,  
AND THE  
MOST LUMINOUS ILLUSTRATOR OF HIS  
LIFE AND WRITINGS.

.





## P R E F A C E.

IN issuing Volume First of a new Library Edition of the entire works of ROBERT BURNS, the editor desires to point out the peculiar claims on public attention which the present undertaking professes to offer.

It seems now to be universally allowed that Burns, as an author, and as a subject of instructive and deeply interesting biographical study—chiefly, as mirrored in his own writings—is entitled to stand in the foremost rank of British literature. It cannot, however, be alleged that any exhaustive effort has, as yet, been made to collect the whole of his poems and correspondence, and present these in the most attractive shape;—shewing the author's text with critical exactness, unbridged and untampered with, and recording the numerous and interesting variations in his manuscripts and several authorised editions. To supply that desideratum is the chief aim of the present publication. The poems and lyrics are arranged in strictly chronological order; the date of each composition, and the original channel of publication, are prominently recorded; and a very considerable number of the author's undoubted productions now, for the first time, appear in a collective form, several of these having hitherto been excluded from the public eye.

The author's prose writings will be similarly arranged; and these, taken in connection with the information

supplied in the annotations, will afford to the reader two separate rehearsals of his thrilling life-drama told by himself—the one in poetry and song, and the other in the richest prose.

The volumes will proclaim for themselves the earnest labour and efforts which have been made by both publisher and editor to obtain the poet's original manuscripts, in order to collate these with the text, and render this edition complete and satisfactory. To those holders of the poet's autograph poems and letters who have kindly lent them to be made use of in the present work, it may suffice in the meantime to state that their favours are specially acknowledged in the editorial notes attached to the respective pieces. An opportunity will be taken in the General Preface, at the completion of the work, to make farther acknowledgments, and more prominently record the names of these and future contributors.

The present is not the first time the Editor has come before the public as an expounder and arranger of the writings of Burns, and a delineator of submerged and mystified facts in his brief and eccentric career. He has served a long apprenticeship to the business on which he now ventures; and, without undervaluing the labours of his predecessors, or of cotemporary workers in the same field, he is confident of producing, in these volumes, an Edition of Burns that shall leave little in the shape of new biographical facts, or fresh literary materials, to be gleaned and supplemented by others.

WM. SCOTT DOUGLAS.

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## P R E F A C E.

*(To the Original Edition, Kilmarnock, 1786.)*

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 anything 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 manoeuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him: but to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal unaffected

---

\* Shenstone.

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.

## DEDICATION.

(*First Edinburgh Edition, 1787.*)

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE  
CALEDONIAN HUNT.

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 style of dedication, to thank you for past favours ; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted Learning, that honest Rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours : I was bred to the Plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious Countrymen ; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country, that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated ; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

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

and licentiousness in the People equally find you an  
inexorable foe !

I have the honour to be, with the sincerest gratitude  
and highest respect,

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

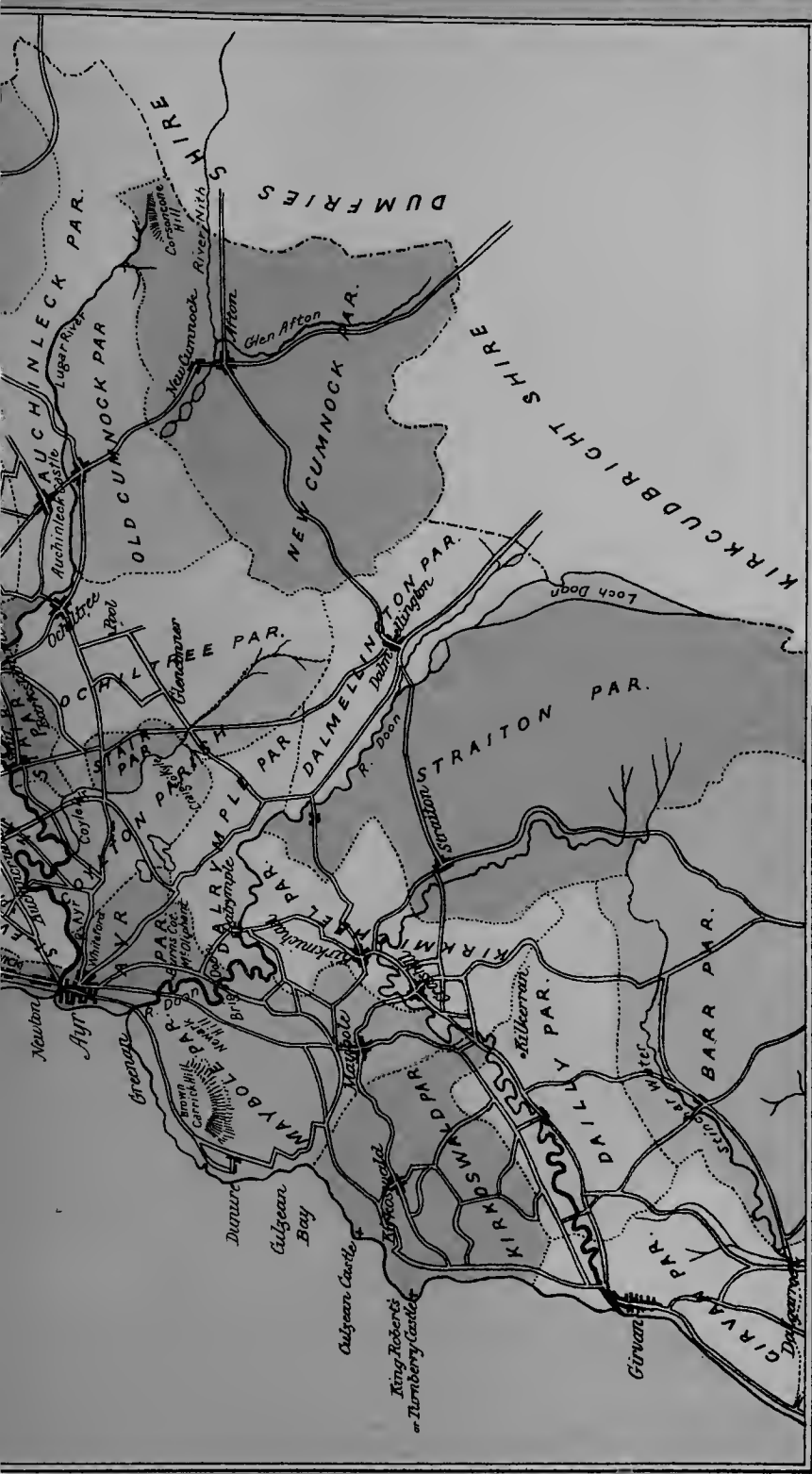
Your most devoted, humble Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, *April 4, 1787.*

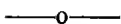








# POEMS AND SONGS.



## SONG—HANDSOME NELL.

*Tune*—"I am a man unmarried."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

I never had the least thought or inclination of turning Poet till I got once heartily in love, and then *rhyme* and *song* were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances. It is, indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind, those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere.—*Common-place Book, Aug. 1783.*

O ONCE I lov'd a bonie lass,  
Aye, and<sup>1</sup> I love her still;  
And whilst that virtue<sup>2</sup> warms my breast,  
I'll love my handsome Nell.

As bonie lasses I hae seen,  
And mony full as braw;<sup>3</sup>  
But, for a modest gracefu' mien,  
The like I never saw.

A bonie lass, I will confess,  
Is pleasant to the e'e;  
But, without some better qualities,  
She's no a<sup>3</sup> lass for me.

---

<sup>1</sup> handsome.

But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,  
 And what is best of a',  
 Her reputation is complete,  
 And fair without a flaw.<sup>4</sup>

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,  
 Both decent and genteel;  
 And then there's something in her gait  
 Gars<sup>b</sup> ony dress look weel.<sup>5</sup>

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

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,  
 'Tis this enchants my soul;  
 For absolutely in my breast  
 She reigns without controul.

[Dr Currie transcribed this song very accurately from the poet's Common-place Book, where it stands recorded under date April 1783. Burns delighted to refer to the incident that gave rise to these juvenile verses:—Nelly Kirkpatrick, daughter of a blacksmith in the neighbourhood of Mount Oliphant, inspired the song in the harvest-field, in the autumn of 1773, when he was yet under fifteen years old. We must refer the reader to the bard's own account of this his first love-experience, contained in the poem addressed to Mrs Scott of Wauchope House, and also in his autobiography; meanwhile let us note how early the power of music seems to have affected Burns. Speaking of "Nell," he says:—"Among other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme." In his Common-place Book, he has followed the record of it with an elaborate "criticism," which shews how carefully he had been training himself for lyric composition. Here is a sample:—In the second couplet of verse *first* "the expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious." "Stanza the *second* I am well pleased with . . . and I think it conveys a fine idea of a sweet, sonsy lass." He

---

<sup>b</sup> makes.



condemns verses *third* and *fourth*; but “the thoughts in the *fifth* stanza come finely up to my favourite idea—a sweet, sonsy lass.” He approves also of the *sixth* verse, “but the second and fourth lines *ending with short syllables, hurts the whole.*” “The *seventh* stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it, but my heart melts, and my blood sallies at the remembrance.” In 1786, Burns presented copies of some of his early pieces—and this among the rest—to Mrs Stewart of Stair, and that MS. exhibits the following variations:—

<sup>1</sup> An’ aye.                      <sup>2</sup> honour.                      <sup>3</sup> the.

<sup>4</sup> The fourth verse is remodelled thus:—

But Nelly’s looks are blythe and sweet,  
Good-humoured, frank, and free;  
And still the more I view them o’er,  
The more they captive me.

<sup>5</sup> Verse fifth is wanting in the Stair MS. That the poet was not satisfied with these variations is evident from the fact that he afterwards transmitted the song to *Johnson* for publication in its original form.]

#### HAR’STE.—A FRAGMENT.

*Tune*—“I had a horse, and I had nae mair.”

(ORIGINAL COMMON-PLACE BOOK, 1872.)

Another circumstance of my life, which made very considerable alteration on my mind and manners, was, that I spent my seventeenth\* summer a good distance from home, at a noted school on a smuggling coast, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c. . . . I went on with a high hand in my geometry, till the sun entered *Virgo*, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom; a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, &c. . . . The last two nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, I was innocent. . . .

Song *second* was the ebullition of that passion which ended the fore-mentioned school business.—*Autobiography.*

Now breezy win’s and slaughtering guns  
Bring Autumn’s pleasant weather,  
And the muircock springs on whirring wings  
Among the blooming heather.

---

\* Dr Currie and succeeding editors of Burns have printed this word “nineteenth;” the correction is here made from the original MS.

Now waving crops, with yellow tops,  
 Delight the weary farmer,  
 An' the moon shines bright when I rove at night,  
 To muse . . . \*

[The name of this "charming *fillette*" was Peggy Thomson; and shortly prior to the first publication of our author's poems she became the wife of a Mr Neilson at Kirkoswald—an "old acquaintance" of Burns, "and a most worthy fellow." When we come to give the song in its finished form (under date 1783), about which time, it seems, Burns experienced a renewed fit of passion for Peggy, we shall give some particulars regarding her history. See page 53.

Here we see that from the very beginning of the poet's attempts at song-writing, he must have a *tune* to prompt his musings. He early laid down this rule, that "to *sowth* the tune over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of our old Scotch poetry."]

SONG—O TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

*Tune*—"Invercauld's Reel, or Strathspey."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788. COMPARED WITH C.-P. BOOK, 1872.)

*Chor.*—O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,  
 Ye wadna been sae shy;  
 For laik o' gear<sup>a</sup> ye lightly me,  
 But, trowth, I care na by.

Yestreen I met you on the moor,  
 Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;<sup>b</sup>  
 Ye geck<sup>c</sup> at me because I'm poor,  
 But fient<sup>d</sup> a hair care I.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

---

<sup>a</sup> lack of money.    <sup>b</sup> dust in motion.    <sup>c</sup> toss the head.    <sup>d</sup> a petty oath.

\* In the extended version, printed p. 53, this line reads "To muse upon my charmer," but in the Common-place Book, after "To muse," a name, supposed to be Jean Armour, is written in *cypher*, or shorthand. If this supposition is correct it only shews what "charmer" was uppermost in the poet's mind when he made the entry in August 1785.

When comin hame on Sunday last,  
 Upon the road as I cam past,  
 Ye snufft an gae your head a cast—  
 But trowth I care't na by.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,  
 Because ye hae the name o' clink,<sup>e</sup>  
 That ye can please me at a wink,  
 Whene'er ye like to try.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,  
 Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,  
 Wha follows ony saucy quean,  
 That looks sae proud and high.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,  
 If that he want the yellow dirt,  
 Ye'll cast your head anither airt,<sup>f</sup>  
 And answer him fu' dry.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But if he hae the name o' gear,  
 Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,  
 Tho' hardly he, for sense or lear,<sup>g</sup>  
 Be better than the kye.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice :  
 Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice ;

---

<sup>e</sup> cash.

<sup>f</sup> direction.

<sup>g</sup> education.

The deil a ane wad spier<sup>h</sup> your price,  
 Were ye as poor as I.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

There lives a lass beside yon park,  
 I'd rather hae her in her sark,  
 Than you wi' a' your thousand mark ;  
 That gars<sup>i</sup> you look sae high.  
 O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

[A little controversy has arisen regarding the date of this song. In the poet's Glenriddell notes, he expressly says of it:—"This song I composed about the age of seventeen." Mrs Begg, on the other hand, (who, by the way, was only five years old when her brother was seventeen,) insisted that the Tibbie of the song was Isabella Stein, of Tarbolton Parish. In a note to the present writer, she says:—"Tibbie Stein lived at Little Hill, a farm marching with that of Lochlie: that the song was written upon her was well known in the neighbourhood, no one doubting it."

With all deference, we are inclined to adhere to the poet's direct statement, and regard this as a Mount Oliphant incident, following immediately after the summer he spent at Kirkoswald. We feel greatly strengthened in this opinion by a corresponding record of Burns, the correctness of which has also been much controverted by his brothers and sisters. It is this:—"In my seventeenth year (*i.e.*, 1775, two years before the Lochlie period), to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands." We suspect this country dancing-school would be in the village of Dalrymple; and the second verse of the above song seems to refer to the road from Dalrymple parish church, where, as may be supposed, the Burnes family would occasionally attend. Even the *strathspey* to which the poet composed these words would seem to have some connection with that dancing-school, which it is likely Robert attended alone, and perhaps unknown to the younger members of the family.

The second stanza and the closing one are both wanting in Johnson's *Museum*. They are inserted here from the Common-place Book. Dr Currie's version of the concluding stanza reads thus:—

There lives a lass in yonder park,  
 I wadna gie her in her sark  
 For thee, wi' a' thy thousan' mark ;  
 Ye needna look sae high.]

<sup>h</sup> inquire.

<sup>i</sup> makes.

## SONG—I DREAM'D I LAY.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.—*Glenriddell Notes in Cromek.*

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing  
 Gaily in the sunny beam ;  
 List'ning to the wild birds singing,  
 By a falling crystal stream :  
 Straight the sky grew black and daring ;  
 Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave ;  
 Trees with aged arms were warring,  
 O'er the swelling drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,  
 Such the pleasures I enjoy'd:  
 But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,  
 A' my flowery bliss destroy'd.  
 Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me—  
 She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill,  
 Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me—  
 I bear a heart shall support me still.

[There can be no doubt that this production was suggested to the young lyrist by his admiration of Mrs Cockburn's song, "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling," which, about the year 1764, found its way into miscellaneous collections of song. It appeared in one of these published in that year, called *The Blackbird*; and also in a like miscellany entitled *The Charmer*, and in another named *The Lark* (both of the latter dated 1765). Any one of them may have been that "Select Collection" which, he tells us, was his *vade mecum* before the Burnes family removed from Mount Oliphant.

The poet again and again reverts to the last four lines of this song, as if the conning them over yielded him some comfort. "At the close of that dreadful period"—his distress at Irvine—he adopted these lines

as the *opening* of a little "sang to soothe his misery," only altering line *third* to suit his altered circumstances, thus:—

"Of mistress, friends and wealth bereav'd me."

But the embryo minstrel, in composing the present song, had Mrs Cockburn's *Flowers of the Forest* rather too much in his eye; for he not only copied her ideas, but her very expressions. For her "silver streams shining in the sunny beams," we have here the tyro's "crystal stream" falling "gaily in the sunny beam." The river Tweed of Mrs Cockburn "grows *drumly* and dark," and so does the streamlet of the young dreamer become a "swelling *drumlie* wave." The lady hears "loud tempests storming before the mid-day," and so does the boy Burns hear "lang or noon, loud tempests storming." Finally, the authoress is "perplexed" with the "sporting of fickle fortune," and our poet is wretchedly "deceived" by the ill-performed promises of the same "fickle fortune;" and, not to be outdone by the lady's defiance of fortune's frowns, the independent youngster boasts that he "bears a heart shall support him still." A quarter of a century ago we pointed out those innocent plagiarisms to the late Robert Chambers, who refers to them in his last remarks on this song.]

### SONG—IN THE CHARACTER OF A RUINED FARMER.

*Tune*—"Go from my window, Love, do."

(CHAMBERS, 1852, COMPARED WITH THE ORIG. MS.)

THE sun he is sunk in the west,  
All creatures retirèd to rest,  
While here I sit, all sore beset,  
    With sorrow, grief, and woe :  
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

The prosperous man is asleep,  
Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep ;  
But Misery and I must watch  
    The surly tempest blow :  
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

There lies the dear [partner] of my breast ;      [mate]  
 Her cares for a moment at rest :  
 Must I see thee, my youthful pride,  
                                 Thus brought so very low !  
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

There lie my sweet [babies] in her arms ;      [babes]  
 No anxious fear their [little] hearts alarms ;      [delete]  
 But for their sake my heart does ache,  
                                 With many a bitter throe :  
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

I once was by Fortune carest :  
 I once could relieve the distrest :  
 Now life's poor [support,] hardly earn'd,      [pittance,]  
                                 My fate will scarce bestow :  
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

No comfort, no comfort I have !  
 How welcome to me were the grave !  
 But then my wife and children dear—  
                                 O, whither would they go !  
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

O whither, O [whither] shall I turn !      [whene]  
 All friendless, forsaken, forlorn !  
 For, in this world, Rest or Peace  
                                 I never more shall know !  
 And it's O, fickle Fortune, O !

[The original of this early production is in the possession of William Nelson, Esq., Edinburgh. It is a stray leaf from a collection formerly known as the Stair MS. now dissevered and scattered abroad. The "ruined farmer" here is undoubtedly meant as a presentment of the author's father bravely struggling to weather out his hard fate at Mount

Oliphant. As a pathetic dirge, it is the best illustration of the following passage in the poet's autobiography :—

“The farm proved a ruinous bargain. . . . My father was advanced in life when he married. I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more ; and to weather these two years we retrenched expenses,” &c.

But what shall we say regarding the youthful poet's *dirge*, and the antique, wailing melody to which he fitted the words? He has given us the title of that tune, which fortunately we are enabled to present here to our readers ; for Stenhouse in his notes to *Johnson's Museum*, records that Burns recovered that old melody, and transmitted it to Johnson. The wonder is—in that sequestered locality, and under eighteen years old—how he acquired, and retained it in his memory. The text is very rough, and in order to fit the melody, the singer will require to substitute the words suggested on the margin for those within brackets in the text. The word “little,” in verse fourth, must be omitted.]

*Slow Time.*

*Air*—“Go from my window, love, do.”

The sun he is sunk in the west, All crea - tures re-  
tir ed to rest, While here I sit - all sore be set With  
sor - row, grief, and woe; and it's O fick - le For - tune, O.

### TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

(FROM THE POET'S MS. IN THE MONUMENT AT EDINBURGH,  
WITH HEADING FROM CROMEK, 1808.)

In my early years, nothing less would serve me than courting the Tragic Muse. I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy forsooth ; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my farther progress. In those days I never wrote down anything ; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory. The following, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from



a great character—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villainies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself—

ALL villain<sup>1</sup> as I am—a damnèd wretch,  
 A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting sinner,<sup>2</sup>  
 Still my heart melts at human wretchedness ;  
 And with sincere but<sup>3</sup> unavailing sighs  
 I view the helpless children of distress :  
 With tears indignant I behold the oppressor  
 Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,  
 Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.—  
 Ev'n you, ye hapless<sup>4</sup> crew ! I pity you ;  
 Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity ;  
 Ye poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds,  
 Whom Vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.  
 Oh ! but for friends and interposing Heaven,<sup>5</sup>  
 I had been driven forth like you forlorn,  
 The most detested, worthless wretch among you !  
 O injured God ! Thy goodness has endow'd me  
 With talents passing most of my compeers,  
 Which I in just proportion have abused—  
 As far surpassing other common villains  
 As Thou in natural parts has given<sup>6</sup> me more.

[Notwithstanding the author's own authority for classing the foregoing with his very earliest efforts in poetical composition, it seems to have undergone revision and amendment at a later period. The copy we print from is perhaps a stray leaf of the Common-place Book, or manuscript collection of his early pieces, referred to by Alexander Smith as having been presented by Burns to Mrs Dunlop. It varies somewhat from the copy inserted in the original Common-place Book now at Greenock. The version we adopt has the following heading—

“A Fragment in the Hour of Remorse, on Seeing a Fellow-Creature  
 in Misery, whom I had once known in Better Days.”

The “human wretchedness” deplored in this pathetic soliloquy was that of the suffering household at Mount Oliphant, which the poet has

so touchingly recorded in his autobiography. We have in these lines a glance at the tyrant factor, and his "insolent, threatening epistles, which used to set us all in tears,"—

"With tears indignant I behold the oppressor  
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,  
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime,"

in which last line we discern the "stubborn, ungainly integrity" of the poet's noble father. The speaker's sympathy for "poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds," corresponds in spirit with that passage in the Common-place Book, of date March 1784, where he introduces this *Fragment*. Cromek, in 1808, first published the piece; but his copy wants the five closing lines, which accordingly we infer were added by the poet in 1784. Cromek's version was printed from a copy found among the poet's papers, headed with the introductory narrative prefixed to the text. It is curious to find Burns thus early attempting dramatic composition; but it is certain that William Burnes had a few of Shakespeare's plays among the books on his shelf at Mount Oliphant.

The variations in the Common-place Book are as follow:—

<sup>1</sup> devil.           <sup>2</sup> villain.           <sup>3</sup> tho'.           <sup>4</sup> helpless.  
<sup>5</sup> O, but for kind, tho' ill-requited friends.   <sup>6</sup> in nat'ral parts hast.]

### THE TARBOLTON LASSES.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

If ye gae up to yon hill-tap,  
Ye'll there see bonie Peggy;  
She kens her father is a laird,  
And she forsooth's a leddy.

There Sophy tight, a lassie bright,  
Besides a handsome fortune:  
Wha canna win her in a night,  
Has little art in courtin.

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,  
And tak a look o' Mysie;  
She's dour<sup>a</sup> and din,<sup>b</sup> a deil within,  
But aiblins<sup>c</sup> she may please ye.

---

<sup>a</sup> sulky.

<sup>b</sup> ill-complexioned.

<sup>c</sup> perhaps.

If she be shy, her sister try,  
 Ye'll may be fancy Jenny ;  
 If ye'll dispense wi' want o' sense—  
 She kens hersel she's bonie.

As ye gae up by yon hillside,  
 Speer in for bonie Bessy ;  
 She'll gie ye a beck, and bid ye light,  
 And handsomely address ye.

There's few sae bonie, nane sae guid,  
 In a' King George' dominion ;  
 If ye should doubt the truth o' this—  
 It's Bessy's ain opinion !

[Here we have a little of the "satirical seasoning" referred to by David Sillar, and of which we have already seen a good sample in his address to "Saucy Tibbie." These verses, however, can hardly be considered as a song, and—as Chambers has observed—they are strikingly inferior to the poet's average efforts. It is rather singular that Chambers does not state where he got these lines, and on what grounds he became satisfied of their authenticity.]

### AH, WOE IS ME, MY MOTHER DEAR.

*Paraphrase of Jeremiah, 15th Chap., 10th verse.*

(GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874.)

AH, woe is me, my Mother dear !  
 A man of strife ye've born me :  
 For sair contention I maun bear ;  
 They hate, revile, and scorn me.

I ne'er could lend on bill or band,  
 That five per cent. might blest me ;  
 And borrowing, on the tither hand,  
 The de'il a ane wad trust me.

Yet I, a coin-denièd wight,  
 By Fortune quite discarded ;  
 Ye see how I am, day and night,  
 By lad and lass blackguarded !

[Burns in 1785 records the remark—" I don't well know what is the reason of it, but somehow or other though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved ; yet I never could get the art of commanding respect." Again, referring to his early boyhood, he says in his autobiography:—" At those years, I was by no means a favourite with anybody." David Sillar, speaking of Burns in 1781, says :—" His social disposition easily procured him acquaintances ; but a certain satirical seasoning, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied by its kindred attendant,—suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe *he had a great deal to say for himself*, but that they suspected his *principles*. He wore the only tied hair in the parish ; and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particular colour, I think *fillemot*,\* was wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders." The poet's account of himself in the text has suggested the above quotations ; but we feel rather at a loss to fix the particular period of composition. The verses stand recorded in the Glenriddell volume at Liverpool, in the poet's autograph, without any indication of date ; but it may be assumed that he would be at least twenty-one years old before he could be concerned in " bills and bonds."

A corrupt copy of the verses occurs in the *Ettrick Shepherd's* Memoir of Burns, 1834, where they are entitled "Stanzas composed while sitting between the stilts of the plough." It seems that Burns had inscribed this paraphrase from Jeremiah on the fly-leaf of his own copy of Fergusson's Poems. That relic is now in the possession of J. T. Gibson-Craig, Esq., Edinburgh. Hogg may have seen that production, and quoted the words from memory. The words paraphrased are as follows :—" Woe is me, my mother, thou hast born me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth. I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury ; yet every one of them doth curse me."]

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\* A yellow-brown colour—from *feuille morte*, a dead leaf.

## MONTGOMERIE'S PEGGY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

ALTHO' my bed were in yon muir,  
 Amang the heather, in my plaidie ;  
 Yet happy, happy would I be,  
 Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,  
 And winter nights were dark and rainy ;  
 I'd seek some dell, and in my arms  
 I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

Were I a Baron proud and high,  
 And horse and servants waiting ready ;  
 Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,—  
 The sharin't with Montgomerie's Peggy.

[Speaking of the earlier portion of the seven years he spent in Tarbolton Parish (1777 to 1784), the poet says he felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the amours in the parish, as ever did Premier in knowing the intrigues of half the courts in Europe. "Montgomerie's Peggy," he tells us, was a deity of his own for six or eight months. "I began the affair," he says, "merely in a *gaieté de cœur*, or, to tell the truth, (what would scarcely be believed,) a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *billet-doux*, which I always piqued myself upon, made me lay siege to her." Mrs Begg, in her notes regarding this affair, says:—"The lady was housekeeper at Coilsfield House ; my brother Robert had met her frequently at Tarboth Mill ; they sat in the same church, and contracted an intimacy together ; but she was engaged to another before ever they met. So, on her part, it was nothing but amusement, and on Burns' part, little more, from the way he speaks of it."]

## THE PLOUGHMAN'S LIFE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

As I was a-wand'ring ae morning in spring,  
 I heard a young ploughman sae sweetly to sing ;  
 And as he was singin', thir words he did say,—  
 There's nae life like the ploughman's in the month o' sweet  
 May.

The lav'rock in the morning she'll rise frae her nest,  
 And mount i' the air wi' the dew on her breast,  
 And wi' the merry ploughman she'll whistle and sing,  
 And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

[Gilbert Burns expressed to Cromek a strong doubt regarding his brother's authorship of these lines, as also of some other pieces found in his handwriting, and included with the *Reliques* of the Poet; but as the authorship of the "Bonie Muirhen"—one of the pieces referred to—has been since clearly traced to Burns, we do not feel at liberty to reject the lines in the text.]

## THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

IN Tarbolton, ye ken, there are proper young men,  
 And proper young lasses and a', man ;  
 But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals,  
 They carry the gree<sup>a</sup> frae them a', man.

Their father's a laird, and weel he can spare't,  
 Braid money to tocher<sup>b</sup> them a', man ;  
 To proper young men, he'll clink<sup>c</sup> in the hand  
 Gowd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

<sup>a</sup> pre-eminence.<sup>b</sup> marriage-portion.<sup>c</sup> count.

There's ane they ca' Jean, I'll warrant ye've seen,  
 As bonie a lass or as braw,<sup>d</sup> man ;  
 But for sense and guid taste she'll vie wi' the best,  
 And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

The charms o' the min', the langer they shine,  
 The mair admiration they draw, man ;  
 While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,  
 They fade and they wither awa, man.

If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this frae a frien',  
 A hint o' a rival or twa, man ;  
 The Laird o' Blackbyre wad gang through the fire,  
 If that wad entice her awa, man.

The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed,  
 For mair than a towmond<sup>e</sup> or twa, man ;  
 The Laird o' the Ford will straught on a board,  
 If he canna get her at a', man.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,  
 The boast of our bachelors a', man :  
 Sae sonsy<sup>f</sup> and sweet, sae fully complete,  
 She steals our affections awa, man.

If I should detail the pick and the wale  
 O' lasses that live here awa, man,  
 The fau't wad be mine if they didna shine  
 The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,  
 My poverty keeps me in awe, man ;

<sup>d</sup> fine.<sup>e</sup> twelvemonth.<sup>f</sup> buxom.

For making o' rhymes, and working at times,  
Does little or naething at a', man.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,  
Nor hae 't in her power to say na, man :  
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,  
My stomach 's as proud as them a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel-booted pride,  
And flee o'er the hills like a craw, man,  
I can haud up my head wi' the best o' the breed,  
Though fluttering ever so braw, man.

My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best,  
O' pairs o' guid breeks I hae twa, man ;  
And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,  
And ne'er a wrang steek in them a', man.

My sarks they are few, but five o' them new,  
Twa' hundred,\* as white as the snaw, man,  
A ten-shillings hat, a Holland cravat ;  
There are no mony poets sae braw, man.

I never had freens weel stockit in means,  
To leave me a hundred or twa, man ;  
Nae weel-tocher'd aunts, to wait on their drants,<sup>g</sup>  
And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I never was cannie<sup>h</sup> for hoarding o' money,  
Or claughtin<sup>i</sup> 't together at a', man ;

---

<sup>g</sup> long prayers.      <sup>h</sup> cunning, prudent.      <sup>i</sup> grasping.

\* Woven in a reed of 1200 divisions, and therefore considerably coarser than the "1700 linen" spoken of in *Tam o' Shanter*.



I've little to spend, and naething to lend,  
But deevil a shilling I awe, man.

[The Bennals is a farm in the western part of the parish of Tarbolton, near Afton Lodge, about five miles from Lochlie. The two young women spoken of in this piece were the predominant belles of the district; being good-looking, fairly educated, and the children of a man reputed wealthy. Gilbert Burns wooed the elder sister, Jeanie Ronald, who, after a lengthened correspondence, refused him on account of his poverty. She became the wife of John Reid, a farmer at Langlands, not far from the Bennals. The younger sister, Annie, appears to have taken the poet's fancy a little; but he was too proud to afford her a chance of refusing him.

A few years after this period, one of the bard's letters gives us a glimpse of the "ups and downs of life" in connection with the *Ronalds of the Bennals*. Writing to his brother William in November 1789, he says:—"The only Ayrshire news that I remember in which I think you will be interested, is that Mr Ronald is bankrupt. You will easily guess, that from his insolent vanity in his sunshine of life, he will feel a little retaliation from those who thought themselves eclipsed by him."

Chambers has neglected to state whence he derived these verses; he merely indicates that they had appeared fugitively somewhere before he gave them a fixed place among the author's works. The small lairdships referred to in the fifth and sixth verses cannot be found in the Ordnance Map of Tarbolton parish; but more than one "Braehead" appears in the neighbouring parishes. "Ford" may be a contraction of Failford, near Tarbolton.]

### SONG—HERE'S TO THY HEALTH.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

HERE'S to thy health, my bonie lass,  
Gude night and joy be wi' thee;  
I'll come nae mair to thy bower-door,  
To tell thee that I lo'e thee.  
O dinna think, my pretty pink,  
But I can live without thee:  
I vow and swear I dinna care,  
How lang ye look about ye.

Thou'rt ay sae free informing me,  
 Thou hast nae mind to marry ;  
 I'll be as free informing thee,  
 Nae time hae I to tarry :  
 I ken thy freens try ilka means  
 Frae wedlock to delay thee ;  
 Depending on some higher chance,  
 But fortune may betray thee.

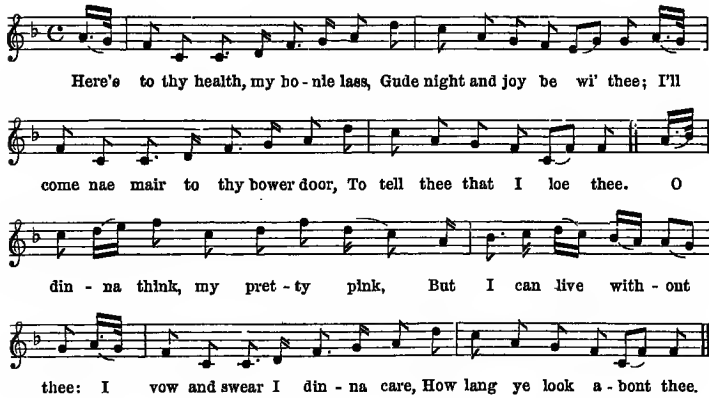
I ken they scorn my low estate,  
 But that does never grieve me ;  
 For I'm as free as any he ;  
 Sma' siller will relieve me.  
 I'll count my health my greatest wealth,  
 Sae lang as I'll enjoy it ;  
 I'll fear nae scaut, I'll bode nae want,  
 As lang's I get employment.

But far off fowls hae feathers fair,  
 And, ay until ye try them,  
 Tho' they seem fair, still have a care ;  
 They may prove as bad as I am.  
 But at twel at night, when the moon shines bright,  
 My dear, I'll come and see thee ;  
 For the man that loves his mistress weel,  
 Nae travel makes him weary.

[Against our own instincts, we were at one time disposed to exclude this production from Burns' collected pieces, in deference to the dictum of his sister, Mrs Begg, who pronounced it to be one of those familiar ditties commonly sung at rural firesides before his efforts in that way were known. The poet sent the song, along with its very sprightly melody, to Johnson at some unascertained period; but it did not appear in the *Museum* till the year of the author's death, and his name is there attached to it. The words are not found in any collection of date prior to their publication in Johnson's work; and as Mrs Begg would be no more than ten years old when, as we conjecture,

this song was composed by her brother, she might naturally, at some after period, mistake it for an old song. It is in every respect characteristic of Burns' manner and sentiments in early manhood; and the strathspey tune to which it is set, suggests his early dancing-school experiences, and the occasional balls of the Tarbolton Bachelors. We append an outline of the music, to enable the reader fully to realise the rustic beauty of this early lyric. Nathaniel Gow's composition, called, "Lady Shaftsbury's Strathspey," is apparently borrowed from this melody.

## Air—"Leggan Burn."



Here's to thy health, my ho-nie lass, Gude night and joy be wi' thee; I'll  
 come nae mair to thy bower door, To tell thee that I loe thee. O  
 din-na think, my pret-ty pink, But I can live with-ont  
 thee: I vow and swear I din-na care, How lang ye look a-bont thee.

## THE LASS OF CESSNOCK BANKS.

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

ON Cessnock banks a lassie dwells;<sup>1</sup>  
 Could I describe her shape and mien;  
 Our lasses a' she far excels,<sup>2</sup>  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>3</sup>

She's sweeter<sup>4</sup> than the morning dawn,  
 When rising Phœbus first is seen;  
 And<sup>5</sup> dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,  
 That grows the cowslip braes between,  
 And drinks the stream with vigour fresh ;<sup>7</sup>  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

She's spotless like<sup>8</sup> the flow'ring thorn,  
 With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,  
 When purest in the dewy morn ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her looks<sup>9</sup> are like the vernal May,  
 When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene ;  
 While birds rejoice on every spray ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her hair is like the curling mist,  
 That climbs<sup>10</sup> the mountain-sides at e'en,  
 When flow'r-reviving rains are past ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,  
 When gleaming<sup>11</sup> sunbeams intervene  
 And gild the distant mountain's brow ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,  
 The pride of all the flowery scene,  
 Just opening on its thorny stem ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her bosom's like the nightly snow,  
 When pale the morning rises keen ;  
 While hid the murm'ring streamlets flow ;  
 An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her lips are like yon<sup>12</sup> cherries ripe,  
That sunny walls from Boreas screen ;  
They tempt the taste and charm the sight ;  
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,  
With fleeces newly washen clean ;  
That slowly mount the rising steep ;  
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,  
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean ;  
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas ;  
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush,  
That sings on<sup>13</sup> Cessnock banks unseen ;  
While his mate sits nestling in the bush ;  
An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.<sup>6</sup>

But it's not her air, her form, her face,  
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen ;  
'Tis<sup>14</sup> the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,  
An' chiefly in her rogueish<sup>15</sup> een.

[This must have been composed just before the poet's short sojourn in the town of Irvine. He was passionately in love with the subject of this poem, or "Song of Similes" as it has been called. Her name was Ellison Begbie, her father being a small farmer in Galston parish, and she herself at that time in service with a family who resided near Cessnock water, about two miles north-east from Lochlie. Burns has made no distinct reference to her in his autobiography, although she seems to have been the heroine of a few of his most admired lyrics. His sister, Mrs Begg, about thirty years ago, first revealed the fact that the four love-letters to "My dear E." in Currie's first edition (and which were withdrawn from subsequent issues of that work) were addressed to Ellison Begbie, who, after some intimacy and correspondence, rejected his suit, and soon married another lover. Referring to his desponding



## SONG—BONIE PEGGY ALISON.

*Tune*—"The Braes o' Balquhidder."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

*Chor.*—And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
 And I'll kiss thee o'er again ;  
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,  
 My bonie Peggy Alison.

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,  
 I ever mair defy them, O !  
 Young kings upon their hanel throne \*  
 Are no sae blest as I am, O !  
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,  
 I clasp my countless treasure, O !  
 I seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share  
 Than sic a moment's pleasure, O !  
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

And by thy eeu sae bonie blue,  
 I swear I'm thine for ever, O !  
 And on thy lips I seal my vow,  
 And break it shall I never, O !  
 And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

[This and the song which immediately follows (*Mary Morison*), long went wandering in search of the living originals ; but no fair damsels nor *sonsie lasses* in the parish of Tarbolton, bearing such names, were ever heard of. The poet, in sending the latter song to George Thomson, expressly told him it was "a juvenile production ;" and as he at the

\* This expression may require explanation to some. "Hanel" means the *first-fruit* of an achievement, or of a particular field, or season : hence a gift at New-Year time is so called. The term "maiden throne" would precisely explain the poet's phrase here.

same time admitted that all his earlier love-songs were the breathings of real passion—a legend of his heart being inscribed on each of them—a “heroine-hunt” for the inspirers of them was the eventful result. Gilbert Burns was applied to for information regarding *Mary Morison*, and he replied that she was also the subject of some light verses, beginning, “And I’ll kiss thee yet.” This clue suggested to the present writer that the poet had simply disguised these juvenile productions by altering the names a little. Mrs Begg’s information regarding her brother’s earnest passion for the *Lass of Cessnock Banks*—Ellison, or Alison Begbie, by name—started the natural idea that Burns must have attempted to weave her name into some snatch of song. Her surname, however, being so very prosaic and untunable, what was a poor poet to do? His object could be attained only by compromise, and that might be accomplished to some extent by transposing *Alison Begbie* into “Peggy Alison,”—a very euphonious by-name indeed! Let us take for granted, that such was the case with the song in our text, and then it follows, that *Ellison Begbie* was also the inspirer of its charming companion-song, *Mary Morison*. The character of “My dear E.” is displayed in every line of it:—

“A thought ungentle canna be  
The thought of Peggy Ellison.”

Only the two latter stanzas of the text, with the chorus, are given in Johnson’s publication. The opening verse is from Cromek (1808). Stephen Clarke, the musical editor of the *Museum*, inscribed on the printer’s copy of the music his feelings in these words:—“I am charmed with this song ‘almost as much as the lover is with Peggy Alison.’”]

### SONG—MARY MORISON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

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

---

<sup>a</sup> turmoil.



Yestreen, when to the trembling string  
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',  
 To thee my fancy took its wing,  
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw :  
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,<sup>b</sup>  
 And yon the toast of a' the town,  
 I sigh'd, and said amang them a',  
 "Ye are na Mary Morison."

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

[The long note to the preceding song will help to shorten this one, as it is held to apply to the same subject. The "trembling string," and the "lighted ha'" of the *second stanza* could in reality refer only to the earnest efforts of a poor fiddler at a village practising on the sanded floor of some school-room ; yet see how the poet's fancy can "take its wing," and exalt the commonest object. Hazlitt says in respect to this lyric—"Of all the productions of Burns, the pathetic and serious love-songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to 'Mary Morison,' those beginning 'Here's a health to ane I loe dear ;' and the song 'O my love is like a red, red, rose.'"]

The tune to which the poet composed this song was "Bide ye yet," which is capable of much pathos when performed in slow time. However, that air having been already well-suited with "canty" words, the late John Wilson, Scottish vocalist, conferred an accession of popularity to *Mary Morison* by wedding her to "The Miller," a beautiful tune of the same character as that selected by Burns.]

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<sup>b</sup> gaily dressed.

## WINTER: A DIRGE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew of such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment which are in a manner peculiar to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast; but there is something even in the

“Mighty tempest and the hoary waste  
Abrupt and deep stretch'd o'er the buried earth,”

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me, than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation in a cloudy winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees and raving o'er the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him* who, in the pompous language of Scripture, “walks on the wings of the wind.” In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortunes, I composed the following song,—Tune, “M'Pherson's Farewell.”—*Common-place Book, April 1784.*

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,<sup>1</sup> tumbling brown, the burn comes down,  
And roars frae bank to brae;  
And bird and beast in covert rest,  
And pass the heartless<sup>2</sup> day.

“The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,”\*  
The joyless winter day  
Let others fear, to me more dear  
Than all the pride of May:

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\* Dr Young.—*R. B.*

The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,  
 My griefs it seems to join ;  
 The leafless trees my fancy please,  
 Their fate resembles mine !

Thou Power Supreme whose mighty scheme  
 These woes of mine fulfil,  
 Here, firm I rest ; they must be best,  
 Because they are *Thy* will !  
 Then all I want—O do Thou grant  
 This one request of mine !—  
 Since to *enjoy* Thou dost deny,  
 Assist me to *resign*.

[We concur with Chambers in assigning the date of this piece to the time of the poet's residence in Irvine, during the winter of 1781-82. Writing in April 1784, the author tells us that he composed it at the period referred to in his head-note to the following Prayer, "just after a tract of misfortunes." This corresponds with the tone of his melancholy letter to his father written from Irvine, and also with what he narrates in his autobiography, of his partner in trade having robbed him, and his flax-dressing shop taking fire on New Year's morning, 1782, by which he was left, "like a true poet, not worth a sixpence."

The variations in the Common-place Book are:—<sup>1</sup> And.      <sup>2</sup> weary.]

## A PRAYER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened and indeed affected the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy ; in this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung

my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following :—

O THOU Great Being ! what Thou art,  
 Surpasses<sup>1</sup> me to know ;  
 Yet sure I am, that known to Thee  
 Are all Thy works<sup>2</sup> below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,  
 All wretched and distrest ;  
 Yet sure those ills that wring<sup>3</sup> my soul  
 Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty,<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> man my soul with firm resolves,  
 To bear and not repine !

[The composition of these verses must be assigned to the same period as that of the foregoing. Writing in December 1787 to his Irvine acquaintance, Richard Brown, the poet thus remarked :—“Do you recollect the Sunday we spent together in Eglinton woods? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet.”

The variations in the Common-place Book are the following :—

<sup>1</sup> Surpasseth.    <sup>2</sup> all affairs.    <sup>3</sup> press.    <sup>4</sup> All-perfect.    <sup>5</sup> O !]

O Thou great Being! what Thou art  
Surpasseth me to know:  
Yet sure I am that known to thee  
Are all affairs below.

Thy creature here before thee stands,  
All wretched & distressed;  
Yet sure those ills that pierce my soul  
Obey thy high behest.

Since Thou All Perfect 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;

O! man my soul with firm resolves  
To withstand not deigne.

Tinis.

Facsimile from the M.S. of the Common-Place Book,  
in possession of John Adam Esq. Greenock.



## PARAPHRASE OF THE FIRST PSALM.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

THE man, in life wherever plac'd,  
Hath happiness in store,  
Who walks not in the wickeds' 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.

[This and the Psalm immediately following evidently belong to the same period of the author's life as the two preceding pieces.]

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH  
PSALM VERSIFIED.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

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<sup>1</sup> globe itself,  
Arose at Thy command ;

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

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

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

Thou layest them, with<sup>2</sup> all their cares,  
In everlasting<sup>3</sup> 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.

[The following variations are found in a copy of this Paraphrase, exhibited on a framed folio sheet, in the poet's early manuscript, within his monument at Edinburgh :—

<sup>1</sup> mighty.      <sup>2</sup> and      <sup>3</sup> never-ending.]

### A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

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

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

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

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

[This composition appears, under the date August 1784, in the Common-place Book, as "A Prayer when fainting fits and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threaten me, *first* put nature on the alarm." These words distinctly point back to a date more or less remote ; consequently those editors who have assumed this Prayer and its relative prose passage to apply to the Mossgiel period of the author's life are at fault in their chronology. The verses are marked by extraordinary vigour, and have been much criticised by those who will be content with no religious poetry, except such as deals in substitutional salvation.

A recent reverend annotator has remarked that "these verses are indication of a contrition for sin, that in the mouth of any other confessor (even St Augustine) would be attributed by the most scrupulous judges to the influence of the Holy Ghost."]

#### STANZAS, ON THE SAME OCCASION.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

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<sup>1</sup> renewing storms ?  
 Is it departing pangs my soul<sup>2</sup> 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 ;<sup>3</sup>  
 But, should my Author health again dispense,  
 Again I might<sup>4</sup> desert fair virtue's way ;

Again in folly's path might go astray ;<sup>5</sup>  
 Again exalt the brute and sink the man ;  
 Then how should<sup>6</sup> I for heavenly mercy pray,  
 Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan ?  
 Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet<sup>7</sup> to temptation ran ?

O Thou great Governor of all below !  
 If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,<sup>8</sup>  
 Thy nod<sup>9</sup> 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 pow'rs to be,<sup>10</sup>  
 To rule their torrent in th' allowèd line ;  
 O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine !

[This composition is set down in the poet's Common-place Book immediately following the preceding, and entitled "Misgivings in the Hour of Despondency and Prospect of Death." He copied it from thence into the Stair manuscript of early pieces (now dismembered and scattered abroad). It is there headed—"Misgivings of Despondency on the Approach of the Gloomy Monarch of the Grave." It was also inserted in the manuscript book of like pieces presented to Mrs Dunlop, under the heading—"Stanzas on the same occasion (as the preceding) in the manner of *Beattie's Minstrel*." That collection is also cut up and scattered ; and these verses, apparently once forming part of it, are exhibited within the Burns monument at Edinburgh. On comparing the copy in the text with the earlier ones, we find that the versification underwent some polishing in 1787, to fit it for appearance in the author's Edinburgh edition.

This piece acquires a certain interest from the manner in which Dr John Brown (author of "Rab and his Friends") has introduced an anecdote concerning it in his little book—"Pet Marjorie: a Story of Child Life Fifty Years Ago" (1863).

The variations in the early manuscripts are as follow :—

- |                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <sup>1</sup> midst. | <sup>2</sup> heart.   | <sup>3</sup> Forgive where I so oft have gone astray. |
| <sup>4</sup> would. | <sup>5</sup> Again to passions I would fall a prey.         |   |
|                     | <sup>5</sup> with passions would be led astray.             | <sup>6</sup> can.                                     |
| <sup>7</sup> then.  | <sup>8</sup> If one so black with crimes dare call on Thee. | <sup>9</sup> breath.                                  |
| <sup>9</sup> rod.   | <sup>10</sup> unfit my native powers be.                    | <sup>10</sup> feel my powers be.]                     |

## FICKLE FORTUNE.—“ A FRAGMENT.”

(CROMEK, 1808.)

THOUGH fickle Fortune has deceived me,  
 She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill ;  
 Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,  
 Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.—

I'll act with prudence as far as I'm able,  
 But if success I must never find,  
 Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,  
 I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

[The poet has set this down in his Common-place Book, under date, September 1785, and thus remarks :—“The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which indeed threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned, [when the prayer ‘O Thou great Being,’ was composed—see p. 30,] and though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since, a ‘tempest brewing round me in the grim sky’ of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will some time or other—perhaps ere long—overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness.”

The reader has already seen, at page 7, the four lines which form the first half of the above fragment. The poet here reproduces them with an important variation in line third, which he appropriately alters from

“ Of many a joy and hope bereav'd me.”

These eight lines altogether read more like rough prose than measured verse ; they have at the same time a certain earnest vigour, and in sentiment are in unison with all he wrote at that period. He says the fragment was constructed “in imitation of an old Scotch song well known among the country ingle-sides,” and of that he quotes one verse thus—

“ When clouds in skies do come together,  
 To hide the brightness of the sun,  
 There will surely be some pleasant weather  
 When a' thir storms are spent and gone.”

He tells us that he has noted that verse “both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times.”]

## RAGING FORTUNE—FRAGMENT OF SONG.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

O RAGING Fortune's withering blast  
 Has laid my leaf full low !  
 O raging Fortune's withering blast  
 Has laid my leaf full low !

My stem was fair, my bud was green,  
 My blossom sweet did blow ;  
 The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,  
 And made my branches grow ;

But luckless Fortune's northern storms  
 Laid a' my blossoms low,—  
 But luckless Fortune's northern storms  
 Laid a'.my blossoms low !

[This sketch was produced at the same time with the preceding. Our poet records in his Common-place Book that he then "set about composing an air in the old Scotch style. I am (he adds) not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, . . . but these were the verses I composed to suit it." As we do with the verses at page 40, we omit the capital letter "O" at the end of every second line, to avoid the unpleasant effect in reading.]

## IMPROMPTU—"I'LL GO AND BE A SODGER."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

O WHY the deuce should I repine,  
 And be an ill foreboder ?  
 I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine,  
 I'll go and be a sodger !

I gat some gear wi' mickle care,  
 I held it weel thegither ;  
 But now it's gane, and something mair—  
 I'll go and be a sodger !

[This is the sequel to the poet's previous penitential bemoanings, and apostrophes to "Fickle Fortune." "Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution!"—he wrote to a lady friend, on receipt of what he deemed ruinous intelligence—"accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope."

The poet was now at home from Irvine. He reached Lochlie about the end of March; and Chambers mentions, in 1856, that the stone chimney-piece of the little garret room where Burns slept in his father's house still bore the initials "R. B.," with the date 1782, supposed to have been cut by the poet's own hand. That relic no longer exists.]

SONG—"NO CHURCHMAN AM I."

*Tune*—"Prepare, my dear Brethren."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

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 care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow ;  
 I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low ;  
 But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,  
 And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

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.

The wife of my bosom, alas ! she did die ;  
 For sweet consolation to church I did fly ;  
 I found that old Solomon provèd it fair,  
 That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all care.

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.

“ 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 harass'd<sup>1</sup> with care.

[We are inclined to set this down as a production of 1782. The Bachelors' Club was instituted at the close of 1780, and the poet was admitted an apprentice Free Mason in July 1781, just before he proceeded to Irvine. He was passed and raised on 1st October following, on which occasion, if he was present at Tarbolton, he must have travelled from Irvine for the purpose.

The song in the text has none of the elements of popularity in it, and seems more like an imitation of an English song, than a spontaneous outburst of his own genius. Indeed in the collection of songs which he studied so much during his boyhood, there is one that appears to have been his model : the closing line of one of its stanzas being

“ And a big-belly'd bottle's a mighty good thing.”

VAR. <sup>1</sup> Pressèd, in all editions prior to 1793.]

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\* Young's “ Night Thoughts.”—R. B.

## BALLAD—MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

*Tune*—"The weaver and his shuttle, O."

(CROMEK, 1808.)

MY father was a farmer upon the Carrick border,<sup>1</sup>  
 And carefully he bred me in decency and order ;  
 He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing ;  
 For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth  
 regarding.

Then out into the world my course I did determine ;  
 Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was  
 charming :  
 My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education :  
 Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted Fortune's favour ;  
 Some cause unseen still stept between, to frustrate each  
 endeavour ;  
 Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd, sometimes by friends  
 forsaken ;  
 And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst  
 mistaken.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last, with Fortune's vain  
 delusion,  
 I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this  
 conclusion :  
 The past was bad, and the future hid, its good or ill  
 untrièd ;  
 But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would  
 enjoy it.



No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend  
me ;  
So I must toil, and sweat, and moil,<sup>2</sup> and labour to sustain  
me ;  
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me  
early ;  
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for Fortune  
fairly.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doom'd  
to wander,  
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber ;  
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain  
or sorrow ;  
I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow.

But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in his palace,  
Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her  
wonted malice :  
I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it  
farther :  
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her.

When sometimes by my labour, I earn a little money,  
Some unforeseen misfortune comes gen'rally upon me ;  
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my goodnatur'd folly :  
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be  
melancholy.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting  
ardour,  
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the  
farther :

Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you,  
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you.

[The poet describes the above as "a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification, but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over."

<sup>1</sup> Here, and at the close of each line of the ballad, the letter "O" is introduced in the Author's MS. to make it fit the tune to which he composed it. It has a disturbing effect in reading, and therefore we withdraw it from our text for the present. In an after part of the work the verses will be given verbatim, as part of the Common-place Book.

<sup>2</sup> "moil" in the MS., but "broil" in Cromek.]

### JOHN BARLEYCORN : A BALLAD.\*

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

THERE was three kings into the east,  
Three kings both great and high,  
And they hae sworn a solemn oath  
<sup>1</sup> John Barleycorn should die.

They took<sup>2</sup> a plough and plough'd him down,  
Put clods upon his head,  
And they hae sworn a solemn oath  
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly<sup>3</sup> on,  
And show'rs began to fall ;  
John Barleycorn got up again,  
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,<sup>4</sup>  
And he grew thick and strong ;  
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,  
That no one should him wrong.

---

\* This is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name.—R. B.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,<sup>5</sup>  
When<sup>6</sup> he grew wan and pale ;  
His bending joints and drooping head  
Show'd he began to fail.

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

They've taen a weapon,<sup>7</sup> long and sharp,  
And cut him by the knee ;  
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,  
Like a rogue for forgerie.

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.

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

They laid him out<sup>8</sup> upon the floor,  
To work him farther woe ;  
And still, as signs of life appear'd,  
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,  
The marrow of his bones ;  
But a<sup>9</sup> miller us'd him worst of all,  
For he crush'd him between two stones.

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.

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

'Twill make a man forget his woe ;  
 'Twill<sup>10</sup> heighten all his joy :  
 'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,  
 Tho' the tear were in her eye.

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

[In the Common-place Book, this is set down immediately before *Poor Mailie*, and all that we know concerning the date of the two poems is that they were written at Lochlie, prior to the year 1784. Gilbert has said regarding the date of the latter that his two younger brothers William and John, then acted as *drivers* in the ploughing operations of the poet and himself. John, in 1782, would be thirteen years old—a very likely age for him to commence duties of that kind ; so by this mode of calculation we arrive at a fair conclusion, were we to hold that *John Barleycorn* and *Poor Mailie* were composed shortly after Burns' return from Irvine in the early spring of 1782. It is not likely that the poet ever saw the ancient ballad of "John Barleycorn" in any collection. A copy in the Pepys' library at Cambridge furnished the old version included by Robert Jamieson in his collection of Ballads, 2 vols., 1808. In the poet's note to the Ballad he says :—"I once heard the old song that goes by this name sung, and being very fond of it, and remembering only two or three verses of it, viz., the 1st, 2d, and 3d, with some scraps, I have interwoven them here and there in the following piece." The poet could never be induced to correct the defective grammar in the opening line, deeming, we suppose, with Shakespeare,

that bad grammar is sometimes a positive beauty. James Hogg had the same feeling in regard to his favourite song "When the kye comes hame." In another of Burns' most admired Ballads,—“There *was* five Carlines in the south”—evidently composed on the model of *John Barleycorn*—he retains the “bad grammar” and directs the song to be sung to the tune of *Chevy Chase*. We cannot tell whether that air was the same above referred to, which he “once heard sung.” In our youth we used to hear *John Barleycorn* sung, and to this day the tune rings in our ears. We never saw it in print, and lest it should be lost to the world, we here set it down.

*Slow time.**Air from oral tradition.*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

There was three kings in to the east, Three kings both great and high;  
 And they hae sworn a so - lemn oath, John Bar - ley - corn should die.

The variations from the Common-place Book are as follow:—

- <sup>1</sup> That John Barleycorn.    <sup>2</sup> They've taen.    <sup>3</sup> The Spring time it came on.  
<sup>4</sup> The Summer it came on.    <sup>5</sup> The Autumn it came on.    <sup>6</sup> And.  
<sup>7</sup> They took a hook was.    <sup>8</sup> They've thrown him out.    <sup>9</sup> the miller.    <sup>10</sup> And.]

## THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY<sup>1</sup> PET YOWE,—AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,  
 Was<sup>2</sup> ae day nibblin on the tether,  
 Upon her cloot<sup>a</sup> she coost<sup>b</sup> a hitch,  
 An' owre she warsl'd<sup>e</sup> in the ditch:  
 There, groanin, dying, she did lie,  
 When *Hughoc*<sup>\*</sup> he cam doytin<sup>d</sup> by.

<sup>a</sup> hoof.

<sup>b</sup> cast.

<sup>c</sup> fell struggling.

<sup>d</sup> walking stupidly.

\* A neighbour herd-callant, about three-fourths as wise as other folk.—*R. B.*

Wi' glowrin<sup>e</sup> een, and 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' case !  
 My dying words attentive hear,  
 An' bear them to my Master dear.

“ Tell him, if e'er again he keep  
 As muckle gear<sup>f</sup> as buy a sheep—  
 O, bid him never tie them mair,  
 Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair !  
 But ca' them out to park or hill,  
 An' let them wander at their will :  
 So may his flock increase, an' grow  
 To scores o' lambs, and 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,<sup>g</sup> an' butchers' knives !  
 But gie them guid cow-milk<sup>g</sup> their fill,  
 Till they be fit to fend themsel ;  
 An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,  
 Wi' taets<sup>h</sup> o' hay an' rippis<sup>i</sup> o' corn.

---

<sup>e</sup> staring.   <sup>f</sup> cash.   <sup>g</sup> foxes.   <sup>h</sup> small quantities.   <sup>i</sup> handfuls.

“ An’ may they never learn the gaets,<sup>j</sup>  
 Of ither vile, wanrestfu<sup>k</sup> pets—  
 To slink thro’ slaps, an’ reave an’ steal,  
 At stacks o’ pease, or stocks o’ kail !  
 So may they, like their great<sup>4</sup> forbears,  
 For monie a year come thro’ the sheers :  
 So wives will gie them bits o’ bread,  
 An’ bairns greet for them when they’re dead.

“ My poor toop-lamb, my son an’ heir,  
 O, bid him breed him up wi’ care !  
 An’ if he live to be a beast,  
 To pit some havins<sup>1</sup> in his breast !

“ An’ warn him—what I winna name<sup>5</sup>  
 To stay content wi’ yowes at hame ;  
 An’ no to rin an’ wear his cloots,  
 Like ither menseless,<sup>m</sup> graceless brutes.

“ An’ niest, my yowie, silly thing,  
 Gude keep thee frae a tether string !  
 O, may thou ne’er forgather up,  
 Wi’ ony blastit, moorland toop ;  
 But ay keep mind to moop<sup>n</sup> an’ mell,<sup>o</sup>  
 Wi’ sheep o’ credit like thysel !

“ And now, my bairns, wi’ my last breath,  
 I lea’e my blessin wi’ you baith :  
 An’ when you think upo’<sup>6</sup> your mither,  
 Mind to be kind to ane anither.

---

<sup>j</sup> ways.

<sup>m</sup> unmannerly.

<sup>k</sup> restless.

<sup>n</sup> fondle.

<sup>1</sup> manners.

<sup>o</sup> associate.

“ 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.”<sup>p</sup>

This said, poor Mailie turn’d her head,  
 An’ clos’d her een among the dead !

[Carlyle considers this the poet’s happiest effort of its peculiar kind : he classes it with the *Address to a Mouse*, and the *Auld Farmer’s Mare*, but holds that “ this has even more of sportive tenderness in it.” It was composed—just as we now see it—one afternoon while engaged with his plough on the slopes of Lochlie, his brother Gilbert being at work with his team on another part of the field. The poet’s youngest brother *John*—of whose early death, by the way, not a syllable has been ever heard—drove the horses, while the musing bard guided his plough in the even rig. Gilbert narrates the incident to this effect :—As they were setting out about noon, with their teams, a curious-looking, awkward boy, named Hugh Wilson, ran up to them in a very excited manner, and with a rueful countenance, announced that poor Mailie had got entangled in her tether and was lying in the ditch. It had never occurred to the terror-stricken “Huoc” that he might have lent a hand in lifting her up : Mailie, however, was soon rescued from her peril and lived—it is hoped—to see her bairns’ bairns. This timely intervention of the half-witted callant was the means of sending down the name of poor Mailie along with his own to distant posterity ; for his comical consternation and pathetic interest in her fate suggested the poem to Burns.

The variations here annexed are from the Common-place Book :—

<sup>1</sup> MY AIN.      <sup>2</sup> Were.      <sup>3</sup> het milk.      <sup>4</sup> auld.  
<sup>5</sup> ay at ridin time.      <sup>6</sup> ever mind your mither.]

<sup>p</sup> bladder.





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

She was nae get<sup>e</sup> o' moorlan tips,<sup>f</sup>  
 Wi' tauted ket,<sup>g</sup> an' hairy hips ;  
 For her forbears<sup>h</sup> 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<sup>i</sup> 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 Ayr your chanters tune !  
 Come, join the melancholious croon  
                                   O' Robin's reed !  
 His heart will never get aboon—  
                                   His Mailie's dead !

[That this poem was composed at a period somewhat later than the "Dying Words," is probable from the fact that the "Elegy" is not inscribed in the poet's Common-place Book, while the main poem is recorded there, almost verbatim as afterwards published. Dr Currie informs us (Vol. III., p. 395, Ed. 1801), that in preparing the "Elegy"

<sup>c</sup> valley.<sup>d</sup> knoll.<sup>e</sup> offspring.

rams.

<sup>g</sup> matted fleece.<sup>h</sup> ancestors.<sup>i</sup> unlucky.

for the press, the poet substituted the present sixth verse for the following:—

“ 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, chews the hams,  
   O’ Mailie dead.”

The substituted stanza is doubtless a great improvement ; yet we cannot but regret with Currie that “Fairlie lambs” should lose the honour once intended for them. Fairlie was the first place in Ayrshire where the poet’s father in early manhood obtained employment.]

### SONG—THE RIGS O’ BARLEY.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

The sky was blue, the wind was still,  
 The moon was shining clearly ;  
 I set her down, wi’ right good will,  
 Among 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,  
 Among the rigs o’ barley.  
 Corn rigs, an’ barley rigs, &c.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace ;  
 Her heart was beating rarely :  
 My blessings on that happy place,  
 Among 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  
 Among the rigs o' barley.  
 Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, &c.

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',  
 Among the rigs o' barley.  
 Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, &c.

[We conceive that we cannot be far wrong in setting down this and the four songs which immediately follow as compositions of the period from the summer of 1782 to the close of 1783, when the Burnes family was preparing to remove to Mossgiel, and old William Burnes was about to bid them all farewell for ever. Many of the "Annies" of the district have contended for the dubious honour of being the heroine of this warmly coloured, yet highly popular, lyric. The name of Anne Ronald has been mentioned; but, as we have already seen, the poet was content to admire her at a respectful distance. Anne Rankine, daughter of a farmer at Adamhill, within two miles west of Lochlie, and who afterwards became Mrs Merry, not only "owned the soft impeachment," but to her dying day boasted that she was the Annie of the "Rigs o' Barley." If so, then Gilbert was right when he told Dr Currie that "there was often a great disparity between the fair captivator and her attributes" as depicted in song by her lover.

Our poet is said to have, on more than one occasion in after-life, referred to the closing verse of this song as one of his happiest strokes of workmanship.]

## SONG—" COMPOSED IN AUGUST."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns  
 Bring Autumn's pleasant weather ;  
 The moorcock<sup>1</sup> springs on whirring wings,  
 Among the blooming heather :  
 Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,  
 Delights the weary farmer ;  
 And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night,  
 To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves<sup>2</sup> the fruitful fells,  
 The plover loves<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

But, Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,  
 Thick flies the skimming swallow ;

The sky is blue, the fields in view,  
 All fading-green and yellow :  
 Come let us stray our gladsome way,  
 And view the charms of Nature ;  
 The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,  
 And ev'ry<sup>3</sup> happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,  
 Till<sup>4</sup> the silent moon shine<sup>5</sup> clearly ;  
 I'll grasp<sup>6</sup> 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 !

[This is "Song Second" (of the author's Edinburgh edition), referred to in his autobiography as "the ebullition of that passion which ended the school business" at Kirkoswald. If the lyric was suggested and partly sketched out when the poet was but in his seventeenth year, we are assured, on the testimony of Mrs Begg, that at a considerably later period he experienced another love-fit for Kirkoswald Peggy, and corresponded with her, with a view to matrimony. It would be then that he dressed up this finely descriptive composition into its existing form ; but as he soon thereafter fell into grief about the subject of his epistle to Rankine, he was forced to abandon the idea of matrimony with Peggy.]

We shall again have occasion to advert to this very early inspirer of the poet's passion, when, under date 1786, we give the verses he inscribed on a presentation copy to her of his first edition. Among the bard's letters also will be given one addressed by him to an early Carrick friend, Mr Thomas Orr, Park, dated 11th Nov. 1784, which throws some light on the present subject.

The variations in the Common-place Book the reader has already got at page 3. The poet sent the song to Johnson in 1792, with the following touches of alteration :—

<sup>1</sup> gor-cock.    <sup>2</sup> loes.    <sup>3</sup> ilka.    <sup>4</sup> While.    <sup>5</sup> shines.    <sup>6</sup> clasp.]

## SONG—"MY NANIE, O."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

BEHIND yon hills where Lugar\* flows,  
 'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,  
 The wintry<sup>1</sup> sun the day has clos'd,  
 And I'll awa to Nanie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' shill ;  
 The night's baith mirk<sup>2</sup> and rainy, O ;  
 But I'll get my plaid an' out I'll steal,  
 An' owre the hill to Nanie, O.

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.

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.

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.

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<sup>3</sup> Nanie, O.

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\* "Stinchar," in all the author's editions, including that of 1794 ; but George Thomson says the poet sanctioned the change in 1792.

Our auld<sup>4</sup> guidman delights to view  
 His sheep an' kye<sup>5</sup> thrive bonie O ;  
 But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,  
 An' has nae care but Nanie, O.

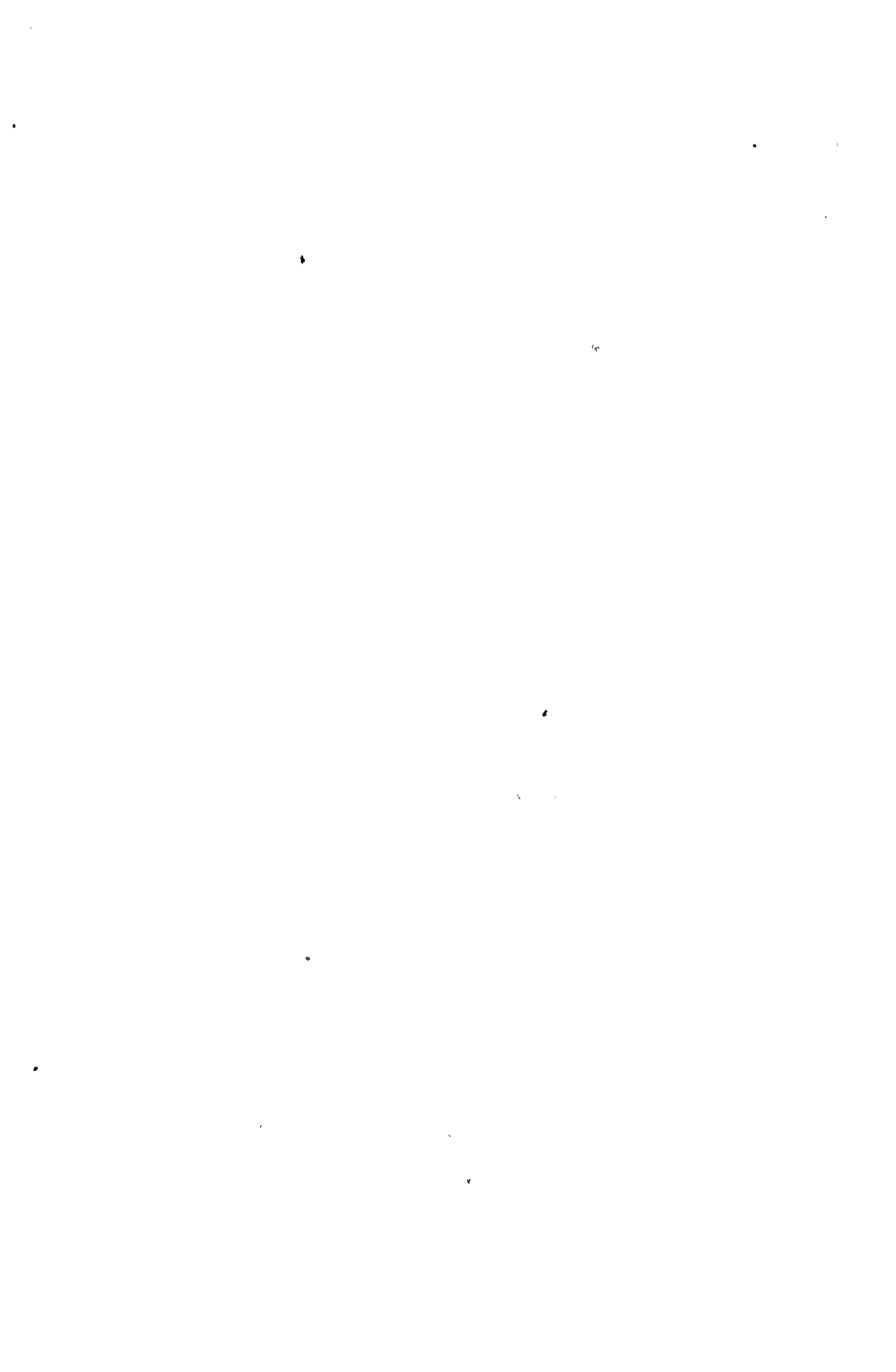
Come weel, come woe, I care na by ;  
 I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O :  
 Nae ither care in life have I,  
 But live, an' love my Nanie, O.

[The author, in his Common-place Book, directs this song to be sung to the tune of "As I came in by London, O," which no doubt would be the opening line of some then popular, but now unknown English song, set to the old Scotch air, "My Nanie, O."

A vast deal has been written and said concerning the heroineship of this song. The Rev. Hamilton Paul, who belonged to Ayrshire, and was almost a contemporary of Burns, thus wrote in 1819:—"In Kilmarnock, Burns first saw 'Nanie,' the subject of one of his most popular ballads. She captivated him as well by the charms of her person as by the melody of her voice. As he devoted much of his spare time to her society, and listened to her singing with the most religious attention, her sister observed to him, that he paid more attention to Nanie's singing than he would do to a preaching; he retorted with an oath—"Madam, there's no comparison." On the other hand, Gilbert Burns, who was aware that the song was composed before his brother ever spent an hour in Kilmarnock, informed George Thomson, that "Nanie was a farmer's daughter in Tarbolton parish, named Fleming, to whom the poet paid some of that roving attention which he was continually devoting to some one. Her charms were indeed mediocre, and what she had were sexual, which indeed was the characteristic of the greater part of his mistresses. He was no Platonic lover, whatever he might pretend or suppose of himself."

Allan Cunningham and other annotators have, through a misconception of the opening lines of the song, run away with the notion that Nanie belonged to Carrick, like the subject of the preceding lyric. But when we have the poet himself confessing that *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle* were his "sole principles of action," and that when the labours of each day were over, he "spent the evening in the way after his own heart," we must conclude that his rural divinities were not far to seek. It is by no means requisite that the inspirer of this picture of rustic purity should have been named "Nanie." Here the poet sets himself to clothe with suitable words one of our most popular native melodies, and unless he had closed each verse with the familiar name—"My Nanie, O," nothing that he could have composed for it could have answered the purpose so well.





Green grow the rakes —  
Green grow the rakes —  
The sweetest hours that'er I spend  
Are spent among the rakes —

There's nought but care on'er my hand  
That pinches the life of man

An' twice nae for the rakes —  
Green grow &c.

The wark race may riches chafe

An' riches will may fly them —

An' thro' at last they catch them fast

These hours can nae eny for them —

Put ye me a carry haul at e'er  
My arms about my dearie —

An' warty care an' warty men

May a' goe tap-falterie —

Green grow &c.

For you that's doue an' pners at this  
bye're naught but pengles aces —  
The lark'st man the warty —

He deary lov'd the lark'st —

Green-grow &c.

Facsimile from the M.S. of the Common-Place Book  
in possession of John Adam Esq. Greenock.



The early copy in the Common-place Book does not materially differ from that afterwards published ; but at the end of verse first, and at the close of the song he gives the following chorus :—

“And O my bonie Nanie, O,  
My young, my handsome Nanie, O ;  
Tho’ I had the world all at my will,  
I would give it all for<sup>6</sup> Nanie, O.”

The other variations are :—

<sup>1</sup> weary. <sup>2</sup> dark. <sup>3</sup> about. <sup>4</sup> “auld” omitted. <sup>5</sup> his kye. <sup>6</sup> to.]

### SONG—GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

*Chor.*—Green grow the rashes, O ;  
Green grow the rashes, O ;  
The sweetest hours that e’er I spend,  
Are spent among the lasses, O.

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

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

But gie me a cannie<sup>a</sup> hour at e’en,  
My arms about my dearie, O ;  
An’ war’ly cares, an’ war’ly men,  
May a’ gae tapsalteerie,<sup>b</sup> O !  
Green grow, &c.

<sup>a</sup> snug.

<sup>b</sup> topsy-turvy.

For you sae douce,<sup>c</sup> ye sneer<sup>1</sup> at this ;  
 Ye're nought but senseless asses, O :  
 The wisest man the warl' e'er<sup>2</sup> saw,  
 He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.  
 Green grow, &c.

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

[The author has nowhere given an indication of the date of this widely popular song. He entered it among other early pieces in his Common-place Book in August 1784. It may have been then just composed; but a Tarbolton contemporary spoke of it to Chambers, as a Lochlie production, in these terms:—"Burns composed a song on almost every tolerable-looking lass in the parish, and finally one in which he embraced them all." It is certain, however, that its crowning stanza—the last one—was not added till a much later date, perhaps not till he brushed up the song to appear in his Edinburgh volume of 1787. This is proved by the fact that in his early manuscript copies that verse is wanting.

The poet's son Robert, during the period of his retirement in Dumfries, used, in connection with this song, to repeat a stanza added by himself, which deserves preservation as a happy sequel to his father's idea in the closing verse. It is as follows:—

"Frae man's ain side the form was made  
 That a' God's wark surpasses, O ;  
 Man only loes his ain heart's-bluid  
 Wha dearly loves the lasses, O."

The early variations are only in the fourth verse:—

<sup>1</sup> For you that's douse, and sneers at this.      <sup>2</sup> the warl' saw.

In all the author's printed copies, except in the *Museum*, the word *spend* in line third of the chorus is altered to "spent," to the detriment of the poet's grammar. We therefore adhere to the *Museum* copy in that particular, which corresponds with the MS. of the Common-place Book.]

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<sup>c</sup> grave, stolid.

## SONG—"INDEED WILL I," QUO' FINDLAY.

*Tune*—"Lass, an I come near thee."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

" WHA is that at my bower-door ?"  
 ' O wha is it but Findlay !'  
 " Then gae your gate, ye 'se nae be here :"  
 ' Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay,  
 " What make ye, sae like a thief ?"  
 ' O come and see, quo' Findlay ;  
 " Before the morn ye'll work mischief"—  
 ' Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.  
  
 " Gif I rise and let you in"—  
 ' Let me in, quo' Findlay,  
 " Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din"—  
 ' Indeed will I, quo' Findlay,  
 " In my bower if ye should stay"—  
 ' Let me stay, quo' Findlay ;  
 " I fear ye'll bide till break o' day"—  
 ' Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.  
  
 " Here this night if ye remain"—  
 ' I'll remain, quo' Findlay ;  
 " I dread ye'll learn the gait again"—  
 ' Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.  
 " What may pass within this bower"—  
 ' Let it pass, quo' Findlay ;  
 " Ye maun conceal till your last hour"—  
 ' Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

[We consider ourselves justifiable in recording this as a production of the Lochlie period of the author's life. Gilbert Burns assured Cromek that his brother composed it in emulation of a piece in Ramsay's Teatable Miscellany, called "The auld man's best argument." An old

woman in Tarbolton, named Jean Wilson, used to divert him and his companions by singing it with great effect; and Gilbert supposed the poet had not then seen Ramsay's song.

James Findlay, an Officer of Excise in Tarbolton, who afterwards married one of the "belles of Mauchline," was appointed, in March 1788, to train Burns for the duties of an exciseman. It is by no means improbable that this same Mr Findlay, or a relative of his, was the hero of the foregoing song.]

### REMORSE—A FRAGMENT.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

OF all the numerous ills that hurt our peace—  
 That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,  
 Beyond comparison the worst are those  
 By our own folly, or our guilt brought on :<sup>1</sup>  
 In ev'ry other circumstance, the mind  
 Has this to say, 'it was no deed of mine :'  
 But, when to all the evil of misfortune  
 This sting is added, 'blame thy foolish self !'  
 Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse,  
 The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—  
 Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involvèd others,  
 The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us ;  
 Nay more, that very love their cause of ruin !  
 O burning hell ! in all thy store of torments  
 There's not a keener lash !  
 Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart  
 Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,  
 Can reason down its agonizing throbs ;  
 And, after proper purpose of amendment,  
 Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace ?  
 O happy, happy, enviable man !  
 O glorious magnanimity of soul !

[These lines (reminding one of the "Fragment of a Tragedy," at p. 11), are recorded, under date September 1783, in the poet's first Com-



mon-place Book. It is most probable that the poem is set down at its proper date, prompted by keen self-reproaches produced through the effects of immoral indulgence. In his observations which introduce the piece, he seems to take credit to himself for bearing up against his wretchedness with manly firmness, because tempered with a penitential sense of his own misconduct. This spirit he terms "a glorious effort of self-command."

<sup>1</sup> Line fourth of this piece shews the only variation in early manuscripts. In the Common-place Book it appears as in our text. Currie gives it thus :

That to our folly or our guilt we owe :]

### EPITAPH ON JAMES GRIEVE, LAIRD OF BOGHEAD, TARBOLTON.

(ORIG. COMMON-PLACE BOOK, 1872.)

HERE lies Boghead among the dead,  
In hopes to get salvation ;  
But if such as he, in Heav'n may be,  
Then welcome—hail ! damnation.

[This is the earliest sample of an extensive crop of like facetiae which the author, to the close of his life, was fond of producing. It is not very complimentary to the poor laird who provoked it ; yet, by adopting a very slight variation, the poet, in his Kilmarnock volume, converted this quatrain into a rich compliment to his friend, Gavin Hamilton, thus ;—

"The poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,  
Whom canting wretches blamed ;  
But with such as he, where'er he be,  
May I be saved or damned !"

Boghead lies upwards of a mile due west from Lochlie, and near Adam-hill. This epitaph does not accord very well with a gossiping anecdote given by Dr Waddell conveying the allegation of frequent friendly visits paid by Burns to Boghead during this early period.]

EPITAPH ON WM. HOOD, SENR., IN TARBOLTON.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

HERE Souter Hood in death does sleep ;  
 To hell if he's gane thither,  
 Satan, gie him thy gear to keep ;  
 He'll haud it weel thegeather.

[The poet printed this with the title "ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER." Every annotator hitherto has held it to apply to one of the elders of Mauchline kirk who aided in the persecution of Gavin Hamilton. It now appears, however, that one of the Tarbolton elders had, at a much earlier period, also provoked the poet's hostility—not certainly by his hypocrisy, but by his extreme penuriousness. The epitaph is recorded in the Common-place Book, along with the following, under date April 1784.]

EPITAPH ON MY OWN FRIEND AND MY FATHER'S  
 FRIEND, WM. MUIR IN TARBOLTON MILL.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

AN honest man here lies at rest,  
 As e'er God with his image blest ;  
 The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
 The friend of age, and guide of youth :  
 Few hearts like his—with virtue warm'd,  
 Few heads with knowledge so informed :  
 If there's another world, he lives in bliss ;  
 If there is none, he made the best of this.

[We take the title of this from the original Common-place Book. Currie's heading is simply "Epitaph on a Friend." This has always been regarded as one of the finest of the poet's numerous compliments, paid in a posthumous form, to hale and hearty friends. The subject of it was the tenant of "Willie's Mill" of Death and Dr Hornbook, and a life-long friend of Burns and his relations. He died in 1793.

The opening line reads thus in the early MS.—

Here lies a cheerful, honest breast.]

## EPITAPH ON MY EVER HONOURED FATHER.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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."

[It is not likely (although not impossible) that this well-known Epitaph, like the preceding, was composed during the lifetime of the subject of it. We find it recorded on the same page, and under the same date (April 1784) as that to William Muir, in the original Common-place Book. Instead of the opening line, as in the text, he has there written—

"O ye who sympathize with virtue's pains ;"

and apparently not satisfied with that, he suggests, at foot of the page—

"O ye whose hearts decessèd merit pains."

The improvement effected in that line, as afterwards published, is very striking. The death of William Burnes happened at Lochlie, on 13th February 1784. These lines of the son are engraved on the father's headstone in Alloway kirkyard ; and the reader, in musing over it, is apt to revert to the memorable words of John Murdoch :—"O for a world of men of such dispositions ! I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions. Then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of those we see in Westminster Abbey!"

## BALLAD ON THE AMERICAN WAR.

*Tune.*—"Killicrankie."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

WHEN Guildford good our pilot stood,  
 An' did our hellim<sup>a</sup> 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,<sup>b</sup> man ;  
 An' did nae less, in full congress,  
 Than quite refuse our law, man.

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.

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage  
 Was kept at Boston-ha',|| man ;

<sup>a</sup> helm.<sup>b</sup> toss.

\* General Richard Montgomery invaded Canada, autumn 1775, and took Montreal,—the British commander, Sir Guy Carleton, retiring before him. In an attack on Quebec he was less fortunate, being killed by a storm of grape-shot in leading on his men at Cape Diamond.

† Lowrie's Burn, a pseudonym for the St Lawrence.

‡ A passing compliment to the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, the patrons of the poet.

|| General Gage, governor of Massachusetts, was cooped up in Boston by General Washington during the latter part of 1775 and early part of 1776. In consequence of his inefficiency, he was replaced in October of that year by General Howe.

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 hackèd sma',† man.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip,  
 Till Fraser brave did fa', man ;  
 Then lost his way, ae misty day,  
 In Saratoga shaw,<sup>c</sup> 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.

Then Montague, an' Guilford too,  
 Began to fear a fa', man ;  
 And Sackville dour, wha stood the stoure,<sup>d</sup>  
 The German chief to thraw,<sup>e</sup> 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.

<sup>c</sup> wood.<sup>d</sup> commotion.<sup>e</sup> thwart.

\* General Howe removed his army from New York to Philadelphia in the summer of 1777.

† Alluding to a *razzia* made by orders of Howe at Peekskill, March 1777, when a large quantity of cattle belonging to the Americans was destroyed.

‡ General Burgoyne surrendered his army to General Gates, at Saratoga, on the Hudson, October 1776.

§ Alluding to the active operations of Lord Cornwallis in Virginia, in 1780, all of which ended, however, in his surrender of his army at Yorktown, October 1781, while vainly hoping for reinforcements from General Clinton at New York.

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.\*

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 *fuux 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<sup>g</sup> them a', man ! "

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,  
 (Inspirèd bardies saw, man),  
 Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, " Willie, rise !  
 Would I hae fear'd them a', man ? "

---

† cheers.

g vanquish.

\* Lord North's administration was succeeded by that of the Marquis of Rockingham, March 1782. At the death of the latter in the succeeding July, Lord Shelburne became prime minister, and Mr Fox resigned his secretaryship. Under his lordship, peace was restored, January 1783. By the union of Lord North and Mr Fox, Lord Shelburne was soon after forced to resign in favour of his rivals, the heads of the celebrated coalition.

† Fox's famous India Bill, by which his ministry was brought to destruction, December 1783.

But, word an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.  
 Gowff'd<sup>h</sup> 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<sup>i</sup> draw, man ;  
 An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid,  
 To mak it guid in law, man.\*

[With the exception of a very few expressions in the foregoing piece, it does not seem to have attracted popular attention. It was most likely a production of the spring of 1784, although not published in the author's first edition. He applied to the Earl of Glencairn and to Mr Erskine, Dean of Faculty, for their opinion as to the policy of including it in his Edinburgh volume, and they seem to have approved of it. Dr Blair, very characteristically remarked on reading the ballad that "Burns' politics smell of the smithy." This may be true, but the politics of the smithy regarding these matters did ultimately prevail. The explanatory foot-notes we adopt from Chambers.]

## REPLY TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY J. RANKINE,

THAT A GIRL IN HIS NEIGHBOURHOOD WAS WITH CHILD TO  
 THE POET.

(STEWART, 1801.)

I AM a keeper of the law  
 In some sma' points, altho' not a' ;  
 Some people tell me gin I fa',  
                   Ae way or ither,  
 The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',  
                   Breaks a' thegither.<sup>a</sup>

---

<sup>h</sup> struck.

<sup>i</sup> knife.

<sup>a</sup> James ii. 10.

\* In the new parliament called by Mr Pitt, after his accession to office in the spring of 1784, amidst the many new members brought in for his support, and that of the king's prerogative, there was an exceeding proportion from Scotland.

I hae been in for't ance or twice,  
 And winna say o'er far for thrice ;  
 Yet never met wi' that surprise  
                   That broke my rest ;  
 But now a rumour's like to rise—  
                   A whaup's<sup>b</sup> 'i the nest !

[The girl Elizabeth Paton, referred to in Rankine's announcement, had been a servant at Lochlie about the period of the Poet's father's death in Feb. 1784. Thereafter, when the Burnes family removed to Mossiel, the girl went to her own home at Largieside in Rankine's neighbourhood. In the natural course of events, the poet had soon occasion to write his famous "Epistle" to the same correspondent, on the subject of the preceding verses. That production accordingly now follows as a proper sequel.]

### EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE,

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,  
 The wale<sup>a</sup> o' cocks for fun an' drinking !  
 There's mony godly folks are thinking,  
                   Your dreams\* and tricks  
 Will send you Korah-like a-sinkin,  
                   Straught to auld Nick's.

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

---

<sup>b</sup> Curlew, a bird that will scream.

\* choice.

\* A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side.—*R. B.*



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<sup>b</sup> aff their back.

Think, wicked Sinner, wha ye're skaithing<sup>c</sup> :  
 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,  
 Yon sang\* ye'll sen't, wi' cannie<sup>d</sup> care,  
                                   And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing !  
 My muse dow<sup>e</sup> scarcely spread her wing ;  
 I've play'd mysel a bonie spring,  
                                   An' danc'd my fill !  
 I'd better gaen an' sair't<sup>f</sup> the king,  
                                   At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,  
 I gaed a rovin wi' the gun,

<sup>b</sup> tears it.<sup>c</sup> damaging.<sup>d</sup> considerate.<sup>e</sup> can.<sup>f</sup> served.

\* A song he had promised the author.—R. B.

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 thinkin they wad fash<sup>g</sup> me for't ;  
     But, Deil-ma-care !  
 Somebody tells the poacher-court,<sup>h</sup>  
     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,<sup>i</sup>  
 An' by my pouth<sup>r</sup> an' my hail,  
 An' by my hen, an' by her tail,  
     I vow an' swear !  
 The game shall pay, owre moor an' dale,  
     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 !

---

<sup>g</sup> bother.

<sup>h</sup> kirk-session.

<sup>i</sup> choice.

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"<sup>j</sup> to claim  
                                   An' thole their blethers !<sup>k</sup>

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.

[It would be interesting indeed to know what were the "poems" which the bard transmitted to Rankine along with this epistle, and even to learn what particular song he had craved from his jolly correspondent. Adamhill is in Craigie parish, although lying within two miles west of Lochlie, which was a much inferior farm. The special trick referred to in the second stanza was that of filling a sanctimonious professor miserably drunk, by entertaining him to a jorum of toddy at the farmhouse. The hot-water kettle had, by pre-arrangement, been primed with proof-whisky, so that the more water Rankine's guest added to his toddy for the purpose of diluting it, the more potent the liquor became.

Less reprehensible instances of his waggery were his "humorous dreams," which the ready-witted farmer of Adamhill had conveniently at hand to relate whenever he desired to help the progress of his argument, or to administer a rebuke. *Daft Rab Hamilton's* dreams were only poor imitations of those originally set forth by the poet's witty neighbour of Adamhill.]

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<sup>j</sup> a guinea.

<sup>k</sup> stand their abuse.

A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN  
DAUGHTER,

THE FIRST INSTANCE THAT ENTITLED HIM TO THE VENERABLE  
APPELLATION OF FATHER.

(STEWART, 1799, COMPARED WITH GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874.)

THOU 's welcome, wean; mishanter<sup>a</sup> fa' me,  
If thoughts<sup>1</sup> o' thee, or yet thy mamie,  
Shall ever daunton<sup>b</sup> me or awe me,  
                    My bonie<sup>2</sup> lady,  
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me  
                    Tyta or daddie.

Tho' now<sup>3</sup> they ca' me fornicator,  
An' tease my name in kintry clatter,  
The mair they talk, I'm kent the better,  
                    E'en let them clash;  
An auld wife's tongue 's a feckless<sup>c</sup> matter  
                    To gie ane fash.

Welcome! my bonie, sweet, wee dochter,  
Tho' ye come here a wee unsought for,  
And tho' your comin' I hae fought for,<sup>4</sup>  
                    Baith kirk and queir;<sup>5</sup>  
Yet, by my faith, ye're<sup>6</sup> no unwrought for,  
                    That I shall swear!

Wee image o' my bonie Betty,  
As fatherly I<sup>7</sup> kiss and daut<sup>d</sup> thee,  
As dear, and near my heart I set thee,  
                    Wi' as gude will  
As a' the priests had seen me get thee  
                    That 's out o' h—ll.

<sup>a</sup> mishap.

<sup>b</sup> discourage.

<sup>c</sup> powerless.

<sup>d</sup> fondle.

Sweet fruit o' mony a merry dint,  
 My funny toil is now a' tint,  
 Sin' thou cam to the warl' asklent,<sup>e</sup>  
     Which fools may scoff at ;  
 In my last plack<sup>f</sup> thy part's be in 't  
     The better ha'f o't.

Tho' I should be the waur bestead,  
 Thou's be as brow and bienly<sup>g</sup> clad,<sup>g</sup>  
 And thy young years as nicely bred  
     Wi' education,  
 As ony brat<sup>9</sup> o' wedlock's bed,  
     In a' thy station.

Lord grant<sup>10</sup> that thou may ay inherit  
 Thy nither's person, grace, an' merit,<sup>11</sup>  
 An' thy poor, worthless daddy's spirit,  
     Without his failins,  
 'Twill please me mair to see thee heir it,<sup>12</sup>  
     Than stocket mailens.<sup>h</sup>

For<sup>13</sup> if thou be what I wad hae thee,  
 And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,  
 I'll never rue my trouble wi' thee—  
     The cost nor shame o't,  
 But be a loving father to thee,  
     And brag the name o't.<sup>14</sup>

[The heading to the above poem is that in the Glenriddell volume preserved in Liverpool ; but the copy entered there in Burns' autograph differs considerably from that first given to the world by Stewart. The verses are differently arranged, and the poem contains two hitherto unpublished stanzas, besides an entire remodelling of the verse which is last in the Glenriddell copy, and the fifth in Stewart. By some inadvertency, as we suppose, Burns, in transcribing the poem, had omitted

<sup>e</sup> sinisterly.      <sup>f</sup> the smallest coin.      <sup>g</sup> warmly.      <sup>h</sup> farms.

Stewart's closing verse (the seventh in our text), which is so fine that it cannot be dispensed with. Through the kindness of Dr Carruthers, of Inverness, we have been supplied with a copy of this poem which Burns presented to the aged Wm. Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee. It corresponds almost entirely with the Glenriddell version, and contains the stanza wanting there. That and other Burns' MSS., to be hereafter noticed, are in the possession of Mr Tytler's great-grandson, Colonel Fraser-Tytler of Aldourie.

The child—born in Nov. 1784—was tenderly reared and educated at Mossgiel under the care of the poet's mother and sisters. When "Betty Burns" arrived at the age of twenty-one years, she received £200 as a marriage-portion out of a fund that had been subscribed for the widow and children of the bard. She bore a striking resemblance to her father, and became the wife of Mr John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, and died in December 1816, at the age of thirty-two. We have heard nothing of her offspring or her descendants.

The third and sixth stanzas are those that were brought to light in 1874 from the Glenriddell MSS. The variations in the Tytler copy and in Stewart are as follow :—

- |  |   |                               |                                 |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> ought.                              | <sup>2</sup> Sweet wee.                       | <sup>3</sup> What tho'.       | <sup>4</sup> bought for.        |
| <sup>5</sup> And that right dear.                |   | <sup>6</sup> 'Twas.           | <sup>7</sup> I, fatherly, will. |
| <sup>8</sup> as elegantly clad.                  |   | <sup>9</sup> gett.            | <sup>10</sup> Gude grant.       |
| <sup>11</sup> mother's looks and graceful merit. |   |                               |                                 |
| <sup>12</sup> hear and see it.                   |   | <sup>13</sup> And if thou be. |                                 |
|  | <sup>14</sup> A lovin father I'll be to thee, |                               |                                 |
|  | If thou be spared ;                           |                               |                                 |
|  | Thro' a' thy childish years I'll e'e thee,    |                               |                                 |
|  | And think't weel-ward.                        |                               |                                 |

The public is now in possession of the complete poem, with the author's last touches.]

### SONG—O LEAVE NOVELS.

(CURRIE, 1801.)

O LEAVE novels, ye Mauchline belles,  
 Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel ;  
 Such witching books are baited hooks  
 For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel ;  
 Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,  
 They make your youthful fancies reel ;  
 They heat your brains, and fire your veins,  
 And then you're prey for Rob Mossgiel.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,  
 A heart that warmly seems to feel ;  
 That feeling heart but acts a part—  
 'Tis rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.  
 The frank address, the soft caress,  
 Are worse than poisoned darts of steel ;  
 The frank address, and politesse,  
 Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.

[This song contains excellent advice to the young women of Mauchline. It would have been well for at least one of those "belles" had she acted on the poet's candid warning ; but, according to the philosophy of a reverend biographer of Burns whose observations are commended by Lockhart—"To warn the young and unsuspecting of their danger, is only to stimulate their curiosity." The warning, in that case, were better withheld.]

#### FRAGMENT—THE MAUCLINE LADY.

(CROMER, 1808.)

WHEN first I came to Stewart Kyle,  
 My mind it was na steady ;  
 Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,  
 A mistress still I had ay :

But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,  
 Not dreading anybody,  
 My heart was caught, before I thought,  
 And by a Mauchline lady.

[If the *Epistle to Davie* was composed in January 1785, then it follows that the poet's first rencontre with Jean Armour was in the summer of 1784. The present fragment, in that case, must apply to her. It is a free parody of the old song, "I had a horse, and I had nae mair," to which tune the author directs it to be set.

The reader ought to be informed that "Stewart Kyle," is that part of the central district of Ayrshire which lies between the rivers Irvine and Ayr. The poet was originally of "King Kyle,"—the district between the Ayr and the Doon. He shifted to Stewart Kyle on leaving Mount Oliphant for Lochlie, in 1777.]

## FRAGMENT—MY GIRL SHE'S AIRY.

*Tune.*—"Black Jock."

(ORIG. COMMON-PLACE BOOK, 1872.)

MY girl she's airy, she's buxom and gay;  
 Her breath is as sweet as the blossoms in May;  
     A touch of her lips it ravishes quite :  
 She's always good natur'd, good humor'd, and free ;  
 She dances, she glances, she smiles upon me ;  
     I never am happy when out of her sight.

Her slender neck, her handsome waist,  
 Her hair well curled, her stays well lac'd,  
 Her taper white leg with . . . . .  
 For her . . . . .  
     And O for the joys of a long winter night.

[The above fragment of song the poet records in his Common-place Book, under date September 1784. The editor of the printed copy of that curious MS. has noted that in the original there is some "defect," where the blanks are filled up with asterisks. Had the fragment been recorded a year later, we might safely assume that Jean Armour was the "airy girl" here sketched out.]

## THE BELLES OF MAUCLINE.

(CURRIE, 1803.)

IN Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,  
 The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a' ;  
 Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,  
     In London or Paris, they'd gotten it a.'



Miss Miller<sup>1</sup> is fine, Miss Markland's<sup>2</sup> divine,  
 Miss Smith<sup>3</sup> she has wit, and Miss Betty<sup>4</sup> is braw :  
 There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,<sup>5</sup>  
 But Armour's<sup>6</sup> the jewel for me o' them a'.

[For the sake of the interest involved in whatever interested Burns, the after-history of the "six proper young belles," catalogued by him in this little piece, has been devoutly traced and recorded. Miss Helen Miller<sup>(1)</sup> married Burns' friend, Dr Mackenzie. The "divine" Miss Markland<sup>(2)</sup> was married to Mr James Findlay, an officer of excise, first at Tarbolton, afterwards at Greenock. The witty Miss Jean Smith<sup>(3)</sup> bestowed herself upon Mr James Candlish, who, like Findlay, was a friend of Burns. The "braw" Miss Betty Miller<sup>(4)</sup> became Mrs Templeton; she was sister of No. 1, and died early in life. Miss Morton<sup>(5)</sup> gave her "beauty and fortune" to Mr Paterson, a merchant in Mauchline. Of Armour's history, Immortality has taken charge. The last survivor<sup>(6)</sup> died in January 1854; she was mother of the Rev. Dr Candlish of Edinburgh, who was laid beside his parents in Old Calton, at Edinburgh, in October 1873.]

### EPITAPH ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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 !

[The subject of this not very witty versicle, was James Humphrey, a jobbing mason, well-known in Mauchline and Tarbolton for his tendency to talk on matters of church doctrine. He used to hint that the poet had satirized him in revenge for being beaten by Humphrey in an argument. He died in 1844 at the advanced age of 86, an inmate of Faile poor's-house; and many an alms-offering he earned in consequence of Burns' epitaph.]

## EPITAPH ON A HENPECKED SQUIRE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

As father Adam first was fool'd,  
 (A case that's still too common,)  
 Here lies a man a woman ruled  
 The devil ruled the woman.

## EPIGRAM ON THE SAID OCCASION.

O DEATH, had'st thou but spar'd his life,  
 Whom we this day lament !  
 We freely wad exchanged the wife,  
 And a' been weel content.  
 Ev'n as he is, cauld in his graff,  
 The swap we yet will do't ;  
 Tak thou the carlin's carcass aff,  
 Thou'se get the saul o' boot.

## ANOTHER.

ONE Queen Artemisa, as old stories tell,  
 When deprived of her husband she lovèd so well,  
 In respect for the love and affection he show'd her,  
 She reduc'd him to dust and she drank up the powder.  
 But Queen Netherplace, of a diff'rent complexion,  
 When called on to order the fun'ral direction,  
 Would have eat her dead lord, on a slender pretence,  
 Not to show her respect, but—to save the expence !

[The three foregoing epigrams were directed against Mr Campbell of Netherplace and his wife, whose house and grounds the poet daily passed on his way between Mossgiel and Mauchline. After publication in his first edition they were withdrawn.]

## ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

As Tam the chapman on a day,  
 Wi' Death forgather'd by the way,  
 Weel pleas'd, he greets a wight so famous,  
 And Dèath was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,  
 Wha cheerfully lays down his pack,  
 And there blaws up a hearty crack :  
 His social, friendly, honest heart  
 Sae tickled Death, they could na part ;  
 Sae, after viewing knives and garters,  
 Death taks him hame to gie him quarters.

[This was first brought to light by William Cobbett, who printed it in his Magazine. It had been communicated to him by the subject of the epitaph, by name Thomas Kennedy, then an aged person resident in London. He represented himself as having known the poet in very early life, in the neighbourhood of Ayr, where both were born and brought up. Kennedy afterwards became a travelling agent for a mercantile house in a country town near Mauchline, where he renewed acquaintance with Burns. These lines were composed on Kennedy's recovery from a severe illness.

This trifle may have suggested to Burns the idea afterwards worked out in "Death and Dr Hornbook."]

## EPITAPH ON JOHN RANKINE.

(STEWART, 1801.)

Æ day, as Death, that gruesome carl,  
 Was driving to the tither warl'  
 A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,  
 And mony a guilt-bespotted lad—  
 Black gowns of each denomination,  
 And thieves of every rank and station,

From him that wears the star and garter,  
 To him that wintles in a halter :  
 Ashamed himself to see the wretches,  
 He mutters, glowrin at the bitches,  
 “ By G—d I’ll not be seen behint them,  
 Nor ’mang the sp’ritual core present them,  
 Without, at least, ae honest man,  
 To grace this d——d infernal clan !”  
 By Adamhill a glance he threw,  
 “ L—d God !” quoth he, “ I have it now ;  
 There’s just the man I want, i’ faith !”  
 And quickly stoppit Rankine’s breath.

[This is another in the same vein as the preceding. Cromek has observed that the first idea of the lines seems to have been suggested by Falstaff’s account of his ragged recruits :—“ I’ll not march through Coventry with them, that’s flat !” The piece would be as much to Rankine’s taste, as a similar compliment, some few years thereafter, was relished by Capt. Grose.]

### LINES ON THE AUTHOR’S DEATH,

WRITTEN WITH THE SUPPOSED VIEW OF BEING HANDED TO  
 RANKINE AFTER THE POET’S INTERMENT.

(STEWART, 1801.)

HE who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and dead,  
 And a green grassy hillock hides his head ;  
 Alas ! alas ! a devilish change indeed.

[These lines must be regarded as a counterpart to the poet’s elegy on himself, composed shortly afterwards, beginning,—

“ Now Robin lies in his last lair,  
 He’ll gabble rhyme and sing nae mair.”]

## MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.—A DIRGE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786).

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

“ Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou ? ”

Began the rev'rend sage ;

“ Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,

Or youthful pleasure's rage ?

Or haply, prest with cares and woes,

Too soon thou hast began

To wander forth, with me to mourn

The miseries of man.

“ The sun that overhangs yon moors,

Out-spreading far and wide,

Where hundreds labour to support

A haughty lordling's pride ;—<sup>1</sup>

I've seen yon weary winter-sun

Twice forty times return ;

And ev'ry time has added proofs,

That man was made to mourn.

“ O man ! while in thy early years,

How prodigal of time !

Mis-spending all thy precious hours—

Thy glorious, youthful prime !

Alternate follies take the sway ;  
 Licentious passions burn ;  
 Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,  
 That man was made to mourn.

“ Look not alone on youthful prime,  
 Or manhood's active might ;  
 Man then is useful to his kind,  
 Supported is his right :  
 But see him on the edge of life,<sup>2</sup>  
 With cares and sorrows<sup>3</sup> worn ;  
 Then Age and Want—oh ! ill-match'd pair—  
 Shew man was made to mourn.

“ A few seem favourites of fate,  
 In pleasure's<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup>  
 Thro' weary life this lesson learn,  
 That man was made to mourn.

“ Many and sharp the num'rous ills  
 Inwoven<sup>6</sup> 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 !

“ 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<sup>7</sup> mourn.

“ If I'm design'd<sup>8</sup> yon lordling's slave—  
 By Nature's law<sup>9</sup> design'd—  
 Why was an independent wish  
 E'er planted in my mind ?  
 If not, why am I subject to  
 His cruelty, or scorn ?  
 Or why has man the will and pow'r  
 To make his fellow mourn ?

“ Yet, let not this too much, my son,  
 Disturb thy youthful breast :  
 This partial view of human-kind  
 Is surely not the last !  
 The poor, oppressèd, honest man<sup>10</sup>  
 Had never, sure,<sup>11</sup> been born,  
 Had there not been some recompense  
 To comfort those that mourn !

“ O Death ! the poor man's dearest friend,  
 The kindest and the best !  
 Welcome the hour my aged limbs  
 Are laid with thee at rest !  
 The great, the wealthy fear thy blow,  
 From pomp<sup>12</sup> and pleasure<sup>13</sup> torn ;  
 But, oh ! a blest relief for those  
 That weary-laden mourn ! ”

[This solemn composition has “chill November” in its introductory line, but the author's record of it in the Common-place

Book is dated "August." That document comes to a sudden close in October 1785, so that we are forced to regard this as a composition of November 1784. He there styles it "A SONG," to the tune of "Peggy Bawn." The present generation knows somewhat of a modern song and tune called "Molly Bawn," but few alive ever heard of the air thus referred to, whose querulous notes lent their impulse to the mind of Burns, while he composed those stanzas. A lovely spot called "Haugh," a mile or more below Mauchline, near where the *Lugar* flows into the river Ayr, is pointed out as the locality indicated by the poet in his opening verse. In one of his letters to Mrs Dunlop, Burns writes:—"I had an old grand-uncle with whom my mother lived in her girlish years; the good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time, his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song, 'The Life and Age of Man.'" In Southey's *Doctor*, we find him thus referring to the present poem, and its connection with the above pathetic incident:—"It is certain that this old song was in Burns's mind when he composed to the same cadence those well-known stanzas of which the burthen is 'Man was made to mourn.' But the old blind man's tears were tears of piety, not of regret; while he thus listened and wept, his heart was not so much in the past as his hopes were in the future. Burns must have been conscious in his better hours (and he had many such) that he inherited the feeling—if not the sober piety—which is so touchingly exemplified in this family anecdote."

The wild cadences which gave effect to the antique words thus sung by the mother of Burns, could be none other than those of the melody of "Peggy Bawn." We are happy to say it is not lost; for the poet picked up the tune from his mother's singing, and, through Stephen Clarke, communicated it to Johnson who has preserved it in his *Museum*. That melody we here annex.

*In slow time.*

*Air—"Peggy Bawn."*

When chill No-ven-ber's sur-ly blast Made fields and for-ests bare,  
 One ev'-ning, as I wan-der'd forth A long the banks of Ayr,  
 I spied a man whose a-ged step seem'd wea-ry, worn with care;  
 His face was fur-row'd o'er with years, And hoa-ry was his hair.



The chief variations in the Common-place Book, commence at stanza third, which thus points to a locality with which he was very familiar in his early days :—

<sup>1</sup> Yon sun that hangs o'er Carrick moors,  
That spread so far and wide,  
Where hundreds labour to support  
The lordly Cassilis' pride.

<sup>2</sup> "on the edge of days."    <sup>3</sup> labours.    <sup>4</sup> fortune's.    <sup>5</sup> To wants  
and sorrows born.    <sup>6</sup> Many the ills that Nature's hand Has woven.  
<sup>7</sup> children.    <sup>8</sup> I am doom'd.    <sup>9</sup> hand.    <sup>10</sup> heart.    <sup>11</sup> surely ne'er.  
<sup>12</sup> pomps.    <sup>13</sup> pleasures.

## THE TWA HERDS ; OR, THE HOLY TULYIE.<sup>a</sup>

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

"Blockheads with reason, wicked wits abhor,  
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war."—POPE.

O a' ye pious godly flocks,  
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,  
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,  
Or worrying tykes ?<sup>b</sup>  
Or wha will tent the waifs<sup>c</sup> an' crocks,<sup>d</sup>  
About the dykes ?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,  
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast  
These five an' twenty<sup>1</sup> simmers past—  
Oh, dool to tell !  
Hae had a bitter black out-cast  
Atween themsel.

O, Moodie, man, an' wordy Russell,  
How could you raise so vile a bustle ;

<sup>a</sup> fight.

<sup>b</sup> dogs.

<sup>c</sup> stragglers.

<sup>d</sup> old ewes.

Ye'll see how "new-light" herds\* will whistle,  
 An' think it fine !  
 The L—'s cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,  
 Sin' I hae min'.

O, sirs ! whae'er wad hae expeckit  
 Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,  
 Ye wha were ne'er<sup>2</sup> by lairds respeckit  
 To wear the plaid ;  
 But by the brutes themselves eleckit,  
 To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,  
 Sae hale and hearty every shank,  
 Nae poison'd soor Arminian stank  
 He let them taste ;  
 Frae Calvin's well, ay clear<sup>3</sup> they drank,—  
 O, sic a feast !

The thummart,<sup>e</sup> willcat,<sup>f</sup> brock,<sup>g</sup> an' tod,<sup>h</sup>  
 Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,  
 He smell'd their ilka hole an' road,  
 Baith out and in ;  
 An' weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,  
 An' sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale ;  
 His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,†  
 He kenn'd the L—'s sheep, ilka tail,  
 Owre a' the height ;  
 An' saw<sup>4</sup> gin they were sick or hale,  
 At the first sight.

<sup>e</sup> founmart, or pole-cat.

<sup>f</sup> wild-cat.

<sup>g</sup> badger.

<sup>h</sup> fox.

\* See foot-note, p. 125.

† Russell's voice could be heard a mile off.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,  
 Or nobly fling<sup>5</sup> the gospel club,  
 And "new-light" herds could nicely drub,  
                   Or pay their skin ;  
 Could shake them o'er the burning dub,  
                   Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O ! do I live to see't,  
 Sic famous twa should disagree't,  
 And names, like "villain," "hypocrite,"  
                   Ilk ither gi'en,  
 While "new-light" herds,<sup>6</sup> wi' laughin spite,  
                   Say neither's lien !

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,  
 There's Duncan \* deep, an' Peebles† shaul',  
 But<sup>7</sup> chiefly thou, apostle Auld,‡  
                   We trust in thee,  
 That thou wilt work them, hot an' cauld,  
                   Till they agree.<sup>8</sup>

Consider, sirs, how we're beset ;  
 There's scarce a new herd that we get,  
 But comes frae 'mang that cursed set  
                   I winna name ;  
 I hope frae<sup>9</sup> heav'n to see them yet  
                   In fiery flame.

Dalrymple§ has been lang our fae,  
 M'Gill|| has wrought us meikle wae,

---

\* Rev. Dr Duncan of Dundonald.    † Rev. Wm. Peebles, Newton-on-Ayr.  
 ‡ Rev. Wm. Auld of Mauchline.        § Rev. Dr Dalrymple of Ayr.  
                   || Rev. Dr M'Gill, Colleague of Dr Dalrymple.

An' that curs'd rascal ca'd M'Quhae,\*  
     An' baith the Shaws,†  
 That aft hae made us black an' blae,  
     Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow‡ lang has hatch'd<sup>10</sup> mischief ;  
 We thought ay<sup>11</sup> death wad bring relief,  
 But he has gotten, to our grief,  
     Ane to succeed him,§  
 A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef ;  
     I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,  
 Wha fain would openly rebel,  
 Forby turn-coats amang oursel,  
     There's Smith || for ane ;  
 I doubt he's but a grey nick quill,<sup>i</sup>  
     An' that ye'll fin'.

O ! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,  
 By mosses, meadows, moors, an' fells,  
 Come, join your counsel and your skills  
     To cove the lairds,  
 An' get the brutes the power themsels  
     To chuse their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,  
 An' Learning in a woody<sup>j</sup> dance,

---

<sup>i</sup> soft, unfit for a pen.

<sup>j</sup> gallows.

\* Minister of St Quivox.

† Dr Andrew Shaw of Craigie, and Dr David Shaw of Coynton.

‡ Dr Peter Woodrow of Tarbolton.

§ Rev. John M'Math, a young assistant and successor to Woodrow.

|| Rev. George Smith of Galston, here and in "The Holy Fair" claimed as friendly to the "new-light" party; but cried down in "The Kirk's Alarm."

An' that fell cur ca'd "common-sense,"\*  
 That bites sae sair,  
 Be banish'd o'er the sea to France :  
 Let him bark there.<sup>12</sup>

Then Shaw's an' D'rymple's eloquence,  
 M'Gill's close nervous excellence,  
 M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,  
 An' guid M'Math,  
 Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart can glance,<sup>13</sup>  
 May a' pack aff.

[The author, in alluding to this poem in his autobiography, gives it no title such as that by which it is now distinguished. He calls it "a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists," and tells us that it was the first of his poetic offspring that saw the light. He does not mean the "light of print," but of circulation in manuscript. In our heading we give three titles, taken respectively from various printed copies; for we are not aware that any holograph copy exists except the one in the British Museum, which calls it "The Holy Tulyie."

In regard to its date, we suspect that Chambers, in placing it under April 1785, has no authority beyond a fancied connection between this poem and the epistle to Wm. Simson, of May 1785. The reader has been already prepared, by the author's outburst against clerical hypocrisy in the Epistle to Rankine, to find him writing shortly thereafter in the same vein. Lockhart tells us—as from personal knowledge—that Burns personally witnessed in open court the unseemly contention between the "two herds,"—to wit, the Rev. John Russell of Kilmarnock, and the Rev. Alex. Moodie of Riccarton. If so, the ecclesiastical court records ought to fix the date precisely, if that be deemed a very important matter. Meanwhile, we assume that the affair happened prior to the close of 1784.

Taking the copy in Stewart's volume (1801) for our standard, we note the following variations:—

- <sup>1</sup> fifty.    <sup>2</sup> no.    <sup>3</sup> Calvin's fountain-head.    <sup>4</sup> tell'd.    <sup>5</sup> swing.  
<sup>6</sup> While enemies.    <sup>7</sup> And chiefly gird thee, 'postle Auld.  
<sup>8</sup> To gar them gree.    <sup>9</sup> trust in.    <sup>10</sup> wrought.    <sup>11</sup> trusted.

<sup>12</sup> The poem ends here in the MS.

<sup>13</sup> In the Tract, 1799, this line reads,—“Wha through the heart can brawly glance,” and thus the compliment to Smith is dispensed with, and turned in favour of M'Math.]

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\* "Common-sense" is claimed as the attribute of the "new-light" party.

## EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.

JANUARY.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHILE winds frae off Ben-Lomond blaw,  
 An' bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw,  
     An' hing us owre the ingle,  
 I set me down to pass the time,  
 An' spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,  
     In hamely, westlin jingle :  
 While frosty winds blaw in the drift,  
     Ben to the chimla lug,<sup>a</sup>  
 I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,  
     That live sae bien<sup>b</sup> an' snug :  
     I tent less, and want less<sup>1</sup>  
     Their roomy fire-side ;  
 But hanker, and canker,  
     To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,  
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,  
     To see how things are shar'd ;  
 How best o' chiels are whyles in want,  
 While coofs<sup>c2</sup> on countless thousands rant,  
     And ken na how to ware't ;<sup>d</sup>  
 But Davie, lad, ne'er fash<sup>e</sup> your head,  
     Tho' we hae little gear ;<sup>f</sup>  
 We're fit to win our daily bread,  
     As lang's we're hale and fier :<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> inwards to the very fireside.<sup>d</sup> spend it.<sup>e</sup> bother.<sup>b</sup> comfortable.<sup>f</sup> wealth.<sup>c</sup> fools.<sup>g</sup> active.

“ Mair spier<sup>h</sup> na, nor fear na,” \*  
 Auld age ne'er mind a feg; <sup>i</sup>  
 The last o't, the warst o't,  
 Is only but to beg.

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 nae sma' ;  
 Nae mair then, we'll care then,  
 Nae farther we can fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,  
 We wander out, we know not where,  
 But either house or hal', <sup>j</sup>  
 Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,  
 The sweeping vales, an' 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 an' sowth<sup>k</sup> a tune ;

<sup>h</sup> enquire.<sup>i</sup> fig.<sup>j</sup> shelter.<sup>k</sup> hum.\* Ramsay.—*R. B.*

Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,  
An' sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank ;  
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
To purchase peace and rest :  
It's no in makin muckle, mair ;  
It's no in books, it's no in lear,<sup>1</sup>  
To make us truly blest :  
If happiness hae not her seat  
An' centre in the breast,  
We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
But never can be blest ;  
Nae treasures nor pleasures  
Could make us happy lang ;  
The heart ay's the part ay  
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,  
Wha drudge an' drive thro' wet and dry,  
Wi' never ceasing toil ;  
Think ye, are we less blest than they,  
Wha scarcely tent<sup>m</sup> us in their way,  
As hardly worth their while ?  
Alas ! how oft in haughty mood,  
God's creatures they oppress !  
Or else, neglecting a' that's good,  
They riot in excess !  
Baith careless and fearless  
Of either heaven or hell ;  
Esteeming, and deeming  
It a<sup>3</sup> an idle tale !

---

<sup>1</sup> learning.

<sup>m</sup> notice.



Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,  
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less,  
     By pining at our state :  
 And, even should misfortunes come,  
 I, here wha sit, hae<sup>4</sup> met wi' some—  
     An's thankfu' for them yet,  
 They gie the wit of age to youth ;  
     They let us ken oursel ;  
 They make<sup>5</sup> us see the naked truth—  
     The real guid and ill :  
     Tho' losses an' crosses  
     Be lessons right severe,  
     There's wit there, ye'll get there,  
     Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts !  
 (To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,  
     And flatt'ry I detest)  
 This life has joys for you and I ;  
 An' joys that riches ne'er could buy,  
     An' 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,  
     An' sets me a' on flame !

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above !  
 O Thou whose very self art love !  
     Thou know'st my words sincere !

The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,  
 Or my more dear immortal part,  
 Is not more fondly dear !  
 When heart-corroding care and grief <sup>6</sup>  
 Deprive my soul of rest,  
 Her dear idea brings relief,  
 And solace to my breast.  
 Thou Being, All-seeing,  
 O hear my fervent pray'r ;  
 Still take her, and make her  
 Thy most peculiar care !

All hail ; ye tender feelings dear !  
 The smile of love, the friendly tear,  
 The sympathetic glow !  
 Long since, this world's thorny ways  
 Had number'd out my weary days,  
 Had it not been for you !  
 Fate still has blest me with a friend,  
 In 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, an' greet with  
 My Davie, or my Jean !

O, how that *Name* inspires my style !  
 The words come skelpin, rank an' file,  
 Amaist before I ken !  
 The ready measure rins as fine,  
 As Phœbus an' the famous Nine  
 Were glowrin owre my pen.

My spavet Pegasus will limp,  
 Till ance he's fairly het ;  
 And then he'll hilch,<sup>n</sup> and stilt, an' jimp,  
 And rin an unco fit :<sup>o</sup>  
 But least then the beast then  
 Should rue this hasty ride,  
 I'll light now, and dight<sup>p</sup> now  
 His sweaty, wizen'd<sup>q</sup> hide.

[The variations in a MS. of this poem, possessed by Robert Gibson, Esq., Glasgow, are interesting. The date is "January 1785," and it is headed "An Epistle to Davy, a Brother-Poet, Lover, Ploughman, and Fiddler."

<sup>1</sup> want less and tent less.    <sup>2</sup> fools.    <sup>3</sup> It's a'.    <sup>4</sup> Yet here I sit hae.

<sup>5</sup> let.

<sup>6</sup> In all my share o' care an' grief,  
 Which Fate has largely given,  
 My hope, my comfort, an' relief  
 Are thoughts of Her and Heaven.  
 Thou Being, &c.

The "Davy" of the poem was David Sillar, one year younger than Burns, and also the son of a small farmer near Tarbolton. He removed to Irvine before the poet published his first edition. Smitten with the spirit of emulation, he also printed a volume of rhyming ware, which appeared in 1789, and Burns, then at Ellisland, helped him to his utmost in procuring subscribers. "Davy" did not make a fortune by the sale of his book ; but he applied himself earnestly to business, first as a grocer, and thereafter as a schoolmaster. Eventually he became a councillor, and latterly a magistrate, of Irvine, and survived till 1830, much respected, and possessed of considerable means.

The poem exhibits Burns in the full blossom of attachment to his Jean. It was not the fate of Sillar to obtain the hand of his "Meg" referred to in the Epistle : she was *Margaret Orr*, a servant at Stair House.]\*

<sup>n</sup> hobble.    <sup>o</sup> run at an uncommon pace.    <sup>p</sup> wipe down.    <sup>q</sup> withered.

\* For further observations regarding the date of this epistle, see note to song, "Tho' cruel fate should bid us part," p. 130, and also foot-note, p. 129.

### HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

“And send the godly in a pet to pray.”—POPE.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

ARGUMENT.—Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering, which ends in tipping orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr Gavin Hamilton—*Holy Willie* and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best; owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr Robert Aiken, Mr Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the county. On losing his process, the muse overheard him [*Holy Willie*] at his devotions, as follows:—

O THOU, who in the heavens does<sup>1</sup> dwell,  
 Who, as it pleases best Thysel,  
 Sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell,  
                                   A' for Thy glory,  
 And no for ony gude or ill  
                                   They've done afore<sup>2</sup> Thee ! \*

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,  
 When thousands Thou hast left in night,  
 That I am here afore<sup>3</sup> Thy sight,  
                                   For gifts an' grace  
 A burning and a shining light  
                                   To a' this place.

---

\* It is equally amusing and instructive to note how differently the respective biographers of the poet have expressed their sentiments regarding this powerful production. The Rev. Hamilton Paul and the Rev. Hatley Waddell, seem to invite the friends of religion to bless the memory of the poet who took such a judicious method of “leading the liberal mind to a rational view of the nature of prayer.” Dr Waddell says that the poem “implies no irreverence whatever on the writer's part; but on the contrary, manifests his own profoundest detestation of, and contempt for, every variety of imposture in the name of religion.” His brother divine regards the poem as “merely a metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves of the pure reformed church of

What was I, or my generation,  
 That I should get sic exaltation,  
 I wha deserve most<sup>3</sup> just damnation  
                     For broken laws,  
 Five<sup>4</sup> thousand years ere<sup>5</sup> my creation,  
                     Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,  
 Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,  
 To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,  
                     In burnin lakes,<sup>6</sup>  
 Where damnèd devils roar and yell,  
                     Chain'd to their stakes.<sup>7</sup>

Yet I am here a chosen sample,  
 To show Thy grace is great and ample ;  
 I'm here a pillar o'<sup>8</sup> Thy temple,  
                     Strong as a rock,  
 A guide, a buckler,<sup>9</sup> and example,  
                     To a' thy flock.

O L—d, Thou kens what zeal I bear,  
 When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,  
 An' singin' there, an' dancin' here,  
                     Wi' great and sma' ;  
 For I am keepit by Thy fear  
                     Free frae them a'.

---

Scotland." Motherwell, on the other hand, styles it "by far the most reprehensible of Burns' pieces, and one which should never have been written." Cunningham timidly shelters himself behind the words of Sir Walter Scott, by calling it a "too daring poem," and "a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote." Chambers describes it as "a satire nominally aimed at *Holy Willie*, but in reality a burlesque of the extreme doctrinal views of the party to which that hypocrite belonged." Many will agree with Sir Harris Nicolas in saying that "the reverend admirers of the poem appear to have compounded with their consciences for being pleased with a piece showing little veneration for religion itself, because it ridicules the mistaken zeal of an opposite sect."



L—d, mind Gaw'n Hamilton's deserts ;  
 He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at carts,<sup>b</sup>  
 Yet has sae mony takin arts,  
                     Wi' great<sup>17</sup> and sma',  
 Frae G—d's ain priest<sup>18</sup> the people's hearts  
                     He steals awa.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,  
 Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,<sup>c</sup>  
 An'<sup>19</sup> set the warld in a roar  
                     O' laughing at us ;—  
 Curse Thou his basket and his store,  
                     Kail an' potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,  
 Against that<sup>20</sup> Presbyt'ry o' Ayr ;  
 Thy strong right hand, L—d, make it bare  
                     Upo' their heads ;  
 L—d visit them,<sup>21</sup> an' dinna spare,  
                     For their misdeeds.

O L—d, my G—d ! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,  
 My vera heart and flesh<sup>22</sup> are quakin,  
 To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,  
                     An' p—'d wi' dread,  
 While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,<sup>d</sup>  
                     Held up his head.

L—d, in Thy day o'<sup>23</sup> vengeance try him,  
 L—d, visit them<sup>24</sup> wha did employ him,  
 And pass not in Thy mercy by them,  
                     Nor hear their pray'r,  
 But for Thy people's sake destroy them,  
                     An' dinna spare.

<sup>b</sup> cards.<sup>c</sup> disturbance.<sup>d</sup> exulting and sneering.







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

Your pity I will not implore,  
 For pity ye have nane ;  
 Justice, alas ! has gi'en him o'er,  
 And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, Sir, deil as ye are,  
 Look something to your credit ;  
 A coof like him wad stain your name,  
 If it were kent ye did it.

[This "Epitaph" is a poor performance, compared with the main poem ; and the author would seem to have been sensible of this when he refrained from transcribing it into the Glenriddell volume along with the "Prayer." It was not published till two years after the latter made its first appearance, and we are not aware that it now exists in the poet's autograph. The name of the hero of these biting satires was William Fisher, a leading elder in the parish church of Mauchline. Its kirk-session, in 1785, consisted of three active members—Rev. William Auld, Mr John Sillars, and "Holy Willie." In cases of discipline, the reverend incumbent, as moderator, first expressed his opinion, and foreshadowed judgment : William Fisher would obsequiously second the minister in the words, "I say wi' you, Mr Auld—what say you, Mr Sillars?" The latter might either agree or dissent, for it made no difference, he being a hopeless minority in a court like that. Such is the account of "Daddie Auld's" session given by Dr Waddell, on the authority of local reminiscences gleaned by him in the district.

Burns, in a poem produced in 1789, refers to his ancient foe, William Fisher, in these words :—

"Holy Will, holy Will, there was wit in your skull,  
 When ye pilfer'd the alms of the poor."

It appears that the sins of the hoary hypocrite rapidly found him out. The date of his death we have not ascertained, but his exit was quite in character ; for he died in a ditch by the road-side, into which he had fallen on his way home from a debauch. Father Auld and he repose in Mauchline kirkyard, almost side by side, the inscription on the minister's tablet recording that he died on 12th December 1791, in his 81st year.]

## DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK,

## A TRUE STORY.

(EDINBURGH EDITIONS, 1787-1794.)

SOME books are lies frae end to end,  
 And some great lies were never penn'd :  
 Ev'n ministers they hae been kenn'd,  
   In holy rapture,  
 A rousing whid<sup>a</sup> at times to vend,<sup>1</sup>  
   And nail't wi' Scripture.

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

The clachan yill<sup>b</sup> had made me canty,  
 I was na fou, but just had plenty ;  
 I stacher'd whyles,<sup>c</sup> but yet took tent ay  
   To free the ditches ;  
 An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, keun'd ay  
   Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glowre  
 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.

<sup>a</sup> fib.<sup>b</sup> village ale.<sup>c</sup> staggered at times.

\* Cumnock hills lie south-east from Tarbolton ; and hence, it is argued by Dr Waddell, the moon could not be seen in *crescent* from the poet's standpoint. The learned critic has forgot the "clachan yill."



‘Ye’re may be come to stap my breath ;  
     ‘But tent me, billie ;  
 ‘I red<sup>l</sup> ye weel, tak care o’ skaith,<sup>m</sup>  
     ‘See, there’s a gully !’<sup>n</sup>

‘Gudeman,’ quo’ he, ‘put up your whittle,<sup>o</sup>  
 ‘I’m no design’d to try its mettle ;  
 ‘But if I did, I wad be kittle<sup>p</sup>  
     ‘To be mislear’d ;<sup>q</sup>  
 ‘I wad na mind it, no that spittle  
     ‘Out-owre my beard.’<sup>r</sup>

‘Weel, weel !’ says J, ‘a bargain be’t ;  
 ‘Come, gies your hand, an’ sae we’re gree’t ;  
 ‘We’ll ease our shanks an’ tak a seat—  
     ‘Come, gies your news ;  
 ‘This while ye hae been mony a gate,  
     ‘At mony a house.’<sup>\*</sup>

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

‘Sax thousand years are near-hand fled  
 ‘Sin’ I was to the butching bred,

---

<sup>l</sup>advise.      <sup>m</sup>harm.      <sup>n</sup>clasp-knife.      <sup>o</sup>knife.  
<sup>p</sup>itchingly apt.      <sup>q</sup>unmannerly.      <sup>r</sup>chin.

\* An epidemical fever was then raging in that country.—*R. B.*

‘ An’ mony a scheme in vain’s been laid,  
     ‘ To stap or scar me ;  
 ‘ Till ane *Hornbook’s*\* ta’en up the trade,  
     ‘ And faith ! he’ll waur me.

‘ Ye ken *Jock Hornbook* i’ the Clachan<sup>s</sup>—  
 ‘ Deil mak his king’s-hood in a spleuchan !<sup>t</sup>—  
 ‘ He’s grown sae weel acquaint wi’ *Buchan* †  
     ‘ And ither chaps,  
 ‘ The weans haud out their fingers laughin,  
     ‘ An’ pouk<sup>u</sup> 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’ curs’d skill,  
 ‘ Has made them baith no worth a f—t,  
     ‘ D—n’d haet they’ll kill !

‘ Twas but yestreen, nae farther gane,  
 ‘ 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,

---

<sup>s</sup> village.

<sup>t</sup> purse or pouch.

<sup>u</sup> pull.

\* This gentleman, Dr Hornbook, is professionally a brother of the sovereign order of the ferula ; but, by intuition and inspiration, is at once an apothecary, surgeon, and physician.—*R. B.*

† Buchan’s Domestic Medicine.—*R. B.* Dr. Wm. Buchan died in 1805.



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

' Waes me for *Johnie Ged's* \* *Hole* now,  
 Quoth I, ' if that <sup>h</sup>thae news be true !  
 ' His braw calf-ward<sup>x</sup> whare gowans<sup>y</sup> grew,  
     ' Sae white and bonie,  
 ' Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew ;  
     ' They'll ruin *Johnie* !'

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

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

' An honest wabster to his trade,  
 ' Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bręd,

---

<sup>x</sup> grazing plot.    <sup>y</sup> daisies.    <sup>z</sup> ghastly.    <sup>a</sup> furrow.    <sup>b</sup> death-bed exit.

\* The grave-digger.—*R. B.*



‘ Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,  
     When it was sair ;  
 ‘ The wife slade cannie to her bed,  
     ‘ But ne’er spak mair.

‘ A country laird had ta’en the batts,  
 ‘ Or some curmurring in his guts,  
 ‘ His only son for *Hornbook* sets,  
     ‘ An’ pay’s him well :  
 ‘ The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,<sup>c</sup>  
     ‘ 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<sup>d</sup> o’ *Hornbook’s* way ;  
 ‘ Thus goes he on from day to day,  
 ‘ Thus does he poison, kill, an’ slay,  
     ‘ An’s weel paid for’t ;  
 ‘ Yet stops me o’ my lawfu’ prey,  
     ‘ Wi’ his d—n’d dirt :

‘ But, hark ! I’ll tell you of 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 !’

---

<sup>c</sup> young ewes.

<sup>d</sup> sample.

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

[The author himself has fixed the date of this poem, which, like *Tam-o'-Shanter*, was struck off almost complete at one heat; for Gilbert has told us that his brother repeated the stanzas to him on the day following the night of the *tiff* with Wilson at the mason lodge. John Wilson, parish schoolmaster at Tarbolton, had also a small grocery shop where he sold common drugs, and gave occasional medical advice in simple cases, and thus became a person of some importance in the village. According to Mr Lockhart he was not merely compelled, through the force and widely-spread popularity of this attractive satire, to close his shop, but to abandon his school-craft also, in consequence of his pupils, one by one, deserting him. "Hornbook" removed to Glasgow, and by dint of his talents and assiduity, at length obtained the respectable situation of session-clerk of Gorbals parish. He died January 13, 1839. Many a time in his latter days he has been heard, "over a bowl of punch, to bless the lucky hour when the dominie of Tarbolton provoked the castigation of Robert Burns."

In the author's earlier editions the word *did*<sup>2</sup> in verse sixth, ungrammatically reads "does;" and line fifth of the opening stanza reads thus:—  
 "Great lies and nonsense baith to vend."]

### EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.—APRIL 1, 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,  
 An' paitricks sraichin loud at e'en,  
 An' morning poussie whiddin<sup>a</sup> seen,  
   Inspire my muse,  
 This freedom, in an unknown frien',  
   I pray excuse.

---

<sup>a</sup> a hare in quick motion.

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

There was ae sang, amang the rest,  
 Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best,  
 That some kind husband had address  
                   To some sweet wife ;  
 It thirl'd<sup>f</sup> the heart-strings thro'<sup>1</sup> the breast,  
                   A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd<sup>2</sup> sae weel,  
 What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel ;<sup>3</sup>  
 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<sup>4</sup> fidgin-fain<sup>5</sup> to hear't,  
 An' sae about him there<sup>5</sup> I spier't ;<sup>h</sup>  
 Then a' that kent him round declar'd  
                   He had *ingine* ;<sup>i</sup>  
 That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,  
                   It was sae fine :<sup>6</sup>

That, set him to a pint of ale,  
 An' either douce<sup>j</sup> or merry tale,

<sup>b</sup> the night before Lent.  
<sup>5</sup> excitedly eager.

<sup>c</sup> gathering.  
<sup>h</sup> asked.

<sup>d</sup> chat.  
<sup>i</sup> genius.

<sup>e</sup> set-to.  
<sup>j</sup> grave.

<sup>f</sup> thrilled.

Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,  
     Or witty catches—  
 'Tween Inverness an' Teviotdale,  
     He had few matches.

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

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,  
 Amaist as soon as I could spell,  
 I to the crambo-jingle<sup>n</sup> fell;<sup>7</sup>  
     Tho' rude an' rough—  
 Yet<sup>8</sup> crooning<sup>o</sup> to a body's sel,<sup>9</sup>  
     Does weel enough.

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

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,  
 And say, "how can you e'er propose,  
 You wha ken hardly verse frae<sup>10</sup> prose,  
     To mak a sang?"  
 But, by your leave, my learned foes,  
     Ye're maybe wrang.

---

<sup>k</sup> harness.   <sup>l</sup> hawker.   <sup>m</sup> chat.   <sup>n</sup> rhyming syllables.   <sup>o</sup> humming.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools—  
 Your Latin names for horns an' stools ?  
 If honest Nature made you fools,  
                   What sairs<sup>p</sup> your grammars ?  
 Ye'd better taen up spades and shoals,  
                   Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes<sup>11</sup>  
 Confuse their brains in college-classes !  
 They gang in stirks,<sup>q</sup> and come out asses,  
                   Plain truth<sup>12</sup> to speak ;  
 An' syne<sup>13</sup> 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<sup>r</sup> glee,  
 Or Fergusson's, the bauld an' slee,  
 Or bright<sup>14</sup> Lapraik's, my friend to be,  
                   If I can hit it !  
 That would be lear<sup>s</sup> enough 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 fu',  
                   I'se no insist :  
 But, gif ye want ae friend that's true,  
                   I'm on your list.

<sup>p</sup> serves.<sup>q</sup> young bullocks.<sup>r</sup> Allan Ramsay's.<sup>s</sup> learning.





While I can either forg or write,  
your friend and servant,  
Majors near Machine 3 Robert Burns  
April 17 85

---

Facsimile of Burns' signature before he shortened his surname, taken from the close of his epistle to John Lapraik, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1785, here traced from the original manuscript as transmitted to Lapraik, now in possession of Robert Sardinie Esq. of Castlemlusk.



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<sup>15</sup> 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 gristle,  
 Twa lines frae you wad gar me fistle,  
   Who am most fervent,  
 While I can either sing or whistle,  
   Your friend and servant.

[We have already seen, in the epistle to Davie, how indulgently Burns regarded the rhyming qualities of his Ayrshire compeers. The song referred to in the third stanza of this poem commended itself so much to his sympathies, that he took this method of becoming acquainted with its supposed author. We say *supposed* author; for in reality it was not Lapraik's own, but a piece he had found in an old magazine, which, by altering its structure a very little, and putting in a Scotch expression here and there, he had the assurance to pass off as his own composition. Burns, who never knew or suspected the plagiarism, afterwards dressed up Lapraik's version and had it printed in Johnson's *Museum*, where it stands, No. 205, set to an air by Oswald. Lockhart praises the opening verse, but remarks that (this song excepted) "it is not easy to understand Burns's admiration of Lapraik's poetry." The reader will find the original poem in the *Weekly Magazine*, October 14, 1773.

John Lapraik was nearly sixty years old when Burns sought acquaintance with him. He had inherited, through a line of ancestors, a small croft near Muirkirk; but happening to borrow money, by a bond thereon, from the Ayr Bank, he became involved in the ruin which soon overtook that unfortunate concern. On the strength of Burns' recorded



The tapetless,<sup>e</sup> ramfeezi'd<sup>f</sup> 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<sup>g</sup> excuses pat me mad ;  
 "Conscience," says I, "ye thowless<sup>h</sup> jade !  
 I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,<sup>i</sup>  
   This vera night ;  
 So dinna ye affront your trade,  
   But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king<sup>j</sup> o' hearts,  
 Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,  
 Roose<sup>j</sup> 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<sup>k</sup> stumple in the ink :  
 Quoth<sup>l</sup> I, "before I sleep a wink,  
   I vow I'll close it ;  
 An' if ye winna mak it clink,<sup>k</sup>  
   By Jove, I'll prose it !"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but<sup>m</sup> whether  
 In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither ;

<sup>e</sup> thoughtless.<sup>f</sup> overspent.<sup>g</sup> dull, pithless.<sup>h</sup> feeble.<sup>i</sup> effusion.<sup>j</sup> praise.<sup>k</sup> sound well.

Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,  
     Let time mak proof ;  
 But I shall scribble down some blether<sup>l</sup>  
     Just clean aff-loof.<sup>m</sup>

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

She's gien me mony a jirt<sup>o</sup> an' fleg,<sup>p</sup>  
 Sin' I could striddle owre a rig ;  
 But, by the L—d, tho' I should beg  
     Wi' lyart<sup>q</sup> pow,  
 I'll laugh an' sing, an' shake my leg,  
     As lang's I dow !<sup>r</sup>

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,<sup>s</sup>  
     I, Rob, am here.<sup>6</sup>

Do ye envy the city gent,  
 Behint a kist<sup>t</sup> to lie an' sklent ;<sup>u</sup>  
 Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.  
     An' muckle wame,  
 In some bit brugh to represent  
     A bailie's name ?

---

<sup>l</sup> nonsense.   <sup>m</sup> off-hand.   <sup>n</sup> tickle.   <sup>o</sup> jerk.   <sup>p</sup> fright.   <sup>q</sup> grey.  
<sup>r</sup> am able.   <sup>s</sup> fickle gossip.   <sup>t</sup> chest or counter.   <sup>u</sup> tell lies and prevaricate.

Or is't the paughty<sup>v</sup> 7 feudal thane,  
 Wi' ruffi'd sark an' glancing cane,  
 Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,  
     But lordly stalks ;  
 While caps and bonnets aff are taen,  
     As by he walks ?

“ O Thou<sup>8</sup> wha gies us each guid gift !  
 Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,  
 Then turn me, if Thou please<sup>9</sup> 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 heaven, 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\*—

---

<sup>v</sup>supercilious.

\* Motherwell, without a word of comment, altered this reading to “ragged followers o' the nine,” which certainly seems a more consistent one. Those daughters of Jove surely wore decent drapery.

Poor, thoughtless<sup>10</sup> devils—yet may shine  
 In glorious light ;  
 While sordid sons o' Mammon's line  
 Are dark as night !

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze,<sup>11</sup> an' growl,  
 Their worthless<sup>12</sup> nievefu' of a soul  
 May in some future carcase howl,  
 The forest's fright ;  
 Or in some<sup>13</sup> day-detesting owl  
 May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,<sup>14</sup>  
 To<sup>15</sup> 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 !

[Allan Cunningham says, respecting this poem, "I have heard one of our greatest English poets (Wordsworth) recite with commendation most of the stanzas, pointing out their all but inimitable ease and happiness of thought and language. He remarked, however, that Burns was either fond of out-of-the-way sort of words, or that he *made* them occasionally in his fits of feeling and fancy. The phrase, 'tapetless, ramfeezled hizzie,' in particular, he suspected to be new to the Scotch dialect ; but I quoted to him the following passage from a letter of William Cowper, dated August 1787 :—'Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is light, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbour of mine ; but the uncouth dialect spoiled all ; and, before he had read him through, he was quite *ramfeezled*.'" ]

The variations in the copy entered in the Common-place Book are these :—

- <sup>1</sup> dowie.    <sup>2</sup> ace.    <sup>3</sup> in went.    <sup>4</sup> Says I.    <sup>5</sup> But what my theme's to be, or.  
<sup>6</sup> This whole stanza is omitted. The poet's own date is April 1785 ; he was consequently then entering upon his seven-and-twentieth summer.  
<sup>7</sup> lordly.    <sup>8</sup> May He.    <sup>9</sup> though He turn ms out.    <sup>10</sup> honest.  
<sup>11</sup> grunt and scrape.    <sup>12</sup> silly.    <sup>13</sup> a.  
<sup>14</sup> Lapraik and Burness then may rise.    <sup>15</sup> And.]

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM SIMSON,  
SCHOOLMASTER, OCHILTREE.—MAY 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it :  
I sud be laith to think ye hinted  
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented<sup>c</sup>  
    On my poor musie ;  
Tho' in sic phraisin<sup>d</sup> terms ye've penn'd it,  
    I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,<sup>e</sup>  
Should I but dare a hope to speel,<sup>f</sup>  
Wi' Allan,<sup>\*</sup> or wi' Gilbertfield,<sup>†</sup>  
    The braes o' fame ;  
Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel,  
    A deathless name.

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

---

<sup>a</sup> heartily.   <sup>b</sup> brother.   <sup>c</sup> obliquely directed.   <sup>d</sup> cajoling.  
<sup>e</sup> basket, a proverbial phrase for "bewildered."   <sup>f</sup> climb.

\* Allan Ramsay.

† William Hamilton, of Gilbertfield.





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,<sup>n</sup>  
 Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,  
 Her banks an' braes, her dens and dells,  
   Whare glorious Wallace  
 Aft bure the gree,<sup>o</sup> 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<sup>p</sup> an' woods,  
 When lintwhites<sup>q</sup> chant amang the buds,  
 And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,<sup>r</sup>  
   Their loves enjoy ;  
 While thro' the braes the cushat croods<sup>s</sup>  
   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 !

<sup>n</sup> hill-country.  
<sup>q</sup> linnets.

<sup>o</sup> pre-eminence.  
<sup>r</sup> quick motion.

<sup>p</sup> holms, or level ground near rivers.  
<sup>s</sup> coos.

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,<sup>t</sup> jundie,<sup>u</sup> stretch, an' strive ;  
 Let me fair Nature's face describe,<sup>v</sup>  
                     And I, wi' pleasure,  
 Shall let the busy, grumblin' 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 ;<sup>w</sup>

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<sup>t</sup> like sheep driven.      <sup>u</sup> jostle.      <sup>v</sup> describe from sight.  
<sup>w</sup> dead sheep, a perquisite of the herd.

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 bade 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<sup>x</sup>  
 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,<sup>y</sup>  
                     Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,  
 Just like a sark,<sup>z</sup> or pair o' shoon,<sup>a</sup>  
 Wore by degrees, till her last roon<sup>b</sup>  
                     Gaed past their viewin ;  
 An' shortly after she was done  
                     They gat a new ane.

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<sup>x</sup> boys.    <sup>y</sup> Lowland speech.    <sup>z</sup> shirt.    <sup>a</sup> shoes.    <sup>b</sup> shred.

\* This is perhaps the solitary instance of the poet writing his name with one syllable prior to April 14, 1786. The closing stanza of the second epistle to Lapraik shows the short spelling, but that verse was so altered after the date referred to. The original MS. of the present poem has not been found.

† *New-Light* is a cant phrase in the West of Scotland for those religious opinions which Dr Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.—*R. B.*

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<sup>c</sup> auld folk the thing misteuk ;  
 For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk<sup>d</sup>  
   An' out o' sight,  
 An' backlins-comin to the leuk,  
   She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd ;  
 The herds and hissels<sup>e</sup> 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<sup>f</sup> an' nicks ;<sup>g</sup>  
 An' monie a fallow gat his licks,  
   Wi' hearty crunt ;<sup>h</sup>  
 An' some, to learn them for their tricks,  
   Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in mony lands,  
 An' "auld-light" caddies<sup>i</sup> bure sic hands,

<sup>c</sup> declare.      <sup>d</sup> corner.  
<sup>h</sup> knock on the head.

<sup>e</sup> flocks or droves.      <sup>f</sup> bruises.  
<sup>i</sup> messengers or apostles.

<sup>g</sup> cuts.

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,<sup>j</sup>  
 Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe ;<sup>k</sup>  
 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 bleatin ;  
 Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin ;  
 Mysel, I've even seen them greetin  
     Wi' girmen spite,  
 To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on  
     By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns !<sup>l</sup>  
 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,<sup>m</sup> they'll fetch it wi' them,  
     Just i' their pouch ;  
 An' when the "new-light" billies see them,  
     I think they'll crouch !

<sup>j</sup> humbling.<sup>k</sup> completely.<sup>l</sup> humble the rascals.<sup>m</sup> shred.

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

[At the date of this epistle, William Simson was parish schoolmaster at the small village of Ochiltree, situated on the left bank of the river Lugar, at a distance of five miles south from the poet's farm. He appears to have introduced himself to Burns by sending him a complimentary letter, after having seen some of his poems in manuscript, particularly the "Holy Tulyie," to which Burns' postscript specially applies. In 1788, Simson was appointed parish teacher in the town of Cumnock, four miles farther up the Lugar, where he continued till his death in 1815. It does not appear from the poet's correspondence, or otherwise, that the acquaintanceship betwixt Burns and Simson, thus so auspiciously begun in 1785, was continued in after-life. He was succeeded as teacher at Ochiltree in 1788 by a brother, Patrick Simson, who had been formerly parish schoolmaster at Straiton in Carrick. A volume of rhyming-ware, left by William Simson, passed at his death into his brother's possession, and, judging from what has been published of its contents, he seems to have better merited the distinction—a "rhyme-composing brother" of Burns—than either Sillar or Lapraik. He had the good sense not to rush into print like them, on the mere strength of the kindly compliments paid to them by the Ayrshire Bard in his published epistles.]

After William Simson's death, his brother Patrick was often visited at Ochiltree by wandering pilgrims, for the sake of the interest conferred by this admired epistle. Allan Cunningham, confounding the one brother with the other, makes reference to William Simson as still surviving in 1834. Through the kindness of the Rev. D. Hogg, Kirkmahoe, we have been shewn "Winsome Willie's" signature, which is our authority for dropping the letter *p* from his surname.

The only variation we have to note is in the sixth stanza : the word *poets*<sup>1</sup> was, in the author's editions prior to 1793, rendered "bardies." The change was probably made at the suggestion of Mr A. F. Tytler, advocate, Edinburgh, who appears to have been entrusted with the revision of the proofs of the poet's later editions.]

## ONE NIGHT AS I DID WANDER.

A FRAGMENT.—MAY 1785.

[CROMEK, 1808.]

ONE night as I did wander,  
 When corn begins to shoot,  
 I sat me down to ponder,  
 Upon an auld tree-root :  
 Auld Ayr ran by before me,  
 And bicker'd to the seas ;  
 A cushat<sup>a</sup> crooded<sup>b</sup> o'er me,  
 That echoed through the braes.

[This fragment seems to have been intended as the opening of a poem similar in style to "Man was made to mourn." It has a descriptive ring about it, like the first verse of the "Holy Fair;" and the scenery indicated is not unlike that of Ballochmyle or Barskimming, the two nearest points where the poet could reach the river Ayr from Mauchline. The fragment first appeared in company with another little unfinished piece, in which the poet contemplates crossing the ocean, and being severed from his "Jean."\*]

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<sup>a</sup> wild pigeon.

<sup>b</sup> crood.

\* This and the three immediately following pieces are in the very peculiar position, that, while they are inserted in the poet's Glenriddell abridgement of his first Common-place Book, between the dates September 1784 and June 1785, they do not appear in the Common-place Book itself, now preserved at Greenock. On examining carefully the latter manuscript, one is forced to the conclusion that these four pieces never at any time formed a portion of that book. Robert Chambers, who never saw the Greenock MS. referred to, was stumbled at so early a date as May 1785 "being attached to these pieces, especially to the song about 'My Jean,'" which, from internal evidence, would seem to belong to the first half of 1786. However, as Burns himself inserted these as forming a portion of his earliest Common-place Book, ending in October 1785, we feel bound to place them in the order of time to which he assigned them.

## FRAGMENT OF SONG—"MY JEAN!"

[JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.]

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

[The affection for Jean Armour displayed here is quite in keeping with the language and sentiment expressed in the "Epistle to Davie." Indeed, on comparing these, the reader will naturally conclude that they must have been composed about the same date. In the one, we find the poet-lover thus expressing himself—

"Her dear idea brings relief and solace to my breast ;"  
 and here he says, almost in the identical words—

"Her dear idea round my heart shall tenderly entwine."  
 Again, in the "Epistle," he invokes heaven to witness that—

"The life-blood streaming through my heart,  
 Or my more dear immortal part,  
 Is not more fondly dear."

And in this little song,—the first sketch of the world-famous "Of a' the airts," &c.—the same language is employed.—

"Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,  
 I still would love my Jean."

The complete copy of the "Epistle to Davie," which the poet presented to Aiken in 1786, certainly bears the date "January 1785," as we have already noticed ; but we must not therefore conclude (as Chambers does) that the *whole* of the poem was completed at so early a date. The references to Jean are thrown in near the *close* of the poem, and if it were now possible to get a sight of the original, as actually forwarded to Sillar in January 1785, it would likely shew very different readings in the three closing stanzas, from those in the printed copy. The early date assigned to that poem was a puzzle to Lockhart, not only from its wonderful perfection in so very intricate and difficult a measure, but also from its glowing celebration of Jean during the very infancy of his acquaintance with her. The air to which it is set in the *Museum* is called "The Northern Lass."]



## SONG—RANTIN, ROVIN ROBIN.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

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

*Chor.*—Robin was a rovin boy,  
 Rantin, rovin, rantin, rovin,  
 Robin was a rovin boy,  
 Rantin, rovin Robin !

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane  
 Was five-and-twenty days begun,\*  
 'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'  
 Blew hansel<sup>b</sup> in on Robin.  
 Robin was, &c.

The gossip keekit<sup>c</sup> in his loof,<sup>d</sup>  
 Quo' scho, " Wha lives will see the proof,  
 This waly<sup>e</sup> boy will be nae coof :<sup>f</sup>  
 I think we'll ca' him Robin."  
 Robin was, &c.

" He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',  
 But ay a heart aboon them a',  
 He'll be a credit till us a',—  
 We'll a' be proud o' Robin."  
 Robin was, &c.

<sup>a</sup> The central district of Ayrshire.<sup>b</sup> first gift.<sup>c</sup> looked.<sup>d</sup> palm.<sup>e</sup> goodly.<sup>f</sup> fool.\* Jan. 25, 1759, the date of my bardship's vital existence.—*R. B.*

“ But sure as three times three mak nine,  
 I see by ilka score and line,  
 This chap will dearly like our kin’,  
 So leeze me<sup>s</sup> on thee ! Robin.”  
 Robin was, &c.

“ Guid faith,” quo’ scho, “ I doubt you, sir,  
 Ye gar<sup>h</sup> the lasses \* \* \*  
 But twenty fauts ye may hae waur  
 So blessins on thee ! Robin.”  
 Robin was, &c.

[Referring to our notes to the two preceding pieces, we may observe that this song displays a vivid forecast of the author’s coming fame. Dr Waddell, in the mistaken belief that it was composed in 1784, calls it “ a perfect prophetic and pictorial idyll, which must be accepted as a very singular and truthful anticipation of his own future greatness.”

The only variation of the poet’s text which we have to note is first found in Cunningham’s edition (1834). His reading of the two opening lines of the closing stanza is as follows :—

“ Gude faith ! ” quo’ sho, “ I doubt you gar  
 The bonie lasses lie aspar.”

The blank left by Cromek in the second line is thus ingeniously filled up, on what authority Allan does not say. The reverend editor above quoted says on this point :—“ All attempts to decorate or to enrich this verse with better rhymes and worse sense, not only vitiate its moral integrity, but destroy its pictorial truthfulness ; in a word, vulgarise and debase it. That Cromek’s edition is the *correct* edition, there cannot be a shadow of a doubt ; and it should be restored and preserved accordingly.” Dr Waddell, however, prints, as our poet’s genuine text, the three syllables with which Cunningham has filled up Cromek’s blank !

Burns composed this song to the tune of “ Dainty Davie,” and he has anxiously pointed out that the chorus is set to the low part of the melody. Templeton, the eminent vocalist, selected another air—“ O gin ye were dead, gudeman”—for his own singing of this song, which necessitated not only an alteration of the words of the chorus to make it fit the music, but a change in other parts of the air to suit it to the words. The tune, “ Dainty Davie,” is one of our oldest : it appears in

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<sup>s</sup> set my heart.

<sup>h</sup> make.

Playford's collection, 1657 ; and as a proper vocal set of the melody is now nowhere to be found, we here annex it.

*Canty.* *Tune—"Dainty Davie."*

There waa a lad waa born in Kyle, But what-na day o' what-  
 oa style, I doubt ita hard-ly worth the while To be sae nice wi'  
 Ro - bin. Ro-bin waa a ro - vin boy, Ran - tin, ro - vin, ran-tin,  
 ro - vin, Ro - bin was a ro - vin boy, Ran - tin, ro - vin Ro - bin.

In the MS. of early pieces presented by the poet to Mrs Dunlop, to which we have referred at pp. 11 and 35 *supra*, a remarkable travestie of the foregoing song is inserted : thus :—

There was a birkie born in Kyle,  
 But whatna day o' whatna style,  
 I doubt its hardly worth the while  
 To be sae nice wi' Davie.  
 Leeze me on thy curly pow,  
 Bonie Davie, dainty Davie !  
 Leeze me on thy curly pow,  
 Thou'se ay my daintie Davie.

The name "Davie," instead of Robin, is thus continued throughout the song, and at verse 4, line 3, instead of "He'll be a credit to us a'," we read, "He'll gie his daddie's name a blaw."]

## ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.\*

(CROMEK, 1808.)

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

\* Fr. for rivulets, or burns, a translation of his own name.



Poor gapin, glowrin Superstition !  
 Wae's me, she's in a sad condition :  
 Eye ! bring *Black Jock*,\* her state physician,  
     To see her water :  
 Alas, there's ground for great suspicion  
     She'll ne'er get better.

Enthusiasm's past redemption,  
 Gane in a gallopin consumption :  
 Not a' her quacks, wi' a' their gumption,<sup>a</sup>  
     Can<sup>4</sup> ever mend her ;  
 Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption,  
     She'll soon surrender.<sup>5</sup>

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,  
 For every hole to get a stapple ;<sup>b</sup>  
 But now she fetches at the thrapple,  
     An' fights for breath ;  
 Haste, gie her name up in the chapel,†  
     Near unto death.<sup>6</sup>

It's<sup>7</sup> you an' *Taylor*‡ are the chief  
 To blame for a' this black mischief ;<sup>8</sup>  
 But could the L—d's ain folk get<sup>9</sup> leave,  
     A toom tar barrel  
 An' twa red peats wad bring relief,  
     And end the quarrel.

For me, my skill's but very sma',  
 An' skill in prose I've nane ava' ;

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<sup>a</sup> acuteness.

<sup>b</sup> tube, like a tobacco pipe.

\* The Rev. J. Russell, Kilmarnock.—*R. B.*

† Mr Russell's Kirk.—*R. B.*

‡ Dr Taylor of Norwich.—*R. B.*

But quietlenswise,<sup>c</sup> between us twa,  
 Weel may ye speed !  
 And tho' they sud you sair misca',  
 Ne'er fash<sup>d</sup> your head.

E'en swinge the dogs, and thresh them sicker !<sup>e</sup>  
 The mair they squeel ay chap<sup>f</sup> the thicker ;  
 And still 'mang hands a hearty bicker  
 O' something stout ;  
 It gars an owthor's<sup>g</sup> pulse beat quicker,  
 And helps his wit.

There's naething like the honest nappy ;<sup>h</sup>  
 Whare'll ye e'er see men sae happy,  
 Or women sonsie,<sup>i</sup> saft and sappy,  
 'Tween morn and morn,  
 As them wha like to taste the drappie,  
 In glass or horn ?

I've seen me daez't<sup>j</sup> upon a time,  
 I scarce could wink or see a styme ;<sup>k</sup>  
 Just ae hauf-mutchkin'<sup>l</sup> does me prime,  
 (Ought less, is little,)  
 Then back I rattle on the rhyme,  
 As gleg's a whittle.<sup>m</sup>

[The person thus addressed was a note-worthy individual. His father was the miller at Craigmill on Cessnock water in Galston parish, where the future philosopher was born in 1717. He showed an early aptitude for science and mechanical skill, and soon became an adept in geometry, architecture, and astronomy. While yet a young man, he

<sup>c</sup> in a quiet manner.

<sup>g</sup> an author's.

<sup>i</sup> buxom.

<sup>l</sup> two gills, a half-pint.

<sup>d</sup> perplex.

<sup>h</sup> strong drink, generally applied to ale.

<sup>j</sup> stupid.

<sup>e</sup> with precision.

<sup>f</sup> lay on.

<sup>k</sup> the faintest form.

<sup>m</sup> sharp as a knife.

removed to Kilmarnock, where he carried on business, first as a cabinet-maker, and afterwards as an extensive wine and spirit merchant; but all his leisure time was devoted to his favourite scientific pursuits and mechanical contrivances. In his religious views he was originally orthodox, and joined the Antiburgher congregation at Kilmaurs; but, before he was fifty years old, his opinions underwent a radical change. These he carried much beyond the Arminianism of the New Light party. In 1780, he published his opinions in three 8vo volumes printed at Glasgow, of which a second edition appeared in 1785. These essays were extensively read, and the work was popularly termed "Gowdie's Bible."

At the date of Burns' epistle to him, Goldie was 68 years old. Whether the poet introduced himself by this means or had previously known him, it is impossible to tell; but certain it is that the bard relied much on Goldie's friendship and advice during his visits to Kilmarnock while his poems were at the press. We hear nothing of Goldie, however, in the poet's prose correspondence. His son was Lieut. Goldie, R.N., who entered the navy in 1803. The old gentleman himself survived to 1811.

This poem was first published in a very imperfect form in Stewart and Meikle's Tracts, 1799. There it has only five stanzas—the third and fourth being transposed, and the four concluding ones entirely wanting. The two closing verses of the present complete copy were published by Cromek in 1808, as a stray fragment found in one of the poet's Common-place Books. Allan Cunningham took upon him to aver that he had seen a copy of the first *Epistle to Lapraik*, of which they formed a part, and were introduced between the fourth-last and third-last verses. This, we suspect, was one of Allan's many hap-hazard statements.

The variations in Stewart are:—

- <sup>1</sup> Goudie.    <sup>2</sup> her.    <sup>3</sup> wad.    <sup>4</sup> will.    <sup>5</sup> Death soon will end her.  
<sup>6</sup> But now she's got an unco ripple,  
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel  
Nigh unto death;  
See how she fetches at the thrapple,  
And gasps for breath.  
'Tis you.    <sup>8</sup> Wha are to blame for this mischief.    <sup>9</sup> gat.]

## THIRD EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

(LAPRAIK'S POEMS, 1788.)

GUID speed and funder to you, Johnie,  
 Guid health, hale han's an' weather bonie ;  
 Now, when ye're nickin<sup>a</sup> down fu' cannie  
                   The staff o' bread,<sup>b</sup>  
 May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y  
                   To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,  
 Nor kick your rickles<sup>c</sup> aff their legs,  
 Sendin the stuff o'er muirs an' hagg<sup>d</sup>  
                   Like drivin wrack ;  
 But may the tapmost grain that wags  
                   Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie, too, an' skelpin at it,  
 But bitter, daudin<sup>e</sup> showers hae wat it ;  
 Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it  
                   Wi' muckle wark,  
 An' took my jocteleg<sup>f</sup> an' whatt<sup>g</sup> it,  
                   Like ony clark.

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

<sup>a</sup> cutting.<sup>b</sup> a Bible term for "bread, the staff of life."<sup>c</sup> ricks of cut grain.<sup>d</sup> mosses.<sup>e</sup> pelting.<sup>f</sup> pen-knife.<sup>g</sup> cut.



But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,  
 Let's sing about our noble sel's :  
 We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills  
     To help, or roose<sup>h</sup> us ;  
 But browster wives an' whisky stills,  
     They are the muses.

Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it,  
 An' if ye mak' objections at it,  
 Then hand in neive<sup>i</sup> some day we'll knot it,  
     An' witness take,  
 An' when wi' usquabae we've wat it,  
     It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd  
 Till kye be gaun without the herd,  
 And a' the vittel in the yard,  
     And theekit<sup>j</sup> right,  
 I mean your ingle-side to guard  
     Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin aquavitæ  
 Shall mak us baith sae blythe and witty,  
 Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,<sup>k</sup>  
     And be as canty  
 As ye were nine year less than thretty—  
     Sweet ane an' twenty !

But stooks are cowpet<sup>l</sup> wi' the blast,  
 And now the sinn keeks<sup>m</sup> in the west,  
 Then I maun rin amang the rest,  
     An' quat my chanter ;  
 Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,  
     Yours, Rab the Ranter.

Sept. 13, 1785.

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<sup>h</sup> inspire.    <sup>i</sup> fist.    <sup>j</sup> covered in.    <sup>k</sup> paunchy.    <sup>l</sup> overturned.    <sup>m</sup> peeps.



There's Gaw'n, misca'd waur than a beast,  
 Wha has mair honor in his breast  
 Than mony scores as guid's the priest  
                   Wha sae abused him :  
 And may a bard no crack his jest  
                   What way they've used him ?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,\*  
 The gentleman in word an' deed—  
 An' shall his fame an' honor bleed  
                   By worthless skellums,<sup>i</sup>  
 An' not a muse erect her head  
                   To cove the blellums ?<sup>j</sup>

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

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,  
 Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,  
 But twenty times I rather would be  
                   An atheist clean,  
 Than under gospel colors hid be  
                   Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,  
 An honest man may like a lass,

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<sup>i</sup> wretches.

<sup>j</sup> blusterers.

\* This couplet was afterwards repeated, in the Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.

But mean revenge, an' malice fause  
                   He'll still disdain,  
 An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,  
                   Like some we ken.

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

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

Tho' blotch't and foul wi' mony a stain,  
 An' far unworthy of thy train,  
 With trembling voice I tune my strain  
                   To join with those  
 Who boldly dare thy cause maintain  
                   In spite of foes :

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

---

\* scope.

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

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd ;  
 Sir, in that circle you are fam'd ;  
 An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd  
     (Which gies ye honor)  
 Even, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,  
     An' winning manner.

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

[The gentleman to whom the above epistle is addressed was assistant and successor to the Rev. Peter Wodrow, minister of Tarbolton, then in declining health through the infirmities of old age. "Auld Wodrow," and his young helper, M'Math, are both complimented in "The Twa Herds," as able preachers, of the liberal or "moderate" stamp. In course of years, Mr M'Math fell into a morbid condition of mind, and eventually took to hard drinking, and died in the Isle of Mull, in 1825.

The two preceding epistles, dated within a few days of each other, specially refer to the bad harvest of 1785, which tended to discourage the poet at his farming, and perhaps to drive him to the muse for consolation. The signature to the first of these is a sobriquet borrowed from the popular song of "Maggie Lauder."]

## SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

(SILLAR'S POEMS, 1789.)

AULD NEIBOR,

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

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle,  
 Lang may your elbuck<sup>c</sup> jink an' diddle,  
 To cheer you thro' the weary widdle  
   O' war'ly cares ;  
 Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle<sup>d</sup>  
   Your auld, grey hairs.\*

But Davie, lad, I'm rede ye're glaikit ;<sup>e</sup>  
 I'm tauld the muse ye hae negleckit ;  
 An' gif it's sae, ye sud be licket<sup>f</sup>  
   Until ye fyke ;<sup>g</sup>  
 Sic hauns<sup>h</sup> as you sud ne'er be faiket,<sup>i</sup>  
   Be hain't<sup>j</sup> wha like.

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink,  
 Rivin the words to gar<sup>k</sup> them clink ;  
 Whyles<sup>l</sup> daez't<sup>m</sup> wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,  
   Wi' jads or masons ;  
 An' whyles, but ay owre late, I think  
   Braw sober lessons.

---

<sup>a</sup> droll. <sup>b</sup> serve. <sup>c</sup> elbow. <sup>d</sup> fondle. <sup>e</sup> thoughtless. <sup>f</sup> beaten. <sup>g</sup> shrug.  
<sup>h</sup> handy fellows. <sup>i</sup> dispensed with. <sup>j</sup> saved from exertion. <sup>k</sup> make.  
<sup>l</sup> sometimes. <sup>m</sup> bewildered.

\* This verse was repeated almost verbatim in the Epistle to Major Logan.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,  
 Commen' me to the bardie clan ;  
 Except it be some idle plan  
                                   O' rhymin clink—  
 The devil-haet, that I sud ban<sup>n</sup>—  
                                   They ever think.

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

Leeze me<sup>q</sup> on rhyme ! it's ay a treasure,  
 My chief, amaist my only pleasure ;  
 At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,  
                                   The muse, poor hizzie !  
 Tho' rough an' raploch<sup>r</sup> be her measure,  
                                   She's seldom lazy.

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

[If David Sillar, then a grocer in Irvine, neglected the muses at the date of this epistle (supposed to be about October 1785), he was soon stimulated to exertion by the success of Burns' first publication, and induced to imitate him, so far as could be done by typography and stationery. This epistle of Burns he introduced in the early pages of his book ; but, in truth, it was the only valuable thing in the volume. Davie played on the violin a little : hence the reference in the second stanza. The phrase "brother fiddler" is also accorded to him, see p. 95.]

<sup>n</sup> swear.    <sup>o</sup> careering.    <sup>p</sup> bother.    <sup>q</sup> commend me to.    <sup>r</sup> coarse.

## SONG.—YOUNG PEGGY BLOOMS.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1787.)

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

Her lips, more than the cherries bright,  
 A richer dye has graced them ;  
 They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,  
 And sweetly tempt to taste them ;  
 Her smile is as the evening mild,  
 When feather'd pairs are courting,  
 And little lambkins wanton wild,  
 In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,  
 Such sweetness would relent her ;  
 As blooming Spring unbends the brow  
 Of surly, savage Winter.  
 Detraction's eye no aim can gain,  
 Her winning pow'rs to lessen ;  
 And fretful Envy grins in vain  
 The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye Pow'rs of Honor, Love, and Truth,  
 From ev'ry ill defend her !  
 Inspire the highly-favour'd youth  
 The destinies intend her :



Still fan the sweet connubial flame  
 Responsive in each bosom ;  
 And bless the dear parental name  
 With many a filial blossom.

[Burns seems to have taken considerable pains with this fine composition, which, though highly finished, is somewhat too artificial to have been a spontaneous outburst of personal passion. The subject of it was Miss Peggy Kennedy, the daughter of a Carrick laird, and a relative of Mrs Gavin Hamilton. The poet was introduced to her when she was on a visit to the Hamiltons. She was then a blooming young woman of seventeen, and was understood to be betrothed to the youthful representative of the oldest and richest family in Galloway ; but, according to Chambers, "a train of circumstances lay in her path, which eventually caused the loss of her good name, and her early death." We shall again have occasion to refer to this lady as the supposed subject of another lyric by Burns, "Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon." The poet enclosed the present verses to Miss Kennedy in a letter, concluding thus : "That the arrows of misfortune may never reach your heart—that the snares of villany may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOUR to the dwelling of PEACE, is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to be," &c.]

SONG.—FAREWELL TO BALLOCHMYLE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

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

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,  
 Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair ;  
 Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,  
 Again ye'll charm the vocal air.

But here, alas ! for me nae mair  
 Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile ;  
 Fareweel the bonie banks of Ayr,  
 Fareweel, fareweel ! sweet Ballochmyle !

[This beautiful lyric was composed about the same time as the preceding song. Ballochmyle had long been the property of the Whitefoord family ; but, about this period, Sir John Whitefoord's misfortunes, arising chiefly through his connections with the Ayr Bank, obliged him to sell his estates. The "Maria" of this song was Miss Whitefoord, who afterwards became Mrs Cranstoun. The "Catrine Woods," and "Catrine Lea," are in the immediate neighbourhood of Ballochmyle, and were then the property of Professor Dugald Stewart. The fine scenery there is at the distance of about two miles from Mauchline, and was a favourite haunt of Burns while he lived at Mossiel.]

FRAGMENT.—HER FLOWING LOCKS.

(CROMER, 1808.)

HER flowing locks, the raven's wing,  
 Adown her neck and bosom hing ;  
 How sweet unto that breast to cling,  
 And round that neck entwine her !

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,  
 O, what a feast, her bonie mou !  
 Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,  
 A crimson still diviner !

[This little "artist's sketch" of female loveliness has no certain history attached to it. Cunningham connects it with a Mauchline incident ; and, if he is right in that respect, it seems probable that our poet intended it as a portrait of Miss Whitefoord.]

## HALLOWEEN.\*

[KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.]

The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood ; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations ; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more enlightened in our own.

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

GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light  
On Cassilis Downans† dance,  
Or owre the lays,<sup>a</sup> in splendid blaze,  
On sprightly coursers prance ;  
Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,  
Beneath the moon's pale beams ;  
There, up the Cove,‡ to stray an' rove,  
Among the rocks and streams  
To sport that night :

---

<sup>a</sup> leas, or sloping fields.

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

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.—*R. B.*

‡ A noted cavern near Colean House, called the Cove of Colean ; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed, in the country, for being a favourite haunt of the fairies.—*R. B.*

Amang the bonie winding banks,  
 Where Doon rins, wimplin,<sup>b</sup> clear ;  
 Where Bruce \* ance ruled the martial ranks,  
 An' shook his Carrick spear ;  
 Some merry, friendly, country-folks  
 Together did convene,  
 To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,  
 An' haud their Halloween  
 Fu' blythe that night.

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

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,<sup>i</sup>  
 Their 'stocks' † maun a' be sought ance ;  
 They steek their een, an' grape<sup>j</sup> an' wale<sup>k</sup>  
 For muckle anes, an' straught anes.

---

<sup>b</sup> meandering.	<sup>c</sup> trim.	<sup>d</sup> appear.	<sup>e</sup> loyal.	<sup>f</sup> love-knots.
<sup>g</sup> shy.	<sup>h</sup> chatter.	<sup>i</sup> cabbage-plot.	<sup>j</sup> grope.	<sup>k</sup> select.

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

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

Poor hav'rel<sup>l</sup> Will fell aff the drift,  
 An' wandered thro' the 'bow-kail,'  
 An' pou't, for want o' better shift,  
 A runt, was like a sow-tail  
 Sae bow't<sup>m</sup> that night.

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

The lasses staw<sup>q</sup> 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<sup>r</sup> a' the lasses ;  
 But her tap-pickle maist was lost,  
 Whan kiutlin in the 'fause-house' †  
 Wi' him that night.

---

<sup>l</sup> half-witted.    <sup>m</sup> crooked.    <sup>n</sup> tottering.    <sup>o</sup> pocket-knives.  
<sup>p</sup> snugly.    <sup>q</sup> stole away.    <sup>r</sup> screamed with laughter.

\* 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.—*R. B.*

† 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, wit an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind : this he calls a "fause-house."—*R. B.*

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

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e ;  
 Wha 'twas, she wadna tell ;  
 But this is *Jock*, 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,  
 And Jean had e'en a sair heart  
 To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,  
 Was brunt wi' primsie<sup>t</sup> Mallie ;  
 An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,<sup>u</sup>  
 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' swear by 'jing,'  
 'Twas just the way he wanted  
 To be that night.

---

<sup>s</sup> agreeable.

<sup>t</sup> prudish.

<sup>u</sup> pet.

\* 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.—*R. B.*

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

But Merran sat behint their backs,  
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell ;  
 She lea'es them gashin<sup>x</sup> at their cracks,<sup>y</sup>  
 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,'<sup>z</sup>  
 And in the 'blue-clue'\* throws then,  
 Right fear't that night.

An' ay she win't,<sup>a</sup> an' ay she swat—  
 I wat she made nae jaukin ;<sup>b</sup>  
 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.

<sup>v</sup> stealthily.<sup>w</sup> tasted.<sup>x</sup> engaged.<sup>y</sup> conversation,<sup>z</sup> cross-beams.<sup>a</sup> winded.<sup>b</sup> delay.

\* 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.—*R. B.*

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,<sup>c</sup>  
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin,<sup>d</sup>  
 She notic't na an aizle<sup>e</sup> brunt  
 Her braw, new, worset apron  
 Out thro' that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's-face !†  
 I daur you try sic sportin,  
 As seek the foul thief ony place,  
 For him to spae<sup>f</sup> 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' died deleeret,  
 On sic a night.

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

<sup>c</sup> quantity of smoke.

<sup>d</sup> agitated.

<sup>e</sup> cinder.

<sup>f</sup> foretell.

<sup>g</sup> young romp.

<sup>h</sup> harvest-home.

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

† A technical term in female scolding.—*R. B.*



" Our 'stibble-rig'<sup>i</sup> was Rab M'Graen,  
 A clever, sturdy fallow ;  
 His sin<sup>j</sup> 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 frightened  
 That vera night."

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

He marches thro' amang the stacks,  
 Tho' he was something sturtin ;<sup>l</sup>  
 The graip he for a harrow taks,  
 An' hauls<sup>m</sup> at his curpin :<sup>n</sup>  
 And ev'ry now an' then, he says,  
 " Hemp-seed I saw thee,

---

<sup>i</sup> leader of the reapers. <sup>j</sup> son. <sup>k</sup> reached. <sup>l</sup> staggered. <sup>m</sup> drags. <sup>n</sup> rear.

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

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

He whistl'd up 'Lord Lenox' March,'  
 To keep his courage cheery ;  
 Altho' his hair began to arch,  
 He was sae fleyd<sup>o</sup> an' eerie :<sup>p</sup>  
 Till presently he hears a squeak,  
 An' then a grane an' gruntle ;  
 He by his shouther gae a keek,  
 An' tumbled wi' a wintle<sup>q</sup>  
 Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,  
 In dreadfu' desperation !  
 An' young an' auld come rinnin out,  
 An' hear the said narration :  
 He swoor 'twas hilchin<sup>r</sup> Jean M'Craw,  
 Or crouchie<sup>s</sup> Merran Humphie—  
 Till stop ! she trotted thro' them a' ;  
 An' wha was it but grumphie<sup>t</sup>  
 Asteer that night ?

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen,  
 To winn three wechts o' naething ; \*

---

<sup>o</sup> timorous. <sup>p</sup> frightened. <sup>q</sup> somersault. <sup>r</sup> halting. <sup>s</sup> crook-backed. <sup>t</sup> the pig.

\* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible ; for there is danger that the being about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a "wecht," and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times, and the third time, an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.—*R. B.*

But for to meet the deil her lane,  
 She pat but little faith in :  
 She gies the herd a pickle<sup>u</sup> nits,  
 An' twa red cheekit apples,  
 To watch, while for the barn she sets,  
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples  
 That vera night.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,  
 An' owre the threshold ventures ;  
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',  
 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.

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

<sup>u</sup> few.  
<sup>x</sup> crooked.

<sup>v</sup> inveigled.  
<sup>y</sup> an oath.

<sup>w</sup> promised.  
<sup>z</sup> shreds.

---

\* Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a "bear-stack," and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—R. B.



Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool ;<sup>i</sup>  
 Near lav'rock<sup>j</sup>-height she jumpet,  
 But mist a fit, an' in the pool  
 Out-owre the lugs she plumpet,  
 Wi' a plunge that night.

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 hea'v'd them on the fire,  
 In wrath that night.

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

[The author's own notes to this long descriptive poem are so complete, that we require to add very little to the information they contain. The

<sup>i</sup> sheath.    <sup>j</sup> lark.    <sup>k</sup> steam.    <sup>l</sup> tongues wagging.    <sup>m</sup> whisky.

\* 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.—*R. B.*

† 1715, when the Earl of Mar headed an insurrection.

‡ Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween Supper.—*R. B.*

poet has selected, as the scene of those old customs and superstitious ceremonies, not the locality of his riper years, but that of his infancy and boyhood. Both in Alloway and at Mount Oliphant, he lived in the close neighbourhood of Colean and Cassilis Downans. We regard this selection on the poet's part as a kind of tacit hint, that even in his own time, the Halloween observances were falling out of practice in the more inhabited districts of Ayrshire. Throughout Scotland at the present day, the only vestige of these is found in the nursery-rhymes and by-plays of children, which the annual recurrence of the season wakens up.

In the sixteenth stanza, the mention of a place is introduced, which the poet names "Achmacalla." We believe there is no such locality in Carrick, or even in Ayrshire; the rhyme required it, and the name was coined accordingly. The fourth stanza from the close of the poem is generally quoted as the finest descriptive passage, within small compass, to be found in poesy. Respecting this production, Mr Lockhart says,— "Hallowe'en, a descriptive poem, perhaps even more exquisitely wrought than the 'Holy Fair,' and containing nothing that could offend the feelings of anybody, was produced about the same period. Burns' art had now reached its climax."]

### TO A MOUSE,

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

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WEE, sleeket, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,  
O, what a panic's in thy breastie !  
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
                                    Wi' bickerin<sup>a</sup> brattle !<sup>b</sup>  
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,  
                                    Wi' murderin' pattle !<sup>c</sup>

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 !

<sup>a</sup> speedy.

<sup>b</sup> scamper.

<sup>c</sup> a hand-stick to break clods.



The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men  
     Gang aft agley,<sup>o</sup>  
 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 !

[We have no variations to note here. The poem seems to have issued perfect from the mint of the author's mind, when he suddenly stopped the ploughshare's farther progress on observing the tiny creature escape across the rig. This is generally regarded as one of the most faultless of the author's productions, and unmatched even by the "Mountain Daisy" in originality and interest. True, one critic is disposed to see an element of weakness in the structure of the second stanza. We are not sensible of this, and neither was William Wordsworth, whose style it closely resembles ; but oh, how unlike the work of any other poet are all the rest of the verses ! "It is difficult to decide (writes Currie) whether this 'Address' should be considered as serious or comic. If we smile at the 'bickering brattle' of this little flying animal, it is a smile of tenderness and pity. The descriptive part is admirable ; the moral reflections beautiful, arising directly out of the occasion ; and in the conclusion there is a deep melancholy, a sentiment of doubt and dread that rises to the sublime."]

#### EPITAPH ON JOHN DOVE, INNKEEPER.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

HERE lies Johnie Pigeon ;  
 What was his religion  
     Whaever desires to ken,  
 To some other warl'  
 Maun follow the carl,  
     For here Johnie Pigeon had nane !

---

<sup>o</sup> awry.



Strong ale was ablution—  
 Small beer—persecution,  
     A dram was "*memento mori*;"  
 But a full-flowing bowl  
 Was the saving his soul,<sup>1</sup>  
     And port was celestial glory.

[The only variation to be noted here is in the last line but one : Chambers has (1) "the joy of his soul;" but the change is no improvement, whatever was his authority for it. John Dove, or more familiarly, "Johnie Doo" was mine host of the Whitefoord Arms Inn at Mauchline, in the main street, opposite the church, at the corner of a cross street, named Cowgate. If we mistake not, he was the "Paisley John" of another poem by Burns, which would indicate that he originally hailed from that town. We have Gilbert Burns' authority for believing that the poet never frequented public houses till he had almost formed the resolution to become an author. Certain it is, before the close of the year 1785, Burns was the leading member of a bachelor's club of a very odd character which held stated meetings at the "Whitefoord Arms." It was a kind of secret association, the professed object of which was to search out, report, and discuss the merits and demerits of the many scandals that cropped up from time to time in the village. The poet was made perpetual president ; John Richmond, a clerk with Gavin Hamilton, writer, was appointed "Clerk of Court"—for they dignified the mock solemnity of their meetings by adopting judicial styles and forms ;—James Smith, a draper in the village, was named "procurator fiscal," and to William Hunter, shoemaker—"weel skill'd in dead and living leather"—was assigned the office of "messenger-at-arms." Having premised thus much concerning this club of rare fellows, some of its effects on Burns' musings we shall now proceed to give.]

#### EPITAPH FOR JAMES SMITH.

(STEWART, 1801.)

LAMENT him, Mauchline husbands a',  
     He aften did assist ye ;  
 For had ye staid hale weeks awa,  
     Your wives they ne'er had miss'd ye.



An' now we're dernd<sup>g</sup> in dens and hollows,  
 And hunted, as was William Wallace,  
 Wi' constables—thae blackguard fallows,  
   An' sodgers baith ;  
 But Gude preserve us frae the gallows,  
   That shamefu' death !

Auld grim black-bearded Geordie's sel'—  
 O shake him owre the mouth o' hell !  
 There let him hing, an' roar, an' yell  
   Wi' hideous din,  
 And if he offers to rebel,  
   Then heave him in.

When Death comes in wi' glimmerin blink,  
 An' tips auld drucken Nanse\* the wink,  
 May Sautan gie her doup a clink  
   Within his yett,  
 An' fill her up wi' brimstone drink,  
   Red-reekin het.

Though Jock an' hav'rel<sup>h</sup> Jean† are merry—  
 Some devil seize them in a hurry,  
 An' waft them in th' infernal wherry  
   Straught through the lake,  
 An' gie their hides a noble curry  
   Wi' oil of aik !<sup>i</sup>

As for the “jurr”—puir worthless body !  
 She's got mischief enough already ;

<sup>g</sup> concealed.

<sup>h</sup> silly.

<sup>i</sup> an oaken stick.

\* Geordie's wife.

† Geordie's son and daughter.

Wi' stanget hips, and buttocks bluidy,  
 She's suffer'd sair ;  
 But, may she wintle in a woody,<sup>‡</sup>  
 If she wh—e mair !

[This very free production was first printed in the Edinburgh Magazine of January 1808. Although the poem may not be entitled to rank with the author's higher efforts in the same style, yet few readers will be inclined to dispute that it fairly establishes its own paternity. It is certainly one of a group of hasty comic effusions dashed off by Burns at this period in connection with the Whitefoord Arms conventions already spoken of. The parents of Jean Armour lived at the back of the Inn ; but her namesake who is the subject of the present poem was in no way related to her. The "Geordie" of the piece was another Mauchline innkeeper, whose "jurr," or female servant, had committed some sexual error that caused a kind of "hue and cry" against her among the neighbours. Thus encouraged, a band of reckless young fellows, with Adam Armour for a ringleader, "rade the stang" upon the poor sinner. Geordie, who sympathised with his "jurr," resented this lawless outrage, and got criminal proceedings raised against the perpetrators. Adam Armour, who was an ill-made little fellow of some determination, had to abscond, and during his wanderings he happened to fall in with Burns, who after commiserating the little outlaw, conceived the "Prayer" here put into his lips.]

### THE COURT OF EQUITY.

(UNPUBLISHED POEM.)

[ABOUT this period should be introduced (had it been presentable) a remarkable production generally known under a coarser title, of which one or more autograph copies are preserved in the British Museum. These are catalogued as "Two Humorous Citations or Summonses to some of his Friends upon the Affairs of Love," &c., dated "Mauchline, 12th May 1786."

Various copies of that curious effusion of Burns shew different dates. We have, at page 163, described the nature of the club, out of whose proceedings the production emanated. John Richmond, named in the body of the poem as "Clerk of Court," left Mauchline to reside in Edinburgh about Martinmas 1785 ; so we must infer that the composition now referred to existed prior to that date. The name of John Richmond is also identified with the history of the famous piece we next present.]

---

<sup>‡</sup> spin round on the gallows.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS.—A CANTATA.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

*Recitativo.*

WHEN lyart<sup>a</sup> leaves bestrow the yird,<sup>b</sup>  
 Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,\*  
 Bedim cauld Boreas' blast ;  
 When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,<sup>c</sup>  
 And infant frosts begin to bite,  
 In hoary cranreuch<sup>d</sup> drest ;  
 Ae night at e'en a merry core  
 O' randie,<sup>e</sup> gangrel<sup>f</sup> bodies,  
 In Poesie-Nansie's held the splore,<sup>g</sup>  
 To drink their orra duddies :<sup>h</sup>  
 Wi' quaffing and laughing,  
 They ranted an' they sang,  
 Wi' jumping an' thumping,  
 The vera girdle<sup>i</sup> rang.

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,  
 Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,  
 And knapsack a' in order ;  
 His doxy lay within his arm ;  
 Wi' usquebae<sup>j</sup> an' blankets warm  
 She blinket on her sodger :  
 An' ay he gies the tozie<sup>k</sup> drab  
 The tither skelpin<sup>l</sup> kiss,

---

<sup>a</sup> withered. <sup>b</sup> ground. <sup>c</sup> slanting stroke. <sup>d</sup> crisp-rime. <sup>e</sup> regardless.  
<sup>f</sup> vagrant. <sup>g</sup> spree. <sup>h</sup> superfluous rags. <sup>i</sup> circular plate of iron for baking.  
<sup>j</sup> whisky. <sup>k</sup> muddled. <sup>l</sup> noisy.

---

\* The old Scotch name for the Bat.—*R. B.*

While she held up her greedy gab,  
 Just like an aumous dish : \*  
 Ilk smack still did crack still,  
 Just like a cadger's<sup>m</sup> whip ;  
 Then staggering an' swaggering,  
 He roar'd this ditty up—

*Air.*

*Tune.*—"Soldier's Joy."

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

My prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,  
 When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram : †  
 And I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,  
 And the Moro‡ low was laid at the sound of the drum.

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,§  
 And there I left for witness an arm and a limb ;  
 Yet let my country need me, with Elliot|| to head me,  
 I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.

---

<sup>m</sup> a travelling hawker, whose wares were carried by a donkey and creels.

\* The poet has the irreverence to compare her mouth to a beggar's alms-dish.

† The battle-ground in front of Quebec, where Wolfe victoriously fell in September 1759.

‡ El Moro was the castle that defended the harbour of St Iago.

§ At the siege of Gibraltar in 1762.

|| G. A. Elliot (Lord Heathfield), who defended Gibraltar during three years.

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

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

*Recitativo.*

He ended ; and the kebars<sup>o</sup> sheuk,  
 Aboon the chorus roar ;  
 While, frighted rattons<sup>p</sup> backward leuk,  
 An' seek the benmost bore :<sup>q</sup>  
 A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,<sup>r</sup>  
 He skirl'd out, encore !  
 But up arose the martial chuck,  
 An' laid the loud uproar.

*Air.*

*Tune.*—"Sodger Laddie."

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

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

<sup>n</sup> trull.

<sup>o</sup> rafters.

<sup>p</sup> rats.

<sup>q</sup> innermost hole.

<sup>r</sup> corner.

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

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

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

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

*Recitativo.*

[Poor Merry-Andrew, in the neuk,  
 Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler-hizzie ;<sup>s</sup>  
 They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,  
 Between themselves they were sae busy :  
 At length, wi' drink an' courting dizzy,  
 He stoiter'd up an' made a face ;  
 Then turn'd, an' laid a smack<sup>t</sup> on Grizzie,  
 Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

*Air.*

*Tune*—"Auld Sir Symon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou ;  
 Sir Knave is a fool in a session ;<sup>u</sup>

---

<sup>s</sup> slut.

<sup>t</sup> kiss.

<sup>u</sup> when tried criminally.



He's there but a prentice I trow,  
But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,  
An' I held awa to the school ;  
I fear I my talent misteuk,  
But what will ye hae of a fool ?

For drink I wou'd venture my neck ;  
A hizzie's<sup>v</sup> the half of my craft ;  
But what could ye other expect,  
Of ane that's avowedly daft ?

I ance was tyed up like a stirk,<sup>w</sup>  
For civilly swearing and quaffing ;  
I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,  
For towsing<sup>x</sup> a lass i' my daffin.<sup>y</sup>

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

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

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

---

<sup>v</sup> loose woman.      <sup>w</sup> bullock: this means the punishment of the "Jougs,"  
an iron collar padlocked round a culprit's neck in a public thoroughfare.

<sup>x</sup> rumpling.      <sup>y</sup> fun.

*Recitativo.*

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,<sup>z</sup>  
 Wha kent fu' weel to cleek<sup>a</sup> the sterlin ;  
 For mony a pursie she had hooked,  
 An' had in mony a well been douked :  
 Her love had been a Highland laddie,  
 But weary fa' the waefu' woodie ;<sup>b</sup>  
 Wi' sighs an' sobs she thus began  
 To wail her braw John Highlandman.

*Air.*

*Tune*—"O an ye were dead, Guidman."

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

*Chorus.*

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

With his philibeg<sup>c</sup> an' tartan plaid,  
 An' guid claymore<sup>d</sup> down by his side,  
 The ladies' hearts he did trepan,  
 My gallant, braw John Highlandman.  
 Sing hey, &c.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,  
 An' liv'd like lords an' ladies gay ;  
 For a lalland face he fearèd none,—  
 My gallant, braw John Highlandman.  
 Sing hey, &c.

<sup>z</sup> a tough old woman.  
<sup>c</sup> kilt.

<sup>a</sup> steal with crooked finger.  
<sup>d</sup> broadsword.

<sup>b</sup> gallows.



*Air.**Tune*—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

Let me ryke<sup>h</sup> up to dight<sup>i</sup> that tear,  
 An' go wi' me an' be my dear ;  
 An' then your every care an' fear  
 May whistle owre the lave<sup>j</sup> o't.

*Chorus.*

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

At kirns an' weddins we'se be there,  
 An' O sae nicely's we will fare !  
 We'll bowse about till Daddie Care  
 Sing whistle owre the lave o't.  
 I am, &c.

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

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,  
 An' while I kittle hair on thairms,<sup>kk</sup>  
 Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms,  
 May whistle owre the love o't.  
 I am, &c.

<sup>h</sup> reach.<sup>i</sup> wipe.<sup>j</sup> rest.<sup>k</sup> horse-hair of the bow on catgut.

*Recitativo.*

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,  
 As weel as poor gut-scraper ;  
 He taks the fiddler by the beard,  
 An' draws a roosty rapier—  
 He swoor by a' was swearing worth,  
 To speet him like a pliver,<sup>1</sup>  
 Unless he would from that time forth  
 Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor tweedle-dee  
 Upon his hunkers bended,  
 An' pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,  
 An' so the quarrel ended.  
 But tho' his little heart did grieve  
 When round the tinkler prest her,  
 He feign'd to snirtle<sup>m</sup> in his sleeve,  
 When thus the caird address'd her :

*Air.*

*Tune.*—"Clout the Cauldron."

My bonie lass, I work in brass,  
 A tinkler is my station ;  
 I've travell'd round all Christian ground  
 In this my occupation ;  
 I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled  
 In many a noble squadron ;  
 But vain they search'd when off I march'd  
 To go an' clout<sup>n</sup> the cauldron.  
 I've taen the gold, &c.

<sup>1</sup> plover for roasting.

<sup>m</sup> laugh in derision.

<sup>n</sup> mend.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,  
 With a' his noise an' cap'rin ;  
 An' take a share with those that bear  
 The budget<sup>o</sup> and the apron !  
 And *by* that stowp ! my faith an' houpe,  
 And *by* that dear Kilbaigie,\*  
 If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,  
 May I ne'er weet my craigie.  
 And by that stowp, &c.

*Recitativo.*

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

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,  
 That play'd a dame a shavie<sup>p</sup>—  
 The fiddler rak'd her, fore and aft,  
 Behint the chicken cavie.  
 Her lord, a wight of Homer's craft, †  
 Tho' limpin wi' the spavie,  
 He hirpl'd up, an' lap like daft,  
 An' shor'd<sup>q</sup> them *Dainty Davie*<sup>r</sup>  
 O' boot<sup>s</sup> that night.

<sup>o</sup> bag of tools.

<sup>p</sup> clean trick.

<sup>q</sup> promised.

<sup>r</sup> the song so called.

<sup>s</sup> into the bargain.

\* A peculiar sort of whisky so called, a great favourite with Poozie Nansie's clubs.—*R. B.* So named from Kilbaigie distillery, in Clackmannan.

† Homer is allowed to be the oldest ballad-singer on record.—*R. B.*

He was a care-defying blade  
 As ever Bacchus listed !  
 Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,  
 His heart, she ever miss'd it.  
 He had no wish but—to be glad,  
 Nor want but—when he thirsted ;  
 He hated nought but—to be sad,  
 An' thus the muse suggested  
 His sang that night.

*Air.*

*Tune.*—"For a' that, an' a' that."

I am a Bard of no regard,  
 Wi' gentle folks an' a' that ;  
 But Homer-like, the glowrin byke,<sup>t</sup>  
 Frae town to town I draw that.

*Chorus.*

For a' that an' a' that,  
 An' twice as muckle's a' that ;  
 I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',  
 I've wife enugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,<sup>u</sup>  
 Castalia's burn, an' a' that ;  
 But there it streams an' richly reams,  
 My Helicon I ca' that.  
 For a' that, &c.

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

---

<sup>t</sup> staring throng.

<sup>u</sup> fountain or pool.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,  
 Wi' mutual love an' a' that ;  
 But for how lang the fie may stang,  
 Let inclination law that.  
 For a' that, &c.

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,  
 They've taen me in, an' a' that ;  
 But clear your decks, an' here's the Sex !  
 I like the jads for a' that.

*Chorus.*

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

*Recitativo.*

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's  
 Shook with a thunder of applause,  
 Re-echo'd from each mouth !  
 They toom'd their pocks, they pawn'd their duds,  
 They scarcely left to coor their fuds,  
 To quench their lowin drouth : .  
 Then owre again, the jovial thrang  
 The poet did request  
 To lowse his pack an' wale<sup>v</sup> a sang,  
 A ballad o' the best ;  
 He rising, rejoicing,  
 Between his twa Deborahs,  
 Looks round him, an' found them  
 Impatient for the chorus.

---

<sup>v</sup> select.



*Air.*

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

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

*Chorus.*

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

What is title, what is treasure,  
 What is reputation's care?  
 If we lead a life of pleasure,  
 'Tis no matter how or where!  
 A fig for, &c.

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

Does the train-attended carriage  
 Thro' the country lighter rove?  
 Does the sober bed of marriage  
 Witness brighter scenes of love?  
 A fig for, &c.

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

A fig for, &c.

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

*Chorus.*

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

[That this extraordinary work of minstrel-art was composed before the close of 1785, is evident from John Richmond's account of it furnished to Robert Chambers. One night after a meeting held at John Dow's, the poet, in the company of James Smith and Richmond, ventured into a very noisy assemblage of vagrants who were making merry in a "hedge alehouse" kept by a Mrs Gibson, known by the soubriquet of "Poosie" or "Posie Nancy." After witnessing a little of the rough jollity there, the three young men left ; and in the course of a few days, Burns recited a part of the poem to Richmond, who reported that, to the best of his recollection, it contained songs by a *Sweep* and by a *Sailor* which do not now appear in the finished cantata. About Martinmas 1785, Richmond removed to Edinburgh, taking with him a portion of the cantata which the poet had presented to him,—namely, that part which we have marked off with brackets.

The "Jolly Beggars" was first published in Stewart and Meikle's Tracts, 1799, without the portion which had thus been given to Richmond. It was republished by Thomas Stewart of Glasgow in 1801, and again in 1802, embracing the *recitativo* and song of "Merry Andrew" which had in the meantime been supplied by Richmond. The manuscript thus completed was published in fac-simile by Lumsden in 1823, with consent of Stewart who was then the owner of it. The preface to

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<sup>w</sup> trulls.

that facsimile contains the following statement: "The manuscript was given by the poet himself, to Mr David Woodburn, at that time factor to Mr M'Adam of Craigengillan, and by Mr Woodburn to Mr Robert M'Limont, merchant in Glasgow, from whom it passed into the possession of Mr Smith of Greenock, who gave it to the present possessor."

The original MS. is now (1876) the property of Mr Gilbert Burns, of Knockmaroon Lodge, County Dublin, nephew of the poet, who purchased it (along with some other manuscripts) for fifty guineas. On the fly-leaf of the bound volume, is a memorandum by a daughter of Mr Stewart, residing in the Azores, stating that her father's uncle, Mr Richmond, the poet's early friend, gave Mr Stewart the MS. On another leaf is written—"This manuscript belongs to David Crichton, junior, Picton, Nova Scotia, North America. Purchased at Terceira, one of the Azores, or Western Islands, 13th January 1845."

From the foregoing account, it would appear that, while Woodburn in 1786 obtained possession of the main poem, a small portion of it, which is really inferior in quality to the rest, seems to have been purposely omitted by the author, when he stitched up the manuscript and handed it to Woodburn. That rejected part had been given to Richmond who, in 1801, presented it to his nephew Mr Stewart, to complete the cantata which that gentleman had obtained from Mr Smith of Greenock. That this is the correct way of reconciling any apparent discrepancies in stating the pedigree of this unique manuscript, is manifest on examining the original: the long dismembered portion is written on one sheet, in a larger character, in a different tint of ink, and apparently on a different quality of paper.

It is a remarkable fact that Cromek, (who in 1810 published a copy of the Jolly Beggars from the original MS., lent by Mr Stewart for the purpose), having heard from Mr Richmond that a Sailor had originally formed one of the persons in the poet's drama, actually took upon him to introduce a Sailor, at that part of the last *recitativo* but one, where the Fiddler relieves the Bard of one of his Deborahs, thus,—

" But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,  
That play'd a dame a shavie ;  
A Sailor raked her fore and aft," &c.

Cromek used other liberties with the text which we need not farther refer to ; but the public is now for the first time put in possession of the whole history of this wonderful poem.]

## SONG—FOR A' THAT.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790)

Tho' women's minds, like winter winds,  
 May shift, and turn, an' a' that,  
 The noblest breast adores them maist—  
 A consequence I draw that.

*Chor.*—For a' that an' a' that,  
 And twice as meikle's a' that ;  
 The bonie lass that I loe best  
 She'll be my ain for a' that.

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

But there is ane aboon the lave,  
 Has wit, and sense, an' a' that ;  
 A bonie lass, I like her best,  
 And wha a crime dare ca' that ?  
 For a' that, &c.

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

Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,  
 They've taen me in an' a' that ;

But clear your decks, and—here's 'The sex !'  
 I like the jads for a' that.  
 For a' that, &c.

[This composition is an altered version of the Bard's first song in the "Jolly Beggars." The first and third stanzas here given are wanting in the other version, and the two opening stanzas of the song in the Jolly Beggars are here omitted. Verse third of the text first appeared in Pickering's ed., 1839. We shall next proceed to give what seems to have been the poet's first intention as a song for the "sturdy caird" in the same cantata, and withdrawn in favour of that already given.]

### SONG—KISSIN MY KATIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

*Tune*—"The bob o' Dumblane."

O MERRY hae I been teethin a heckle,<sup>a</sup>  
 An' merry hae I been shapin a spoon ;  
 O merry hae I been cloutin<sup>b</sup> a kettle,  
 An' kissin my Katie when a' was done.  
 O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,  
 An' a' the lang day I whistle and sing ;  
 O a' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,<sup>c</sup>  
 An' a' the lang night as happy's a king.

Bitter in dool<sup>d</sup> I lickit<sup>e</sup> my winnins<sup>f</sup>  
 O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave :  
 Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linnens,  
 And blythe be the bird that sings on her grave !  
 Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie ;  
 O come to my arms and kiss me again !

<sup>a</sup> Soldering fresh teeth to a flax-dresser's comb.

<sup>c</sup> companion.

<sup>d</sup> grief.

<sup>e</sup> eat the fruit of.

<sup>b</sup> mending.

<sup>f</sup> earnings.

Drucken or sober, here's to thee, Katie !  
 An' blest be the day I did it again.

[The operations described in the first stanza, are all those of the tinker. It is supposed that this song was intended to be made use of in the "Jolly Beggars," and was afterwards thrown aside for the more suitable one put into the caird's lips—"My bonie lass, I work in brass."]

### THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

(KILMARNOCK, ED., 1786.)

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

GRAY.

My lov'd, my 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 Aiken in a cottage would have been ;  
 Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween !

November chill blows loud wi' angry sugh ;<sup>a</sup>  
 The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;  
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;  
 The black'ning trains<sup>1</sup> o' craws to their repose :  
 The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,—

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<sup>a</sup> whistling sound.

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.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,  
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;  
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher<sup>b</sup> through  
 To meet their 'dad,' wi' flichterin'<sup>c</sup> noise and glee.  
 His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,  
 His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,  
 The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,  
 Does<sup>2</sup> a' his weary kiaugh<sup>d</sup> and care<sup>3</sup> beguile,  
 And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

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

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,  
 And each for other's welfare kindly spiers :<sup>h</sup>  
 The social<sup>4</sup> hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet ;  
 Each tells the uncos<sup>i</sup> that he sees or hears.  
 The parents partial eye their hopeful years ;

<sup>b</sup> make way.<sup>c</sup> fluttering. .<sup>d</sup> anxiety.<sup>e</sup> by-and-by.<sup>f</sup> attentively.<sup>g</sup> private.<sup>h</sup> enquires.<sup>i</sup> uncommon news.

Anticipation forward points the view ;

The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers,  
Gars<sup>j</sup> auld claes<sup>k</sup> look amaist as weel's the new ;  
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,

The younkers a' are warned to obey ;  
And mind their labors wi' an eydent<sup>l</sup> hand,  
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk<sup>m</sup> or play ;  
“ And O ! be sure to fear the Lord alway,  
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night ;  
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,  
Implore His counsel and assisting might :  
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright.”

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;

Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,  
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,  
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.  
The wily mother sees the conscios flame  
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ;  
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,  
While Jenny haffins<sup>n</sup> is afraid to speak ;  
Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ;

A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye ;  
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;  
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.  
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,

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<sup>j</sup> makes.

<sup>k</sup> clothes.

<sup>l</sup> diligent.

<sup>m</sup> dally.

<sup>n</sup> almost.



But blate<sup>o</sup> an' laithfu',<sup>p</sup> scarce can weel behave ;  
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy  
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave ;  
 Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.<sup>q</sup>

O happy love ! where love like this<sup>5</sup> is found :  
 O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !  
 I've pacèd much<sup>6</sup> 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 evening<sup>7</sup> 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<sup>8</sup> 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 ?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,  
 The halesome parritch,<sup>r</sup> chief of Scotia's food ;  
 The sowpe their only hawkie<sup>s</sup> does afford,  
 That, 'yont the hallan<sup>t</sup> snugly chows her cood :  
 The dame brings forth, in complimentary mood,

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<sup>o</sup> bashful.   <sup>p</sup> hesitating.   <sup>q</sup> rest.   <sup>r</sup> oatmeal porridge.   <sup>s</sup> cow.   <sup>t</sup> porch.

\* “ If anything on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feeling of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.”—*Common-place Book*, April 1783.

To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd<sup>u</sup> kebbuck,<sup>v</sup> fell ;<sup>w</sup>  
 And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid :  
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell  
 How 'twas a twomond<sup>x</sup> auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

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

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,  
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim ;  
 Perhaps ' Dundee's ' wild-warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive ' Martyrs,' worthy of the name ;  
 Or noble ' Elgin ' beets the heaven-ward flame,  
 The sweetest<sup>9</sup> 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.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,  
 How Abram was the friend of God on high ;  
 Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage  
 With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;  
 Or, how the royal bard did groaning lie

<sup>u</sup> saved.<sup>v</sup> chcese.<sup>w</sup> pungent.<sup>x</sup> twelvemonth.<sup>y</sup> gray side-locks.<sup>z</sup> selects.

Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;  
 Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;  
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;  
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

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

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

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,  
 In all the pomp of method, and of art ;  
 When men display to congregations wide  
 Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart !  
 The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,

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\* Pope's "Windsor Forest."—*R. B.*

The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;  
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,  
 May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul ;  
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

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

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

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !  
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,  
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content !  
 And O ! may Heaven their simple lives prevent

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\* "Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made."  
 GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village*.

From luxury's contagion, weak and vile !  
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou ! who pour'd the patriotic tide,  
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted<sup>10</sup> 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 !

[That this poem was composed near the close of 1785, is proved by the author's words in his letter to John Richmond, 17th February 1786. That young man was then a writer's clerk in Edinburgh, whither he had gone from Mauchline two or three months previously. In that letter, the titles are given of five very important poems, including "The Cottar's Saturday Night," which, "among several others," he had composed since Richmond left Mauchline. Lockhart has well said—"The Cottar's Saturday Night' is perhaps, of all Burns' pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible now-a-days, would be most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character of the man. In spite of many feeble lines and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me that even his genius would suffer more in estimation by being contemplated in the absence of this poem than of any other single poem he has left us."

The fact of this poem having been constructed on the model of Fergusson's "Farmer's Ingle," takes nothing from its merit, and the rapidity of its execution along with many others, while it surprises us, can be explained only by the conjecture, that almost immediately after the failure of his second year's crop at Mossgiel, he had come to the resolution of abandoning his farm, and of composing a set of poems with a view to publication.

The MS. copy of this poem, used by the printer of the Kilmarnock edition of his poems, is now at Irvine, carefully preserved by the Burns' Club there, along with several other manuscripts. A fac-simile of it was published by Mr Maxwell Dick, of that town, in 1840. An earlier copy is that which was presented to Allan Cunningham in



An' tho' yon lowin heugh's<sup>c</sup> thy hame,  
                   Thou travels far ;  
 An' faith ! thou 's neither lag<sup>d</sup> nor lame,  
                   Nor blate,<sup>e</sup> nor scaur.<sup>f</sup>

Whyles, rangin like a roarin lion,  
 For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin ;  
 Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,  
                   Tirlin<sup>g</sup> the kirks ;  
 Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,  
                   Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend grannie say,  
 In lanely glens ye like to stray ;  
 Or where auld ruin'd castles grey  
                   Nod to the moon,  
 Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,  
                   Wi' eldritch<sup>h</sup> croon.

When twilight did my grannie summon,  
 To say her pray'rs, douse, honest woman !  
 Aft 'yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,  
                   Wi' eerie<sup>i</sup> drone ;  
 Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrees<sup>j</sup> comin,  
                   Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,  
 The stars shot down wi' sklentim<sup>k</sup> light,  
 Wi' you mysel, I gat a fright,  
                   Ayont the lough ;  
 Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,  
                   Wi' wavin sough.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>c</sup> pit or hollow.<sup>g</sup> unroofing.<sup>k</sup> slanting.

L.

<sup>a</sup> slow.<sup>h</sup> hideous.<sup>i</sup> sound.<sup>e</sup> bashful.<sup>i</sup> frightful.

g

<sup>f</sup> to be scared.<sup>j</sup> elder-trees.

The cudgel in my nieve<sup>m</sup> did shake,  
 Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,  
 When wi' an eldritch, stoor<sup>u</sup> "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<sup>o</sup> dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,  
 May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain ;  
 For oh ! the yellow treasures taen  
   By witchin skill ;  
 An' dawtet,<sup>p</sup> twal-pint 'hawkie's'<sup>q</sup> gane  
   As yell's the bill.<sup>r</sup>

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

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

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<sup>m</sup> fi st. <sup>n</sup> base-voiced. <sup>o</sup> dug-up. <sup>p</sup> petted. <sup>q</sup> cow. <sup>r</sup> milkless as the bull. <sup>s</sup> magic.





An' sklented <sup>a</sup> 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 scaul—<sup>b</sup>  
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 thinkin,  
A certain bardie's rantin, drinkin,  
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,  
To your black pit ;  
But, faith ! he'll turn a corner jinkin,  
An' cheat you yet.

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

[The only variation we have to record in connection with this poem is in the seventh verse from the close, and it is a very significant one.]

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<sup>a</sup> sinisterly cast.      <sup>b</sup> scolding wife.      <sup>c</sup> perhaps.

\* *Vide* Milton, Book vi.—*R.B.*

In the letter to John Richmond, of 17th Feb. 1786, already alluded to in the note to "The Cottar's Saturday Night," the poet hints at something disagreeable having happened with respect to himself. The reference there was to an occurrence which, shortly afterwards, led to a rupture between Jean Armour and him. As the present poem then stood, the verse indicated read as follows :—

" Lang syne, in Eden'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,  
  O' guileless heart."

For that stanza, the one in the text was substituted when he came to prepare the poem for the press. A similar obliteration of the name of Jean was made in the poem entitled "The Vision." He would have deleted "the adored name" from the "Epistle to Davie" also, we may be very certain, had it been possible to do so without seriously injuring it.

The poet styles Satan a "sneck-drawin dog," an epithet which our glossary explains as referring to the stealthy doings of a thief: but it signifies more than that. The allusion is rather to the practised cheat who ingeniously scrapes away from the horns of cattle the natural markings which tell their age,—by which trick he can pass them off as much younger, and of more value.

This "Address to the Deil" is one of the author's most popular pieces, and has been the theme of unmingled praise by critics. The poet's relenting tenderness, even towards the author and perpetual embodiment of evil, is a fine stroke at the close. "Humour and tenderness," says Dr Currie, "are here so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which predominates."]

## SCOTCH DRINK.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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 howse, 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 other poets raise a frácas  
 'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drucken Bacchus,  
 An' crabbet names an' stories wrack us,  
                                   An' grate our lug :<sup>a</sup>  
 I sing the juice Scotch bere<sup>b</sup> can mak us,  
                                   In glass or jug.

O thou, my muse ! guid auld Scotch drink !  
 Whether thro' wimplin<sup>c</sup> worms thou jink,<sup>d</sup>  
 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<sup>e</sup> adorn,  
 An' aits set up their awnie<sup>f</sup> horn,  
 An' pease and beans, at e'en or morn,  
                                   Perfume the plain :  
 Leeze<sup>g</sup> me on thee, John Barleycorn,  
                                   Thou king o' grain !

---

<sup>a</sup> ear.    <sup>b</sup> barley.    <sup>c</sup> winding.    <sup>d</sup> escape.    <sup>e</sup> level land near a river.  
<sup>f</sup> bearded.    <sup>g</sup> commend me to thee !

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

Food fills the wame,<sup>j</sup> an' keeps us leevin ;  
 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, scievin,<sup>k</sup>  
     Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited<sup>l</sup> Lear ;  
 Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care ;  
 Thou strings the nerves o' Labor sair,  
     At 's weary toil ;  
 Thou ev'n brightens dark Despair  
     Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,<sup>m</sup>  
 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<sup>n</sup> fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts ;  
 But<sup>o</sup> thee, what were our fairs and rants ?

---

<sup>n</sup> soft cakes.    <sup>i</sup> most select.    <sup>j</sup> stomach.    <sup>k</sup> rapidly.    <sup>l</sup> confused.  
<sup>m</sup> strong ale in silver mugs.    <sup>n</sup> gives a relish to.    <sup>o</sup> without.

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 reekin on a New-year mornin  
   In cog or bicker,<sup>p</sup>  
 An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,<sup>q</sup>  
   An' gusty sucker !<sup>r</sup>

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,  
 An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,<sup>s</sup>  
 O rare ! to see thee fizz an' freath  
   I' th' lugget caup !<sup>t</sup>  
 Then Burnewin<sup>u</sup> comes on like death  
   At ev'ry chaup.<sup>v</sup>

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 clamour.

When skirlin weanies<sup>w</sup> see the light,  
 Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,

---

<sup>p</sup> wooden vessel.    <sup>q</sup> ale-posset with whisky added.    <sup>r</sup> sugar.  
<sup>s</sup> implements.    <sup>t</sup> an eared cup, called a "quaich".    <sup>u</sup> the blacksmith.  
<sup>v</sup> stroke of the hammer.    <sup>w</sup> squalling infants.

\* See "The Holy Fair."



May gravels round his blather wench,  
 An' gouts torment him, inch by inch,  
 Wha twists his gruntle<sup>i</sup> wi' a glunch<sup>j</sup>  
   O' sour disdain,  
 Out owre a glass o' whisky-punch  
   Wi' honest men !

O whisky ! soul o' plays an' pranks !  
 Accept a bardie's gratefu' thanks !<sup>2</sup>  
 When wanting thee, what tuneless crouks  
   Are my poor verses !  
 Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks  
   At ither's a—s !

Thee, Ferintosh !\* O sadly lost !  
 Scotland lament frae coast to coast !  
 Now colic grips, an' barkin hoast<sup>k</sup>  
   May kill us a' ;  
 For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast  
   Is ta'en 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,<sup>l</sup> an' whisky gill,

---

<sup>i</sup> mouth.      <sup>j</sup> grumble.      <sup>k</sup> cough.      <sup>l</sup> flour or barley cake.

\* Whisky from a privileged distillery in Cromartyshire, belonging to Forbes of Culloden. The privilege was abolished by Parliament in 1785.





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

On giving her the accustomed ripp of corn to hansel in the New-year.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

A GUID New-year I wish thee, Maggie!  
Hae, there's a ripp<sup>a</sup> to thy auld baggie:<sup>b</sup>  
Tho' thou's howe-backit<sup>c</sup> now, an' knaggie,<sup>d</sup>  
I've seen the day  
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie,<sup>e</sup>  
Out-owre the lay.<sup>f</sup>

Tho' now thou's dowie,<sup>g</sup> 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<sup>h</sup> thee,  
Ance in a day.

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

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,  
Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere;

<sup>a</sup> handful.

<sup>b</sup> stomach.

<sup>c</sup> hollow-backed.

<sup>d</sup> bony.

<sup>e</sup> colt.

<sup>f</sup> lea.

<sup>g</sup> decayed.

<sup>h</sup> anger.

<sup>i</sup> strong.

<sup>j</sup> firm.

<sup>k</sup> stately.

<sup>l</sup> earth.

<sup>m</sup> ditch or morass.

He gied me thee, o' tocher <sup>n</sup> clear,  
   An' fifty mark ;  
 Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,  
   An' thou was stark.<sup>o</sup>

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

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 <sup>s</sup> but hoyte <sup>t</sup> and hobble,  
 An' wintle <sup>u</sup> like a saumont-coble,  
*That* day, ye was a jinker <sup>v</sup> noble,  
   For heels an' win' !  
 An' ran them till they a' did wauble,<sup>w</sup>  
   Far, far behin' !

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

---

<sup>n</sup> dowry.	<sup>o</sup> strong.	<sup>p</sup> mischievous.	<sup>q</sup> easy-led.	<sup>r</sup> plump.
<sup>s</sup> can.	<sup>t</sup> stumble.	<sup>u</sup> twist and rock.	<sup>v</sup> runner.	<sup>w</sup> stoiter.
<sup>x</sup> high-mettled.		<sup>y</sup> lingering	<sup>z</sup> out of the way.	

\* See note, page 75.





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

[Our poet seems to have "hansel'd" the eventful year 1786 with this poem, which is executed in his very best manner. Professor Wilson, in his famed Essay on Burns, declares that, to his knowledge, the recital of it has brought tears of pleasure to the eyes, and "humanised the heart of a Gilmerton carter." There are no variations to note in connection with this composition.]

### THE TWA DOGS :

A TALE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,  
 That bears the name o' auld "King Coil,"<sup>a</sup>  
 Upon a bonie day in June,  
 When wearin thro' the afternoon,  
 Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,  
 Forgather'd <sup>b</sup> 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 lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar  
 Shew'd him the gentleman an' scholar ;

<sup>u</sup> move.

<sup>v</sup> reserved bit of ground.

<sup>w</sup> stretch.

<sup>a</sup> the district of King's Kyle in Ayrshire.

<sup>b</sup> met together.

But though he was o' high degree,  
 The fient a pride, nae pride had he ;  
 But wad hae spent an hour caressin,  
 Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messan :<sup>c</sup>  
 At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,  
 Nae tawted tyke,<sup>d</sup> tho' e'er sae duddie,  
 But he wad stand, as glad to see him,  
 An' stroan'd on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie—  
 A rhymin, rantin, ravin billie,<sup>e</sup>  
 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<sup>f</sup> an' 'faithfu' tyke,  
 As ever lap a sheugh<sup>g</sup> or dyke.  
 His honest, sonsie, baws'nt<sup>h</sup> face  
 Ay gat him friends in ilka place ;  
 His breast was white, his tousie<sup>i</sup> back  
 Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black ;  
 His gawsie<sup>j</sup> tail, wi' upward curl,  
 Hung owre his hurdies<sup>k</sup> wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain<sup>l</sup> o' ither,  
 And unco pack an' thick<sup>m</sup> thegither ;  
 Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd an' snowket ;  
 Whyles mice an' moudieworts<sup>n</sup> they howket ;<sup>o</sup>  
 Whyles scour'd<sup>p</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>c</sup> mongrel cur.	<sup>d</sup> rough cur.	<sup>e</sup> brother.	<sup>f</sup> sagacious.	<sup>g</sup> ditch.
<sup>h</sup> striped with white.	<sup>i</sup> shaggy.	<sup>j</sup> large.	<sup>k</sup> hips.	<sup>l</sup> fond.
<sup>m</sup> hob-a-nob.	<sup>n</sup> moles.	<sup>o</sup> dug up.	<sup>p</sup> scampered.	

\* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's "Fingal."—*R. B.*

An' there began a lang digression  
About the "lords o' the creation."

## CÆSAR.

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

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,  
His coals, his kane,<sup>q</sup> an' a' his stents :<sup>r</sup>  
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 toiling,  
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling ;  
An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,<sup>s</sup>  
Yet ev'n the ha' folk <sup>t</sup> fill their pechan <sup>u</sup>  
Wi' sauce, ragouts, an' sic like trashtrie,  
That's little short o' downright wastrie.  
Our whipper-in, wee, blastet wonner,<sup>v</sup>  
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 <sup>w</sup> in,  
I own it's past my comprehension.

## LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't <sup>x</sup> eneugh :  
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,<sup>y</sup>

---

<sup>q</sup> rents in farm-produce.    <sup>r</sup> assessments.    <sup>s</sup> cramming.    <sup>t</sup> kitchen-people.  
<sup>u</sup> belly.    <sup>v</sup> despised indweller.    <sup>w</sup> stomach.    <sup>x</sup> perplexed.    <sup>y</sup> ditch.



Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,  
 Baring<sup>z</sup> a quarry, an' sic like ;  
 Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,  
 A smytrie<sup>a</sup> o' wee duddie weans,  
 An' nought but his han'-daurg,<sup>b</sup> to keep  
 Them right an' tight in thack an' raep.<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>d</sup> chiels, an' clever hizzies,<sup>e</sup>  
 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 stinking brock.<sup>f</sup>

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<sup>g</sup> a factor's snash ;<sup>h</sup>  
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear  
 He'll apprehend them, poind<sup>i</sup> their gear ;  
 While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,  
 An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble !

---

<sup>z</sup> clearing away the debris from the rock.    <sup>a</sup> litter.    <sup>b</sup> hand's labour.  
<sup>c</sup> "thack and raep," meaning thatch and straw-ropes to bind it, is a sym-  
 bolic term for "household."    <sup>d</sup> stately.    <sup>e</sup> women.    <sup>f</sup> badger.  
<sup>g</sup> endure.    <sup>h</sup> outburst of spite.    <sup>i</sup> judicially attach.

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 and 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<sup>j</sup> weans an' faithfu' wives ;  
The prattling things are just their pride,  
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

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

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,  
They get the jovial, rantin kirns,<sup>m</sup>  
When rural life, of 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 ;

<sup>j</sup> thriving.<sup>k</sup> ale.<sup>l</sup> marvel.<sup>m</sup> harvest-home rejoicings.

The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,  
 An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;  
 The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,<sup>n</sup>  
 Are handed round wi' right guid will;  
 The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,<sup>o</sup>  
 The young anes ranting thro' the house—  
 My heart has been sae fain to see them,  
 That I for joy hae barket wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said  
 Sic game is now owre aften play'd;  
 There's mony a creditable stock  
 O' decent, honest, fawsont<sup>p</sup> 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 parading,  
 Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading:  
 Or maybe, in a frolic daft,  
 To Hague or Calais takes a waft,  
 To mak a tour an' tak a whirl,  
 To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,  
 He rives his father's auld entails;

<sup>n</sup> snuff-mull.<sup>o</sup> conversing gleefully.<sup>p</sup> seemly.

Or by Madrid he takes 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 an' fatter,  
 An' clear the consequential sorrows,<sup>2</sup>  
 Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.  
 For Britain's guid ! for her destruction !  
 Wi' dissipation, feud an' faction.

## LUATH.

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

O would they stay aback frae courts,  
 An' please themsels wi' countra sports,  
 It wad for ev'ry ane be better,  
 The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter !  
 For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,  
 Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows ;  
 Except for breakin o' their timmer,  
 Or speakin lightly o' their limmer,  
 Or shootin of 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 !

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

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

An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,  
 Their galloping 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-ring,  
 Niest day their life is past enduring.

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.

---

<sup>q</sup> molest.

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<sup>r</sup> humm'd wi' lazy drone ;  
 The kye stood rowtin i' the loan ;  
 When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,  
 Rejoic'd they were na *men*, but *dogs* ;  
 An' each took aff his several way,  
 Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

[“The tale of ‘Twa Dogs’ was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog which he called ‘Luath’ that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of ‘Stanzas to the memory of a quadruped friend ;’ but this plan was given up for the tale as it now stands. ‘Cæsar’ was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite *Luath*.”—*Letter of Gilbert Burns*, Vol. iii., Appendix, Currie's Ed.]

The main object of this poem, Dr Currie has remarked, “seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by shewing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves. . . . The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talent for moralizing, are downright dogs, and not, like the horses of Swift, and ‘Hind and Panther’ of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes.”

The first variation we have to notice is in the sixth paragraph of the poem,—some of the poet's more squeamish critics having prevailed on

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<sup>r</sup> beetle.

him to change a very graphic couplet to a very tame and inexpressive one. Accordingly, in the edition of 1794, instead of the lines in our text, we read as follows :—

<sup>1</sup> Until wi' daffin weary grown,  
Upon a knowe they sat them down :

and from one of his manuscripts of that period, it might be inferred that the alteration cost him some trouble, as the former line reads thus :—

Till tired at last, and weary grown.

Some close observer of the canine species has remarked that dogs never choose a "knowe" to sit on. The poet's picture ought not therefore to have been meddled with.

The second variation (<sup>2</sup>) is found in the edition of 1786, where, instead of the improved text, we read thus :—

" An' purge the bitter ga's an' cankers,  
O' curst Venetian h—res an' ch—ncres." ]

## THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER

TO<sup>1</sup> THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS.\*

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786).

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

PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,  
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,  
An' doucely <sup>a</sup> manage our affairs  
In parliament,  
To you a simple poet's <sup>2</sup> pray'rs  
Are humbly sent.

---

<sup>a</sup> honestly.

\* This was written before the Act anent the Scotch distilleries, of session 1786, for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.  
—R. B.

















Sages their solemn een may steek,<sup>b</sup>  
 An' raise a philosophic reek,<sup>c</sup>  
 An' physically causes seek,  
   In clime an' season ;  
 But tell me whisky's name in Greek,  
   I'll tell the reason.

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

[In this piece, our poet returns, with increased poetic fervour, to the theme of "Scotch Drink." We of this generation are apt to wonder why, in the opening line, he addresses "Irish lords" instead of those of our own Scotland, when hailing the "Scotch representatives in the House of Commons:" but the eldest sons of Scottish peers not being eligible for election in Scotland seems to have been felt by Burns as a national affront. We must therefore regard the prominence here given to "Irish lords" as a pointed stroke of satire. The question was tried by Lord Daer during the poet's lifetime, both in the Court of Session and House of Lords, and decided against him.

The variations are—<sup>(1)</sup> in the title, where the words "The Right Honourable, and Honourable" are introduced in the author's first edition. <sup>(2)</sup> For "poet's," the word "Bardie's" was used in all editions previous to that of 1794. <sup>(3)</sup> This stanza was excluded by the author in published copies,—for what reason Gilbert Burns could not say: but clearly it was to avoid giving offence to the gallant soldier by the allusion to his deficiency as a speaker. <sup>(4)</sup> The variation here corresponds with number <sup>(2)</sup>. <sup>(5)</sup> This closing verse which Currie approvingly characterises as a "most laughable, but most irreverent apostrophe," underwent, in the edition of 1794 a change which has been rejected by every editor of the poet. The innovation seems to have been suggested by Mr Alexander Fraser Tytler.

"Till when ye speak, ye ablin's blether,  
   Yet, deil mak matter !  
 Freedom and whisky gang thegither,  
   Tak aff your whitter !"]

<sup>b</sup> close.           <sup>c</sup> mist.           <sup>d</sup> lose.

I.

P

## THE ORDINATION.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

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

KILMARNOCK wabsters, fidge <sup>a</sup> an' claw,<sup>b</sup>  
An' pour your creeshie <sup>c</sup> nations ;  
An' ye wha leather rax <sup>d</sup> an' draw,  
Of a' denominations ;  
Swith !<sup>e</sup> to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',  
An' there tak up your stations ;  
Then aff to Begbie's <sup>\*</sup> in a raw,  
An' pour divine libations  
For joy this day.

Curst “ Common-sense,” that imp o' h-ll,  
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder : †  
But Oliphant ‡ aft made her yell,  
An' Russell § sair misca'd her :  
This day Mackinlay || taks the flail,  
An' he's the boy will blaud <sup>f</sup> her !  
He'll clap a shangan § on her tail,  
An' set the bairns to daud her  
Wi' dirt this day.

---

<sup>a</sup> shrug.    <sup>b</sup> scratch.    <sup>c</sup> greasie.    <sup>d</sup> stretch.    <sup>e</sup> be off !    <sup>f</sup> slap.  
<sup>§</sup> a cleft stick, or a thistle.

\* Begbie's Inn, in a small court near the Laigh Kirk.

† Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr Lindsay to the “ Laigh Kirk.”—*R. B.*

‡ Rev. James Oliphant, minister of Chapel of Ease, Kilmarnock, from 1764 to 1774.

§ Rev. John Russell of Kilmarnock, one of the “ Twa Herds.” He was successor to Oliphant. See notes pp. 89, 134.

|| Rev. James Mackinlay, subject of the present poem, ordained 6th April 1786. As a preacher, he became “ a great favourite of the million.”



Mak haste an' turn King David owre,  
 An' lilt wi' holy clangor ;  
 O' double verse come gie us four,  
 An' skirl up " the Bangor : " <sup>h</sup>  
 This day the kirk kicks up a stoure, <sup>i</sup>  
 Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her ;  
 For Heresy is in her pow'r,  
 And gloriously she'll whang her,  
 Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,  
 An' touch it aff wi' vigour,  
 How graceless Ham \* leugh at his dad,  
 Which made Canaan a nigger ;  
 Or Phineas † drove the murdering blade,  
 Wi' whore-abhorring rigour ;  
 Or Zipporah, † the scaldin jad, <sup>1</sup>  
 Was like a bluidy teeger,  
 I' th' inn that day.

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 o'er the flock to feed, <sup>2</sup>  
 And punish each transgression ;  
 Especial, rams that cross the breed,  
 Gie them sufficient threshin ;  
 Spare them nae day.

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<sup>h</sup> a favourite psalm-tune.

<sup>i</sup> rumpus.

\* Genesis ix. 22.—*R. B.*

† Numbers xxv. 8.—*R. B.*

‡ Exodus iv. 25.—*R. B.*

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

Nae mair by "Babel's streams" we'll weep,  
 To think upon our "Zion;"  
 And hing our fiddles up to sleep,  
 Like baby-clouts a-dryin!  
 Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,  
 And o'er the thairms<sup>m</sup> be tryin;  
 Oh, rare! to see our elbucks<sup>n</sup> wheep,  
 And a' like lamb-tails flyin,  
 Fu' fast this day!

Lang, Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,  
 Has shor'd<sup>o</sup> the Kirk's undoin;  
 As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,<sup>p</sup>  
 Has proven to its ruin: \*  
 Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,  
 He saw mischief was brewin;  
 An' like a godly, elect bairn,  
 He's waled<sup>q</sup> us out a true ane,  
 And sound this day.

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<sup>j</sup> merry.    <sup>k</sup> low.    <sup>l</sup> roots of cabbage.    <sup>m</sup> catgut.    <sup>n</sup> elbows.  
<sup>o</sup> attempted.    <sup>p</sup> distressed.    <sup>q</sup> selected.

\* Rev. Wm. Boyd, a "Moderate," ordained pastor of Fenwick, June '25, 1782.

Now Robertson \* harangue nae mair,  
 But steek <sup>r</sup> your gab <sup>s</sup> for ever;  
 Or try the wicked town of Ayr,  
 For there they'll think you clever:  
 Or, nae reflection on your lear,  
 Ye may commence a shaver;  
 Or to the Netherton † repair,  
 An' turn a carpet-weaver,  
 Aff-hand this day.

Mu'trie ‡ and you were just a match,  
 We never had sic twa drones;  
 Auld "Hornie" did the Laigh Kirk watch,  
 Just like a winkin baudrons,<sup>t</sup>  
 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<sup>3</sup> this day.

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.

<sup>r</sup> shut.<sup>s</sup> mouth.<sup>t</sup> cat.

\* Rev. John Robertson, colleague of Dr Mackinlay, ordained 1765, died 1798. He belonged to the "Common-sense" order of preachers.

† A district of Kilmarnock, where carpet weaving was largely carried on.

‡ The Rev. John Multrie, a "Moderate" whom Mackinlay succeeded.

§ The poet, and author of an "Essay on Truth," who was reckoned to side with the moderate party in church matters.

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,<sup>u</sup>  
 As ane were peelin onions !  
 Now there, they're packèd aff to h-ll,  
 An' banish'd our dominions,  
 Henceforth this day.

O happy day ! rejoice, rejoice !  
 Come bouse about the porter !  
 Morality's demure decoys <sup>4</sup>  
 Shall here nae mair find quarter :  
 Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys  
 That heresy can torture ; <sup>5</sup>  
 They'll gie her on a rape a hoise,  
 And cove <sup>v</sup> her measure shorter  
 By th' head some day.

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,<sup>w</sup> and ev'ry skin,  
 We'll rin them aff in fusion,  
 Like oil some day.

[The poet's letter to Richmond of 17th Feb. 1786 intimates that the present poem had already been composed : but it is a curious fact that Dr Mackinlay's ordination did not take place till 6th April thereafter.

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<sup>u</sup> bitter-tasting part.      <sup>v</sup> cut.      <sup>w</sup> a brimstone match.

\* A cant-phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.—*R. B.*

Chronologists and annotators are thus taught how unsafe it is to dogmatise on any production from internal evidence alone. Thus it is not improbable that even the poem of "The Whistle" was composed in anticipation of the event; with only a few lines added thereafter to record the triumph of Craighdarroch.

Both in this poem and its companion satire, "The Holy Fair," a personality named "Common-Sense" is introduced. This means the "new light," or Arminian doctrine that crept into the teaching of some Scotch pulpits, about the middle of last century, and which Burns lent all the powers of his pen to promote. Here he retraces the history of the "Laigh Kirk" of Kilmarnock so far back as the year 1764, and shows that a series of consecutive appointments of non-evangelical ministers then commenced with the Rev. Wm. Lindsay. He refers to "a scoffing ballad" of that date which more than hinted that the minister obtained that appointment through the influence of his wife, a Miss Margaret Lauder, who had formerly been in high favour with the patron, the Earl of Glencairn. On the present occasion, however, the Earl yielded to the popular wishes, and the refreshing "old light" again spread its halo around the Laigh Kirk. Mackinlay survived till 1841. His son, the Rev. James Mackinlay, died in Edinburgh so recently as June 1876.

The following variations are found in an early manuscript of this poem :—

<sup>1</sup> Come wale a text, a proper verse,  
And touch it aff wi' vigour,  
How Ham leugh at his father's a——,  
Which made Canaan a nigger;  
Or Phineas did fair Cozbie pierce  
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;  
Or Zipparah, wi' scalding hearse, &c.

<sup>2</sup> There, try his mettle on the creed,  
Wi' form'la and confession;  
And lay your hands upon his head,  
And seal his high commission,  
The holy flock to tent and feed,  
And punish each transgression, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Fu' fast.

<sup>4</sup> delusive joys.

<sup>5</sup> will clap him in the torture.]

## EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the slee’st, pawkie thief,  
 That e’er attempted stealth or rief!<sup>a</sup>  
 Ye surely hae some warlock-breef<sup>b</sup>  
   Owre human hearts ;  
 For ne’er a bosom yet was prief<sup>c</sup>  
   Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an’ moon,  
 An’ ev’ry star that blinks<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>e</sup> stature,  
 She’s turn’d you off, 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<sup>f</sup> working prime,

---

<sup>a</sup> robbery.  
<sup>e</sup> stinted.

<sup>b</sup> spell.  
<sup>f</sup> excited brain.

<sup>c</sup> proof.

<sup>d</sup> twinkles.



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 living sound an' hale ;  
 Then top and maintop crowd the sail,  
                                   Heave Care o'er-side !  
 And large, before Enjoyment's gale,  
                                   Let's tak the tide.

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

The magic-wand then let us wield ;  
 For, ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,  
 See, crazy, weary, joyless eild,  
                                   Wi' wrinkl'd face,  
 Comes hostin,<sup>1</sup> hirplin<sup>m</sup> owre the field,  
                                   Wi' creepin pace.

---

<sup>1</sup> coughing.

<sup>m</sup> limping.



When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,<sup>n</sup>  
 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 an' play.

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

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,  
 For which they never toil'd nor swat ;  
 They drink the sweet and eat the fat,  
   But<sup>o</sup> 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,  
   An' seize the prey :  
 Then cannie,<sup>p</sup> in some cozie<sup>q</sup> place,  
   They close the day.

<sup>n</sup> twilight.<sup>o</sup> without.<sup>p</sup> quietly.<sup>q</sup> snug.

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

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<sup>r</sup>.o' rhymes.

" Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,  
 Till icicles hing frae their beards;  
 Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,  
   And maids of honor;  
 An' yill an' whisky gie to cairds,<sup>s</sup>  
   Until they sconner.<sup>t</sup>

" A title, Dempster\* merits it;  
 A garter gie to Willie Pitt;

---

<sup>r</sup> abundance.

<sup>s</sup> tinkers.

<sup>t</sup> are nauseated.

\* George Dempster of Dunnichen, M. P., a distinguished patriot referred to in "The Author's Earnest Cry," p. 220.



Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise ;  
 Nae ferly<sup>y</sup> tho' ye do despise  
 The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,  
   The rattling 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.

[The only variation found in this poem is in the last verse but one. The word "rattlin" was introduced in 1787, for "rambling" in the previous edition. James Smith, the person here addressed, was a shop-keeper in Mauchline, short of stature but vigorous in mind. From what we have said of him (p. 163, *supra*) as the "wag in Mauchline," celebrated in one of Burns' cleverest epigrams, and as "fiscal" of the "Court of Equity" held at the Whiteford Arms Inn, the reader will need little more information regarding him. He stood Burns' friend "through thick and thin," when he got into difficulties early in the Spring of 1786, in relation to his love-alliance with Jean Armour. The first intimation of trouble regarding that affair is given in the poet's letter to Richmond, 17th Feb. 1786, in which he says: "I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith; he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline." Smith afterwards had a calico-printing manufactory at Avon, near Linlithgow, but proved unsuccessful. It was his fate to end life sooner even than our poet, and in the very place where Burns at one time expected to end *his*—the West Indies.]

## THE VISION.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

## DUAN FIRST.\*

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,  
 The curlers quat their roarin play,†  
 And hunger'd maukin<sup>a</sup> taen her way,  
   To kail-yards green,  
 While faithless snaws ilk step betray  
   Whare she has been.

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

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

All in this mottie, misty clime,  
 I backward mus'd on wasted time,

---

<sup>a</sup> hare.                   <sup>b</sup> flail.                   <sup>c</sup> parlour, or inner apartment.  
<sup>d</sup> cough exciting.       <sup>e</sup> building.

\* Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his *Cath-Loda*, vol. 2. of M'Pherson's translation.—*R.B.*

† Not only from the hilarity of the game, but from the roaring sound of the curling-stone along the hollow ice.

How I had spent my youthfu' prime,  
                   An' done naething,  
 But stringing 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'ring " blockhead ! coof ! " <sup>f</sup>  
 An' heav'd on high my wauket loof, <sup>g</sup>  
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,  
                   Or some rash aith,  
 That I henceforth wad be rhyme-proof  
                   Till my last breath—

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

Ye need na doubt, I held my wisht ;  
 The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht ;  
 I glowr'd <sup>h</sup> as eerie 's <sup>i</sup> I'd been dusht, <sup>j</sup>  
                   In some wild glen ;  
 When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,  
                   An' stepped ben.

<sup>f</sup> fool.<sup>g</sup> work-hardened palm.<sup>h</sup> stared.<sup>i</sup> frightened.<sup>j</sup> awed into stupor.

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 markèd in her face ;  
 A wildly-witty, rustic grace  
                                   Shone full upon her ;  
 Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,  
                                   Beam'd keen with honor.†

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,  
 Till half a leg was scrimply seen ;  
 An' such a leg ! my bonie Jean ‡  
                                   Could only peer it ;  
 Sae straught, sae taper, tight an' clean—  
                                   Nane else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,  
 My gazing wonder chiefly drew ;  
 Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw  
                                   A lustre grand ;  
 And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,  
                                   A well-known land.

---

\* A quotation from his own words in the preceding Epistle to James Smith, page 237.

† This couplet was a great favourite with Dr Chalmers, who referred to it as the description of an eye too divine for fallen humanity to possess. His own eye seemed to belie his words as he spoke.

‡ "My bonie Jean." About the month of January or February 1786, when, as we conjecture, this poem was composed, these words must have stood as in the text. But when his poems were at the press, the author's irritation on her account caused him to alter the words to "my Bess, I ween,"—and so they stand in the Kilmarnock edition : but in 1787, that irritation having subsided, Jean was restored to her place of honour in the poem.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost ;  
 There, mountains to the skies were toss't :  
 Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,  
                     With surging foam ;  
 There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,  
                     The lordly dome.

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

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

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

My heart did glowing transport feel,  
 To see a race heroic † wheel,

---

\* Here, in the first edition, *Duan First* came to a close ; the additional seven stanzas were appended in the second edition, apparently in compliment to Mrs Dunlop and other influential friends of the author.

† The Wallaces.—*R. B.*



And brandish round the deep-dyed steel,  
     In sturdy blows;  
 While, back-recoiling, seem'd to reel  
     Their suthron foes.

His Country's Saviour, \* mark him well!  
 Bold Richardton's heroic swell; †  
 The chief, on Sark who glorious fell ‡  
     In high command;  
 And he whom ruthless fates expel  
     His native land.

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade  
 Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid, §  
 I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd  
     In colours strong:  
 Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd,  
     They strode<sup>1</sup> along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove, ||  
 Near many a hermit-fancied cove  
 (Fit haunts for friendship or<sup>2</sup> for love,  
     <sup>^</sup> In musing mood),  
 An aged Judge, I saw him rove,  
     Dispensing good.

---

\* William Wallace.—*R. B.*

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

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

§ Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial place is still shown.—*R. B.*

|| Barskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice-Clerk.—*R. B.* (Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)

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,<sup>3</sup> all its source and end to draw,  
                   That,<sup>4</sup> 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 whispering throb did witness bear  
                   Of kindred sweet,  
 When with an elder sister's air  
                   She did me greet.

“ All hail ! my own inspirèd 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 !

---

\* Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor and present Professor Stewart.  
 —*R. B.* The father of Dugald Stewart was eminent in Mathematics.

† Colonel Fullerton.—*R. B.* He had travelled under the care of Patrick Brydson, author of a well-known publication, “A Tour through Sicily and Malta.”





“ 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-mantled earth  
 Warm cherish’d ev’ry floweret’s birth,  
 And joy and music pouring forth  
                   In ev’ry grove ;  
 I saw thee eye the general mirth  
                   With boundless love.

“ When ripen’d fields and azure skies  
 Call’d forth the reapers’ rustling noise,

---

\* Burns obtained the idea of this visionary from the “Scota” of Alex. Ross, in the “Fortunate Shepherdess.”

† The Loudoun branch of the Campbells is here referred to.



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

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

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

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

[When the poet, in his 19th stanza, Duan Second, makes Coila say to him that his fame extends over all her wide domains, he thereby plainly intimates, that several of his effusions had been widely circulated in manuscript prior to 1786 ; and that for some time past he had been cultivating the patronage of the gentry of the district. In a letter which he addressed to Mrs Dunlop from Edinburgh, on 15th January 1787, he enclosed the seven concluding stanzas of Duan first, as in the text, and wrote as follows :—“ I have not composed anything on the great

Wallace, except what you have seen in print, and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition. You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my 'Vision' long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood."

To another patroness—Mrs Stewart of Stair—he had presented a manuscript book of ten leaves, folio, containing, along with several early poems, a copy of the Vision. That copy embraces about twenty stanzas which he cancelled when he came to print the piece in his Kilmarnock volume. Seven of these, as we have seen, he restored in printing his second edition, and the remainder of the suppressed verses we now append. The ten leaves of the poet's handwriting just referred to are generally styled the "Stair manuscript." It was purchased by the late Mr Dick, bookseller in Ayr, from the grandson of Mrs Stewart of Stair; and, since Mr Dick's decease, it has been cut asunder and sold piecemeal by his representatives.

Referring to the suppressed stanzas of the 'Vision,' Chambers thus observes:—"It is a curious and valuable document—valuable for an unexpected reason, namely, its proving what might otherwise be doubted, that Burns was not incapable of writing weakly. The whole of the inedited stanzas are strikingly of this character. Perhaps there is after all, a second and a greater importance in the document, as showing how, with the capability of writing ineffectively, his taste was so unerring as to prevent him from publishing a single line that was not fitted to command respect; for every one of the poor stanzas has been thrown out on sending the poem to the press."

#### SUPPRESSED STANZAS OF "THE VISION."

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

After 18th stanza of the text:—

WITH secret throes I marked that earth,  
That cottage, witness of my birth;  
And near I saw, bold issuing forth  
    In youthful pride,  
A Lindsay race of noble worth,  
    Famed far and wide.

Where, hid behind a spreading wood,  
An ancient Pict-built mansion stood,  
I spied, among an angel brood,  
    A female pair;  
Sweet shone their high maternal blood,  
    And father's air.\*

---

\* Sundrum.—*R. B.* Hamilton of Sundrum was married to a sister of Colonel Montgomerie of Coilsfield.



An ancient tower\* to memory brought  
 How Dettingen's bold hero fought ;  
 Still, far from sinking into nought,  
   It owns a lord  
 Who far in western climates fought,  
   With trusty sword.

Among the rest I well could spy  
 One gallant, graceful, martial boy,  
 The *soldier* sparkled in his eye,  
   A diamond water ;  
 I blest that noble badge with joy  
   That owned me *frater*.†

After 20th stanza of the text :—

Near by arose a mansion fine,‡  
 The seat of many a muse divine ;  
 Not rustic muses such as mine,  
   With holly crown'd,  
 But th' ancient, tuneful, laurell'd Nine,  
   From classic ground.

I mourn'd the card that Fortune dealt,  
 To see where honie Whitefoords dwelt ; §  
 But other prospects made me melt,  
   That village near ; ||  
 There Nature, Friendship, Love, I felt,  
   Fond-mingling dear !

Hail ! Nature's pang, more strong than death !  
 Warm Friendship's glow, like kindling wrath !  
 Love, dearer than the parting breath  
   Of dying friend !  
 Not ev'n with life's wild devious path,  
   Your force shall end !

The Pow'r that gave the soft alarms  
 In blooming Whiteford's rosy charms,  
 Still threatens the tiny, feather'd arms,  
   The barb'd dart,  
 While lovely Wilhelminia warms  
   The coldest heart. ¶

\* Stair.—*R. B.* That old mansion was then possessed by General Stewart and his lady, to whom the MS. was presented.

† Captain James Montgomerie, Master of St James' Lodge, Tarbolton, to which the author has the honour to belong.—*R. B.*

‡ Auchinleck.—*R. B.* § Ballochmyle. || Mauchline.

¶ A compliment to Miss Wilhelmina Alexander as successor, in that locality, to Miss Maria Whitefoord.

After 21st stanza of the text :—

Where Lugar leaves his moorland plaid,\*  
 Where lately Want was idly laid,  
 I markèd busy, bustling Trade,  
                                   In fervid flame,  
 Beneath a Patroness's aid,  
                                   Of noble name.

Wild, countless hills I could survey,  
 And countless flocks as wild as they ;  
 But other scenes did charms display,  
                                   That better please,  
 Where polish'd manners dwell with Gray,  
                                   In rural ease.†

Where Cessnock pours with gurgling sound ; ‡  
 And Irwine, marking out the bound,  
 Enamour'd of the scenes around,  
                                   Slow runs his race,  
 A name I doubly honor'd found, §  
                                   With knightly grace.

Brydon's brave ward, || I saw him stand,  
 Fame humbly offering her hand,  
 And near, his kinsman's rustic band, ¶  
                                   With one accord,  
 Lamenting their late blessed land  
                                   Must change its lord.

The owner of a pleasant spot,  
 Near sandy wilds, I last did note ; \*\*  
 A heart too warm, a pulse too hot  
                                   At times, o'erran ;  
 But large in ev'ry feature wrote,  
                                   Appear'd, the Man.

In the Text, two of the verses imported from the stanzas originally suppressed, namely, the 2nd and 4th from the close of *Duan First*, show minute variations in the MS. :—

<sup>1</sup> stalked.      <sup>2</sup> and.      <sup>3</sup> The words This (<sup>3</sup>) and That (<sup>4</sup>) are transposed.

The greater portion of the MS. of these "suppressed stanzas" is in the possession of Robert Jardine, Esq. of Castlemilk, who has obliged us with the use of it in collating and correcting the eight concluding

\* Cumnock.—*R. B.*

† Mr Farquhar Gray.—*R. B.*

‡ Auchinskieth.—*R. B.*

§ Caprington.—*R. B.*

|| Colonel Fullerton (see note, p. 244).—*R. B.*

¶ Dr. Fullerton.—*R. B.*

\*\* Orangefield.—*R. B.*

verses thereof. In that MS., the verse relating to Catrine (21st of the text) is inserted immediately before that referring to Cumnock and the Lugar.]

### THE RANTIN DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.

*Tune.*—"Whare'll our gudeman lie."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

O WHA my babie-clouts will buy ?  
 O wha will tent <sup>a</sup> me when I cry ?  
 Wha will kiss me where I lie ?  
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

O wha will own he did the faut ?  
 O wha will buy the <sup>1</sup> groanin maut ? <sup>b</sup>  
 O wha will tell me how to ca't ?  
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

When I mount the creepie-chair, <sup>c</sup>  
 Wha will sit beside me there ?  
 Gie me Rob, I'll seek nae mair,  
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

Wha will crack <sup>d</sup> to me my lane ?  
 Wha will mak me fidgin fain ? <sup>e</sup>  
 Wha will kiss me o'er again ?  
 The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

[The poet attached the following note to this production in the copy of the "Museum" which belonged to his friend Mr Riddell :—  
 "I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud."

Although previous annotators have held this to apply to Betty Paton, our conjecture is that the young girl here referred to was Jean Armour, and the period—early in 1786, when the state of matters between them

<sup>a</sup> watch.

<sup>b</sup> refreshments for the nurse and gossips.

<sup>c</sup> the penance-stool in the church.

<sup>d</sup> converse.

<sup>e</sup> eagerly fond.

could no longer be concealed. By an unusual neglect on Lockhart's part to "verify his quotations," he condemns the above song, and says it "exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame." We quite agree with Sir Harris Nicolas that both this song referring to Jean, and the "Poet's Welcome" referring to a prior occasion of the same kind, "are remarkable for the tenderness they breathe towards infant and mother alike." There can be little doubt that this and a fragment of song which immediately follows, would be penned and sent to Jean by way of consolation when he first ascertained the result of their tender meetings. The only variation in the MS. is—

<sup>1</sup> my.]

### HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

*Tune.*—"The Job of Journey-work."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

ALTHO' my back be at the wa',  
 And tho' he be the fautor ;<sup>a</sup>  
 Altho' my back be at the wa',  
 Yet, here's his health in water.  
 O wae gae by his wanton sides,  
 Sae brawlie's he could flatter ;  
 Till for his sake I'm slighted sair,  
 And dree<sup>b</sup> the kintra clatter :  
 But tho' my back be at the wa',  
 Yet here's his health in water !

[Another verse of this song, although not in the poet's handwriting, was found among the numerous scraps which were forwarded to the late Mr Pickering ; but as its genuineness cannot be ascertained, we consign it to small type :—

He follow'd me baith out an' in—  
 The deil haet could I baffle'm !  
 He follow'd me baith out an' in,  
 Thro' a' the neuks o' Mauchlin :  
 And whan he gat me in his grips,  
 Sae brawly did he flatter,  
 That had a saint been in my stead,  
 She'd been as great a fautor :  
 But let them say or let them do,  
 Here's Robin's health in water !

<sup>a</sup> defaulter.

<sup>b</sup> dread.

Stenhouse, in his note to this song, states that Burns threw it off in jocular allusion to his own and Jean Armour's awkward predicament before their marriage. Allan Cunningham, however, denounces the suggestion as barbarous and insulting to both the lovers. For our part, we see no flagrant inaptitude in the conjecture of Stenhouse.]

## ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID,

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

My Son, these maxims make a rule,  
 An' 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.

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

Hear me, ye venerable core,  
 As counsel for poor mortals  
 That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door  
 For glaikit<sup>a</sup> Folly's portals :

---

<sup>a</sup> thoughtless.

I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,  
 Would here propone defences—  
 Their donsie<sup>b</sup> tricks, their black mistakes,  
 Their failings and mischances.

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

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.

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

---

<sup>b</sup> unlucky.

<sup>c</sup> exchange.

<sup>d</sup> others.

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

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

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone  
 Decidedly can try us ;  
 He knows each chord, its various tone,  
 Each spring, its various bias :  
 Then at the balance let's be mute,  
 We never can adjust it ;  
 What's done we partly may compute,  
 But know not what's resisted.

[This is pre-eminently one of those poems whose lines become "mottoes of the heart." In all likelihood, the period in Burns' life we have now reached, in the order of our chronology, was the date of its composition: yet it is rather remarkable that he withheld it from publication in his Kilmarnock edition of that year. There is a prose passage inserted in his Common-place Book, under date March 1784, in which the line of reflection and argument is very similar to that in this poem. The passage being somewhat lengthy, we refer the reader to it in another portion of this work.]

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<sup>e</sup> perhaps.

<sup>f</sup> admittedly.

## THE INVENTORY ;

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

(CURRIE, 1800, COMPD. WITH STEWART, 1801.)

SIR, as your mandate did request,  
 I send you here a faithfu' list,  
 O' gudes an' gear,<sup>a</sup> an' a' my<sup>1</sup> graith,<sup>b</sup>  
 To which I'm clear to gi'e<sup>2</sup> my aith.

*Imprimis*, then, for carriage cattle,  
 I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,  
 As ever drew before a pettle.<sup>c</sup>  
 My *hand*<sup>3</sup>-*afore*'s<sup>d</sup> a guid auld ' has been,'  
 An' wight an' wilfu' a' his days been :  
 My *hand*<sup>4</sup>-*ahin*'s<sup>e</sup> a weel gaun<sup>5</sup> fillie,  
 That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,<sup>f</sup>  
 An' your auld borough mony a time,  
 In days when riding was nae crime.  
 [But ance, when in my wooing pride  
 I, like a blockhead, boost<sup>g</sup> to ride,  
 The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,  
 (L—d pardon a' my sins, an' that too !)  
 I play'd my fillie sic a shavie,  
 She's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.]  
 My *furr-ahin*'s<sup>h</sup> a wordy<sup>6</sup> beast,  
 As e'er in tug or tow was traced.

<sup>a</sup> substantials of any kind.<sup>b</sup> accoutrements.<sup>c</sup> plough-stick.<sup>d</sup> fore-horse on the left-hand in the plough.—*R. B.*<sup>e</sup> hindmost on the left-hand in the plough.—*R. B.*<sup>f</sup> Kilmarnock.—*R. B.*<sup>g</sup> behaved.<sup>h</sup> hindmost-horse on the right-hand in the plough.—*R. B.*



The fourth's a Highland Donald hastie,  
 A d—n'd red-wud<sup>i</sup> Kilburnie blastie !  
 Foreby a cowt,<sup>j</sup> o' cowts the wale,  
 As ever ran before a tail :  
 Gin he be spar'd to be a beast,  
 He'll draw me fifteen pund at least.  
 Wheel-carriages I ha'e but few,  
 Three carts, an' twa are feckly<sup>k</sup> new;  
 An auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,  
 Ae leg an' baith the trams are broken ;  
 I made a poker o' the spin'le,  
 An' my auld mither brunt the trin'le.<sup>l</sup>

For men, I've three mischievous boys,  
 Run-deils for ranting an' for noise ;  
 A gaudsman \* ane, a thrasher t' other :  
 Wee Davock hauds the nowt<sup>m</sup> in fother.  
 I rule them as I ought, discreetly,  
 An' aften labour them completely ;  
 An' ay on Sundays duly, nightly,  
 I on the " Questions " targe<sup>n</sup> them tightly ;  
 Till, faith ! wee Davock's grown<sup>o</sup> sae gleg,<sup>o</sup>  
 Tho' scarcely langer than your leg,  
 He'll screed<sup>p</sup> you aff Effectual Calling,<sup>q</sup>  
 As fast as ony in the dwelling.  
 I've nane in female servan' station,  
 (L—d keep me ay frae a' temptation !)  
 I hae nae wife—and that my bliss is,  
 An' ye have laid nae tax on misses ;

---

<sup>i</sup> stark-mad.      <sup>j</sup> colt.      <sup>k</sup> hardly.      <sup>l</sup> wheel.      <sup>m</sup> cattle.  
<sup>n</sup> cross-question.      <sup>o</sup> sharp.      <sup>p</sup> repeat.  
<sup>q</sup> a prominent question and answer in the church catechism.

\* A driver of the plough team : the name is derived from the practice of using a gaud or prick in some countries where oxen are yoked to the plough.

An' then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,  
 I ken the deevils darena touch me.  
 Wi'<sup>s</sup> weans I'm mair than weel contented,  
 Heav'n sent me ane mair than I wanted :  
 My sonsie,<sup>r</sup> smirking, dear-bought Bess,<sup>s</sup>  
 She stares the daddy in her face,  
 Enough of ought ye like but grace :  
 But her, my bonie, sweet wee lady,  
 I've paid enough for her already ;  
 An' gin ye tax her or her mither,  
 By the L—d, ye'se get them a' thegither !

And now, remember, Mr Aiken,  
 Nae kind of licence out<sup>t</sup>I'm takin :  
 [Frae this time forth, I dó declare  
 I'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie mair ;]  
 Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,<sup>t</sup>  
 Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle ;  
 My travel a', on foot I'll shank it,  
 I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit !<sup>9</sup>  
 [The kirk and you may tak' you that,  
 It puts but little in your pat ;  
 Sae dinna put me in your beuk,  
 Nor for my ten white shillings leuk.]

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

MOSSGIEL, February 22, 1786.

[In May 1785, with a view to liquidate ten millions of unfunded debt, Mr Pitt made a large addition to the number of taxed articles, and amongst these were female-servants. It became the duty of Mr

<sup>r</sup> plump.

<sup>s</sup> see note, page 74.

<sup>t</sup> pick my steps.





TO MR M'ADAM, OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,  
 IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE  
 COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

SIR, o'er a gill I gat your card,  
 I trow it made me proud ;  
 ' See wha taks notice o' the bard !'  
 I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,  
 The senseless, gawky <sup>a</sup> million ;  
 I'll cock my nose aboon them a',  
 I'm roos'd <sup>b</sup> by Craigen-Gillan !

'Twas noble, sir ; 'twas like yoursel,  
 To grant your high protection :  
 A great man's smile ye ken fu' well,  
 Is ay a blest infection.

Tho', by his <sup>c</sup> banes wha in a tub  
 Match'd Macedonian Sandy !  
 On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,  
 I independent stand ay,—

And when those legs to gude, warm kail,  
 Wi' welcome canna bear me,  
 A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,<sup>d</sup>  
 An' barley-scone shall cheer me.

---

<sup>a</sup> silly.

<sup>b</sup> praised.

<sup>c</sup> Diogenes.

<sup>d</sup> leek.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath  
 O' mony flow'ry simmers !  
 An' bless your bonie lasses baith,  
 I'm tauld they're loosome kimmers !<sup>e</sup>

An' God bless young Dunaskin's laird,  
 The blossom of our gentry !  
 An' may he wear an auld man's beard,  
 A credit to his country.

[About March 1786 we suppose to have been the date of the above verses. The poet thought so well of this little production, that he included it in the Glenriddell collection of his early poems, where he states that it was an extempore composition, "wrote in Nanse Tinnock's, Mauchline." Craigengillan is a considerable estate in Carrick. Mr David Woodburn, factor for its owner, was on such friendly terms with Burns, that he received from him a copy of the celebrated cantata, "The Jolly Beggars"—the same which afterwards passed into the hands of Thomas Stewart, the publisher. But another account states that Stewart got the copy directly from Mr John Richmond of Mauchline, who was his uncle. See note to "Jolly Beggars."]

### TO A LOUSE.

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

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

HA ! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin<sup>1</sup> ferlie ?<sup>a</sup>  
 Your impudence protects you sairlye ;  
 I canna say but ye strut<sup>b</sup> rarely,  
     Owre gauze and lace ;  
 Tho' faith ! I fear, ye dine<sup>2</sup> but sparely  
     On sic a place.

<sup>e</sup> loveable queans.

<sup>a</sup> wonder.

<sup>b</sup> strut.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastet wonner,<sup>c</sup>  
 Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,  
 How daur ye set your<sup>s</sup> fit upon her—  
                                   Sae fine a lady?  
 Gae<sup>4</sup> somewhere else, and seek your dinner  
                                   On some poor body.

Swith!<sup>d</sup> <sup>5</sup> in some beggar's hauffet<sup>e</sup> squattle,  
 Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle;<sup>6</sup>  
 There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,  
                                   In shoals and nations;  
 Whaur horn nor bane<sup>f</sup> ne'er daur unsettle  
                                   Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,  
 Below the fatt'rels,<sup>g</sup> snug and tight;  
 Na, faith<sup>7</sup> ye yet! ye'll no be right,  
                                   Till ye've got on it—  
 The vera tapmost, tow'rin<sup>8</sup> height  
                                   O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,  
 As plump an' grey as ony groset:<sup>h</sup>  
 O for some rank, mercurial rozet,  
                                   Or fell, red smeddum,<sup>i</sup>  
 I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,  
                                   Wad dress your droddum!<sup>j</sup>

I wad na been surpris'd to spy  
 You on an auld wife's flannen toy;<sup>k</sup>

<sup>c</sup> indweller.      <sup>d</sup> begone!

<sup>e</sup> folds, or puckerings.

<sup>f</sup> breech.

<sup>g</sup> side of the head.

<sup>h</sup> gooseberry.

<sup>i</sup> old fashioned cap.

<sup>j</sup> small-toothed comb.

<sup>k</sup> pungent stuff.





INSCRIBED ON A WORK OF HANNAH MORE'S,  
PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY.

(CUNNINGHAM'S ED., 1834.)

THOU flatt'ring mark of friendship kind,  
Still may thy pages call to mind  
    The dear, the beauteous, donor ;  
Tho' sweetly female ev'ry part,  
Yet such a head, and more—the heart  
    Does both the sexes honor :  
She show'd her taste refin'd and just,  
    When she selected thee ;  
Yet deviating, own I must,  
    For sae approving me :  
    But kind still I'll mind still  
        The *giver* in the gift ;  
    I'll bless her, an' wiss her  
    A Friend aboon the left.

[The poet enclosed a copy of this inscription in a letter to Mr Robert Aiken, dated 3rd April 1786. His plan of publishing a volume of his poems at Kilmarnock was then completed, for he says to his friend and patron,—“My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to the press.” It is very remarkable that no biographer or editor of Burns has ever stated or suggested the name of the lady, “Mrs C.,” who showed that mark of early attention to Burns, although he refers to it as “the second flattering instance of Mrs C.'s notice and approbation.”

Upon no authority beyond reasonable surmise, we venture to say that the lady was Mrs Cunninghame of Enterkin, a daughter of Mrs Stewart of Stair, and a distant relative of Mr Aiken.

On 20th March, the poet had written to Robert Muir of Kilmarnock, hoping to have the pleasure of seeing him there, “before we hear the gowk.” That was, of course, to arrange about the printing of his poems ; and it is very likely that when he went to Kilmarnock he had his poem of the “Ordination,” and perhaps of a sketch of the “Holy Fair” also, in his pocket, both of those pieces being closely associated with the clerical history of that town.

In the face of a chronological line closely linked and well defined,

which runs through this portion of the poet's life and labours, some vain gossipers have had the temerity to assert that Burns, before getting his poems printed in Kilmarnock, had proceeded to Glasgow, and entered into some negotiations with Brash & Reid, printers there. Not a tittle of evidence for this has been adduced; and it is a pity to see the consecutive course of the poet's biography disturbed by the introduction of such manifest fables.]

### THE HOLY FAIR.\*

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

UPON<sup>1</sup> a simmer Sunday morn,  
 When Nature's face is fair,  
 I walkèd forth to view the corn,  
 An' snuff the caller<sup>2</sup> air.  
 The rising sun owre Galston muirs  
 Wi' glorious light was glintin;  
 The hares were hirplin<sup>b</sup> down the furs,  
 The lav'rocks they were chantin  
 Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad,  
 To see a scene sae gay,  
 Three hizzies,<sup>c</sup> early at the road,  
 Cam skelpin up the way.

---

\* fresh.

<sup>b</sup> limping.

<sup>c</sup> wenchies.

\* "Holy Fair" is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.—*R. B.*

Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,  
 But ane wi' lyart<sup>d</sup> lining ;  
 The third, that gaed a wee a-back,  
 Was in the fashion shining,  
 Fu' gay<sup>2</sup> that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,  
 In feature, form, an' claes ;  
 Their visage<sup>3</sup> 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.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I,<sup>4</sup> " 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' laughin as she spak,  
 An' taks me by the hands,  
 " Ye, for my sake, hae gien<sup>5</sup> the feck<sup>c</sup>  
 Of a' the ten commands  
 A screed<sup>f</sup> some day."<sup>6</sup>

" 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 :<sup>g</sup>  
 Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl'd pair,  
 We will get famous laughin  
 At them this day."

<sup>d</sup> grey.<sup>e</sup> greater portion.

rend.

<sup>g</sup> sport.

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 !"<sup>7</sup>  
 Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,<sup>h</sup>  
 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,<sup>i</sup> in ridin graith,<sup>j</sup>  
 Gaed hoddin<sup>k</sup> by their cotters ;  
 There swankies<sup>l</sup> young, in braw braid-claith,  
 Are springin<sup>8</sup> owre the gutters.  
 The lasses, skelpin<sup>m</sup> barefit, thrang,  
 In silks an' scarlets glitter ;  
 Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in mony a whang,<sup>n</sup>  
 An' farls,<sup>o</sup> bak'd wi' butter,  
 Fu' crump that day.

When by the 'plate' we set our nose,  
 Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence,  
 A greedy glowr 'black-bonnet'<sup>p</sup> throws,  
 An' we maun draw our tippence.  
 Then in we go to see the show :  
 On ev'ry side they're gath'rin ;  
 Some carryin dails, some chairs an' stools,  
 An' some are busy bleth'rin<sup>q</sup>  
 Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend<sup>r</sup> the show'rs,  
 An' screen our countra gentry ;

<sup>h</sup> breakfast-time.<sup>i</sup> sagacious. <sup>j</sup> attire.<sup>k</sup> jolting.<sup>l</sup> strapping fellows.<sup>m</sup> hastening. <sup>n</sup> thick slice.<sup>o</sup> cakes of shortbread.<sup>p</sup> by-name for an elder.<sup>q</sup> talking nonsense.<sup>r</sup> ward off.

There 'Racer Jess,'<sup>9\*</sup> an' twa-three wh-res,  
 Are blinkin at<sup>10</sup> the entry.  
 Here sits a raw o' tittlin jads,  
 Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck ;  
 An' there a batch o' wabster lads,<sup>11</sup>  
 Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock,  
 For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,  
 An' some upo<sup>12</sup> their claes ;  
 Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,  
 Anither sighs an' prays :  
 On this hand sits a chosen<sup>13</sup> swatch,<sup>8</sup>  
 Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud<sup>14</sup> faces ;  
 On that a set o' chaps, at<sup>15</sup> watch,  
 Thrang winkin on the lasses  
 To chairs that day.

O happy is that man, an' blest !  
 Nae wonder that it pride him !  
 Whase ain dear lass, that he likes<sup>16</sup> best,  
 Comes clinkin down beside him !  
 Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,  
 He sweetly does compose him ;  
 Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,  
 An's loof upon her bosom,  
 Unkend that day.†

---

<sup>8</sup> sample.

\* February 1813, died at Mauchline, Janet Gibson—the "Racer Jess" of Burns' "Holy Fair," remarkable for her pedestrian feats. She was a daughter of "Poesie Nansie" who figures in "The jolly Beggars."—*Newspaper Obituary*.

† "This verse sets boldly out with a line of a psalm. It is the best description ever was drawn. 'Unkend that day' surpasses all."—*James Hogg*.

Now a'<sup>17</sup> the congregation o'er  
 Is silent<sup>18</sup> expectation ;  
 For Moodie speels<sup>19</sup> the holy door,\*  
 Wi' tidings o' damnation :<sup>20</sup>†  
 Should *Hornie*, as in ancient days,  
 'Mang sons o' God present him,  
 The vera sight o' Moodie's<sup>21</sup> face,  
 To's ain het hame<sup>22</sup> had sent him  
 Wi' fright that day.

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

But hark ! the tent has chang'd its voice ;  
 There's peace an' rest nae langer ;  
 For a' the real judges rise,  
 They canna sit for anger,  
 Smith † opens out<sup>23</sup> his cauld harangues,  
 On practice and on <sup>24</sup> morals ;

---

<sup>‡</sup> unearthly.

\* Rev. Alexander Moodie of Riccarton, one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds." His personal appearance and style of oratory are not here caricatured by the poet. Trans. from Culross 1762. Died Feb. 15, 1799.

† Altered from "salvation," by suggestion of Dr Hugh Blair.

‡ Rev. George (subsequently Dr) Smith of Galston, referred to in the "Twa Herds" and also in the "Kirk's Alarm." Ord. 1778. Died 1823.

An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,  
 To gie the jars an' barrels  
 A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,  
 Of moral pow'rs an' reason ?<sup>25</sup>  
 His English style, an' gesture fine  
 Are a' clean out o' season.  
 Like Socrates or Antonine,  
 Or some auld pagan<sup>26</sup> heathen,  
 The *moral man* he does define,  
 But ne'er a word o' *faith* in  
 That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote  
 Against sic poison'd nostrum ;  
 For Peebles,\* frae the water-fit,<sup>27</sup>  
 Ascends the holy rostrum :  
 See, up he's got the word o' God,  
 An' meek an' mim has view'd it,  
 While 'Common-sense'<sup>u</sup> has taen the road,  
 An' aff, an' up the Cowgate †  
 Fast, fast that day.

Wee Miller ‡ niest, the Guard relieves,  
 An' Orthodoxy raibles,<sup>v</sup>  
 Tho' in his heart he weel believes,  
 An' thinks it auld wives' fables :

---

<sup>u</sup> See foot-note to "The Ordination." <sup>v</sup> holds forth in a hum-drum way.

\* Rev. Wm. Peebles of "The Water-fit," or Newton-upon-Ayr. Ord. 1778, made a D.D. in 1795, and died in 1825, aged 74.

† A street so called which faces the tent in Mauchline.--R. B.

‡ Rev. Alex. Miller, afterwards of Kilmaurs, a short, paunchy man, supposed to be at heart a "moderate." "This stanza," says Chambers, "virtually the most depreciatory in the poem, is said to have retarded Miller's advancement." Ord. in Kilmaurs 1788. Died in 1804.

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.

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.

Leeze me on drink ! it gies us mair  
 Than either school or college ;  
 It ken'les wit, it waukens lear,<sup>w</sup>  
 It pangs<sup>x</sup> 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.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent  
 To mind baith saul an' body,<sup>28</sup>  
 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 ;

---

<sup>w</sup> learning.

<sup>x</sup> crams.



While some are cozie i' the neuk,  
 An' forming assignations  
 To meet some day.

But now the L—'s ain trumpet touts,  
 Till a' the hills are rairin,<sup>y</sup>  
 And echoes back-return the shouts ;  
 Black Russell <sup>30</sup> is na spairin : \*  
 His piercin words, like highlan' <sup>31</sup> swords,  
 Divide the joints an' marrow ;  
 His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,  
 Our vera " sauls does harrow " †  
 Wi' fright that day !

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,  
 Fill'd fou o' lowin 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 roarin ;  
 When presently it does appear,  
 'Twas but some neibor snorin  
 Asleep that day.

'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 <sup>32</sup> gaed round, in cogs <sup>33</sup> an' caups,  
 Among the furms an' benches ;

---

<sup>y</sup> roaring with echo.

\* Rev. John Russell, one of the "Twa Herds," and "Rumble John" of the *Kirk's Alarm*. Ord. in Kilmarnock 1774. Called to Stirling 1800.

† Shakespeare's "Hamlet."--*R. B.*

An' cbeese an' bread, frae women's laps,  
 Was dealt about in lunches,  
 An' dawds that day.

In comes a gawsie,<sup>z</sup> gash<sup>a</sup> guidwife,  
 An' sits down by the fire,  
 Syne<sup>34</sup> draws her kebbuck<sup>b</sup> an' her knife ;  
 The lasses they are shyer :  
 The auld guidmen, about the grace,  
 Frae side to side they bother ;  
 Till some ane by his bonnet lays,  
 An' gies them't, like a tether,  
 Fu' lang that day.

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

Now 'Clinkumbell,' wi' rattlin tow,  
 Begins to jow an' croon ;<sup>35</sup>  
 Some swagger hame the best they dow,  
 Some wait the afternoon.  
 At slaps<sup>f</sup> 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.

<sup>z</sup> jolly.<sup>a</sup> sagacious.<sup>b</sup> cheese.<sup>c</sup> Alas.<sup>d</sup> soil with meal.<sup>e</sup> end of a cheese.<sup>f</sup> stiles.

How many 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.

[Mr Lockhart, after commending the "Cottar's Saturday Night," in eloquent terms, makes this observation,—“That the same man should have produced that poem and the 'Holy Fair' about the same time, will ever continue to move wonder and regret.” But the world's "regret" in this matter has been very evanescent ; for, although the abuses and absurdities here censured, in connexion with rural celebrations of the communion, have happily disappeared, it cannot be said that the lessons conveyed in the satire are no longer necessary.

Mr Lockhart has farther observed that had Burns "taken up the subject of this rural communion in a solemn mood, he might have produced a piece as gravely beautiful as his 'Holy Fair' is quaint, graphic, and picturesque. Nay," adds the critic, "I can easily imagine a scene of family worship to have come from his hand as pregnant with the ludicrous as the 'Holy Fair' itself." In these circumstances, we cannot be too thankful that Burns followed his own instincts in the mode of treating both subjects.

The communion was administered at Mauchline in those days but once a year, namely, on the second Sunday of August ; and Chambers, considering that any portion of the year 1785 was too early a date for this composition, sets it down as being nearly the last piece produced by Burns prior to the publication of his poems in July 1786. The "Ordination" was certainly a production of February of that year, and we feel bound to regard "The Holy Fair" as a riper performance, composed somewhat farther on in the season. We must therefore discard, as utterly improbable, the recently promulgated story, that the present poem underwent a formal reading by its author in Nanse Tinnock's publichouse, in the audience, *inter alia*, of Jean Armour, and the poet's younger brother William.

The rupture between Jean and her lover took place about the end of March 1786,\* after which period such a meeting as the story describes

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\* On 15th April, the poet thus wrote regarding Jean—"I had not a hope, nor even a wish, to make her mine after her conduct."

was simply impossible. Another strong presumption that this poem was composed after February 1786 arises from the fact that the poet in his letter to Richmond on 17th of that month, asks his friend to forward to him from Edinburgh a copy of Fergusson's poems. In the opening of the "Holy Fair," Fergusson's "Leith Races" is evidently closely followed as a model; an imaginary being called "Mirth" conducts the Edinburgh poet to the scene of enjoyment, exactly as "Fun" in this poem conveys Burns to "Mauchline Holy Fair."\*

The following variations are taken from an early MS. of this poem, now preserved in the British Museum :—

- <sup>1</sup> 'twas on.    <sup>2</sup> brow.    <sup>3</sup> faces.    <sup>4</sup> gothie.    <sup>5</sup> broke.    <sup>6</sup> By night or day.
- <sup>7</sup> Gothie I'll get my tither coat,  
And on my Sunday's sark ;  
An' meet ye in the yard without  
At op'nin o' the wark.
- <sup>8</sup> spangiu.    <sup>9</sup> Bet B—r.    <sup>10</sup> sit blinkin.    <sup>11</sup> brawds.    <sup>12</sup> an' ithers.  
<sup>13</sup> goodey.    <sup>13</sup> an elect (1st Ed.)    <sup>14</sup> wi' mercy-beggin.  
<sup>15</sup> on.    <sup>16</sup> loves.    <sup>17</sup> But now.    <sup>18</sup> husht in.  
<sup>19</sup> Sawuie climbs.    <sup>20</sup> salvation (1st Ed.)    <sup>21</sup> Sawnie's.  
<sup>22</sup> To Hell wi' speed.    <sup>23</sup> Geordie begins.    <sup>24</sup> of.
- <sup>25</sup> It's no nae gospel truth divine,  
To cant o' sense an' reason.
- <sup>26</sup> wicked.    <sup>27</sup> for Fairy Willy Water-fit.    <sup>28</sup> Their lowin' drouth to quench.  
<sup>29</sup> punch.    <sup>30</sup> Black Jock, he.    <sup>31</sup> twae-edged.    <sup>32</sup> yill.    <sup>33</sup> jugs.    <sup>34</sup> then.
- <sup>35</sup> Then Robin Gib, wi' weary jow,  
Begins to clink and croon.

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\* Lockhart also contends that the "Holy Fair" was the *last* and best of that series of satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed. "Here," says that critic, "unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This is indeed an extraordinary performance; no partizan of any sect can whisper that malice has formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lies in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, are held up to ridicule. Immediately on its publication, it was acknowledged (amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath) that national manners were once more in the hands of a NATIONAL POET."

## SONG, COMPOSED IN SPRING.

*Tune*—"Johnny's Grey Breeks."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

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,  
 An' it winna let a body be.\*

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.

The wanton coot the water skims,  
 Among the reeds the ducklings cry,  
 The stately swan majestic swims,  
 And ev'ry thing is blest but I.  
 And maun I still, &c.

---

\* This chorus is part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's. Menie is the common abbreviation of Mariamne.—*R. B.* More correctly, it is the abbreviate of Marion.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,  
 And o'er the moorlands whistles shill ;  
 Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,  
 I meet him on the dewy hill.  
 And maun I still, &c.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,  
 Blythe waukens by the daisy's side,  
 And mounts and sings on fluttering wings,  
 A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.  
 And maun I still, &c.

Come winter, with thine angry howl,  
 And raging, bend the naked tree ;  
 Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,  
 When nature all is sad like me !  
 And maun I still, &c.

[The author must have had a very special reason for the retention, through all his own editions, of this chorus, apparently so inappropriate to the sentiment of the song. His main purpose was to shew that slighted love was the cause of his mourning ; and he told the truth in his foot-note about the chorus being "part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's." This "gentleman in Edinburgh" was none other than the bard himself, who of course was his *own* "particular friend ;" and the substitution of the name "Menie" for *Jeanie* was a necessary part of the little *ruse* he chose here to adopt. In like manner, he poured forth about the same time his "Lament occasioned by the unfortunate issue of a *friend's* amour."

The pride of Burns seems to have been galled to the extreme by the position assumed by Jean and her parents, at the time when the poet's acknowledgment of a private marriage with Jean was formally torn up in scorn.

The chorus of this song, however jarring it may seem to the mere reader of the text, has no such effect when sung in slowish time along with the body of the song, to the tune actually chaunted by the poet when in the act of composing it. Gray's "Elegy" was present in his thoughts, while engaged with this composition, as well as that which immediately follows ; and indeed the poet acknowledges this in his note to Kennedy which enclosed the "Mountain Daisy." The similarity between verse sixth of this song and verse second of the "Daisy," needs no pointing out.]

## TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

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

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

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

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north  
 Upon thy early, humble birth ;  
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted<sup>a</sup> 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<sup>b</sup>  
                                   O' clod or stane,  
 Adorns the histie<sup>c</sup> stibble field,  
                                   Unseen, alane.

<sup>a</sup> sparkled.<sup>b</sup> shelter.<sup>c</sup> dry.

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

Such is the fate of artless maid,  
 Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade !  
 By love's simplicity betray'd,  
   And guileless trust ;  
 Till she, like thee, all soi'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 !

[On 20th April 1786, our poet enclosed this "little gem" to his friend John Kennedy. In that MS. it is called "The Gowan," a title sub-



sequently changed for the English appellation, as above. He thanks Kennedy for having put his name into Mr Hamilton's list of subscribers, and also for requesting a subscription-paper with a view to gather additional names.

Regarding this poem, Burns says, "I am a good deal pleased with some of the sentiments, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which (as the elegantly melting Gray says) 'melancholy has marked for her own.'" It is curious to note that the closing couplet of each of the four concluding verses begins with the same word—"Till."

Grahame, the author of "The Sabbath, and other poems," has the following fine apostrophe to the lark, in connexion with the text of this and the preceding poem :—

"Thou, simple bird  
Of all the vocal quire, dwell'st in a home  
The humblest, yet thy morning's song ascends  
Nearest to heaven ;—sweet emblem of *his* song  
Who sung thee wakening by the daisy's side !"

We have referred to Gray the poet as having furnished some impulse to Burns in these pieces ; and we are indebted to Dr Carruthers for pointing out that the image in the closing verse of the text is derived from Dr Young :—

"Stars rush, and final Ruin fiercely drives  
His plough-share o'er creation."—*Night ix.*]

## TO RUIN.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

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

[Here the tone of the closing stanza of the "Daisy" is taken up, and the theme expanded into a little ode. Allan Cunningham was disposed to see in this piece some reference to apprehended ruin through the failure of the poet's farming efforts at Mossgiel ; but it was the scornful eye of Jean—"jet, jet-black, and like a hawk," that still haunted him ; and he singles out, from the thick-flying darts of destruction around him, the *one* that

    . . . "has cut my dearest tie,  
     And quivers in my heart."

In the autobiography, he tells us, in reference to the occasion of the "Lament," that it nearly cost him the loss of his reason. Gilbert adds that "The 'Lament' was composed after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided."]

## THE LAMENT,

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

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

“Alas ! how oft does goodness wound itself,  
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe !”

HOME.

O THOU pale orb that silent shines  
While care-untroubled mortals sleep !  
Thou seest a wretch 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 !

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

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

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

Encircled in her clasping arms,  
 How have the raptur'd moments flown !  
 How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,  
 For her dear sake, and 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 ?

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

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

The morn, that warns th' approaching day,  
 Awakes me up to toil and woe ;

I see the hours in long array,  
 That I must suffer, lingering slow :  
 Full many a pang, and many a throe,  
 Keen recollection's direful train,  
 Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,  
 Shall kiss the distant western main.

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

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

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

[This highly-finished poem contains passages nearly equal to the author's Address to "Mary in heaven." The reader will observe, that

every stanza contains four lines that rhyme together,—a feat in versification which the poem called “A Dream” again exhibits in a twofold degree—a double *somersault* of rhyme, in short. Dr Currie has referred to the eighth stanza, describing a sleepless night from anguish of mind, as being of very striking excellence. The mere exercise of producing such pieces as those we are now considering helped to soothe the poet’s embittered feelings; and the wholesome excitement in connexion with the printing of his poems completed the cure.

The simple-minded James Hogg made a blundering note on this production, through regarding the poet’s averment in the title as literally true. He gravely commented on the contents as being a vicarious bewailment for the distress of Burns’ friend, Alexander Cunningham, under his celebrated love-disappointment—a circumstance that happened several years after this poem was published.]

### DESPONDENCY—AN ODE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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

Happy! ye sons of busy life,  
 Who, equal to the bustling strife,  
     No other view regard!

Ev'n when the wishèd end's denied,  
 Yet while the busy means are plied,  
     They bring their own reward :  
 Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,  
     Unfitted with an aim,  
 Meet ev'ry sad returning night,  
     And joyless morn the same !  
     You, bustling and justling,  
         Forget each grief and pain ;  
 I, listless, yet restless,  
     Find ev'ry prospect vain.

How blest the solitary's lot,  
 Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,  
     Within his humble cell,  
 The cavern, wild with tangling roots—  
 Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,  
     Beside his crystal well !  
 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.

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 !

O enviable early days,  
 When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,  
 To care, to guilt unknown !  
 How ill exchange'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 !

[In this poem, the same theme as that pursued through the four preceding pieces is exhausted in a very satisfactory manner. Apparently tired himself of stringing mournful rhymes about Jean's "perfidy ingrate," he sets himself to give his youthful compeers the benefit of his dear-bought experience in such words as these :—

" Even when the wished-for end's denied,  
 Yet, while the busy means is plied,  
 These bring their own reward."

With enchanting words of the tenderest wisdom, he—only twenty-seven years old—speaks of his own "enviable early days," and then, as if under the sanction of mature age, addresses his young readers thus :—

" Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,  
 Like linnets in the bush ;  
 Ye little know what ills ye court,  
 When manhood is your wish !" &c.



Meanwhile, Jean had been sent off to Paisley, to avoid seeing her poet-lover, whose heart, like that of Nature herself, abhorred a vacuum. At this juncture—all unobserved—he consoled himself by cultivating a “reciprocal attachment” with a generous-hearted maiden resident in his neighbourhood, whose name he afterwards made immortal by the strength and beauty of his musings over the memory of those stolen interviews.]

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., MAUCLINE,

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

*Mossgaville, May 3, 1786.*

I HOLD it, sir, my bounden duty  
 To warn you how that “Master Tootie,”  
     Alias, “Laird M’Gaun,”  
 Was here to hire yon lad away  
 ’Bout whom ye spak the tither day,  
     An’ wad hae don’t aff han’;<sup>a</sup>  
 But lest he learn the callan<sup>b</sup> tricks—  
     An’ faith I muckle doubt him—  
 Like scrapin out auld Crummie’s nicks,<sup>c</sup>  
     An’ tellin lies about them;  
     As lieve then,<sup>d</sup> I’d have then,  
     Your clerkship he should sair,<sup>e</sup>  
 If sae be ye may be  
     Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho’ I say’t, he’s gleg<sup>f</sup> enough,  
 An’ bout a house that’s rude an’ rough,  
     The boy might learn to swear;  
 But then wi’ *you* he’ll be sae taught,  
 An’ get sic fair example straught,  
     I hae na ony fear.

<sup>a</sup> at once.

<sup>b</sup> boy.

<sup>c</sup> natural rings on the cow’s horns.

<sup>d</sup> willingly.

<sup>e</sup> serve.

<sup>f</sup> sharp.

Ye'll catechise him, every quirk,  
 An' shore <sup>g</sup> him weel wi' "hell;"  
 An' gar him follow to the kirk—  
 Ay when ye gang yoursel.  
 If ye then, maun be then  
 Frae hame this comin Friday,  
 Then please sir, to lea'e, sir,  
 The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honour I hae gi'en,  
 In Paisley John's,<sup>h</sup> that night at e'en,  
 To meet the "warld's worm;"<sup>i</sup>  
 To try to get the twa to gree,  
 An' name the airles<sup>j</sup> an' the fee,  
 In legal mode an' form:  
 I ken he weel a *snick* can draw,<sup>k</sup>  
 When simple bodies let him;  
 An' if a Devil be at a',  
 In faith he's sure to get him.  
 To phrase you an' praise you,  
 Ye ken your Laureat scorns:  
 The pray'r still, you share still,  
 Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

[This off-hand production explains itself. The poet was about to part with one of the boys on his farm, whose services were coveted by "Master Tootie," a dishonest dealer in cows. The boy had also attracted the attention of Gavin Hamilton, and Burns, who much preferred that the boy should serve Hamilton, wrote this note to him by way of warning.

In the second verse, the poet has imitated the "Madam Blaize" of Goldsmith—

"Her love was sought, I do aver, by twenty beaux and more:  
 The king himself has followed her—when she has walked before."

<sup>g</sup> threaten.

<sup>h</sup> Dow's Inn.

<sup>i</sup> avaricious reptile.

<sup>j</sup> earnest of a bargain.

<sup>k</sup> take advantage by fraud.

In the text, the cowdealer is charged with the dishonest practice of scraping off the natural ridges from the horns of cattle to disguise their age. Another definition of "a sneck-drawer" is a thief who will steal imperceptibly into a house by gently drawing the sneck or bar. The poet has termed Satan a "snick-drawing dog" in the "Address to the Deil." It may please the deil to be informed that Dr Chalmers, in his Scripture readings, applies the same term to the patriarch Jacob.]

### VERSIFIED REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1834.)

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,  
 And faith I'm gay and hearty !  
 To tell the truth and shame the deil,  
 I am as fou as Bartie :  
 But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,  
 Expect me o' your partie,  
 If on a beastie I can speel,  
 Or hurl in a cartie.

Yours,

ROBERT BURNS.

MACHLIN, *Monday night*, 10 o'clock.

[From the fact of the poet's name being spelled here with one syllable, we must conclude that it was written after 14th April 1786, when he first adopted the contracted form. The original MS. which has been long preserved in the Paisley Library, affords no clue to the name of the person thus addressed. The English reader may be here informed that Thursday is, in some parts of Scotland, pronounced as written in line fifth of the verses ; and it is necessary to explain that "Bartie" is one of the many names given to the devil by Ayrshire peasants.]

## SONG—WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY ?

*Tune.*—"Ewe-Bughts, Marion."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

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

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,  
 And the apple on the pine ;  
 But a' the charms o' the Indies  
 Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,  
 I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true ;  
 And sae may the Heavens forget me,  
 When I forget my vow !

O plight me your faith, my Mary,  
 And plight me your lily-white hand ;  
 O plight me your faith, my Mary,  
 Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,  
 In mutual affection to join ;  
 And curst be the cause that shall part us !  
 The hour and the moment o' time !

[This song, addressed to the living Mary Campbell, was composed at some date apparently from the middle of March to 14th May 1786. Whether she was then serving as a nursery-maid with Gavin Hamilton, in Mauchline, or in service elsewhere, it is impossible to determine. The popular belief is that Mary was byres-woman or

dairy-maid at Coilsfield House, when Burns set his affections on her ; but that idea has no foundation that we are aware of, beyond a traditional conjecture, first printed in Chambers's "Scottish Songs," 1829. The tradition naturally took its rise from the fact so tenderly recorded by the poet, that his final tryst with her was in that neighbourhood. Besides the song in our text, one or two others, identified with Mary Campbell as their subject, have been preserved. One of these is a Prayer for Mary's protection during the author's wanderings abroad ; and another indicates that the frowns of fortune had determined him to "cross the raging sea," in order

" That Indian wealth may lustre throw  
Around my Highland lassie, O."

The poet, in his autobiography, after referring to his distraction caused by Jean's supposed "perfidy," says—"I gave up my part of the farm to my brother, and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica ; but before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems." On 20th March, he arranged to meet Robert Muir at Kilmarnock, to forward that object ; and on 3rd April, he was just "sending his proposals to the press." One would conclude that the work of arranging and preparing his poems for the printer—not to mention his industrious composing of fresh poems to fill the volume—was enough to occupy his head and hands, without the introduction of the Highland Mary episode at such a time. Nevertheless, he did manage, amid all these engagements, to cultivate the "pretty long tract of reciprocal attachment" which preceded the final parting with Mary on Sunday, 14th May. Such were the strange circumstances under which this song was composed. The inscriptions on the "Highland Mary bible," particularly noticed in connection with the song which follows, are highly suggestive of mystery and secrecy in this rash courtship and inopportune betrothal.

In October 1792, the poet offered this lyric to George Thomson as a substitute or companion-song for the "The Ewe-Bughts, Marion" ; but that gentleman did not adopt it. It is not to be understood from the opening line of the song, that Burns asked Mary to accompany him to the West Indies ; for his words to Thomson are, "I took the following *farewell* of a dear girl."]

## MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

NAE gentle\* dames, tho' ne'er sae fair,  
 Shall ever be my muse's care :  
 Their titles a' are empty show ;  
 Gie me my Highland lassie, O.

*Chorus.*—Within the glen sae bushy, O,  
 Aboon the plain sae rashy, O,  
 I set me down wi' right guid will,  
 To sing my Highland lassie, O.

O were yon hills and vallies mine,  
 Yon palace and yon gardens fine !  
 The world then the love should know  
 I bear my Highland lassie, O.

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

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,  
 I know her heart will never change,  
 For her bosom burns with honor's glow,  
 My faithful Highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billows' roar,  
 For her I'll trace a distant shore,  
 That Indian wealth may lustre throw  
 Around my Highland lassie, O.

---

\* high-born.

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

Farewell the glen sae bushy, O !  
 Farewell the plain sae rashy, O !  
 To other lands I now must go,  
 To sing my Highland lassie, O.

[The accompanying cuts represent very faithfully the inscriptions and symbolic markings on the bible presented by Burns to Mary at their parting. The printer's date on the title-page is 1782. When Mary died, in October 1786, the volumes were taken care of by her mother, who survived till August 1828. Several years before that event, she had presented the bible to Mary's surviving sister, Anne, the wife of James Anderson, a stone-mason. That generation had passed away, when the precious relic, together with a lock of *Highland Mary's* hair, turned up at Montreal, in Canada, about the year 1840, whither they had been carried by William Anderson, a son of Mary's sister. Several Scottish residents of that city subscribed and purchased the relics from Anderson, with the object of having them deposited in the poet's monument at Ayr. Accordingly, on 1st January 1841, they were formally handed for this purpose to Provost Limont of Ayr.

So early as 1828, Mr Lockhart remarked that Cromek's interesting details of the parting ceremonials which are supposed to have been transacted between the poet and Mary at their final meeting, "have recently been confirmed very strongly by the accidental discovery of a bible presented by Burns to Mary Campbell, in the possession of her surviving sister." He quotes the inscription from Leviticus and St Matthew very accurately, and adds, "that on the blank leaf opposite one of these texts is written—'Robert Burns, Mossiel.'"

An examination of those sacred relics suggests the probability that poor Mary, on seeing the certain approach of death, had wilfully erased her own name and that of her poet lover, by wetting the writing and drawing her fingers across it, obliterating the surnames as they now appear. The likelihood is, that Burns, in the whirl of excitement which immediately followed the "Second Sunday of May" 1786, forgot his vows to poor Mary, and that she, heartsore at his neglect, deleted the names from this touching memorial of their secret betrothment.

Notwithstanding all the gossip that has been risked on the subject, our impression is, that—

“She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek”—

that, in short, she came to the same conclusion as poor Olivia, in the “Vicar of Wakefield,” did :—

“The only art . . . . .  
To give repentance to her lover,  
And wring his bosom, is to die.”

On the fly-leaf of Volume I. of the bible, the name, “Mary Campbell,” followed by the poet’s mason-mark, had been inscribed : the latter is still nearly entire ; but the name has been almost completely erased, thus :—

*M.C.*



The corresponding blank-leaf in Volume II. had contained the poet’s name and address, with the mason-mark subjoined ; but these also have been subjected to an erasing process ; and now we can only trace as follows :—

*Robert H. C. C.*  
*M.C.*

*M.C.*



If Mary sunk into the grave without revealing the fact of her betrothal to Burns, it seems equally certain that Burns never whispered her name to a living soul till three years after her decease. It was only when the surpassing beauty and pathos of his sublime dirge—"To Mary in Heaven," awakened a curiosity which he could not avoid in some degree to satisfy, that he uttered a few vague particulars of her story. It was a mysterious episode in the life of Burns, of which the world can never learn the full facts. We incline to give assent to the utterance of his "spiritual biographer," Dr Waddell:—"In connection with this there was neither guilt, nor the shadow of guilt on his conscience;" but when we find Burns, after eighteen months' experience of loving wedlock with his own Jean, suddenly appealing to the shade of Mary in these words:—

"Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?  
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?"

we feel constrained to say, "if this is not the language of remorse, what is it?"]

Vol. I.

And ye shall not swear  
by My Name falsely—  
I am the LORD.  
Levit: 19 (chap: 12<sup>th</sup> Top)



Vol. II.

— Thou shalt not forswear  
thyself, but shalt perform  
unto the LORD thine  
Oath. —  
math: 5 (ch. 33<sup>rd</sup> Top)

## EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

*May* —, 1786.

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

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

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

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

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 <sup>b</sup> thro' ev'ry other man,  
 Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

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

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,  
 Assiduous wait upon her ;  
 And gather gear by ev'ry wile  
 That's justify'd by honor ;

<sup>a</sup> poverty.<sup>b</sup> look stealthily.<sup>c</sup> flame.

Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
 Nor for a train attendant ;  
 But for the glorious privilege  
 Of being independent.

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

The great Creator to revere,  
 Must sure become the creature ;  
 But still the preaching cant forbear,  
 And ev'n the rigid feature :  
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,  
 Be complaisance extended ;  
 An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange  
 For Deity offended !

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

Adieu, dear, amiable youth !  
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting !  
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth,  
 Erect your brow undaunting !

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

[The young friend here so sagaciously addressed was Andrew Aiken, son of the poet's early patron Robert Aiken, to whom the "Cottar's Saturday Night" is inscribed. He afterwards engaged in mercantile pursuits in Liverpool, where he prospered, and was ultimately appointed English consul at Riga, at which port he died in 1831. Andrew's son, Peter F. Aiken, passed as an advocate in Edinburgh : but instead of practising the law, he became a banker in Bristol, when he still survives in honorable retirement.

In a holograph copy of this epistle, dated "Mossgeil, May 15th 1786," the following additional stanza is introduced, immediately after the sixth verse :—

"If ye hae made a step aside—  
 Some hap mistake o'erta'en you,  
 Yet still keep up a decent pride,  
 And ne'er o'er far demean you ;  
 Time comes wi' kind oblivious shade,  
 And daily darker sets it ;  
 And if nae mair mistakes are made,  
 The warld soon forgets it."

Chambers well remarks that "the admirable taste of the poet had doubtless observed this verse to be below the rest in terseness and point, and therefore caused him to omit it in printing." The latter half of stanza fifth has been the subject of some criticism. In 1851, Chambers thus directed attention to it in a foot-note :—"It is not often that the sagacity of Burns is open to challenge ; but here certainly he is not philosophically right. It must always be a questionable maxim which proposes to benefit the individual at the expense of his fellow-creatures, or which, if generally followed, would neutralise itself—as this would do." This honest-like objection was not relished by some of the poet's admiring countrymen : in particular, the *Scotsman* of April 10th 1851, in reviewing the first volume of Chambers's labours, remarked that his comments, "when free from platitude, are not always void of offence. The spectacle of Mr Chambers, or indeed almost any man, lecturing upon Burns as deficient in generosity, frankness, and boldness of spirit, does not harmonise with one's idea of the fitness of things." We humbly think that Burns's practice condemned his own maxim. We cannot conceive of his having ever thus acted on the reserve "when wi' a bosom crony : " on the contrary, he did sometimes unguardedly lay him-

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<sup>d</sup> use the lesson.

self open to "critical dissection" among those who watched for his halting.

One of the poet's early Carrick associates—the late William Niven, of Kilbride, Maybole—always asserted that this epistle was originally addressed to him, and shifted to Andrew Aiken as a more profitable investment of his rhyming ware. Niven unfortunately could never prove his assertion by production of the original; and there exists a letter from Burns to Niven dated 30th August 1786—a month after the publication of the poem—which is couched in the most friendly terms, and refers to a recent hobnobbing between the poet and him at Maybole. On the other hand, the Rev. Hamilton Paul, in 1819, adverts to Niven's assertion as being a well-known fact, and calls it "the sole instance of disingenuousness which we have heard charged against Burns."]

### ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB.

(EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, 1818.)

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honorable and Honorable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakspeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred Highlanders who, as the Society were informed by Mr M'Kenzie of Applecross, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters whose property they are, by emigrating from the lands of Mr Macdonald of Glengary to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—LIBERTY.

LONG life, my lord, an' health be yours,  
 Unskait<sup>d</sup> <sup>a</sup> by hunger'd Highland boors;  
 Lord grant nae duddie,<sup>b</sup> desperate beggar,  
 Wi' dirk, claymore, and rusty trigger,  
 May twin<sup>c</sup> auld Scotland o' a life  
 She likes—as lambkins<sup>1</sup> like a knife.

Faith, you and Applecross were right  
 To keep the Highland hounds in sight:  
 I doubt na! they wad bid<sup>d</sup> nae better,  
 Than let them ance out owre the water,

<sup>a</sup> unharmed.

<sup>b</sup> ragged.

<sup>c</sup> deprive.

<sup>d</sup> offer.

Then up amang thae lakes and seas,  
 They'll mak what rules and laws they please :  
 Some daring Hancoke, or a Franklin,  
 May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin ;  
 Some Washington again may head them,  
 Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them ;  
 Till (God knows what may be effected  
 When by such heads and hearts directed),  
 Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire  
 May to Patrician rights aspire !  
 Nae sage North now, nor sager Sackville,  
 To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,—  
 An' whare will ye get Howes and Clintons  
 To bring them to a right repentance—  
 To cowe the rebel generation,  
 An' save the honor o' the nation ?  
*They*, an' be d—d ! what right hae they  
 To meat, or sleep, or light o' day ?  
 Far less—to riches, pow'r, or freedom,  
 But what your lordship likes to gie them ?

But hear, my lord ! Glengary, hear !  
 Your hand's owre light on them, I fear ;  
 Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,  
 I canna say but they do gaylies ;<sup>o</sup>  
 They lay aside a' tender mercies,  
 An' tirl<sup>f</sup> the hallions<sup>g</sup> to the birses ;<sup>h</sup>  
 Yet while they're only poind'<sup>t</sup> and herriet,<sup>j</sup>  
 They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit :  
 But smash them ! crash them a' to spails,<sup>k</sup>  
 An' rot the dyvors<sup>l</sup> i' the jails !

<sup>o</sup> pretty well.

<sup>t</sup> strip.

<sup>g</sup> clowns.

<sup>h</sup> hairy hides.

<sup>l</sup> distrained.

<sup>j</sup> robbed.

<sup>k</sup> chips.

<sup>l</sup> bankrupts.

The young dogs, swinge them to the labour ;  
 Let wark an' hunger mak them sober !  
 The hizzies,<sup>m</sup> if they're aughtlins fawsont,<sup>n</sup>  
 Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd !  
 An' if the wives an' dirty brats  
 Come thiggin<sup>o</sup> at your doors an' yetts,  
 Flaffin wi' duds, an' grey wi' beas',<sup>p</sup>  
 Frightin away your ducks an' geese ;  
 Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,<sup>q</sup>  
 The langest thong, the fiercest growler,  
 An' gar the tatter'd gypsies pack  
 Wi' a' their bastards on their back !

Go on, my Lord ! I lang to meet you,  
 An' in my "house at hame" to greet you ;  
 Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle,  
 The benmost neuk<sup>r</sup> beside the ingle,  
 At my right han' assigned your seat,  
 'Tween Herod's hip an' Polycrate ;  
 Or (if you on your station tarrow),<sup>s</sup>  
 Between Almagro and Pizarro,  
 A seat, I'm sure ye're weel deservin't ;  
 An' till ye come—your humble servant,

BEELEBUB.

*June 1st, Anno Mundi 5790.*

[This curious production must have been a hasty one, and not much regarded by its author. The only known copy was presented to Mr John Rankine of Adamhill, and through him passed into the hands of a friend who sent it for publication to the editor of the Edinburgh Magazine for February 1818.

M'Kenzie of Applecross is remembered as a liberal-minded, patriotic man, who strove to improve the condition of his tenantry. His views and those of the Highland Society must have been misapprehended by

<sup>m</sup> girls.

<sup>n</sup> good-looking.

<sup>o</sup> begging.

<sup>p</sup> vermin.

<sup>q</sup> a bull-dog.

<sup>r</sup> innermost corner.

<sup>s</sup> take a disrelish.



the bard when he put this address into the mouth of "Beelzebub." The signature of that august personage, detached from the poem, is preserved, among other autographs of Burns, in the collection of W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh.

A curious variation, in line sixth of the poem, must be pointed out. Instead of the word "lambkins," which we adopt from Cunningham and from Pickering, both Motherwell and the Magazine have "butchers." It is difficult to decide which is the proper word: butchers may, while lambs cannot, be supposed to like the knife; but as the author here seems to mean that Scotland detests Breadalbane for his alleged oppression of her poor Highlanders, we prefer the word in the text, as best suiting the poet's ironical strain.]

### A DREAM.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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 :—

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

I see ye're complimented thrang,  
By mony a lord an' lady ;  
"God save the King" 's a cuckoo sang  
That's unco easy said ay :

The poets, too, a venal gang,  
 Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd an' ready,  
 Wad gar<sup>a</sup> you trow<sup>b</sup> ye ne'er do wrang,  
 But ay unerring steady,  
 On sic a day.

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

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

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

---

<sup>a</sup> make.

<sup>b</sup> believe.

<sup>c</sup> perhaps.

<sup>d</sup> be beaten.

<sup>e</sup> cannot.

<sup>f</sup> riven.

<sup>g</sup> patched.

\* A reference to the loss of the North American Colonies.

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

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

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,  
 When taxes he enlarges,  
 (An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,<sup>j</sup>  
 A name not envy spairges),<sup>k</sup>  
 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.\*

Adieu, my Liege ! may Freedom geck<sup>l</sup>  
 Beneath your high protection ;  
 An' may ye rax<sup>m</sup> Corruption's neck,  
 And gie her for dissection !

---

<sup>h</sup> behaved. <sup>i</sup> common-park. <sup>j</sup> offspring. <sup>k</sup> disparages. <sup>l</sup> exult. <sup>m</sup> stretch.

\* In the spring of 1786, some discussion arose in parliament about a proposal to give up 64 gun ships, when the navy supplies were being considered.



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.

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

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

Ye, lastly, bonie blossoms a',  
 Ye royal lasses dainty,  
 Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,  
 An' gie you lads a-plenty !

---

\* puffed up.

\* King Henry V.—*R. B.* † Sir John Falstaff, *vid.* Shakspeare.—*R. B.*

‡ Frederick, first a Bishop, and afterwards Duke of York.

§ Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain Royal sailor's amour.—*R. B.* This was Prince William Henry, afterwards King William IV. who in his youth espoused Mrs Jordan the player.

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.

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

[The poet's letter to Mrs Dunlop (April 30th, 1787,) gives us a hint of some of the difficulties he had to steer through, in his endeavours to be on good terms with patrons, and yet retain his independence. Allan Cunningham has observed that "the merits of 'The Dream' are of a high order—the gaity as well as keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not its only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic ; his falling asleep over the Laureate's Ode was a likely consequence, for the birth-day strains of those times were something of the dullest." Few poetical couplets are oftener quoted than those in verse fourth :—

Facts are chiels that winna ding,  
 An' downa be disputed.

The poem throughout has been long regarded as prophetic. The closing lines, however, which seemed to suggest a warning of probable constitutional changes like those which France soon experienced, have happily proved of a different character. The only variations (1) (2) occur where the word "poet" was in the author's later editions substituted for "bardie" in the earlier ones. The change was probably made at the suggestion of Mr A. F. Tytler.]

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<sup>t</sup> petted.           <sup>u</sup> salted.           <sup>v</sup> dish full.           <sup>w</sup> lingered with distaste.  
<sup>x</sup> corner of the dish.           <sup>y</sup> scraped.

## A DEDICATION

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,  
 A fleechin,<sup>a</sup> fleth'rin<sup>b</sup> Dedication,  
 To roose<sup>c</sup> 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<sup>d</sup> 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<sup>e</sup> 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<sup>f</sup> 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.

---

<sup>a</sup> begging.   <sup>b</sup> flattering.   <sup>c</sup> praise.   <sup>d</sup> pretence.   <sup>e</sup> cannot.   <sup>f</sup> thrash.

I readily and freely grant,  
 He downa 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 <sup>g</sup> 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 orthodoxy.  
 That he's the poor man's friend in need,  
 The gentleman in word and deed,  
 It's no thro' terror of d-mn-t-n ;  
 It's just a carnal inclination.<sup>1</sup>

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

No—stretch a point to catch a plack ;<sup>h</sup>  
 Abuse a brother to his back ;  
 Steal thro' the winnock <sup>i</sup> frae a whore,  
 But point the rake that taks the door ;

<sup>g</sup> occasionally.<sup>h</sup> farthing.<sup>i</sup> window.



Be to the poor like onie whunstane,  
 And haud their noses to the grunstone ;  
 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,<sup>j</sup> 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 <sup>k</sup> dubs of your ain delvin !<sup>l</sup>  
 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 :

<sup>j</sup> hands.<sup>k</sup> muddy.<sup>l</sup> digging.

Because (ye need na tak' it ill),  
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,  
And your petitioner shall ever ——  
I had amaist said, ever pray,  
But that's a word I need na say ;  
For prayin, I hae little skill o't,  
I'm baith dead-sweer,<sup>m</sup> an' wretched ill o't ;  
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,  
That kens or hears about you, sir——

“ May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark,  
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk !<sup>n</sup>  
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,  
For that same gen'rous spirit smart !  
May Kennedy's far-honor'd name \*  
Lang beet ° his hymeneal flame,  
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizzen,  
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,<sup>p</sup>  
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,  
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow ! ”

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<sup>m</sup> loath.

<sup>n</sup> attorney.

<sup>o</sup> fan.

<sup>p</sup> great-grandchild.

\* Mr Hamilton's wife belonged to an ancient and influential family of that name, in Carrick.

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 !

[In all likelihood, this characteristic effusion was composed with a view to its occupying a place in front of the author's first publication ; but probably its freedom of sentiment and lack of reverence for matters orthodox would stagger its cautious and circumspect typographer. It was accordingly slipped into the book near the close, in fellowship with "The Louse," and some subjects less dainty in character than those first presented to the reader. This "dedication" is nevertheless esteemed one of the best poems in the volume ; and none of the author's lines are more frequently on the lips of his readers than some of its pithy sentences. Indeed, the bard's correspondence testifies that he was himself fond of quoting its couplets occasionally. The gentleman to whom it is addressed was, in every respect, a man after Burns' own

heart; and this fact is very quaintly told in the passage where he explains his reason for dedicating the poems to Hamilton :—

“ Because—ye needna tak it ill—  
I thought them something like yoursel.”

According to Mr Lockhart, “ Hamilton’s family, though professedly adhering to the Presbyterian Establishment, had always lain under a strong suspicion of Episcopalianism. Gavin’s grandfather had been curate of Kirkoswald in the troublous times that preceded the Revolution, and incurred popular hatred in consequence of being supposed to have been instrumental in bringing a thousand of the ‘ Highland host ’ into that region in 1677.” We rather suspect this was the *great-grandfather* of the poet’s friend, named Claud, who died in 1699, and whose son *John* was a writer in Edinburgh.

Gavin’s father was also a writer in Mauchline, inhabiting the old castellated mansion which still exists near the church. Cromek mentions that the Rev. William Auld had quarrelled with the senior Hamilton, and sought every occasion of revenging himself on the son. Be that as it may, our notes at pp. 100 and 102 sufficiently narrate the annoyances to which Gavin was subjected by the Kirk Session; and the author’s text there, and elsewhere, shews the measure of the reprisal that followed.

One of the existing representatives of Mr Hamilton is Major Wallace Adair, husband of a granddaughter of Gavin, and himself a grandson of Charlotte Hamilton, sister of the subject of the text.

The only variation we can record is at the close of the 6th paragraph. The author, in his second edition, cancelled a line which there appears in his Kilmarnock volume, forming the last line of a triplet, thus :—

And och ! that’s nae regeneration.

Cromek, however, mentions that he had seen a copy of this poem, in which one of Hamilton’s great sins, in the eyes of Daddy Auld and Holy Willie, is thus neatly introduced :

He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,  
Au’ pricks his beast as it were Monday.

This looks amazingly like the parody of a couplet in Tam O’Shanter, and the reader will search the text in vain for a possible corner where it might have stood.]

## VERSIFIED NOTE TO DR MACKENZIE, MAUCHLINE.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

FRIDAY first 's the day appointed  
 By the Right Worshipful anointed,  
 To hold our grand procession ;  
 To get a blad o' Johnie's morals,  
 And taste a swatch \* o' Manson's barrels  
 I' the way of our profession.  
 The Master and the Brotherhood  
 Would a' be glad to see you ;  
 For me I would be mair than proud  
 To share the mercies wi' you.  
 If Death, then, wi' skaith,<sup>b</sup> then,  
 Some mortal heart is hechtin,<sup>c</sup>  
 Inform him, and storm<sup>d</sup> him,  
 That Saturday you'll fecht him.

ROBERT BURNS.

*Mossiel, An. M. 5790.*

[The masonic date appended to the foregoing rhyme, signifies A. D. 1786. Our notes hitherto, (except in connection with the bacchanalian song given at page 38,) have had no occasion to refer to the poet's passion for Free-masonry. He had, in July 1784, been raised to the position of Depute Master of St James' Lodge, Tarbolton, from which period down to May 1788, he continued frequently to sign the minutes in that capacity. On 24th June 1786, being St John's Day, a grand procession of the lodge took place by previous arrangement, and the lines forming the text shew the style in which he invited his brother-mason, Dr Mackenzie, to be present on the occasion. The Lodge held its meetings in a back-room of the principal inn of the village kept by a person named Manson. It is not very clear who was the "Johnie" thus expected to dilate on morals: Professor Walker tells us it was John Mackenzie himself, whose favourite topic was "the origin of Morals."]

\* sample.

<sup>b</sup> harm.<sup>c</sup> threatening<sup>d</sup> bully.

## THE FAREWELL.

TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE, TARBOLTON.

*Tune*—"Goodnight, and joy be wi' you a'."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786).

ADIEU ! a heart-warm, fond adieu ;  
 Dear brothers of the *mystic tye* !  
 Ye favoured, *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.

Oft have I met your social band,  
 And spent the cheerful, festive night :  
 Oft, honour'd with supreme command,  
 Presided o'er the *sons of light* :  
 And by that *hieroglyphic* bright,  
 Which none but *Craftsmen* ever saw !  
 Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write  
 Those happy scenes, when far awa.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,  
 Unite you in the *grand Design*,  
 Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above—  
 The glorious *Architect* Divine,  
 That you may keep th' *unerring line*,  
 Still rising by the *plummet's law*,  
 Till *Order* bright completely shine,  
 Shall be my pray'r when far awa.

And *you*, 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*.

[An examination of the minute-book of the lodge shews that on 23d June 1786, the poet was present at a meeting preparatory to the grand procession referred to in the last piece. No other lodge-meeting was held till the 29th of July, which Burns also attended ; and as the present song formed part of the volume which was put into the hands of the public on the last day of that month, we may assume that the occasion on which the poet repeated or sang the verses to the brethren was on the 23d or 24th of June. He was then full of the intention of sailing before the close of August ; for we find him writing to a friend on 30th July :—

“ My hour is now come : you and I shall never meet in Britain more. I have orders, within three weeks at furthest, to repair aboard the *Nancy*, Captain Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica.”

It would appear that Captain James Montgomery (a younger brother of Col. Hugh Montgomery of Coilsfield) was, about this period, Grandmaster of St James Lodge ; and Chambers tells us that the first four lines of the closing stanza of this song refer to him. On the other hand, a little work of some pretensions, called “ A winter with Robert Burns,” asserts that the reference is to William Wallace “ of the Tarbolton St. David's,” Sheriff of the County of Ayr—a name “ to masonry and Scotia dear.” Strange to say, a note in the “ *Aldine*” edition tells us that this half-stanza refers to Sir John Whitefoord.]

ON A SCOTCH BARD,  
GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

A' YE wha live by sowps<sup>a</sup> o' drink,  
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,<sup>b</sup>  
A' ye wha live and never think,  
Come, mourn wi' me !  
Our billie's<sup>c</sup> gien us a' a jink,<sup>1</sup>  
An' owre the sea !

Lament him a' ye rantin core,  
Wha dearly like a random-splore ;<sup>d</sup>  
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,  
In social key ;  
For now he's taen anither shore,<sup>2</sup>  
An' owre the sea !

The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,  
And in their dear petitions place him :<sup>3</sup>  
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 bumble,<sup>e</sup>  
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,  
'Twad been nae plea ;  
But he was gleg as onie wumble,<sup>f</sup>  
That's owre the sea !

---

<sup>a</sup> spoonfuls.    <sup>b</sup> versifying.    <sup>c</sup> brother.    <sup>d</sup> frolic.    <sup>e</sup> blunderer.  
<sup>f</sup> joiner's gimlet.



Auld, cantie Kyle may weepers<sup>g</sup> wear,  
 An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear :  
 'Twill mak<sup>4</sup> her poor auld heart, I fear,  
                     In finders<sup>h</sup> 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<sup>i</sup> brak his heart at last,  
                     Ill may she be !  
 So, took a berth afore the mast,  
                     An' owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,<sup>j</sup>  
 On<sup>5</sup> scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,<sup>k</sup>  
 Wi' his proud, independent stomach, '  
                     Could ill agree ;  
 So, row't his hurdies<sup>l</sup> 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 :<sup>m</sup>

---

<sup>g</sup> a stripe of white muslin on the cuffs of mourners.    <sup>h</sup> fragments.    <sup>i</sup> jilt.  
<sup>j</sup> cudgel.    <sup>k</sup> meal and water mixed.    <sup>l</sup> posteriors.    <sup>m</sup> comfortable shelter.

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 !<sup>6</sup>  
 Your native soil was right ill-willie ;  
 But may ye flourish like a lily,  
                                   Now bonilie !  
 I'll toast you in my hindmost gillie,<sup>n</sup>  
                                   Tho' owre the sea !

[This playful ode shines out cheerfully among the poet's more pathetic leave-takings of the period. He puts it into the mouth of an imaginary "rhyme-composing brother;" but not one of the tribe, except the bard of Kyle himself, could have produced such an original and happy strain. His own picture is painted to the life, in all his "ranting, roving Robin-hood;" and yet, amid his rollicking, he throws in a touch of the true pathetic, just to show his reader how

" Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,  
 Thrill the deepest notes of woe."

He who, only a few months before, had sung so despairingly in "The Lament," and kindred effusions, concerning

" A faithless woman's broken vow,"

here reverts to the same theme in a strain of smothered bitterness:—

" He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west  
 Lang mustering up a bitter blast ;  
 A jillet brak his heart at last,  
                                   Ill may she he !  
 So, took a berth afore the mast,  
                                   An' owre the sea."

The variations annexed are from a MS. copy, formerly possessed by Mr Pickering of London.

<sup>1</sup> Our billie, Rob, has taen a jink.      <sup>2</sup> He's canter'd to anither shore.

<sup>3</sup> An' pray kind Fortune to redress him.      <sup>4</sup> gar.      <sup>5</sup> An'

<sup>6</sup> Then fare-ye-weel, my rhymin billie.]

---

<sup>n</sup> gill of whisky.

## SONG.—FAREWELL TO ELIZA.

*Tune*—"Gilderoy."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,  
 And from my native shore ;  
 The cruel fates between us throw  
 A boundless ocean's roar :  
 But boundless oceans, roaring wide,  
 Between my love and me,  
 They never, never can divide  
 My heart and soul from thee.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,  
 The maid that I adore !  
 A boding voice is in mine ear,  
 We part to meet no more !  
 But the latest throb that leaves my heart,  
 While Death stands victor by,—  
 That throb, Eliza, is thy part,  
 And thine that latest sigh !

[In the Ode on a Scotch Bard, the author took a general farewell of the "bonie lasses—widows, wives an' a'," and here he singles out one in particular, from among "the belles of Mauchline," in whom he seems to have a more special interest. The language is almost identical with that in which he addressed Jean Armour shortly before, "Tho' cruel fate," &c. (see p. 130). That he really had some of "his random fits o' daffin" with a young woman bearing this Christian name, is evident from a few words that dropped from him after his "eclatant return" from Edinburgh to Mauchline.

On 11th June 1787, in a letter to his friend James Smith, then at Linlithgow, he says—"Your mother, sister, and brother ; my quondam Eliza, &c., are all well." Chambers, from a variety of circumstances, came to the conclusion that this "Eliza" was the "braw Miss Betty" of the "six proper young belles," so distinguished by the poet in his canzonette given at page 76. She was sister to Miss Helen Miller, the wife of Dr Mackenzie, and died shortly after being married to a Mr Templeton.]





## EPITAPH FOR GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,  
 Whom canting wretches blam'd ;  
 But with such as he, where'er he be,  
 May I be sav'd or d—d !

[Here is a characteristic turn of the poet's pen in favour of his honest, but greatly maligned, friend and neighbour, Mr Hamilton, of whom we have already had occasion to say a good deal (see pp. 96, 100, 141, 142). He survived till 8th Feb. 1805, dying at the comparatively early age of fifty-two. A year after his death, his daughter Wilhelmina (referred to in one of the poet's letters) married the Rev. John Tod, a successor of Daddy Auld as parish minister of Mauchline. Mr Tod died in 1844, and his wife survived till 1858, leaving several descendants.]

## EPITAPH ON "WEE JOHNIE."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

*Hic Jacet wee Johnie.*

Whoe'er 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.

[From the day that Burns came before the world as an author till the day of his death, and seventy years beyond that event, the poet's readers had a tacit understanding that these four lines had been waggishly inserted in the last sheet of his book, as a satire—not a very wicked one—on his printer. How that understanding arose does not appear. The decent little typographer, however, (who was really a master of his own art, although, in the eyes of genius, destitute of the "divine afflatus"), was not a whit the worse of setting up in type his own "Hic jacet." He prospered in the world, and died at Ayr on 6th May 1821.

By his own instructions, his body was removed to his favourite Kilmar-nock, where his true "Hic jacet" may be read in the High Church burial ground. He bequeathed, under very peculiar restrictions, a small mortification for educational purposes, to his native town, of which he was for sometime a magistrate.]

### THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

(CURRIE 1800.)

*Tune*—"Ettrick Banks."

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,  
 On every blade the pearls hang ; \*  
 The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,  
 And bore its fragrant sweets along :  
 In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,  
 All nature list'ning seem'd the while,  
 Except where greenwood echoes rang,  
 Among the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,  
 My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,  
 When, musing in a lonely glade,  
 A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy :  
 Her look was like the morning's eye,  
 Her air like nature's vernal smile ;  
 Perfection whisper'd, passing by,  
 "Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle !" <sup>1</sup>

Fair is the morn in flowery May,  
 And sweet is night in autumn mild ;  
 When roving thro' the garden gay,  
 Or wand'ring in the lonely wild :

---

\* "Hang," a common Scotticism for *hung*.

But woman, nature's darling child !  
 There all her charms she does compile ;  
 Even there her other works are foil'd <sup>2</sup>  
 By the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

O had she been <sup>3</sup> a country maid,  
 And I the happy country swain,  
 Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed  
 That ever rose on Scotland's <sup>4</sup> plain !  
 Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,  
 With joy, with rapture, I would toil ;  
 And nightly to my bosom strain  
 The bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

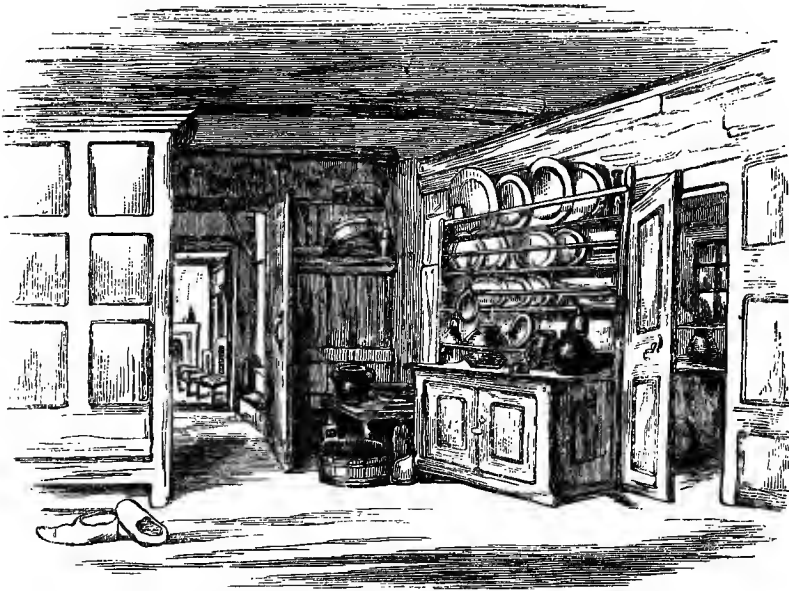
Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,  
 Where fame and honors lofty shine ;  
 And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,  
 Or downward seek the Indian mine :  
 Give me the cot below the pine,  
 To tend the flocks or till the soil ;  
 And ev'ry day have <sup>5</sup> joys divine  
 With the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

[According to the poet's own information, on a lovely evening in July 1786, before the summer's heat had browned the vernal glory of the season, and while the fragrant blossom yet lingered on the hawthorn, the muse suggested this famous lyric. His correcting of the press, involving many a journey to and from Kilmarnock, was then accomplished ; and while waiting, no doubt with some anxiety, for publication day, he indulged himself with one of his wonted strolls on the banks of Ayr at Ballochmyle. In these romantic retreats, while his "heart rejoiced in nature's joy," fresh animation was added to the scene by the unexpected approach of Miss Williamina Alexander, the sister of the new proprietor of that estate ; and although she only crossed his path like a vision, the above verses were the result of that incident.

In a warmly-composed letter, he enclosed the song to the lady ; referring with much animation to the occasion which gave it birth.



That communication bears date the 18th of November 1786, when the success of his first publication had encouraged him to drop his emigration scheme, and to resolve on a second edition to be published in Edinburgh. His professed object in addressing the lady was to obtain her consent to the printing of the song in the new edition. It would appear, however, that Miss Alexander judged it prudent not to reply to the poet's request. But a day at length arrived when she was proud to exhibit the letter and the poem together in a glass case. A few years ago, the writer of this note had the pleasure of examining that interesting production, which now hangs on the wall of the "spence" or back-parlour of the farm of Mossgiel, the place selected about twenty years ago, by the relatives of the heroine of the song, as the fittest for its



exhibition to "all and sundries." The hand-writing is more careless than usual, and shews occasionally a mis-spelled word. The following are the variations:—

<sup>1</sup> The lily's hue, and rose's dye,  
Bespoke the lass o' Ballochmyle.

<sup>2</sup> And all her other charms are foil'd.      <sup>3</sup> O if she were, &c.      <sup>4</sup> Scotia's.  
<sup>5</sup> has (clearly a clerical error in grammar).

Our woodcut of the interior of Mossgiel farm-house is from a drawing

by Sir Wm. Allan, kindly lent by its possessor, W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh.

The name of the present tenant of Mossgiel is James Wyllie, who entered in 1841. He succeeded James Orr, who entered when the Burns family left in 1798.

We have only to add that the "Bonie Lass" herself died unmarried in 1843, aged 88. She must thus have been 31 years old in 1786.]

MOTTO PREFIXED TO THE AUTHOR'S FIRST  
PUBLICATION.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

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.

[The famous Kilmarnock volume of Burns, with the above motto, (evidently his own composition), on its title-page, was ready for distribution on the same day (30th July 1786) on which he penned an excited letter to his friend Richmond in Edinburgh, from "Old Rome Forest," near Kilmarnock. The father of Jean Armour, having learned that the poet had executed a formal conveyance of his personal effects, including the copyright of his poems, and the profits to arise from their sale, in favour of his brother Gilbert, for the up-bringing of his "dear-bought Bess," obtained a legal warrant to apprehend Burns till he should find security to meet the prospective alimentary claim of his daughter Jean. The poet, through some secret channel, heard of this; and he thus confided himself to Richmond:—"I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the Gospel, have nowhere to lay my head. I know you will pour an execration on her head; but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake. I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation—exiled, abandoned, forlorn." We have no letters of Burns dated from home during the following month of August, which seems to have been spent in secret journeys from one locality to another, gathering the fruits of his recent publication.]



gave them a place in his MS. collection made for Captain Riddell, where we find the following heading and note attached :—"Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the first edition of my Poems, which I presented to an old sweetheart, then married.—'Twas the girl I mentioned in my letter to Dr Moore, where I speak of taking the sun's altitude. Poor Peggy! Her husband is my old acquaintance, and a most worthy fellow. When I was taking leave of my Carrick relations, intending to go to the West Indies, when I took farewell of her, neither she nor I could speak a syllable. Her husband escorted me three miles on my road, and we both parted with tears." See pp. 4 and 54 *supra*.]

### LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.

(GILBERT BURNS' ED., 1820.)

WAE worth thy power, thou cursed leaf,  
 Fell source o' a' my woe and grief;  
 For lack o' thee I've lost my lass,  
 For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass:  
 I see the children of affliction  
 Unaided, through thy curst restriction:  
 I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile  
 Amid his hapless victim's spoil;  
 And for thy potency vainly wished,  
 To crush the villain in the dust:  
 For lack o' thee, I leave this much-lov'd shore,  
 Never, perhaps, to greet old Scotland more.

KYLE.

R. B.

[The note is for one pound of the Bank of Scotland's issue, 1st March 1780. Internal evidence shows that the lines were written about August 1786. So far as appears, they were first printed in the "Morning Chronicle" of 27th May 1814, from which they were transferred to the "Scots Magazine" for September of same year. The original was then in the possession of Mr James F. Gracie of Dumfries. Both the handwriting and the composition attest its genuineness as a production of Burns.]

## STANZAS ON NAETHING.

EXTEMPORE EPISTLE TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(ALEX. SMITH'S ED., 1865.)

To you, sir, this summons I've sent,  
 Pray, whip till the pownie is fraething ;<sup>a</sup>  
 But if you demand what I want,  
 I honestly answer you—naething.

Ne'er scorn a poor Poet like me,  
 For idly just living and breathing,  
 While people of every degree  
 Are busy employed about—naething.

Poor Centum-per-centum may fast,  
 And grumble his hurdies<sup>b</sup> their claithing,  
 He'll find, when the balance is cast,  
 He's gane to the devil for—naething.

The courtier cringes and bows,  
 Ambition has likewise its plaything ;  
 A coronet beams on his brows ;  
 And what is a coronet ?—naething.

Some quarrel the Presbyter gown,  
 Some quarrel Episcopal graithing ;<sup>c</sup>  
 But every good fellow will own  
 The quarrel is a' about—naething.

---

<sup>a</sup> frothing.<sup>b</sup> posteriors.<sup>c</sup> vestments.

The lover may sparkle and glow,  
 Approaching his bonie bit gay thing ;  
 But marriage will soon let him know  
 He's gotten—a buskit up naething.

The Poet may jingle and rhyme,  
 In hopes of a laureate wreathing,  
 And when he has wasted his time,  
 He's kindly rewarded wi'—naething.

The thundering bully may rage,  
 And swagger and swear like a heathen ;  
 But collar him fast, I'll engage,  
 You'll find that his courage is—naething.

Last night wi' a feminine whig—  
 A poet she couldna put faith in ;  
 But soon we grew lovingly big,  
 I taught her, her terrors were naething.

Her whigship was wonderful pleased,  
 But charmingly tickled wi' ae thing ;  
 Her fingers I lovingly squeezed,  
 And kissed her, and promised her—naething.

The priest anathèmas may threat—  
 Predicament, sir, that we're baith in ;  
 But when honor's reveillé is beat,  
 The holy artillery's naething.

And now I must mount on the wave—  
 My voyage perhaps there is death in ;  
 But what is a watery grave ?  
 The drowning a Poet is naething.

And now, as grim death's in my thought,  
 To you, sir, I make this bequeathing ;  
 My service as long as ye've ought,  
 And my friendship, by God, when ye've naething.

[This piece was recorded by the author in the collection of unpublished poems made by him for his friend Riddell of Glenriddell. Alexander Smith obtained it in one of the many manuscript scroll books of the poet which Dr Currie declined to make use of in compiling his edition and biography. It is supposed to have been presented by Burns to Mrs Dunlop sometime in the year 1788. It seems to have passed through several hands, and at each remove to have been denuded of some of its pages. In a tattered condition it came at last into the hands of Mr Macmillan, the London publisher of Smith's edition of Burns. That editor remarks that "the last stanza is almost identical in thought and expression with the closing lines of the well-known Dedication to Gavin Hamilton." That last stanza, together with the one immediately preceding, fixes the date of this characteristic effusion as about August 1786.]

### THE FAREWELL.

(REV. H. PAUL'S ED., 1819.)

The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer ?  
 Or what does he regard his single woes ?  
 But when, alas ! he multiplies himself,  
 To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,  
 To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,  
 To helpless children,—then, Oh then he feels  
 The point of misery festering in his heart,  
 And weakly weeps his fortunes like a coward :  
 Such, such am I !—undone !

THOMSON'S *Edward and Eleanor*.

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,  
 Far dearer than the torrid plains,  
 Where rich ananas blow !  
 Farewell, a mother's blessing dear !  
 A brother's sigh ! a sister's tear !  
 My Jean's heart-rending throe !

Farewell, my Bess ! tho' thou'rt bereft  
 Of my paternal care,  
 A faithful brother I have left,  
 My part in him thou'lt share !  
 Adieu too, to you too,  
 My Smith, my bosom frien' ;  
 When kindly you mind me,  
 O then befriend my Jean !

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

[The author's painful anticipation of "Jean's heart-rending thro' " in this effusion, seems to prove that it was composed prior to 3rd September 1786, at which date she was delivered of twins, a boy and a girl. It is observable in the poet's correspondence and other productions after that event, that he seems less disposed to carry out his resolution to go abroad. The admiration everywhere expressed for the lately published poems, began to throw a lustre on the name of Burns, and to point his way to a better fate than exile in a torrid clime. The birth of these children, and the improved prospects of the bard, inclined old Mr Armour to come to honourable terms with him. It was agreed that the Mossgiel family should adopt the boy, while Jean herself took charge of the girl, thus dividing the burden of maintenance on both parties equally.

A letter penned by Burns to Robert Muir shortly after the event, indicates the pleasant turn which matters had taken :—"you will have



heard that Armour has repaid me double. A very fine boy and girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pleasure, and some with foreboding anguish, through my soul.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive, but more of this when, in the latter part of next week, we shall meet.”]

### THE CALF.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

To the Rev. JAMES STEVEN, on his text, MALACHI, ch. iv. vers. 2.  
“And ye shall go forth, and grow up, as 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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> hour,  
Shall<sup>3</sup> ever be your lot,  
Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly Power,  
You e'er should be a *stot* !

Tho',<sup>4</sup> when some<sup>5</sup> kind connubial dear  
Your but-an'-ben adorns,  
The like has been that—you may wear  
A noble head of *horns*.

And, in your lug,<sup>6</sup> most reverend James,  
To hear you roar and rowte,  
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims  
To rank among the *nowte*.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,  
 Below<sup>7</sup> a grassy hillock,  
 With justice they may mark your head—  
 “ Here lies a famous *bullock* ! ”

[The eventful Sunday, 3d September 1786, which produced the poet's twins towards evening, brought forth this effusion at the morning service in Mauchline kirk. Burns had called upon Mr Gavin Hamilton in his way thither, expecting his friend might be going there too. Mr Hamilton declined going, but requested the poet to bring him a note of the discourse in not fewer than four stanzas of rhyme. A bet was made between them on this point, and accordingly Burns presented four of the above verses to Hamilton immediately after forenoon service. Dr Mackenzie happened to look in at Mr Hamilton's at the same time, and was so tickled with the performance that he extracted from the poet a promise of a copy, which reached him on the evening of same day. That copy, with two extra verses (the fourth and sixth of the text), is now in possession of his son, John Whitefoord Mackenzie, Esq., Edinburgh, by whose kindness we are enabled to record a few variations, and publish, for the first time, a note from Burns which accompanied the poem.

The Rev. James Steven, a native of Kilmarnock, was at this time the young assistant of the Rev. Robert Dow, of Ardrossan. On the present occasion he merely interchanged pulpits with Mr Auld. In 1787 he was called to London (Crown Court Chapel), and in 1803 was presented to the parochial charge of Kilwinning. He obtained the degree of D.D., and died of apoplexy in 1817. His second son, Charles, became minister of Stewarton.

VAR.—<sup>1</sup> And when some patron shall be kind To bless.  
 \* mystic.    <sup>3</sup> should.    <sup>4</sup> And.    <sup>5</sup> a.    <sup>6</sup> to conclude.    <sup>7</sup> Beneath.]

### NATURE'S LAW—A POEM.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

“ Great Nature spoke ; observant man obey'd.”—POPE.

LET other heroes boast their scars,  
 The marks of sturt and strife ;  
 And other poets sing of wars,  
 The plagues of human life ;

Shame fa' the fun ; wi' sword and gun  
 To slap mankind like lumber !  
 I sing his name, and nobler fame,  
 Wha multiplies our number.

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

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

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

Auld cantie Coil may count the day,  
 As annual it returns,

The third of Libra's equal sway,  
 That gave another Burns,  
 With future rhymes, an' other times,  
 To emulate his sire ;  
 To sing auld Coil in nobler style,  
 With more poetic fire.

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

[This characteristic effusion is written in the same happy vein as "Willie Chalmers," which immediately follows. It celebrates a ruling quality in the constitutional structure of the body and soul of Burns, and reminds us of the epigram he afterwards inscribed on a window-pane of the Globe Tavern, Dumfries :—

" The Deities that I adore  
 Are social Peace and Plenty !  
 I'm better pleased to make one more,  
 Than be the death of twenty."

The reference, in the last stanza but one, is to Robert Burns, junior, who, born on 3d September 1786, died at Dumfries, 14th May 1857, in his 71st year. He was a man of solid acquirements, but without any "poetic fire." Every Scotchman, however, will proudly acknowledge the compliment conveyed in the closing stanza.]

## SONG.—WILLIE CHALMERS.

(LOCKHART'S LIFE OF BURNS, 1829.)

Mr Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his *Dulcinea*. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows :—

Wi' braw new branks <sup>a</sup> in mickle pride,  
 And eke a braw new brechan,<sup>b</sup>  
 My Pegasus I'm got astride,  
 And up Parnassus pechin ;<sup>c</sup>  
 Whiles owre a bush wi' downward crush,  
 The doited <sup>d</sup> beastie stammers ;  
 Then up he gets, and off he sets,  
 For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na, lass, that weel kenn'd name  
 May cost a pair o' blushes ;  
 I am nae stranger to your fame,  
 Nor his warm urgèd wishes.  
 Your bonie face, sae mild and sweet,  
 His honest heart enamours,  
 And faith ye'll no be lost a whit,  
 Tho' wair'd <sup>e</sup> on Willie Chalmers.

Auld Truth hersel might swear ye're fair,  
 And Honour safely back her ;  
 And Modesty assume your air,  
 And ne'er a ane mistak her :  
 And sic twa love-inspiring een  
 Might fire even holy palmers ;  
 Nae wonder then they've fatal been  
 To honest Willie Chalmers.

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<sup>a</sup> horse-curbing gear. <sup>b</sup> horse-collar. <sup>c</sup> breathing hard. <sup>d</sup> stupid. <sup>e</sup> spent.

I doubt na fortune may you shore <sup>f</sup>  
 Some nim-mou'd <sup>g</sup> pouter'd priestie,  
 Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,  
 And band upon his breastie :  
 But oh ! what signifies to you  
 His lexicons and grammars ;  
 The feeling heart's the royal blue,  
 And that's wi' Willie Chalmers.

Some gapin', glowrin countra laird  
 May warsle <sup>h</sup> for your favour ;  
 May claw his lug, and straik his beard,  
 And hoast <sup>i</sup> up some palaver : <sup>j</sup>  
 My bonie maid, before ye wed  
 Sic clumsy-witted hammers,  
 Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp <sup>k</sup>  
 Awa wi' Willie Chalmers.

Forgive the Bard ! my fond regard  
 For ane that shares my bosom,  
 Inspires my Muse to gie 'm his dues,  
 For deil a hair I roose <sup>l</sup> him.  
 May powers aboon unite you soon,  
 And fructify your amours,  
 And every year come in mair dear  
 To you and Willie Chalmers.

[This curious piece was obtained by Mr Lockhart from Lady Harriet Don, with the explanation as above prefixed, in the poet's own words. His model for the versification was an old Scottish lyric, entitled "Omnia vincet Amor," which will be found in the "Tea Table Miscellany," and also in Johnson's *Museum*.

The reader will afterwards see an interesting letter, which was addressed by the poet to "Willie Chalmers" from Edinburgh, shortly

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<sup>f</sup> proffer.	<sup>g</sup> affectedly modest.	<sup>h</sup> strive.	<sup>i</sup> cough.
<sup>j</sup> nonsensical speech.		<sup>k</sup> spring.	<sup>l</sup> flatter.







“Geld you! (quo’ he) an’ what for no?  
 If that your right hand, leg, or toe  
 Should ever prove your spiritual foe,  
                                   You should remember  
 To cut it aff—an’ what for no?—  
                                   Your dearest member!”

“Na, na, (quo’ I,) I’m no for that,  
 Gelding’s nae better than ’tis ca’t;  
 I’d rather suffer for my faut,  
                                   A hearty flewit,  
 As sair owre hip as ye can draw ’t,  
                                   Tho’ I should rue it.”

“Or, gin ye like to end the bother,  
 To please us a’—I’ve just ae ither—  
 When next wi’ yon lass I forgather,  
                                   Whate’er betide it,  
 I’ll frankly gie her ’t a’ thegither,  
                                   An’ let her guide it.”

But, sir, this pleas’d them warst of a’,  
 An’ therefore, Tam, when that I saw,  
 I said “Gude night,” an’ cam’ awa’,  
                                   An’ left the Session;  
 I saw they were resolvèd a’  
                                   On my oppression.

[This rich performance (of its kind) has been reprinted, in a more or less complete form, in most of the standard editions of Burns’ poems, since it first appeared. The Aldine, which gave it unmutilated, remarks that Cunningham “very decorously omitted the last five stanzas.” As we do not approve of presenting an author’s production in a garbled state, we prefer giving this piece entire, rather than to omit it altogether. We come to this conclusion the more readily, that we may have an opportunity of recording our dissent from a certain

class of the poet's annotators, who affect to disbelieve that he had any hand in its composition.

The person to whom it is addressed was Thomas Walker, a tailor resident at Pool, near the village of Ochiltree. He was in terms of intimacy with William Simson, the parish schoolmaster there, to whom Burns addressed the poetical Epistle given at page 121 *supra*. The tailor was rather an eccentric character, and could string rhymes together as fluently, if not so much to the point, as could his friend the Latin Schoolmaster. Having seen Burns' epistle to Simson, which was extracted from the poet of Mossiel by way of reply to a complimentary letter addressed to him by the dominie, Walker conceived that he might experience the same good-fortune by sending the poet a brotherly epistle. Accordingly he composed and strung together a dreary performance of twenty-six stanzas, in Burns' favourite measure, and despatched it to Mossiel by a secure hand. Here is a sample of the contents, taken from Tom's own recorded copy in his MS. collection, now lying before us :—

“ Had I a night o' thee or twa,  
An' guid tobacco for to blaw,  
Altho' it was baith frost and snaw,  
I wadna weary ;  
The crack thou could sae brawly ca',  
An' keep me cheery.

Or could we meet some Mauchline Fair—  
I sometimes tak a bottle there—  
Thou'd be as welcome to a share  
As thou could'st be ;  
Wae worth the purse that wadna spare  
A drink to thee !”

As may well be conjectured, Burns was not to be caught by such bait as this : by and by, however, the publication of the Kilmarnock volume, seemed, in Tom's eyes, a fair opportunity for renewing the attempt to extract a reply from the poet. He changed his tactics, however, and tried the experiment of rousing the poet by assuming the character of a moral censor. He fortunately exhibited his performance to Simson before despatching it, by whose advice the epistle was reduced in extent from twenty-one to ten stanzas. This required some re-arrangement and alterations, which the schoolmaster managed with so much skill, that Allan Cunningham has suggested that Burns himself may have been the author of the “Trimming epistle” as well as the reply to it. Walker's second performance is also now before us, in his own manuscript, and on comparing the original with the “Epistle from a Tailor,” as printed by Stewart, the conviction is forced upon us that Simson had as much to do with its composition as Walker had.

Both Simson, who died in 1815. and Walker, who was buried in Sorn a few years earlier, saw Stewart's publication attributing the authorship of the verses in the text to Burns—a fact proclaimed by the

verses themselves. During the lifetime of those worthies, and not till a quarter of a century thereafter, did any writer ever venture to deny the authorship of the verses to Burns. An absurd theory respecting them, however, has been since started (and eagerly supported by some innovators) that Burns never answered either of the tailor's epistles; but that Simson composed the reply attributed to Burns, imitated his hand-writing, and despatched it by a circuitous route to Walker. It is asserted that the pious tailor swallowed the ruse, but was so horror-stricken by its blasphemy and bawdry, that he consigned it to the flames. The latter fact we shall not dispute, for the original manuscript has not been recovered.

We have already adverted to the fact that John Richmond of Mauchline was cousin to Thomas Stewart, the printer and publisher. This at once suggests that Burns had consigned both the "Tailor's Epistle" and a copy of his own "Reply" to Richmond, the Clerk of the "Court of Equity," and that through this source the documents passed into that publisher's hands.

To the kindness of the Rev. David Hogg, Kirkmahoe, we are indebted for the use of Tom Walker's manuscripts above referred to. In early life, that gentleman acted as assistant to William Simson's brother Patrick, in the parish-school of Ochiltree, and obtained Walker's manuscripts from the tailor's representatives in Pool. Walker appears to have at length come out as an author; for James Paterson records, in his "Contemporaries of Burns," that he published a pamphlet called "A Picture of the World."]















