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THE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.
THE WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.
WITH
A SERIES OF AUTHENTIC
PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS,
MARGINAL GLOSSARY, NUMEROUS NOTES, AND APPENDICES:

ALSO
THE LIFE OF BURNS, BY J. G. LOCKHART;
AND ESSAYS ON THE GENIUS, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS OF BURNS,
BY THOMAS CARLYLE AND PROFESSOR WILSON

EDITED BY
CHARLES ANNANDALE, M.A., LL.D.,
EDITOR OF THE "IMPERIAL DICTIONARY," ETC.

VOL I.

TORONTO:
J. E. BRYANT & CO.
LONDON, GLASGOW, EDINBURGH, AND DUBLIN.
BLACKIE & SON.
1889.
The poet lived in a cottage on the outskirts of a small town. He spent his days writing in solitude, and his poetry was much loved by the townspeople. His verses were often recited at gatherings and events, and he became known as a local hero.

One of his most famous poems, "Poem," was well received and was even translated into several languages. It was then published in a limited edition by a small press in Edinburgh. The copies quickly sold out, and the poet was invited to give readings at various venues, where his poems were recited to a growing audience.

Among the many admirers of the poet, one person stood out, a young writer who had grown up in the town. The long lines of one of the poet's poems always resonated with her. She had read them all her life, and the images they conjured were a constant source of inspiration. 

Hately, the young writer decided to write her own verse, inspired by the poet's work. She, like the poet, lived in a cottage, but hers was on the outskirts of a different town. The young writer was determined to create her own legacy in the world of literature, and she spent many long nights poring over the poet's works, trying to capture the essence of his poetry in her own writing.

As the years went by, the poet's legacy continued to grow. His works were studied and analyzed by scholars, and new editions were published, reaching a wider audience. The young writer, now a respected poet in her own right, often spoke of the influence that the poet had had on her. They had both found inspiration in the same cottage, nestled in the outskirts of their respectively small towns, and their paths had crossed in a most unexpected way.
PREFACE.

The first edition of Burns's poems appeared in 1786, or just a little over one hundred years ago. It was printed at Kilmarnock, to be sold by subscription for the modest sum of three shillings, and formed a small volume entitled, "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns." The author was then a young man of twenty-seven, and known only in his own immediate neighbourhood; but this unpretending little book, and the somewhat larger Edinburgh edition which soon followed it, were enough to make his name a household word among Scotchmen, and to show that Scotland had given birth to a great national poet. Since then Burns's fame has gone on increasing, edition after edition of his writings has been published, and copies have been sold by the hundred thousand.

Among the chief of the larger editions of Burns's works was one brought out, about forty years ago, by the publishers of the present edition. It had a long lease of public favour, and was generally regarded as not unworthy of the poet. Since its publication, however, much fresh matter that should be incorporated in any comprehensive edition of Burns has been accumulated; additional poems and letters of his have been made public, and a considerable number of new facts relating to his life have become known. This result has been brought about chiefly by the labours of such painstaking editors as Robert Chambers, Hately Waddell, George Gilfillan, and especially W. Scott Douglas, the first and last of whom in particular have added in a surprising manner to the bulk of Burns's published writings and to the known facts of his life. With these additions to our knowledge of Burns's life and writings the demand among readers for copies of his works has more than kept pace, and, indeed, seems to be without limit. For as the population of the British islands continues to increase, as the English speaking communities throughout the world continue to multiply, so also do the admirers of Scotland's National Bard, by whom his works and life are more and more studied. Hence the issue of the present...
edition, in which the most recent available matter has been incorporated, and which, it is believed, will better than any other enable readers to form a complete and just estimate both of the man and of his writings.

Among the chief features of this edition are the following:

The writings of Burns are here presented in two sections, of which the one contains the poetry, the other the prose. Both sections are arranged chronologically, the pieces following each other according to their dates, so that the development of the poet's genius and his literary career may be readily studied and placed in connection with all the facts of his life. With the same object in view the year of the poet's age to which each poem belongs is inserted at the top of the page where the piece occurs. Numerous notes are appended to the author's text, giving the reader a vast amount of useful, and indeed indispensable, information in regard to persons, places, occurrences, local usages, &c., connected with or referred to by Burns. Without such a commentary many references and allusions would not be understood, nor would the poems and letters possess anything like the same interest. A certain number of the notes are critical in their character—they may point out special beauties, or may indicate where the poet has been less happy in his efforts. These latter notes are chiefly selected from writers of eminence who have had Burns for their theme.

The poems are treated on the self-interpreting plan, that is, the Scottish words and expressions, such as occur especially in the best and most characteristic of Burns's poems, are rendered intelligible to all by means of marginal explanations accompanying each piece that requires such aid. To those unacquainted with the dialect that Burns often used this must prove a most valuable feature, as it will enable any one readily to apprehend the meaning of even the most difficult passages, while the troublesome necessity of consulting a glossary is entirely avoided. Parallel with each line will be found the necessary interpretation, so that the reader carries the sense along with him without stopping, and only very rarely does a more detailed explanation require to be furnished in a note. But it is well to remember that the difficulty of understanding Burns is apt to be exaggerated, and that many of his poems present few and trilling peculiarities of dialect and others none at all.

The Life of the poet given in this edition, that namely written by John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott, is the only one that has acquired the character of a classic. It forms an eminently readable poet's gentler appendage and guide. But those who the notes to correct.

The writing of the universal Burns departed tribute to country in its own

An account of the poet's birthdate and the occurrence of traits in the works of writers, and of

All the notes of such a kind, having an eye to the best pieces have been suppressed.

The Biographical they a real challenge to the Life of a poet, most acutely examined by his author, by D.
readable and extremely fair-minded account of Burns's life, one in which the poet's greatness is fully recognized, and his defects and failings treated with gentleness and charity. The Life is supplemented by notes and an extensive appendix, adding very considerably to the information supplied by Lockhart, and giving results obtained by the most recent investigations and discoveries. But the most valuable supplement to the Life will be found in the letters and the notes accompanying them, taken in conjunction with the poems belonging to corresponding periods.

The two Essays included in this edition are studies on the poet and his writings that all readers must be glad to possess. Carlyle's essay has been universally recognized as one of the best and most sympathetic estimates of Burns ever written, and one of the ablest of its author's contributions to the department of literature to which it belongs. The eloquent and enthusiastic tribute of the renowned "Christopher North" to his fellow-poet and fellow-countryman, if a less celebrated composition, will be found to have merits of its own fully entitling it to the place here assigned it.

Among other features of the present edition attention may be drawn to the account which it contains of the great centenary celebration of the poet's birthday held in 1859 (with quotations from the chief addresses delivered on the occasion); the description of monuments erected to him, and of the portraits of him that exist; the selection of poems in his honour by well-known writers; the account of the chief editions of his works that have been published, and of the translations of his poems into foreign languages, &c.

Altogether, it may safely be said that in no other edition is there accumulated such a quantity of valuable matter calculated to throw light, from all points of view, upon Burns the poet and Burns the man. Readers will here possess Burns's works complete, in the best sense of the word, only a few trifling pieces unworthy of the poet being omitted and a few rather coarse passages suppressed.

The Pictorial Illustrations will no doubt be regarded as worthy of the text they accompany. The Landscapes embrace the principal scenes identified with the Life and Writings of the Poet, and thereby include views of much of the most attractive scenery of Scotland and of many localities rendered interesting by historical as well as by poetical associations. They are from finished pictures, by D. O. Hill, R.S.A., an artist fully acquainted with the scenes, alive to the
poetical and other associations connected with them, and whose faithful representations are rendered in a poetic spirit. The portraits are all from authentic originals. Besides two portraits of the Poet himself—the one from Nasmyth's well-known picture, the other from the remarkable drawing by Skirving—they present the likenesses of persons intimately connected with Burns by friendship or by association with his Muse.

GLASGOW, December, 1887.
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ROBERT BURNS,

Jamaicaborn, about the year 1759, son of a tenant farmer, in Ayr, and of the family of Allan Burns, of Alloway.

About the year 1775, when about eighteen years of age, he was sent to sea, with his uncle, a passenger to London, and the vessel, during her cruise, was in the north, and again in the South-West Indies. He returned to his native country in 1779.

The family were of the parish of Kilmarnock, and he is stated to have been highly esteemed by his kindred and influential friends. After the death of his mother, he was sent to sea again, about the year 1781, and was not heard from until his death, which occurred in London, about the year 1796.

1[Passim]

2[Passim]
THE
WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS.

LIFE OF THE POET
BY J. G. LOCKHART.

CHAPTER I.


My father was a farmer upon the Carrick bower,
And carefully he brought me up in decency and order.

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in a clay-built cottage, about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, and in the immediate vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway, and the "Auld Brig o' Doon." About a week afterwards, part of the frail dwelling, which his father had constructed with his own hands, gave way at midday; and the infant poet and his mother were carried through the storm, to the shelter of a neighbouring hedge.

The father, William Burnes or Burness (for so he spelt his name), was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, whence he removed at nineteen years of age, in consequence of domestic embarrassments. The farm on which the family lived formed part of the estate forfeited, after the Rebellion of 1715, by the noble house of Keith-Marischal; and the poet took pleasure in believing that his humble ancestors shared

the principles and the fall of their chiefs. "Though my fathers" (said he after his fame was established) "had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hazard in the contest—though they left their cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost. . . They shook hands with ruin, for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country." Indeed, after William Burnes settled in the west of Scotland, there prevailed a vague notion that he himself had been out in the insurrection of 1745-6; but though Robert would fain have interpreted his father's silence in favour of a tale which flattered his imagination, his brother Gilbert always treated it as a mere fiction; and such it was. It is easy to suppose, that when any obscure northern stranger fixed himself in those days in the Low Country, such rumours were likely enough to be circulated concerning him. [It is not improbable that some members of the family had gone "out" with the young Earl Marischal in 1715, but it is tolerably certain that none of the poet's more immediate ancestors, at least

1 Passages that do not belong to the Life as written by Lockhart, but are now inserted to supplement or correct his text or notes, are inclosed in square brackets.

2 An error. A letter of recommendation given to William Burnes by three Kincardineshire gentlemen, dated 9th May, 1748, shows that he was at least twenty-seven years of age when he left his father's house.

3 Letter to Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, 16th December, 1789. [The letter will be found in its proper place in the poet's Correspondence.]
on the father's side, "shock hands with ruin," on account of any connection they had with that rising. His grandfather settled on his farm of Clochmhill about that time, and remained there till 1718, while his great-grandfather and several of his grand-uncles were for long thriving farmers in the neighbourhood, some of them or their families till after Burns's own death.]

William Burnes laboured for some years in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh as a gardener, and then found his way into Ayrshire. [In 1749 he was employed in laying out the Meadows, or Hop: Park, on the south side of Edinburgh, ground which was formerly covered by a lake called the Borough Loch.] At the time when Robert was born, he was gardener and overseer to a gentleman of small estate, Mr. Ferguson of Doonholm: but resided on a few acres of land, which he had on lease from another proprietor, and where he had originally intended to establish himself as a nurseryman. He married Agnes Brown in December, 1757, and the poet was their first-born.

William Burnes seems to have been, in his humble station, a man eminently entitled to respect. He had received the ordinary learning of a Scottish parish school, and profited largely, both by that, and by his own experience in the world. "I have met with few" (said the poet, after he himself had seen a good deal of mankind) "who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to my father." He was a strictly religious man. There exists in his handwriting a little manual of theology, in the form of a dialogue, which he drew up for the use of his children, and from which it appears that he had adopted more of the Arminian than of the Calvinistic doctrine; a circumstance not to be wondered at, when we consider that he had been educated in a district which was never numbered among the strongholds of the Presbyterian church. The affectionate reverence with which his children ever regarded him, is attested by all who have described him as he appeared in his domestic circle; but there needs no evidence, beside that of the poet himself, who has painted, in colours that will never fade, "the saint, the father, and the husband," of the "Cotter's Saturday Night."

Agnes Brown, the wife of this good man, is described as "a very sagacious woman, without any appearance of forwardness, or awkwar

dness of manner;" and it seems that, in features, and, as he grew up, in general address, the poet resembled her more than his father. She had an inexhaustible store of ballads and traditional tales, and appears to have nourished his infant imagination by this means, while her husband paid more attention to "the weightier matters of the law."

These worthy people laboured hard for the support of an increasing family. William was occupied with Mr. Ferguson's service, and Agnes, like the Wyfe of Auchenermichtie, who ruled

Baithe calvis and kye,
And a the house balth in and out.—
contrived to manage a small dairy as well as her children. But though their honesty and diligence merited better things, their condition continued to be very uncomfortable, and our poet (in his letter to Dr. Moore) accounts distinctly for his being born and bred "a very poor man's son," by the remark, that "stubborn ungracious integrity, and headlong, unguaranteed insolubility, are disqualifying circumstances."

These defects of temper did not, however, obscure the sterling worth of William Burnes in the eyes of Mr. Ferguson; who, when the gardener expressed a wish to try his fortune on a farm of his then vacant, and confessed at the same time his inability to meet the charges of stocking it, at once advanced £100 towards the removal of the difficulty. Burnes accordingly removed to this farm (that of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr) at Whitsuntide, 1766, when his eldest son was between six and seven years of age. But the soil proved to be

1 [See Appendix.—"Paternal Ancestry of Burns."—]
2 Letter of Burns to Dr. Moore, 24 August, 1757. [This autobiographical letter will be found complete in the present volume following the Life.]
3 [This manual as it exists is in the handwriting of Murdoch, the teacher, who had either extended it from notes, or written it from the dictation of William Burnes at Mount Oliphant. See vol. iv.]
5 Morison, vol. ii. p. 262. [She lived till 14th January, 1820, thus surviving her distinguished son nearly a quarter of a century.]
of a most ungrateful description; and Mr. Ferguson dying, and his affairs falling into the hands of a harsh factor (who afterwards sat for his picture in the "Twa Dogs"), Burns was glad to give up his barrack in the end of six years. He then removed about ten miles to a larger and better farm, that of Lochiel, in the parish of Tarbolton. But here, after a short interval of prosperity, some unfortunate misunderstanding took place as to the conditions of the lease; the dispute was referred to arbitration; and, after three years of suspense, the result involved Burns in ruin. The worthy man lived to know this decision; but death saved him from witnessing its necessary consequences. He died of consumption on the 13th February, 1784. Severe labour, and hopes only renewed to be baffled, had at last exhausted a robust but irritable structure and temperment of body and of mind.

In the midst of the harassing struggles which followed this termination, William Burns appears to have used his utmost exertions for promoting the mental improvement of his children—a duty rarely neglected by Scottish parents, however humble their station and scanty their means. Robert was sent, in his sixth year, to a small school at Alloway Mill, about a mile from the house in which he was born. But Campbell, the teacher, being in the course of a few months removed to another situation, Burns and four or five neighbours engaged Mr. John Murdoch to supply his place, lodging him by turns in their own houses, and insuring to him a small payment of money quarterly. Robert Burns, and Gilbert his next brother, were the aptest and favourite pupils of this worthy man, who, in a letter published at length by Currie, detailed, with honest pride, the part which he had in the early education of our poet. He became the frequent inmate and confidential friend of the family, and speaks with enthusiasm of the virtues of William Burns, and of the peaceable and happy life of his humble abode.

He was," says Murdoch, "a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so; and a stripe with the birch, even on the skin of the coat, gave heartfelt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

"He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice; the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time, it was with an old man, for using smutty innuendoes and double entendres.

"In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. The 'Cottar's Saturday Night' will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there."

2 [Murdoch was about eighteen years of age when, in May, 1765, he took possession of the school, a small thatched building directly opposite Burns's Cottage. He ultimately went to London, where he published several educational works. In his latter days he sank into poverty, and a fund was raised for his relief. He died, April 20, 1824, aged seventy-seven; and from the ordinary notice published in the London papers we learn that the celebrated Talleyrand was one of several distinguished foreigners who learned English from Burns's schoolmaster. His account of the Burns household will be found complete in the appendix to Lockhart's Life, as here published.]

3 [Burns's birthplace, or as it is now commonly called "Burns's Cottage," is a low-roofed, one-storied structure of a very humble order on the highroad from Ayr to Maybole, and at a little distance from Alloway Kirk and the Auld Brig o' Doon. The road, when Burns's father built his house, ran in a more westerly direction than the present highway, the whole of his garden-ground lying between the two. The cottage consisted of a "kitchen" or kitchen end to the left of the doorway, a "bed" or room end to the right, with an "awnmie" or partition press between, facing the door. At the back of this press and facing the kitchen fireplace was the reeds which contained the bed in which the poet was born. On the family's removing to Mount oliphant the cottage, with its surrounding garden-acres, was sold to the Corporation of Shoemakers in Ayr, for £20. About the beginning of the fourteenth century it was granted to the Earl of Douglas, and in 1607 to James Douglas, Lord Whitley. Mr. Lockhart says, "Burns and his family never occupied it to the last year of his life. It is now an inn."]
The boys, under the joint tuition of Murdoch and their father, made rapid progress in reading, spelling, and writing; they committed psalms and hymns to memory with extraordinary ease—the teacher taking care (as he tells us) that they should understand the exact meaning of each word in the sentence ere they tried to get it by heart. "As soon," says he, "as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words; and to supply all the ellipses. Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were the Spelling Book, the New Testament, the Bible, Mason’s Collection of Prose and Verse, Fisher’s English Grammar."—"Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church-music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert’s ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice unintonable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert’s countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert’s face said, ‘Mirth, with thee I mean to live;’ and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the Muses, he would never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind."

"At those years," says the poet himself, in 1787, "I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cauntrips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places: and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was The Vision of Minos, and a hymn of Addison’s, beginning, ‘How are thy servants blest, 0 Lord!’ I particularly remember one halflanaza, which was music to my boyish ear:

For though on dreadful whirls we hang
High on the broken wave—

I met with these pieces in Mason’s English Collection, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books ever read since, were, the Life of Hannibal, and the History of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn,
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LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest."

And speaking of the same period and books to Mrs. Dunlop, he says, "For several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stolen out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to steal a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days, I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur——

-Syme to the Leglen wood, when it was late, then
To make a silent and a safe retreat.

"I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen miles to pay my respects to the Leglen Wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged."

Murdock continued his instructions until the family had been about two years at Mount Oliphant, when he left for a time that part of the country. "There being no school near us," says Gilbert Burns, "and our little services being already useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings by candle-light—and in this way my two elder sisters received all the education they ever received."

1 Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, 1587.—[The "Tamibal" mentioned above was lent by Mr. Murdoch; the "Wallace," by Kirkpatrick, a blacksmith in the vicinity of Mount Oliphant, the father of "Handsome Nell," the heroine of the poet's first song. The old woman of whom he speaks was a Betty Davidson, the widow of a cousin of Mrs. Burns. William Burns used to invite her to spend a few months at a time with his family, which kindness she requited by giving what assistance she could in the household work. Her cheery disposition and her stock of very lore made her a great favourite with the children.]

2 [The Leglen Wood is situated in a peninsula formed by a remarkable bend in the river Ayr on the estate of Auchencruive, parish of St. Quivox, about three miles from the mouth of the river, and nearly six from Mount Oliphant. According to Blind Harry it was a favourite hiding-place of Wallace.]
petent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to stain his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches." A collection of letters, by eminent English authors, is mentioned as having fallen into Burns's hands much about the same time, and greatly delighted him.

When he was about thirteen or fourteen years old, his father sent him and Gilbert "week about, during the summer quarter," to the parish school of Dalrymple, two or three miles distant from Mount Oliphant, 1 for the improvement of their penmanship. The good man could not pay two fees; or his two boys could not be spared at the same time from the labour of the farm!

"We lived very poorly," says the poet. "I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me (Gilbert) could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I. My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent letters, which used to set us all in tears."

Gilbert Burns gives his brother's situation at this period in greater detail—"To the buffetings of misfortune," says he, "we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, 2 while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old (for he was now above fifty), broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed, in the night-time."

The year after this, Burns was able to gain three weeks of respite, one before, and two after the harvest, from the labours which were then straining his youthful strength. His tutor Murdoch was now established in the town of Ayr, and the boy spent one of those weeks in revising the English grammar with him; the other two were given to French. He laboured enthusiastically in the new pursuit, and came home at the end of a fortnight with a dictionary and a "Télineane," of which he made such use in his leisure hours, by himself, that in a short time (if we may believe Gilbert) he was able to understand any ordinary book of French prose. His progress, whatever it really amounted to, was looked on as something of a prodigy; and a writing-master in Ayr, a friend of Murdoch, insisted that Robert Burns must next attempt the rudiments of the Latin tongue. He did so, but with little perseverance, we may be sure, since the results were of no sort of value. Burns's Latin consisted of a few scraps of hackneyed quotations, such as many that never looked into Ruddiman's "Rudiments" can apply on occasion, quite as skilfully as he ever appears to have done. The matter is one of no importance; we might perhaps safely dismiss it with parodying what Ben Jonson said
At the age of thirteen, we first saw a crop of corn, and at seventeen a harvest. A labourer on the farm, he felt at our tender age the toils and difficulties, was buffeting against the fatigues of his life, and feeling for children, and in a general, in all circumstances, these reflections on his father's mind and mine were a kind of distress. I doubt not, and sorrow of this kind, as a great measure the strength of spirits with which he passed through his whole life. Even through a dull period of his life, there is no indication of the heart, no sighing and suffocation of the soul.

His sons was able to gain much from his before, and two of the labours which were before was strength. His grammar was established in the new, and spent one of those English grammar with a given to French. In the new French, the end of a fort, and a Télémaque, in his leisure hours, and the time (if we may be able to understand any) in the case. His progress, we look to, was looked on ; and a writing- to Murdoch, insisted next attempt the tongue. He did so, on us, we may be sure, it had no sort of value. He had a few scraps of as many that his's Rudiments can be as skillfully as he ever was. The matter is one of the perhaps safely disti.. Ben Jonson said
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of Shake-phere; he had little French, and no Latin; and yet it is proper to mention, that he is found, years after he left Ayrshire, writing to Edinburgh in some anxiety about a copy of Molière.

He had read, however, and read well, ere his sixteenth year elapsed, no contemptible amount of the literature of his own country. In addition to the books which have already been mentioned, he tells us that, before the family quitted Mount Oliphant, he had read "the Spectator, some plays of Shakespeare, Pope (the Homer included), Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, Locke on the Human Understanding, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Boyle's Lectures, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, Hervey's Meditations" (a book which has ever been very popular among the Scottish peasantry), "and the Works of Allan Ramsay," and Gilbert adds to this list, Pamela (the first novel either of the brothers read), two stray volumes of Peregrine Pickle, two of Count Fathom, and a single volume of "some English historian," containing the reign of James I. and his son. The Collection of Songs says Burns, was my nude memento. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noticing the true tender or sublime, from affection or fasting; and I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is."

He derived, during this period, considerable advantages from the vicinity of Mount Oliphant to the town of Ayr—a place then, and still distinguished by the residence of many respectable gentlemen's families, and a consequent elegance of society and manners, not common in remote provincial situations. To his friend, Mr. Murdoch, he no doubt owed, in the first instance, whatever attentions he received there from people older as well as higher than himself; some such persons appear to have taken a pleasure in lending him books, and surely no kindness could have been more useful to him than this. As for his colleagues, he himself says, very justly, "It is not commonly at that green age that our young genity have a due sense of the distance between them and their ragged playfellows. My young superiors," he proceeds, "never insulted the cloutely appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observation; and one whose heart I am sure not even the Mummy Begum scenes have tainted, helped me to little French. Parting with these, my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction—but I was soon called to more serious evils." The condition of the family during the last two years of their residence at Mount Oliphant, when the struggle which ended in their removal was rapidly approaching its crisis, has been already described; nor need we dwell again on the untimely burden of sorrow, as well as toil, which fell to the share of the youthful poet, and which would have broken altogether any mind wherein feelings like his had existed, without strength like his to control them.

The removal of the family to Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, took place when Burns was in his sixteenth year. He had some time before this made his first attempt in verse, and the occasion is thus described by himself in his letter to Moore:

"This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-

1 Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, 1787.

2 The allusion here is to one of the sons of Dr. John Malcolm, afterwards highly distinguished in the service of the East India Company.

3 [This is a mistake; the poet had completed his eighteenth year when the Burns family removed to Lochlea in 1777. The farm of Lochlea, to which the Burns family removed on leaving Mount Oliphant, is situated about three miles from Tarbolton, and occupies a gentle slope varying on a low-lying tract of land which at one time formed the bed of the loch from which the place takes its name. During draining operations in 1578 the remains of a very complete crannog or lake-dwelling were discovered in the bed of the loch. In the poet's time the steading consisted of a one-storied thatched dwelling-house, with a barn on the one side and a stable and byre on the other. The old dwelling-house has now been converted into a stable, and a commodious residence has been erected in its stead. The barn, which the poet is said to have roofed with his own hand, has given place to a more modern erection which, at least, contains one stone of the old fabric, and which bears the inscription "The Lintel of the Poet's Barn. Rebuilt 1578."]
slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a young man in that younger age; my scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice: but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a bonnie, sweet, somie lass. In short, she, altogether unwillingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worn philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to laiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-string thrill like an Eolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rat-tan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettles-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favourite recit, to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song, which was said to be composed by a small country lass's son, on one of his father's maidens, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholastic craft than myself.

"Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment." [1]

The earliest of the poet's productions is the little ballad,

1 Autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore. (The previous twelve months had seen him emerge from obscurity and become famous; this now doubt was one of his "highest enjoyments.")

O, once I loved a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still,
And while that honour warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Neil, &c.

Burns himself characterizes it as "a very puerile and silly performance:" yet it contains here and there lines of which he need hardly have been ashamed at any period of his life:

She dresses nay so clean and neat,
With decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gives my dress book need.

"Silly and puerile as it is," said the poet, long afterwards, "I am always pleased with this song, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue sincere. . . . I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance." (Ms. Memorandum-book, August, 1788.)

In his first epistle to Lapraik (1785) he says,

Amidst as soon as I could spell,
I to the crannach-jingle fell,

Two rude and rough;

Yet growing to a body's self
Does weel enough.

And in some nobler verses, entitled "On my Early Days," we have the following passage:

I mind it weel in early date, remember
When I was heedless, young and blate, bashful
And it could thrash the barn.

Or ham . . . yoch n' the pleugh.

At this, the foostooghten sair enough,

Yet ween proud to learn—

When first among the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,

At' the bare ilk merry o'or others each

Could rank my rig and lass—

Still shearing and clearing

The other stockit raw, other row

Weechers and halvers gossip and nonsense

Wearing the day awa—

Then a wish, I mind its power, remember
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heap my breast,

That I, for poor and Scotland's sake,

Some useful plan or book could make,

Or sing a song, at least:

The rough bar-thistle spreading wide,

Among the hearest bear,

I turned the seeder-clip aside, weeding shears

And spared the symbol dear.

He is hardly to be envied who can conten-
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

Robert and Gilbert as farm-labourers:—Robert's supremacy as a farm-worker:—goes to dancing-school:—the rural beauties of Tarbolton:—early productions:—rural courtship:—Kirkoswald:—early literary correspondence:—poems written at Lochlea:—life at Irvine:—Alison Legdie:—letter to his father:—friendship with Richard Brown:—becomes a freemason:—bachelor's club:—discussions:—club ball:—David Sillar:—correspondence with James Burns:—birth of an illegitimate child.

O enquire early days,
When dwelt the heartless pleasure's race,
To care and guilt unknown:
How ill exchanged for riper times,
To fill the folies, or the crimes
Of others—or my own!

As has been already mentioned, William Burns now quitted Mount Oliphant for Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, where, for some little space, fortune appeared to smile on his industry and frugality. Robert and Gilbert were employed by their father as regular labourers—he allowing them £7 of wages each per annum; from which sum, however, the value of any home-made clothes received by the youths was exactly deducted. Robert Burns's person, inured to daily toil, and continually exposed to all varieties of weather, presented, before the usual time, every characteristic of robust and vigorous manhood. He says himself, that he never feared a competitor in any species of rural exertion; and Gilbert Burns, a man of uncommon bodily strength, adds, that neither he, nor any labourer he ever saw at work, was equal to the youthful poet, either in the corn-field, or the severer tasks of the thrashing-floor. Gilbert says, that Robert's literary zeal slackened considerably after their removal to Tarbolton. He was separated from his acquaintances of the town of Ayr, and probably missed not only the stimulus of their conversation, but the kindness that had furnished him with his supply, such as it was, of books. But the main source of his change of habits about this period was, it is confessed on all hands, the preoccupations forerun of one of his own turbulent passions.

"In my seventeenth year," says Burns, "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 moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years." I say dissipation, comparatively.

1 Letter to Dr. Moore.
2 [In his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore Burns says, "The nature of the bargain was such as to throw a little ready money into his (the father's) hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable," Probably the landlord advanced some money in lieu of better house accommodation, or for certain improvements to be effected. The rate of wages at which the brothers were paid was that current at the time.]
lively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-the-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune, were the gate of industrious economy, or the path of little chiselling bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I could never squeeze myself into it;—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in 156, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish learning, a certain wild literary talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was un penchant pour l'adorable moisir du genre humain. My heart was completely tender, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, seythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared further for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country had seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper secon to these occasions, and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe."

In regard to the same critical period of Burns's life, his excellent brother writes as follows:—"The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age) were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enhance on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair-enchantress. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he

\[\text{[From 1777 to 1784, consequently from the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth year of his age.]}\]

\[\text{[Cromek's Reliques of Robert Burns (1808), P. 242.]}\]
I came to lay where flowers were springing gayly in the sunny beam;
Listening to the wild birds singing,
By a falling crystal stream.

Straight the sky grew black and daring,
There the woods the whitethroats rave,
Trees with aged arms were warning,
For the swelling drunkey wave.

Such was life's deceitful morning, &c.

On comparing these verses with those on "Handsome Nell," the advance achieved by the young bard in the course of two short years must be regarded with admiration; nor should a minor circumstance be entirely overlooked, that in the piece which we have just quoted, there occurs but one Scotch word. It was about this time also, that he wrote a ballad of much less ambitions vein, which, years after, he says, he used to con over with delight, because of the faithfulness with which it recalled to him the circumstances and feelings of his opening manhood.

— My father was a farmer on the Carrick border,
And carefully he brought me up in decency and order,
He made me act a manly part, tho' I was never a far thing;
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 my observing;
My talents they were not the weed, nor yet my education;
Resolved was I at least to try to mend my situation...

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me;
So I must toil, and sweat, and braid, and labour to sustain;
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, th' life I'm bound to wander;
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slander.
No view, nor care, but shun whatever might breed me pain or sorrow;
I live to-day, as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow, &c.

These are the only two of his very early productions in which we have nothing expressly about love. The rest were composed to celebrate the charms of those rural beauties who followed each other in the dominion of his fancy—or shared the exanques throne between them; and we may easily believe that one who possessed, with other qualifications, such powers of flattering, feared competitors as little in the diversions of his evenings as in the toils of his day.

The rural lover, in those districts, pursues his tender vacation in a style, the especial fascination of which towa-bred swains may find it somewhat difficult to comprehend. After the labours of the day are over, may, and often after he is supposed by the inmates of his own fireside to be in his bed, the happy youth thinks Fittle of walking many long Scotch miles to the residence of his mistress, who, upon the signal of a tap at her window, comes forth to spend a short hour or two beneath the harvest moon, or if the weather be severe (a circumstance which never prevents the journey from being accomplished), amidst the shelves of her father's barn. This "chappin' out," as they call it, is a custom of which parents commonly wink at, if they do not openly approve, the observance; and the consequences are far, very far, more frequently than harmless, than persons not familiar with the peculiar manners and feelings of our peasantry may find it easy to believe. Excursions of this class form the theme of almost all the songs which Burns is known to have produced about this period,—and such of these juvenile performances as have been preserved are, without exception, beautiful. They show how powerfully his boyish fancy had been affected by the old rural minstrelsy of his own country, and how easily his native taste caught the secret of its charm. The truth and simplicity of nature breathe in every line—the images are always just, often originally happy—and the growing refinement of his ear and judgment may be traced in the terser language and more mellow flow of each successive ballad.

The best of his songs written at this time is that beginning,

It was upon a luminous night,
When corn rises are bonnie, ridges
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held away to Annie.

[That is, "tapping out," tapping or knocking to make the girl come out.]
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

The time flew by with tatter'd heed, careless
Till 'twixt the late and early,
To see me through the barley, &c.

The heroine of this ditty was a daughter of the poet's friend—"rule, rough, ready-witted Rankine."

We may let him carry on his own story. "A circumstance," says he, "which made some alteration on my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, and at a noted school, to learn navigation, surveying, diligence, &c., in which I made a good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and unruly dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming fillette, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and cosines for a few days more: but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel like:

Promine, gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.

"It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but crave the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in this country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless."

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's works; I had ceased human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pondered over them most devously; I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

"My life flowed on much in the same course till the twenty-third year. Vive l'amour, et vive la bataille, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure: Sterne and McKenzie—Tristram Shandy and the Man of Feeling—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the

1 This "charming fillette," as the poet calls her, was a Peggy Thomson, and the early attachment seems to have been renewed temporarily some nine years later. She ultimately became the wife of John Neilson, an early acquaintance of the poet's. On the publication of his poems he presented a copy to Peggy accompanied with the lines beginning "Once fondly loved, and still remember'd dear," &c.]
floor to the school, and set me off at a distance from my studies. I, with my sires and my meagre note-book, at noon to take the air, and flowers, I

of doing any more. During my remaining week I stayed, and my faculties of my mind to meet her; and by this carry me in this country, the image of this woman kept me guilty.

considerably increased, and with the help of Thomsen's and other human nature books enlarged several of my literary correspondents and improved me in composition. A collection of letters by foreign, and I pored over them. I kept copies of those which pleased me; and a few of the compositions enticed my mind to him so far, that almost every post brought me letters as if I had been a book and ledger.

in the same course

Vive l'amour, et

sole principles of

two more authors to

pleasure: Sterne

Shandy and the

bosom favourites.

talk for my mind;

according to the

the poet calls her,

the early attachment

temporarily some nine
ing the wife of John

of the poet. On the

presented a copy to Peggy

“Once fondly

“Tie,” &c.]
the

with

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The

dialect of the

merrie Scotch.
humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they found vent in rhyme; and then the coming over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet.”

Of the rhymes of those days, a few, when he wrote his letter to Moore, had appeared in print. “Winter, a Dirge,” an admirably versified piece, is of their number; the “Death of Poor Mailie, Mailie’s Elegy,” and “John Barleycorn;” and one charming song, inspired by the Nymph of Kirkoswald, whose attractions put an end to his trigonometry.

Now westlin’ winds, and slaughterin’ guns,
Bring Autumn’s pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whisperin’ wing,
Among the bloomin’ heather.

—Peggy dear, the evening’s clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading green and yellow;
Come let us stray our glesome way, &c.

“John Barleycorn” is a clever old ballad, very cleverly new-modelled and extended; but the “Death and Elegy of Poor Mailie” deserve more attention. The expiring animal’s adumbrations touching the education of the “poor toot lamb, her son and heir,” and the “yowie, silie thing,” her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of sly homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the “Twa Dogs,” and perhaps to its utmost depth, in his “Death and Doctor Hornbook.” It need scarcely be added, that Poor Mailie was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her last words were written. She had been purchased by Burns in a frolic, and became exceedingly attached to his person.

Thee’ all the town she trotted by him,
A lang half-mile she could desyer him;
Wf kindly bent, when she did spie him,
She ran wi’ speed;
A friend nae faith’n’ ne’er came nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

These little pieces are in a much broader dialect than any of their predecessors. His merriment and satire were, from the beginning, Scotch.

Notwithstanding the luxurious tone of some of Burns’s pieces produced in those times, we are assured by himself (and his brother unhesitatingly confirms the statement), that no positive vice mingled in any of his loves, until after he reached his twenty-third year. He has already told us, that his short residence “away from home” at Kirkoswald, where he mixed in the society of seafaring men and smugglers, produced an unfavourable alteration on some of his habits; but in 1781-2 he spent six months at Irvine; and it is from this period that his brother dates a serious change.

“As his numerous connections,” says Gilbert, “were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty (from which he never deviated till his twenty-third year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be the case while he remained a farmer, as the stock of a farm required a sum of money he saw no probability of being master of for a great while. He and I had for several years taken land of our father, for the purpose of raising flax on our own account; and in the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax-raising.”

Burns, accordingly, went to a half-brother of his mother’s, by name Peacock, a flax-dresser in Irvine, with the view of learning this new trade, and for some time he applied himself diligently; but misfortune after misfortune attended him. The shop accidentally caught fire during the carnival of a New-year’s-day morning, and Robert “was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.”—“I was obliged,” says he, “to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father’s head; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a belle filet whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The
finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mitimus—"Depart from me ye cursed!"

[Shortly before the poet's visit to Irvine, a young woman named Ellison or Alison Begbie was the subject of his ardent attentions with a serious view to future marriage. She was the daughter of a small farmer near Galston, and was, at the time, in service with a family who lived on the banks of the Cessnock, about two miles to the east of Lochiel. She is the heroine of the songs the "Lass of Cessnock Banks, Peggy Alison, and Mary Morison," the two latter being better-sounding substitutions for the somewhat unpoetical name Ellison Begbie. Four love-letters addressed to her appear in the Correspondence, but after some intimacy and letter writing the poet's suit was rejected, and the lady married another sweetheart. She is generally supposed to have been the belle fille referred to, but Dr. Hately Waddell asserts that a Miss Janet Wilson, a native of Irvine or the neighbourhood, and who married Mr. Ronald of Bennals, has the honour of being the one who rejected Burns.]

The following letter, addressed by Burns to his father, three days before the unfortunate fire took place, will show abundantly that the gloom of his spirits had little need of that aggravation. When we consider by whom, to whom, and under what circumstances, it was written, the letter is every way a remarkable one:

"Honoured Sir,

"I have purposely delayed writing in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's-day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder; and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind that I dare neither review past events, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimpse a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains and uncessiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

The soul, uneasy, and confined at home, Rests and expiates in a life to come.

"It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer." As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were so much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. [See letters to Ellison Begbie in their proper place at the beginning of the poet's Correspondence.]

1 The verses of Scripture here alluded to, are as follows:

"15. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and they shall sit upon the throne as the sheep."

"16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"17. For the river of the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's-day I shall conclude.

"I am, honoured Sir, your dutiful son,

ROBERT BURNS.

"P.S.—My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow till I get more."

"This letter," says Dr. Currie, "written several years before the publication of his Poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit which indicates a mind conscious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodgings, rented, perhaps, at the rate of a shilling a week. He passed his days in constant labour as a dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble, though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation, his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in the world, shows how ardently he wished for honourable fame; and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection, and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful representations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness.

Unhappily for himself, and for the world, it was not always in the recollections of his virtuous home and the study of his Bible, that Burns sought for consolation amidst the heavy distresses which "his youth was heir to." Irvine is a small seaport; and here, as at Kirkoswald, the adventurous spirits of a smuggling seaport; again bewailing his being jilted by "a belle fille" whom he had adored, at another time entering upon a connection which ended in his enduring public censure before a congregation, and finally writing that letter to his father, in which he expresses himself tired of the world, and transported at the thought that he shall soon be in a better. Who could expect, from the despising and moralizing tone of that letter that, four days after, he would be engaged in the New-Year merry-making, in the course of which his shop caught fire and was reduced to ashes!

Burns himself thus sums up the results of his residence at Irvine:—"From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but
the principal thing which gave my mind a
the principal thing which gave my mind a
turn, was a friendship I formed with a young
turn, was a friendship I formed with a young
fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless
fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless
son of misfortune. He was the son of a
son of a
simple mechanic; but a great man in the
simple mechanic; but a great man in the
neighbourhood, taking him under his patron-
neighbourhood, taking him under his patron-
age, gave him a genteel education, with a view
age, gave him a genteel education, with a view
de bettering his situation in life. The patron
de bettering his situation in life. The patron
dying just as he was ready to launch out into
dying just as he was ready to launch out into
the world, the poor fellow in despair went to
the world, the poor fellow in despair went to
sea; where, after a variety of good and ill
sea; where, after a variety of good and ill
fortune, a little before I was acquainted with
fortune, a little before I was acquainted with
him, he had been set ashore by an American
him, he had been set ashore by an American
privateer, on the wild coast of Conmacht,
privateer, on the wild coast of Conmacht,
stripped of everything. . . His mind
stripped of everything. . . His mind
was fraught with independence, magnanimity
was fraught with independence, magnanimity
and every manly virtue. I loved and admired
and every manly virtue. I loved and admired
him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course
him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course
strove to imitate him. In some measure I
strove to imitate him. In some measure I
succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught
succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught
it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge
it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge
of the world was vastly superior to mine; and
of the world was vastly superior to mine; and
I was all attention to learn. He was the only
I was all attention to learn. He was the only
man I ever saw who was a greater fool than
man I ever saw who was a greater fool than
myself, where woman was the presiding star;
myself, where woman was the presiding star;
but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of
but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of
a sailor—which hitherto I had regarded with
a sailor—which hitherto I had regarded with
horror. Here his friendship did me a mis-
horror. Here his friendship did me a mis-
chief." [The young man here referred to was
chief." [The young man here referred to was
Richard Brown, with whom Burns kept up an
Richard Brown, with whom Burns kept up an
affectionate correspondence, and who was one of
affectionate correspondence, and who was one of
the first to discern his latent genius, and to
the first to discern his latent genius, and to
courage him to aspire to the character of a poet.
courage him to aspire to the character of a poet.
When the contents of Burns' Letter to Moore
When the contents of Burns' Letter to Moore
were related to him, he exclaimed, "Illicit
were related to him, he exclaimed, "Illicit
love! levity of a sailor! When I first knew
love! levity of a sailor! When I first knew
Burns he had nothing to learn in this respect.
Burns he had nothing to learn in this respect."
Professor Walker, when preparing to write
Professor Walker, when preparing to write
his sketch of the Poet's life, was informed by
his sketch of the Poet's life, was informed by
an aged inhabitant of Irvine, that Burns' an aged inhabitant of Irvine, that Burns'
chief delight while there was in discussing
chief delight while there was in discussing
religious topics, particularly in those circles
religious topics, particularly in those circles
which usually gather in a Scotch churchyard
which usually gather in a Scotch churchyard
after service. The senior added that Burns
after service. The senior added that Burns
commonly took the high Calvinistic side in
commonly took the high Calvinistic side in
such debates; and concluded with a boast
such debates; and concluded with a boast
"that the lad" was indebted to himself in a
"that the lad" was indebted to himself in a
great measure for the gradual adoption of
great measure for the gradual adoption of
"more liberal opinions." [A statement that
"more liberal opinions." [A statement that
seems more than doubtful. It is well known
seems more than doubtful. It is well known
that his early training partook little of extreme
that his early training partook little of extreme
Calvinism, and the following extract from
Calvinism, and the following extract from
David Sillar's letter to Mr. Aiken of Ayr
David Sillar's letter to Mr. Aiken of Ayr
(part of which is given further on), proves the
(part of which is given further on), proves the
liberality of the views held by Burns prior to
liberality of the views held by Burns prior to
his residence in Irvine:—"He had in his
his residence in Irvine:—"He had in his
youth paid considerable attention to the argu-
youth paid considerable attention to the argu-
ments for and against the doctrine of original
ments for and against the doctrine of original
sin, then making considerable noise in your
sin, then making considerable noise in your
neighbourhood, and having perused Dr.
neighbourhood, and having perused Dr.
Taylor's work on that subject, and Letters
Taylor's work on that subject, and Letters
on Religion Essential to Man, when he came
on Religion Essential to Man, when he came
to Tarbolton, his opinions were of consequence
Tarbolton, his opinions were of consequence
to favourable to what you Ayr people call the
to favourable to what you Ayr people call the
moderate side. . . . The slightest insinuation
moderate side. . . . The slightest insinuation
of Taylor's opinions made his neighbours
of Taylor's opinions made his neighbours
suspect, and some even avoid him, as
suspect, and some even avoid him, as
an heretical and dangerous companion."]
an heretical and dangerous companion."]

It was during the same period, that the
It was during the same period, that the
poet was first initiated in the mysteries of
poet was first initiated in the mysteries of
freemasonry, "which was," says his brother,
freemasonry, "which was," says his brother,
"his first introduction to the life of a boon
"his first introduction to the life of a boon
companion." He was introduced to St. David's
companion." He was introduced to St. David's
Lodge of Tarbolton by John Rankine, a very
Lodge of Tarbolton by John Rankine, a very
dissipated man, of considerable talents, to
dissipated man, of considerable talents, to
whom he afterwards indited a poetical epistle,
whom he afterwards indited a poetical epistle,
which will be noticed in its place. [A disrup-
which will be noticed in its place. [A disrup-
tion took place in the St. David's Lodge in
tion took place in the St. David's Lodge in
June, 1782, and the separating body, to which
June, 1782, and the separating body, to which
Burns adhered, reconstituted themselves under
Burns adhered, reconstituted themselves under
the old charter, dated 1711, as the St. James's
the old charter, dated 1711, as the St. James's
Tarbolton Lodge, of which he subsequently
Tarbolton Lodge, of which he subsequently
officiated as Depute Master.]
officiated as Depute Master.]

"Rhyme," Burns says, "I had given up"
"Rhyme," Burns says, "I had given up"
(on going to Irvine); "but meeting with Fer-
(on going to Irvine); "but meeting with Fer-
gasson's Scottish Poems, I strangely renewed
ngasson's Scottish Poems, I strangely renewed
my wildly-sounding lyre with animating vigour."
my wildly-sounding lyre with animating vigour."
Neither flax-dress'd nor the tavern could
Neither flax-dress'd nor the tavern could
keep him long from his proper vocation. But
keep him long from his proper vocation. But
it was probably this accidental meeting with
it was probably this accidental meeting with
Fergasson, that in a great measure finally de-
Fergasson, that in a great measure finally de-
termined the "Scottish" character of Burns's
termined the "Scottish" character of Burns's
poetry; and, indeed, but for the lasting sense
despite poetry; and, indeed, but for the lasting sense
of this obligation, and some natural sympathy
of this obligation, and some natural sympathy
with the personal misfortunes of Fergasson's
with the personal misfortunes of Fergasson's
life, it would be difficult to account for the
life, it would be difficult to account for the
very high terms in which Burns always men-
very high terms in which Burns always men-
tions his productions.
ments his productions.

Shortly before Burns went to Irvine, he, his
Shortly before Burns went to Irvine, he, his
brother Gilbert, and some seven or eight young
brother Gilbert, and some seven or eight young

[^1]"Letters concerning the Religion Essential to Man,
[^1]"Letters concerning the Religion Essential to Man,
as it is distinct from what is merely an accession
as it is distinct from what is merely an accession
to it. In two parts; translated from the French.
to it. In two parts; translated from the French.
Glasgow, printed for Robert Urice, 1761,"]
Aiken of Ayr (a neighbour), proves the fact; the clubBurns had in his head to the argumentation of original composition in your presence Dr. Johnson, and Letters to the People when he came of consequence to dissuade people call for the slightest insanity, to induce his neighbours to avoid him, as a lunatic.

For a period, that the mysteries of nature, his brother, brought forth the Life of a moon man, to St. David's Kirk, a very industrious talents, to frame a poetical epistle, of his. [A disruption of David's Lodge in Stirling, to which they were under the rubric of St. James's Lodge, subsequently ejected.]

And given up" the inebriate with Fer-Aik's, having now my thoughts settling vigour."

At some tavern could he meet, a meeting with some. They were finally decidedJr. of Burns's money in a last sense of mutual sympathy. In Ferguson's account for the time, he always mentions Irvine, he, his age eight young men.

Essentially Man, with an accession in the French.

LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

20

men besides, all of the parish of Tarbolton, had formed themselves into a society, which they called the Bachelor's Club; and which met one evening in every month for the purposes of mutual entertainment and improvement. That their cups were not modestly filled is evident; for the rules of the club did not permit any member to spend more than threepence at a sitting. A question was announced for discussion at the close of each meeting; and at the next they came prepared to deliver their sentiments upon the subject-matter thus proposed. Burns and David Sillar (to whom the "Epistle to Davie, a Brother-poet" was afterwards addressed, and who subsequently published a volume of verses not without merit) were employed by the rest, to draw up the regulations of the Society; and some stanzas prefixed to Sillar's Scroll of Rules, "first introduced Burns and him to each other as brother rhymers."

Of the sort of questions discussed, we may form some notion from the minute of one evening, still extant in Burns's handwriting.—"QUESTION FOR HALLOWE'EN (Nov. 11, 1789).—"Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome in person nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm well enough; the other of them a girl every way agreeable in person, conversation, and behaviour, but without any fortune: which of them shall he choose?" Burns, as may be guessed, took the imprudent side in this discussion.

"On one solitary occasion," says he, "we resolved to meet at Tarbolton in July, on the race-night and have a dance in honour of our society. Accordingly, we did meet, each one with a partner, and spent the night in such innocence and merriment, such cheerfulness and good-humour, that every brother will long remember it with delight." There can be no doubt that Burns would not have patronized this sober association so long, unless he had experienced at its assemblies the pleasure of a stimulated mind; and as little, that to the habit of arranging his thoughts and expressing them in somewhat of a formal shape, thus early cultivated, we ought to attribute much of that conversational skill which, when he first mingled with the upper world, was generally considered as the most remarkable of all his personal accomplishments.—Burns's associates of the Bachelor's Club, must have been young men possessed of talents and acquirements, otherwise such minds as his and Gilbert's could not have persisted in measuring themselves against theirs; and we may believe, that the periodical display of the poet's own vigour and resources, at these club meetings, and (more frequently than his brother approved) at the Freemason Lodges of Irvine and Tarbolton, extended his rural reputation; and, by degrees, prepared persons not immediately included in his own circle, for the extraordinary impression which his poetical efforts were ere long to create all over "the Carrick border."

Mr. David Sillar 2 gives an account of the beginning of his own acquaintance with Burns, and introduction into this Bachelor's Club, which will always be read with much interest. —"Mr. Robert Burns was some time in the parish of Tarbolton prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with its kindred attendant, suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe, he had a great deal to say for himself, and that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particu-

2 David Sillar, a native of Tarbolton, became in 1784 a schoolmaster at Irvine; and having, in the course of a long life, realized considerable property, was appointed chief magistrate of that town. (It is said that as Sillar grew rich he grew penurious, and that when requested to subscribe to the national fund and afterwards to the Ayr monument to Burns, he refused. He died in 1830.)
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lar colour, I think filicinet, he wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders. These surmises, and his exterior, had such a magnetic influence on my curiosity, as made me particularly solicitous of his acquaintance. Whether my acquaintance with Gilbert was casual or premeditated, I am not now certain. By him I was introduced, not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where in a short time, I became a frequent, and, I believe, not unwelcome visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church, when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or hasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have frequently been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; and many times, when I have been harshly anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them, with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noon-tide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the woods in the neighbourhood of Stair, a situation peculiarly adapted to the genius of a rural bard. Some book (generally one of those mentioned in his letter to Mr. Murdoch) he always carried and read, when not otherwise employed. It was likewise his custom to read at table. In one of my visits to Lochlea, in time of a sower supper, he was so intent on reading, I think Tristram Shandy, that his spoon falling out of his hand, made him exclaim, in a tone scarcely imitable, 'Alas, poor Yorick!' Such was Burns, and such were his associates, when I was admitted a member of the Bachelor's Club."

The misfortunes of William Burns thickened space, as has already been seen, and were approaching their crisis at the time when Robert came home from his flax-dressing experiment at Irvine. I have been favoured with copies of some letters addressed by the poet soon afterwards to his cousin, 'Mr. James Burns, writer in Montrose,' which cannot but gratify every reader. They are worthy of the strong understanding and warm heart of Burns; and, besides opening a pleasing view of the manner in which domestic affection was preserved between his father and the relations from whom the accidents of life had separated that excellent person in boyhood, they appear to me—written by a young and unknown peasant in a wretched hovel, the abode of poverty, care, and disease—to be models of native good taste and politeness.

"Lochlea, 21st June, 1783.

'Dear Sir,—My father received your favour of the 10th curt.; and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is, in his own opinion, and indeed in almost every body else's, in a dying condition; he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him, to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Cairns; and to him I must refer you for the news of our family. I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the present wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high; oatmeal 17s. and 18s. per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere; but that resource is likely to fail us; and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landlords, full of ideas of farming gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the ruins in that part. We have no crop of the year, and we have been reduced to a dependence on the market. I cannot tell you what will become of us. Pray do me the favour of writing to my brother to this effect."

1 16th January, 1783.
3 These letters first appeared in the 1820 re-issue of Currie's edition.
of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what, in the event, we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed in new ones. In short, my dear sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron & Co.'s Bank, which no doubt you have heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fop-puries, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it; but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

"My mother sends you a small present of a cheese; 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs. Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

"I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you, that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your county, when opportunity serves. My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and my mother and the rest of the family desire to enclose their compliments to you, Mrs. Burns, and the rest of your family, along with,—Dear Sir, your affectionate Cousin,

"ROBERT BURNS."

In the second of these letters, the poet announces the death of his father. It is dated Lochlea, 17th February, 1784.

"Dear Cousin,—I would have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event, which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected. On the 13th curt, I lost the best of fathers. Though, to be sure, we have had long warning of the impending stroke, still the feelings of nature claim their part; and I cannot recollect the tender endeavours and parental lessons of the best of friends, and the ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the colder dictates of reason would partly condemn. I hope my father's friends in your country will not let this occasion mar your peace. I shall never, however, be able to forgive you for your regard for my father's health, and the care he has for him, who will always be grateful for the same.

Among other evils from which the excellent William Burns thus escaped, was an affliction that would, in his eyes, have been severe. Our youthful poet had not, as he confesses, come unscathed out of the society of those persons of "liberal opinions" with whom he consisted in Irvine; and he expressly attributes to their lessons, the sempe into which he fell, and the resolutions he formed for the future."

John Buccleuch, 1780 re-issue of
all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirizes under the appellation of "Daddie Auld." The "Poet's Welcome to an Illegitimate Child" was composed on the same occasion—a piece in which some very many feelings are expressed, along with others which it can give no one pleasure to contemplate. There is a song in honour of the same occasion, or a similar one about the same period, the "Hantin' Dog the Daddie o't," which exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying, in his shame.

When I consider his tender affection for the surviving members of his own family, and the reverence with which he ever regarded the memory of the father whom he had so recently buried, I cannot believe that Burns has thought fit to record in verse all the feelings which this exposure excited in his bosom. "To waive (in his own language) the quantum of the sin," he who, two years afterwards, wrote the "Cottar's Saturday Night," had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fireside of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers of the still small voice and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself, escaped (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors might be, had at least done him no wrong.

It is impossible not to smile at one item of consolation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion:

"The mail they talk, I've heard the better; known Even let them clash! gossip"

This is indeed a singular manifestation of "the last infirmity of noble minds."

CHAPTER III.

[Removal to Mossgiel:—theological discussions:—Church parties:—the New-Lights and Auld-Lights:—Gavin Hamilton—his feud with Mr. Auld:—Dr. Macgill's case:—the "Twa Heris:"—"Holy Willie's Prayer:"—the "Ordination," "Kirk's Alarm," and "Holy Fair:"—"Epistle to Davie," and first idea of becoming an author; Gilbert's account of this period's poems:—Dr. Hornbook:—"the inequality of human condition:" "Life and Age of Man:"—the "Cottar's Saturday Night" and "Holy Fair:"—West Indian project:—Highland Mary:—Jean Armour:—acknowledgment of marriage:—birth of twins:—legal steps taken to secure his children's maintenance.]

The star that rules my luckless lot
Has filled me the rascal coat,
And damned my fortune to the great:
But in repart,
Has blessed me wi' a random shot
O' country wit.

Three months before the death of William Burns, Robert and Gilbert took the farm of Mossgiel, in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline, with the view of providing a shelter for their parents in the storm, which they had seen gradually thickening, and knew must soon burst; and to this place the whole family removed on William's death. 1 It was

1 There is much humour in some of the verses; as,  
"Twas so richly lately in my fun,
I used a raisin' wi' my gun,
Went an' brought a partridge to the gun,
A lassie ben, ben;
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought none wad ben, &c.

[The farm of Mossgiel (originally Mossgavel),

stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family (says Gilbert), and was

which consisted of 138 acres, the rent being £30, is situated about a mile from Mauchline, on the road to Torbinton and Irvine. Two other farms also bear the same name, being distinguished respectively as West Mossgiel and South Mossgiel, while the farm on which the poet resided is known as East Mossgiel. It occupies the summit of a ridge which separates the valley of the Ayr from that of the Cassock and commands views of much scenic beauty. The house, in the poet's day, consisted of a one-storied cottage, and though called "the auld chay biggin," in the "Vision," was well built, having been erected by Gavin Hamilton, who was the principal tenant, as a pleasant country retreat for himself and his family. It was on the usual plan of farm-houses of the day, and consisted of a "but and ben" (kitchen and parlour), with a garret above, to which a trap-stair gave access, in the lobby behind the door. The garret was divided into three small apartments, two of which were used as bed-rooms and the third as a hummer-room. The middle apartment of the three, lighted by a skylight.
...and not, we may lie of the thought of a mind ill at ease, who, whatever be his end, had at least one item of his own choosing.

"The better; known in the clash! gospel man manifestation of minds."

**Local Audits:**

"Isle's Will" West Green, and first idea of equality of human beings:—West Indian Alliance:—legal steps

...individual savings (albeit), and was

...current being £20, lo

...line, on the road

...also bear respectively as

...Mussgelet.

...which separates the Cessnock and

...The house,

...one-storied cottage,

...biggin," in the

...principal tenant, as a

...It

...stair gave access,

...garret was divided

...lighted by a skylight...
a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother’s allowance and mine was £7 per annum each. And during the whole time this family concern lasted, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, Robert’s expenses never, in any one year, exceeded his slender income.”

“I entered on this farm,” says the poet, “with a full resolution, Come, go to, I will be wise. I read farming books, I calculated crops, I attended markets, and, in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

“At the time that our poet took the resolution of becoming wise, he procured,” says Gilbert, “a little book of black paper, with the purpose expressed on the first page, of making farming memorandums. These farming memorandums are curious enough,” Gilbert slyly adds, “and a specimen may gratify the reader.”—Specimens accordingly he gives, as follows:

window placed in the sloping roof, formed the bedroom of the two brothers Robert and Gilbert, and contained a small table at which the poet wrote many of his most famous pieces, with a drawer in which his productions were stored. The “ten” end of the house was the celebrated “spence” of the “Vision,” the scene of “Collin’s” inspiritory visit to the bard. In 1815 great alterations were made upon the house. It was completely gutted, and a story added to it, so that the present substantial two-storied slated building bears little resemblance to the dwelling which sheltered the poet and his family. No portion of the original structure now remains except the shell of old walls, which reach half-way up the present. Theouthouses which form an arcade round a paved court are all modern. Gilbert Burns continued on the farm till 1800, when he removed to Dunning, in Dunfries-shire, a farm belonging to Sir C. S. Menteath of Closeburn.

1 [When William Burns died his sons and the two eldest daughters ranked as creditors of their father for arrears of wages. The farm must have been very imperfectly stocked if they had no more to start with than their joint savings.]

2 Letter to Dr. Moore.

3 [This quotation is in Dr. Currie’s own words, and not in those of Gilbert Burns as stated in the text.]

O why the dence should I repine
And be an ill-forlaider?
I’m twenty-three, and five foot nine—
I’ll go and be a sodger, &c.

O leave novels, ye Manchline belles,
Ye’re safer at your spinn’ wheel;
Such wicked books are baited books
For rakish rooks—like Rob Mossgiel.

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandious,
They make your Youthful Fancies reel,
They heat your veins, and fire your brains,
And then ye’re pray for Rob Mossgiel, &c. &c.

The four years during which Burns resided on this cold and ungrateful farm of Mossgiel, were the most important of his life. It was then that his genius developed its highest energies; on the works produced in those years his fame was first established, and must ever continue mainly to rest: it was then also that his personal character came out in all its brightest lights, and in all but its darkest shadows; and indeed, from the commencement of this period, the history of the man may be traced, step by step, in his own immortal writings.

Burns now began to know that Nature had meant him for a poet; and diligently, though as yet in secret, he laboured in what he felt to be his destined vocation. Gilbert continued for some time to be his chief, often indeed his only confidant; and anything more interesting and delightful than this extensive man’s account of the manner in which the poems included in the first of his brother’s publications were composed, is certainly not to be found in the annals of literary history.

The reader has already seen, that long before the earliest of them was known beyond the domestic circle, the strength of Burns’s understanding, and the keenness of his wit, as displayed in his ordinary conversation, and more particularly at masonic meetings and debating clubs (of which he formed one in Manchline, on the Tarbolton model, immediately on his removal to Mossgiel), had made his name known to some considerable extent in the country about Tarbolton, Manchline, and Irvine; and thus prepared the way for his poetry. Professor Walker gives an anecdote on this head, which must not be omitted: Burns already numbered several clergymen among his acquaintance; indeed, we know from himself, that at this period he was not a
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little flattered, and justly so, no question, with being permitted to mingle occasionally in their society.

One of these gentlemen told the professor, that after entering on the clerical profession, he had repeatedly met Burns in company, "where," said he, "the amenity and originality displayed by him, the depth of his discourse, the force of his expressions, and the authoritative energy of his understanding, had created a sense of his power, of the extent of which I was unacquainted, till it was revealed to me by accident. On the occasion of my second appearance in the pulpit, I came with an assured and tranquil mind, and though a few persons of education were present, advanced some length in the service in my confidence and self-possession unimpaired; but when I saw Burns, who was of a different parish, unexpectedly enter the church, I was affected with a trepidation and embarrassment, which suddenly apprised me of the impression which my mind, unknown to itself, had previously received." The professor adds, that the person who had thus unconsciously been measuring the stature of the intellectual giant, was not only a man of great talents and education, but "remarkable for a more than ordinary portion of constitutional firmness."

Every Scotch peasant who makes any pretension to understanding, is a theological critic—at least such was the case—and Burns, no doubt, had long ere this time distinguished himself considerably among those hard-headed groups that may usually be seen gathered together in the churchyard after the service is over. It may be guessed, that from the time of his residence at Irvine, his strivings were too often delivered in so reverent a vein.

"Poetical divinity," says he to Dr. Moore, in 1787, "at this time, was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation-parties on Sundays, at funerals, &c., used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised the hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour." There are some plain allusions to this matter in Mr. David Sillar's letter, already quoted; and a friend has told Allan Cunningham "that he first saw Burns on the afternoon of the Monday of a Manseful sacrament, lounging on horseback at the door of a public-house, holding forth on religious topics to a whole crowd of country people, who presently became so much shocked with his published. It is dated Mossgiel, August, 1784. "We have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world, which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this last century. We have had a party of the Presbytery Relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the braw of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago, a Mrs. Buchanan from Glasgow came and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts among them, and, among others, their preacher, one Mr. Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he and their spirit that another, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, which were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed the old man Buchanan, and put him out of the town; on which, all his followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their doors behind them; one left a washing on the green, another a cow belowing at the crib without meat, or any body to mind her; and, after several stages, they are fixed at present in the neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent; they have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great fame of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above mentioned are facts."

[Elspeth Simpson or Buchan was a native of Barr, and was born in 1738, and married Robert Buchan, a painter in Glasgow. In 1770 she began to prophesy the end of the world, and in 1782 she joined Whyte in Irvine a few months after Burns had left that town. The last of her disciples died in Crochetford, Kirkendaleshire, in 1810, and had the bones of "Lucy" Buchan interred with him.

levites and the multitude; their ground of the firmament was over the seas, their horses were carried on swift couriers, their trumpets were heard as far as the ends of the earth. And they came to the city with weapons of war, as he that goeth into battle with his horse.

We have young powers in the Burness, as to their belonging to the world.
at funerals, with so much levity, that they fairly hissed him from the ground.

To understand Burns's situation at this time, at once patronized by a number of clergymen, and attended with "a tune and cry of heresy," we must remember his own words, that "political divinity was putting the country half mad." Of both the parties which, ever since the Revolution of 1688, have pretty equally divided the Church of Scotland, it so happened that some of the most zealous and confident leaders and partizans were then opposed to each other, in constant warfare, in this particular district; and their feuds being of course taken up among their congregations, and spleen and prejudice at work, even more furiously in the cottage than in the manse, he who, to the annoyance of the one set of belligerents, could talk like Burns, might court pretty surely—with whatever alloy his wit happened to be mingled, in whatever shape the precious "circulating medium" might becast—on the applause and countenance of the enemy. And it is needless to add, they were the less scrupulous sect of the two that enjoyed the cooperation, such as it was then, and far more important, as in the sequel it came to be, of our poet.

William Burns, as we have already seen, though a most exemplary and devout man, entertained opinions very different from those which commonly obtained among the rigid Calvinists of his district. The worthy and pious old man himself, therefore, had not improbably infused into his son's mind its first prejudice against these persons; though, had he lived to witness the manner in which Robert assailed them, there can be no doubt his sorrow would have equalled his anger. The jovial spirits with whom Burns associated at Irvine, and afterwards, were of course habitual delirers of the manners, as well as the tenets of the 

Orthodox, orthodox, who believe in John Knox.

We have already observed the effect of the young poet's own first collision with the ruling powers of Presbyterian discipline; but it was in the very act of settling at Mosse-giel that Burns formed the connection, which, more than any circumstance besides, influenced him as to the matter now in question. The farm belonged to the estate of the Earl of Loudoun, but the brothers held it on a sub-lease from Mr. Gavin Hamilton, writer (i.e. attorney), in Mauchline, a man, by every account, of engaging manners, open, kind, generous, and high-spirited, between whom and Robert Burns, in spite of considerable inequality of condition, a close and intimate friendship was ere long formed. Just about this time it happened that Hamilton was at open feud with Mr. Auld, the minister of Mauchline (the same who had already relapsed the poet), and the ruling elders of the parish, in consequence of certain irregularities in his personal conduct and deportment, which, according to the usual strict notions of kirk-discipline, were considered as fairly demanding the vigorous interference of these authorities. The notice of this person, his own landlord, and, as it would seem, one of the principal inhabitants of the village of Mauchline at the time, must, of course, have been very flattering to our political young farmer. He espoused Gavin Hamilton's quarrel warmly. Hamilton was naturally disposed to mix up his personal affair with the standing controversies wherein Auld was at variance with a large and powerful body of his brother clergymen; and by degrees the Mauchline writer's ardent, came to be as vehemently interested in the church-politics of Ayrshire, as he could have been in politics of another order. he happened to be a freeman of some open borough, and his patron a candidate for the honour of representing it in St. Stephen's.

Cromek has been severely criticised for some details of Gavin Hamilton's dissensions with his parish minister; but perhaps it might have been well to limit the censure to the tone and spirit of the narrative, since there is no doubt that these petty squabbles had a large share in directing the early energies of Burns's poetical talents. Even in the west of Scotland, such matters would hardly excite much notice nowadays, but they were quite enough to produce a world of vexation and controversy forty years ago; and the English reader, to whom all such details are denied, will certainly never be able to comprehend either the merits or the demerits of many of Burns's most remarkable productions. Since

2 Reliques, p. 164, &c.
I have touched on this matter at all, I may as well add, that Hamilton's family, though professedly adhering (as, indeed, if they were to be Christians at all in that district, they must needs have done) to the Presbyterian Establishment, had always lain under a strong suspicion of Episcopalianism. Gavin's great grandfather had been curate of Kirkoswald in the troubled times that preceded the Revolution, and incurred great and lasting popular hatred, in consequence of being supposed to have had a principal hand in bringing a thousand of the "Highland host" into that region in 1677-8. The district was commonly said not to have entirely recovered the effects of that savage visitation in less than a hundred years; and the descendants and representatives of the Covenanters, whom the curate of Kirkoswald had the reputation at least of persecuting, were commonly supposed to regard with anything rather than ready good-will, his descendant, the witty writer of Mauchline. A well-nursed prejudice of this kind was likely enough to be met by counter-spleen, and such seems to have been the truth of the case. The lapse of another generation has sufficed to wipe out every trace of feud, that were still abundantly discernible, in the days when Ayrshire first began to ring with the equally martial applause and vituperation of—

Poet Burns,
And his priest-skelping turns.

It is impossible to look back now to the civil war, which then raged among the churchmen of the west of Scotland, without confessing, that on either side there was much to regret, and not a little to blame. Proud and haughty spirits were unfortunately opposed to each other; and in the superabundant display of zeal as to doctrinal points, neither party seems to have mingled much of the charity of the Christian temper. The whole exhibition was most unlovely—the spectacle of such indecent violence among the leering ecclesiastics of the district, acted unfavourably on many men's minds—and no one can doubt, that in the at best unsettled state of Robert Burns's principles, the unhappy effect must have been powerful indeed as to him.

Maegill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of original sin and the Trinity; and the former at length published an essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the church courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this; and at last Dr. Maegill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his own congregation from the pulpit—which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of Maegill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unpreached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton and all persons of his stamp, were of course on the side of Maegill; and, and the Mauchline elders, were his enemies. Mr. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of Maegill's cause before the presbytery, and, I believe, also before the synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into a warm friendship, with Burns. Burns, therefore, was from the beginning a zealous, as in the end he was perhaps the most effective, partisan of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation. Maegill, Dalrymple, and their brethren, suspected, with more or less justice, of leaning to heterodox opinions, are the "New Light" pastors of his earliest satires.

The prominent antagonists of these men, and chosen champions of the "Auld Light" in Ayrshire, it must now be admitted on all hands, presented, in many particulars of personal conduct and demeanour, as broad a mark as ever tempted the shafts of a satirist. These men prided themselves on being the legitimate and undegenerate descendants and representatives of the haughty Puritans, who chiefly conducted the overthrow of Popery in Scotland, and who ruled for a time, over both king and people, with a more tyrannical dominion that ever the Catholic
priesthood itself had been able to exercise amidst that high-spirited nation. With the horrors of the Papal system for ever in their mouths, these men were in fact as bigoted monks, and almost as relentless inquisitors, in their hearts, as ever wore cowl and cord—astere and ungracious of aspect, coarse and repulsive of address and manners—very Pharis- sees as to the lesser matters of the law, and many of them, to all outward appearance at least, overflowing with pharisaical self-conceit as well as monastic bile. That admirable qualities lay concealed under this ungainly exterior, and mingled with and checked the worst of these gloomy passions, no candid man will permit himself to doubt; and that Burns has grossly overcharged his portraits of them, deepening shadows that were of themselves sufficiently dark, and excluding altogether those brighter, and perhaps softer, traits of character, which redeemed the originals within the sympathies of many of the worthiest and best of men, seems equally clear. Their bitterest enemies dared not at least to bring against them, even when the feud was at its height of fervour, charges of that heinous sort, which they fearlessly, and I fear justly, preferred against their antagonists. No one ever accused them of signing the articles, administering the sacraments, and eating the bread of a Church whose fundamental doctrines they disbelieved, and, by institution at least, disavowed.

The law of church patronage was another subject on which controversy ran high and furious in the district at the same period; the actual condition of things on this head being upheld by all the men of the New Light, and condemned as equally at variance with the precepts of the gospel and the rights of freemen by not a few of the other party, and, in particular, by certain conspicuous zealots in the immediate neighbourhood of Burns. While this warfare raged, there broke out an intesthe discord within the camp of the faction which he loved not. Two of the foremost leaders of the Auld Light party quarrelled about a question of parish boundaries; the matter was taken up in the Presbytery of Irvine, and there, in the open court, to which the announcement of the disension had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest, the reverend divines, hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other coram populo, with a fiery virulence of personal invective, such as has ever been banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code.

"The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light," says Burns, "was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them dramatis personae in my 'Holy Fair.' I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause." This was the "Holy Tuilzie, or Tw Herds," a piece not given either by Currie or Gilbert Burns, though printed by Mr. Paul, and omitted, certainly for no very intelligible reason, in editions where the "Holy Fair," the "Ordination," &c. found admittance. The two herds, or pastors, were Mr. Moodie, minister of Riccarton, and that favourite victim of Burns's, John Russell, then minister at Kilnarnock, and afterwards of Stirling.

"From this time," Burns says, "I began to be known in the country as a maker of rhymes. . . . 'Holy Willie's Prayer' next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, and see if any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers;" and to a place among profane rhymers, the author of this terrible infliction had unquestionably established his right. Sir Walter Scott speaks of it as "a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote—but unfortunately cast in a form too daringly profane to be received into Dr. Currie's collection." Burns's reverend editor Mr. Paul, nevertheless, presents

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1 Currie's edition, as already mentioned, was published in 1800. The eighth edition of this was published in 1830 with additions by Gilbert Burns. The Rev. Hamilton Paul's edition came out in 1819.
2 See note to the "Tw Herds."
3 Quarterly Review, No. 1. p. 22.
Willie's Prayer" at full length, and even calls on 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."

"This," says that bold commentator, "was not only the prayer of Holy Willie, but it is merely the metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves the pure reformed Church of Scotland. In the course of his reading and polemical warfare, Burns embraced and defended the opinions of Taylor of Norwich, Macgill, and that school of divines. He could not reconcile his mind to that picture of the Being, whose very essence is love, which is drawn by the high Calvinists, or the representatives of the Covenanters—namely, that he is disposed to grant salvation to none but a few of their sect; that the whole Pagan world, the disciples of Mahomet, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and even the Calvinists who differ from them in certain tenets, must, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, descend to the pit of perdition, man, woman, and child, without the possibility of escape; but such are the identical doctrines of the Camerons of the present day, and such was Holy Willie's style of prayer. The hypocrisy and dishonesty of the man, who was at the time a reputed saint, were perceived by the discerning penetration of Burns, and to expose them he considered it his duty. The terrible view of the Deity exhibited in that able production is precisely the same view which is given to Him, in different words, by many devout preachers at present. They inculcate, that the greatest sinner is the greatest favourite of Heaven—that a reformed bawd is more acceptable to the Almighty than a pure virgin, who has hardly ever transgressed even in thought—that the lost sheep alone will be saved, and that the ninety-and-nine out of the hundred will be left in the wilderness, to perish without mercy—that the Saviour of the world loves the elect, not from any lovely qualities which they possess, for they are hateful in his sight; but 'he loves them because he loves them.' Such are the sentiments which are breathed by those who are denominated High Calvinists, and from which the soul of a poet who loves mankind, and who has not studied the system in all its bearings, recoils with horror. . . . The gloomy forbidding representation which they give of the Supreme Being, has a tendency to produce insanity, and lead to suicide."—Life of Burns.

Mr. Paul may be considered as expressing in the above, and in other passages of a similar tendency, the sentiments with which even the most audacious of Burns's anti-Calvinistic satires were received among the Ayrshire divines of the New Light. That performances so blasphemous should have been, not only pardoned, but applauded by ministers of religion, is a singular circumstance, which may go far to make the reader comprehend the exaggerated state of party feeling in Burns's native county, at the period when he first appealed to the public ear; nor is it fair to pronounce sentence upon the young and reckless satirist, without taking into consideration the undeniable fact—that in his worst offences of this kind, he was encouraged and abetted by those who, to say nothing more about their professional character and authority, were almost the only persons of liberal education whose society he had any opportunity of approaching at the period in question. Had Burns received, at this time, from his clerical friends and patrons, such advice as was tendered, when rather too late, by a layman who was as far from bigotry on religious subjects as any man in the world, this great genius might have made his first approaches to the public notice in a very different character.

"Let your bright talents"—(thus wrote the excellent John Ramsay of Ochtretyre, in October, 1757)—"let those bright talents which the Almighty has bestowed on you, be

1 I leave this passage as it stood originally; but am happy in having it in my power to add, on Mr. Paul's own authority, that he had no hand either in selecting the poems for the edition in question, or superintending the printing of it. He merely contributed the brief memoir prefixed, and critical notes appended to it; and "considered his contributions as a jeu d'esprit." After this explanation, my text may safely be left to the interpretation of every candid reader.
henceforth employed to the noblest purpose of supporting the cause of truth and virtue. An imagination so varied and fertile as yours may do this in many different modes; nor is it necessary to be always serious, which you have been to good purpose; good morals may be recommended in a comedy, or even in a song. Great allowances are due to the heat and inexperience of youth;—and few poets can boast, like Thomson, of never having written a line, which, dying, they would wish to blot. In particular, I wish you to keep clear of the thorny walks of satire, which makes a man an hundred enemies for one friend, and is doubly dangerous when one is supposed to extend the slips and weaknesses of individuals to their sect or party. About modes of faith, serious and excellent men have always differed; and there are certain curious questions, which may afford scope to men of metaphysical heads, but seldom mend the heart or temper. Whilst these points are beyond human ken, it is sufficient that all our sects concur in their views of morals. You will forgive me for these hints. Few such hints, it is likely, ever reached his ears in the days when they might have been most useful—days of which the principal honours and distinctions are thus alluded by himself:

I’ve been at drunken writers’ feasts;
Nay, been bithch-fou’eang godly priests. dead-bruik

It is amusing to observe how soon even really lucile hardy learn the tricks of their trade: Burns knew already what lustre a compliment gains from being set in sarcasm, when he made Willie call for special notice to

—Gawn Hamilton’s deserts,………
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes; cards
Yet has sae mony takin’ arts
Wi' grit and sma.
Frue God’s ain priests the people’s hearts
He steals awa, &c.

Nor is his other patron, Aiken, introduced with inferior skill, as having merited Willie’s most fervent excitements by his “glitt-tongued” defence of the heterodox doctor of Ayr:

Lord! visit them who did employ him,
And for thy people’s sake destroy ‘em.

Burns owed a compliment to this gentleman’s eloquentairy talents. “I never knew there was any merit in my poems,” said he, “until Mr. Aiken read them into repute.”

Encouraged by the “roar of applause” which greeted these pieces, thus orally proclaimed and recommended, he produced in succession various satires, wherein the same set of persons were lashed; as, the “Ordination”; the “Kirk’s Alarm,” &c. &c.; and last, and best undoubtedly, the “Holy Fair,” in which, unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This was, indeed, an extraordinary performance; no partisan of any sect could whisper that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, were held up to ridicule; it was acknowledged, amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet; and hardly denied by those who shook their heads the most gravely over the indiscretions of particular passages, or even by those who justly regretted a too prevailing tone of levity in the treatment of a subject essentially solemn, that the Muse of “Christ’s Kirk on the Green” had awakened, after the slumber of ages, with all the vigour of her regal youth about her, in “the auld clay biggin’” of Mossiel. The “Holy Fair” however, created admiration, not surprise, among the circle of domestic friends who had been admitted to watch the steps of his progress in art, of which, beyond that circle, little or nothing was heard until the youthful poet produced at length a satirical masterpiece. It is not possible to reconcile the statements of Gilbert and others, as to some of the minutiae of the chronological history of Burns’s previous performances; but there can be no doubt, that although from choice or accident his first provincial fame was that of a satirist, he had, some time before any of his philippics on the Auld Light divines made their appearance, exhibited to those who enjoyed his personal confidence, a range of imaginative power hardly inferior to what the “Holy Fair” itself displays; and,

[The “Holy Fair” was not the last of the polemical satires; it was written in August, 1785, the “Ordination” in February 1786, and the “Kirk’s Alarm” in August, 1783.]
at least, such a rapidly improving skill in poetical language and verifcation, as must have prepared them for witnessing, without wonder, even the most perfect specimens of his art.

Gilbert says, "that among the earliest of his poems" was the "Epistle to Davie," and Mr. Walker believes that this was written very soon after the death of William Burns. This piece is in the very intricate and difficult measure of the "Cherry and the Sloe;" and, on the whole, the poet moves with ease and grace in his very unnecessary trammels; but young poets are careless beforehand of difficulties which would startle the experienced; and great poets may overcome any difficulties if they once grapple with them; so that I should rather guard my distrust of Gilbert's statement, if it must be literally taken, on the celebration of "Jean" with which the epistle terminates; and after all, she is celebrated in the concluding stanzas, which may have been added some time after the first draft. The gloomy circumstances of the poet's personal condition, as described in this piece, were common, it cannot be doubted, to all the years of his youthful history; so that no particular date is to be founded upon these; and if this was the first, certainly it was not the last occasion, on which Burns exercised his fancy in the colouring of the very worst issue that could attend a life of unsuccessful toil.

The last of, the worst of It only just to beg—

But Gilbert's recollections, however on trivial points inaccurate, will always be more interesting than anything that could be put in their place.

"Robert," says he, "often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the mind of a poem was often first produced.

[That is the "Cherry and the Sloe," a Scotch poem by Alexander Montgomery, published in 1595.]

It was, I think, in summer, 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden (kail-yard), that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle (to Davie). I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles; and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression—but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism, and we talked of sending it to some magazine, but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped.

"It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that the author first repeated to me the "Address to the Devil." The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him, by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage. "Death and Doctor Hornbook," though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to cke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most highly-holistically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little
84, when, in the evening, I went to the mason-meeting in Tarbolton, where the dominie unfortunately made too ostentations a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physie, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions, he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of the way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me. The 'Epistle to John Lapraik' was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, 'On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin', I believe he has omitted the word rocking in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of going a-rocking, or with the rock. As the connection the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of those rockings at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their rocks, that Lapraik's song beginning, 'When I upon thy bosom lean,' was sung, and we were informed who was the author. The verses to the 'Mouse' and 'Mountain Daisy' were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while

The poems mentioned by Gilbert Burns in the above extant, are among the most popular of his brother's performances; and there may be a time for recurring to some of their peculiar merits as works of art. It may be mentioned here, that John Wilson, alias Dr. Hornbook, was not merely compelled to shut up shop as an apothecary, or druggist rather, by the satire which bears his name; but so irresistible was the tide of ridicule, that his pupils, one by one, deserted him, and he abandoned his schoolcraft also. Removing to Glasgow, and turning himself successfully to commercial pursuits, Dr. Hornbook survived the local storm which
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

he could not effectually withstand, and was often heard in his latter days, when waxing cheerful and communicative over a bowl of punch "in the Saltmarket," to bless the lucky hour in which the dominion of Tarbolton provoked the exultation of Robert Burns. In those days the Scotch universities did not turn out doctors of physic by the hundred, according to the modern fashion introduced by the necessities of the French revolutionary war; Mr. Wilson's was probably the only medicine-chest from which salis and seena were distributed for the benefit of a considerable circuit of parishes; and his advice, to say the least of the matter, was perhaps as good as could be had, for love or money, among the wise women who were the only rivals for his practice. The poem which drove him from Ayrshire was not, we may believe, either expected or designed to produce any such serious effect. Poor Hornbook and the poet were old acquaintances, and in some sort rival vats at the time in the mason-lodge.

In "Man was made to Mourn," whoever might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly,—and who shall say, with absolute injustice,—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly, nor more lofty expressed, than in some of these stanzas:—

Think ye, that such as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry,
Wit'never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way;—

As hardly worth their while? .

In "Man was made to Mourn," Burns appears to have taken many hints from an ancient ballad, entitled the "Life and Age of Man," which begins thus:—

Upon the sixteenth hunder year of God, and fifty-three,
Frie Christ was born, that brought us dear as writings testify:
On January, the sixteenth day, as I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say—Ah! man is made to mourn!

"I had an old grand-uncle," says the poet, in one of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my believe, either expected or designed to produce any such serious effect. Poor Hornbook and the poet were old acquaintances, and in some sort rival vats at the time in the mason-lodge.

In "Man was made to Mourn," whoever might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly,—and who shall say, with absolute injustice,—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly, nor more lofty expressed, than in some of these stanzas:—

See tender poor o'er-laboured wight,
So subject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil?
If I'm design'd you bondage's slave—
By nature's laws design'd—
Why was an independent wish
Ever planted in my mind?

The same feeling, strong, but triumphed over in the moment of inspiration, as it ought ever to have been in the plain exercise of such an understanding as his, may be read in every stanza of the "Epistle to Davie":—

It's no in titles nor in rank,
It's no in wealth like Lou'rin bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in books, it's no in hear, learning
To make us truly blest.
to treat as unreal? Yet they shrink to small dimensions in the presence of a spirit thus exalted at once, and softened, by the pieties of virgin love, filial reverence, and domestic devotion.

That he who thus enthusiastically apprehended, and thus exquisitely painted, the artless beauty and solemnity of the feelings and thoughts that ennable the life of the Scottish peasant, could witness observances in which the very highest of these redeeming influences are most powerfully and gracefully displayed, and yet describe them in a vein of unmixed merriment—that the same man should have produced the "Cotter's Saturday Night" and the "Holy Fair" about the same time—will ever continue to move wonder and regret.

"The annual celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the rural parishes of Scotland, has much in it," says the unfortunate Heron, "of those old Popish festivals, in which superstition, traffic, and amusement, used to be strangely intermingled. Burns saw and seized in it one of the happiest of all subjects to afford scope for the display of that strong and piercing sagacity, by which he could almost intuitively distinguish the reasonable from the absurd, and the becoming from the ridiculous; of that picturesque power of fancy which enables him to represent scenes, and persons, and groups, and looks, and attitudes, and gestures, in a manner almost as lively and impressive, even in words, as if all the artifices and energies of the pencil had been employed; of that knowledge which he had necessarily acquired of the manners, passions, and prejudices of the rustic around him; of whatever was ridiculous, no less than whatever was affectionately beautiful in rural life."  

This is very good so far as it goes; but who ever disputed the exquisite graphic truth, so far as it goes, of the poem to which the critic refers? The question remains as it stood; is there then nothing besides a strange mixture of superstition, traffic, and amusement, in the scene which such an annual celebration in a rural parish of Scotland presents? Does nothing of what is "affectionately beautiful in rural life" make a part in the original which was before the poet's eyes? Were "Superstition," "Hypocrisy," and "Fun," the only influences which he might justly have impersonated? It would be hard, I think, to speak so even of the old Popish festivals to which Mr. Heron alludes; it would be hard, surely, to say it of any festival in which, mingled as they may be with sanctimonious pretenders, and surrounded with giddy groups of onlookers, a mighty multitude of devout men are assembled for the worship of God, beneath the open heaven, and above the tombs of their fathers.  

Let us beware, however, of pushing our censure of a young poet, mad with the inspiration of the moment, from whatever source derived, too far. It can hardly be doubted that the author of the "Cotter's Saturday Night" had felt, in his time, all that any man can feel in the contemplation of the most sublime of the religious observances of his country; and as little, that had he taken up the subject of this rural sacrament in a solemn mood he might have produced a piece as gravely beautiful, as his "Holy Fair" is quaint, graphic, and picturesque. A scene of family worship, on the other hand, I can easily imagine to have come from his hand as pregnant with the ludicrous as that "Holy Fair" itself. The family prayers of the Saturday's night, and the rural celebration of the eucharist, are parts of the same system—the system which has made the people of Scotland what they are—and what, it is to be hoped, they will continue to be. And when men ask of themselves what this great national poet really thought of a system in which minds immeasurably inferior to his can see so much to venerate, it is surely just that they should pay more attention to what he has delivered under the gravest sanction. In noble natures, we may be sure, the source of tears lies nearer the heart than that of smiles.

Mr. Hamilton Paul does not desert his post on occasion of the "Holy Fair"; he defends the poet, unloaf, "with the vigorous years; this, was blind time his high- and cry, while the old song of Monsieurs" is, perhaps, those exclusion things possible injurious, if a character, of sublime lines, and to me, that are in estimation the absence of single performances he certainly determined but his effort is too confusion is easy, there is more difficulty, than in any considerable appearance of the fountain of the car, and is delightful which present under an inveterate monotony energy pressure. The she'll affect
that piece as manfully as "Holy Willie," and, indeed, expressly applauds Burns for having endeavoured to explode "abuses discon- tinned by the General Assembly." The General Assembly would no doubt say, both of the poet and the commentator, non tantum.

"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's art had now reached its climax; but it is time that we should revert more particularly to the personal history of the poet.

He seems to have very soon perceived, that the farm of Mossgiel could at the best furnish no more than the bare means of existence to so large a family; and wearied with the "prospects drear," from which he only escaped in occasional intervals of social merriment, or when gay flashes of soltry fancy, for they were no more, threw sunshine on everything, he very naturally took up the notion of quitting Scotland for a time, and trying his fortune in the West Indies, where, as is well known, the managers of the plantations are, in the great majority of cases, Scotchmen of Burns's own rank and condition. His letters show that on two or three different occasions, long before his poetry had excited any attention, he had applied for, and nearly obtained appointments of this sort, through the intervention of his acquaintances in the seaport of Irvine. 1 Petty accidents, not worth describing, interfered to disappoint him from time to time; but at last a new burst of misfortune rendered him doubly anxious to escape from his native land; and but for an accident, which no one will call petty, his arrangements would certainly have been completed.

But we must not come quite so rapidly to the last of his Ayrshire love-stories.

How many lesser romances of this order were evolved and completed during his residence at Mossgiel, it is needless to inquire; that they were many, his songs prove, for in those days he wrote no love-songs on imaginary heroines. 2 "Mary Morison," "Behind yon hills where Stinchflor flows," "On Cessnock banks there lives a lass," belong to this period, 3 and there are three or four inspired by Mary Campbell—the object of by far the deepest passion that Burns ever knew, and which he has accordingly immortalized in the noblest of elegies.

In introducing to Mr. Thomson's notice the song:

Will you go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave on Scotia's shore?—
Will you go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar?

Burns says, "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took this farewell of a dear girl;" and, afterwards, in a note on—

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle of Montgomery;
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlin;—
There summer first unfad Subject, and the tallest tarry,
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary,

he adds,—"After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal affection, we met at a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent a day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following, she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenwich, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to her grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness;" and Mr. Cromeck, speaking of the same "day of parting love," gives, though without mentioning his authority, some further particulars which no one would willingly believe to be apocryphal. "This adieu," says that zealous inquirer into the details of Burns's story, "was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials, which rustic sentiment has devised to prolong tender emotions, and to impose awe. The lovers stood on each side

1 [There is no authority for saying that Burns ever contemplated trying his fortunes in the West Indies prior to 1786. Though he speaks of "thinking of going to the West Indies in my very early years," he refers to his 28th year, 1786. See below.]

3 [These songs certainly belong to the period before he took up his residence at Mossgiel.]
of a small purling brook—they loved their hands in the limpid stream—and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted—never to meet again." It is proper to add, that Mr. Cromek's story, which even Allan Cunningham was disposed to receive with suspicion, has been confirmed very strongly by the accidental discovery of a Bible, presented by Burns to "Mary Campbell," which was found in the possession of her sister at Androssan. Upon the boards of the first volume is inscribed, in Burns's handwriting, —"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, I am the Lord.—Levit. chap. xix. v. 12." On the second volume,—"Thou shalt not swear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.—St. Matth. chap. v. 33." And, on a blank leaf of either,—"Robert Burns, Mossgiel," with his masonic mark.

How lasting was the poet's remembrance of this pure love, and its tragic termination, will be seen hereafter.

Highland Mary, however, seems to have died before her lover had made any more serious attempts in poetry. 1 In the Epistle to Mr. Sillar, the very earliest, according to Gilbert, of these essays, the poet celebrates "his Davie and his Jean."

This was Jean Armour, the daughter of a respectable man, a mason in the village of Mauchline, where she was at the time the reigning toast, 2 and who afterwards became the wife of our poet. There are numberless allusions to her maiden charms in the best pieces which he produced at Mossgiel.

The time is not yet come, in which all the details of this story can be expected. 3 Jean Armour found herself "as ladies wish to be that love their lords." And how slightly such a circumstance might affect the character and reputation of a young woman in her sphere of rural life at that period, every Scotchman will understand—to any but a Scotchman, it might, perhaps, be difficult to explain. The manifold readiness with which the young rustics commonly come forward to avert, by marriage, the worst consequences of such indiscretions, cannot be denied; nor, perhaps, is there any class of society, in any country, in which matrimonial infidelity is less known than among the female peasantry of Scotland.

Burns's worldly circumstances were in a most miserable state when he was informed of Miss Armour's condition; and the first announcement of it staggered him like a blow. He saw nothing for it but to fly the country at once; and, in a note to James Smith of Mauchline, the confidant of his amour, he thus wrote:—"Against two things I am fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugal. The first, by Heaven, I will not do!—the last, by hell, I will never do!—A good God bless you, and make you happy, up to the warmest weeping wish of parting friendship. . . . If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her; so help me, God, in my hour of need."

The lovers met accordingly; and the result of the meeting was what was to be anticipated from the tenderness and the manliness of Burns's feelings. All dread of personal inconvenience yielded at once to the tears of the woman he loved, and ere they parted he gave into her keeping a written acknowledgment of marriage, which, when produced by a person in Miss Armour's condition, is, according to the Scots law, to be accepted as legal evidence of an irregular marriage having really taken place; it being of course understood that the marriage was to be formally avowed as soon as the consequences of their imprudence could no longer be concealed from her family.

The disclosure was deferred to the last moment, and it was received by the father of Miss Armour with equal surprise and anger. Burns, confessing himself to be unequal to the maintenance of a family, proposed to go immediately to Jamaica, where he hoped to find better fortunes. He offered, if it were rejected, to abandon his farm, which was ere now a hopeless concern, and earn bread at least for his wife and children as a daily labourer at home; but nothing could appease the indigna-
tion of Armour, who, Professor Walker hints, had entertained previously a very bad opinion of Burns's whole character. By what arguments he prevailed on his daughter to take so strange and so painful a step we know not; but the fact is certain, that, at his entreaty, she destroyed the document, which must have been to her the most precious of her possessions—the only evidence of her marriage.  

It was under such extraordinary circumstances that Miss Armour became the mother of twins.  

[Another statement regarding the destruction of the document is, that Jean's father snatched it from her in a sudden fit of anger, threw it on the fire, and commanded her to think herself no longer the wife of Burns. It may be remarked that the destruction of the paper only destroyed evidence; it could not annul the marriage.]  

[After the destruction of the important document Miss Armour was sent off to Paisley, evidently with the purpose of preventing communication between her and her poet lover. On 9th July Burns writes to his friend Richmond in Edinburgh that he had called on Jean after her return, and received a somewhat chilling reception. "However," he adds, "the priest, I am informed, will give me a certificate as a single man if I comply with the rules of the church, which, for that very reason I intend to do. I am going to put on sackcloth and ashes this day. I am indigent so far as to appear in my own coat." Delinquents like Burns had to do penance on three or four Sundays. Burns began his course of public repentance on 9th July, and should have finished on the 23rd. For some reason or other two Sundays were omitted, and Burns made his last appearance along with Jean and some other offenders on 6th August, as shown by the following extract from the session records:—"1786, August 6th.—Robert Burns, John Smith, Mary Lindsay, Jean Armour, and Angus Auld, appeared before the congregation professing their repentance for the sin of fornication, and they, having each appeared twice a year, being formerly, were this day rebuked and absolved from the scandal."  

It appears that the Rev. Mr. Auld, by whom these guilty parties were rebuked, was accustomed to write down the rebukes he administered to offenders in a small volume, which is still in existence, and which shows him to have been a faithful minister, and, by no means, a severe or unkindly man. The rebuke delivered to Burns and his fellow-sinners as noted down in this curious volume is as follows:—"You appear there to be rebuked, and, at the same time, making profession of repentance for the sin of fornication. The frequency of this sin is just matter of lamentation among Christians, and affords just ground of deep humiliation to the guilty persons themselves. We call you to reflect seriously in earnest of heart on all the instances of sin and guilt, on their numbers, high aggravation, and unhappy consequences; and say, having done foolishly, we'll do so

Burns's love and pride, the two most powerful feelings of his mind, had been equally wounded. His anger and grief together drove him, according to every account, to the verge of absolute insanity; and some of his letters on this occasion, both published and unpublished, have certainly all the appearance of having been written in as deep a concentration of despair as ever preceded the most awful of human calamities. His first thought had been, as we have seen, to fly at once from the scene of his disgrace and misery; and this course seemed now to be absolutely necessary. He was summoned to find security for the maintenance of the children whom he was prevented from legitimating, and such was his poverty that he could not satisfy the parish officers. I suppose security for some four or five pounds a year was the utmost that could have been demanded from a person of his rank; but the man who had in his desk the immortal poems to which we have been referring above, either disdained to ask, or tried in vain to find, pecuniary assistance in his hour of need; and the only alternative that presented itself to his view was America or a jail.

Who can ever learn without grief and indignation, that it was the destiny of such miscreants, who, at this moment, could pour out such a strain as the "Lament?"

0 thou pale orb, that silts, and shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that holy pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woes I nightly vigil keep,
Beneath thy unwarming beam;
And mourn in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

No idle-fyed poetical plaints,
My sad love-born lamentations claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No faded torches, quench'd, and pale;
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft attest'd Pow'r's above;
The promised Father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

no more. Beware of returning again to thy sin, as some of you have done, like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire." By the law of Scotland a subsequent marriage between the father and mother legitimates children born out of wedlock; hence it is, probably, that antemortem incontinence is looked upon rather too leniently among the lower classes.]
CHAPTER IV.

(Jamaica engagement;—resolution to publish his poems;—publication of first edition;—preparations for sailing;—growing fame;—Dugald Stewart, Dr. Blair, Mrs. Dunlop;—"Loss of Ballochmyle";—hopes of an excise appointment;—visit to Dr. Laurie;—Dr. Blacklock's letter;—Burns resolves to visit Edinburgh.)

He saw misfortune's cold nor'west Lang musing up a bitter blast;  
A gillet brake his heart at last,  
ill may she be!  
So, took a berth afore the mast—

Jamaica was now his mark; and after some little time and trouble, the situation of assistant-overseer on the estate of a Dr. Douglas in that colony, was procured for him by one of his friends in the town of Irvine. Money to pay for his passage, however, he had not; and it at last occurred to him, that the few pounds requisite for this purpose might be raised by the publication of some of the finest poems that ever delighted mankind.

His landlord Gavin Hamilton, Mr. Aiken, and other friends, encouraged him warmly; and after some hesitation, he at length resolved to hazard an experiment which might perhaps better his circumstances; and, if any tolerable number of subscribers were procured, could not make them worse than they were already. His rural patrons exerted themselves with success in the matter; and so many copies were soon subscribed for, that Burns entered into terms with a printer in Kilmarnock, and began to copy out his performances for the press. He carried his MSS. piecemeal to the printer; and, encouraged by the ray of light which unexpected patronage had begun to throw on his affairs, composed, while the printing was in progress, some of the best poems of the collection. The tale of the "Twa Dogs," for instance, with which the volume commenced, is known to have been written in the short interval between the publication being determined on and the printing begun. His own account of the business to Dr. Moore is as follows:—

"I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth, it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica.  

1 John Wilson.

2 While his poems were in the press Burns executed a deed (still in existence) formally assigning over to native land, I resolved to publish my poems.

I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power: I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—
or, perhaps, a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits. I can truly say, that, pauvre inconnu as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet: I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, for which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. 2—My

his brother Gilbert all the goods that he might leave behind him on his departure for Jamaica, as well as the profits that might arise from the publication of his poems;—Gilbert on the other hand undertaking to bring up and educate the poet's illegitimate child Elizabeth, daughter of Elizabeth Paton. No mention is made of Jean Armour or her possible offspring.

2 [His "Proposals for publishing by Subscription, Scottish Poems by Robert Burns," were dated April 14th, 1786. The work was to be "elegantly printed, in one volume octavo. Price, stitched, Three Shillings." On July 31, 1786, the volume was issued, and the whole edition was disposed of as follows:—Mr. Aiken of Ayr disposed of 145 copies; Mr. Robert Muir of Kilmarnock, 72 copies; James Smith of Mancuhine, 41 copies; Gavin Hamilton, 40 copies; Gilbert Burns, 70 copies; John Kennedy, Dumfriess House, 20 copies;]
vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

Hungry ruim had me in the wind.

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.

To the above rapid narrative of the poet, we may annex a few details, gathered from his various biographers and from his own letters.

While his sheets were in the press (June—July, 1786) it appears that his friends, Hamilton and Aiken, revolved various schemes for procuring him the means of remaining in Scotland; and having studied some of the practical branches of mathematics, as we have seen, and in particular gauging, it occurred to himself that a situation in the excise might be better suited to him than any other he was at all likely to obtain by the intervention of such patrons as he possessed.

He appears to have lingered longer after the publication of the poems than one might suppose from his own narrative, in the hope that these gentlemen might at length succeed

John Logan, of Lailacht, 20 copies; Mr. MoWhinie, Writer, Ayr, 20 copies; David Sillar, Irvine, 14 copies; William Niven, Maybole, 7 copies; Walter Morton, Cumnock, 6 copies; John Neilson, Kirkcowald, 5 copies. Wilson himself disposed of 70 copies, while copies were supplied to William Barker, Thomas Small, Ralph Sellar, and John Rankine. On August 28, 550 copies had been disposed of, and there then remained on hand only 13 copies. The expense of printing and publishing the whole edition amounted to £35, 17s., a sum that would little more than purchase a single copy now, they have become so rare.

in their efforts in his behalf. The poems were received with favour, even with rapture, in Ayrshire, and ere long over the adjoining counties. "Old and young," thus speaks Robert Heron, "high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even ploughboys and maid-servants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned the most hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the works of Burns." The poet soon found that his person also had become an object of general curiosity, and that a lively interest in his personal fortunes was excited among some of the gentry of the district, where the details of his story reached them, as it was pretty sure to do, along with his modest and manly preface. Among others, the celebrated Professor

1 Preface to the First Edition.

"The following trilles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these, and other celebrated names their countrymen are, at least in their original language, a fountain shat 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 rustic companions around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the appliance, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, weakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task unmeet to the poetical mind,—these were his motives for courting the Muse, 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, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

"It is an observation of that celebrated poet Shen-
Life of Robert Burns.

Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh and his accomplished lady, then resident at their beautiful seat of Catrine, began to notice him with much polite and friendly attention. Dr. Hugh Blair, who then held an eminent place in the literary society of Scotland, happened to be paying Mr. Stewart a visit, and on reading the "Holy Fair," at once pronounced it the "work of a very fine genius," and Mrs. Stewart, herself a poetess, flattered him perhaps still more highly by her warm commendations. But, above all, his little volume happened to attract the notice of Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, a lady of high birth and ample fortune, enthusiastically attached to her country, and interested in whatever appeared to concern the honour of Scotland. This excellent woman, while slowly recovering from the languor of an illness, lay her hands accidentally on the stone, whose divine elegies do honour 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 possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manoeuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious drawings of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal unfeigned sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation. To his subscribers, the author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for granting him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetical bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

1 There is some confusion here; Helen Hamattine, Dugald Stewart's first wife, was at that time suffering from an illness, of which she died the following year. Helen D'Arcy Cranston, "the poetess," did not become Mrs. Stewart till 1708.

2 This lady was the daughter of Sir Thomas Wallace, Baronet of Craigie, supported to represent the family of which the great hero of Scotland was a cadet.

new production of the provincial press, and opened the volume at the "Cottar's Saturday Night." "She read it over," says Gibert, "with the greatest pleasure and surprise; the poet's description of the simple cottagers operated on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, repelling the demon ennui, and restoring her to her wonted inward harmony and satisfaction." Mrs. Dunlop instantly sent an express to Mossgiel, distant sixteen miles from her residence, with a very kind letter to Burns, requesting him to supply her, if he could, with half-a-dozen copies of the book, and to call at Dunlop as soon as he could find it convenient. Burns was from home, but he acknowledged the favour conferred on him in an interesting letter, still extant; and shortly afterwards commenced a personal acquaintance with one that never afterwards ceased to befriend him to the utmost of his power. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop form a very large proportion of all his subsequent correspondence, and, addressed as they were to a person whose sex, age, rank, and benevolence inspired at once profound respect and a graceful confidence, will ever remain the most pleasing of all the materials of our poet's biography.

At the residences of these new acquaintances, Burns was introduced into society of a class which he had not before approached; and of the manner in which he stood the trial, Mr. Stewart thus writes to Dr. Currie: "His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened with apparent attention and deference, on subjects where his wont of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance; and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or servility, rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency and
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precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company, more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotsmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phrasology. At this time, Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation, not, however, without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or ganger in his own country.

The provincial applause of his publication, and the consequent notice of his superiors, however flattering such things must have been, were far from administering any essential relief to the urgent necessities of Burns's situation. Very shortly after his first visit to Catrine, where he met with the young and amiable Basil Lorimer, whose condescension and kindness on the occasion he celebrates in some well-known verses, we find the poet writing to his friend, Mr. Aiken of Ayr, in the following sad strain:—"I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business, the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering sobs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society or the vagaries of the Muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the bands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be had in the scale against it."

He proceeds to say that he claims no right to complain. "The world has in general been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was for some time past fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while all defenseless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart, and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my schoolfellows and youthful companions were striking off, with eager hope and earnest intent, on some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was standing idle in the market-place, or only kept the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim. You see, sir, that if I know one's errors, were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it."

In the midst of all the distresses of this period of suspense, Burns found time, as he tells Mr. Aiken, for some "vagaries of the Muse" and one or two of these may deserve to be noticed here, as throwing light on his personal demeanour during this last summer of his fame. The poems appeared in July, and one of the first persons of superior condition (Gilbert, indeed, says the first) who courted his acquaintance in consequence of having read them, was Mrs. Stewart of Stair, a beautiful and accomplished lady. Burns presented her on this occasion with some MS. songs; and among the rest, with one in which her own charms were celebrated, in that warm strain of compliment which our poet seems to have all along considered the most proper to be used whenever fair lady was to be addressed in rhyme.

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

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the pine-roses blow—
There oft, as mild evening sweeps over the sea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me."

On this occasion the poet sent a parcel of "songs,
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

It was in the spring of the same year, that he had happened, in the course of an evening ramble on the banks of the Ayr, to meet with a young and lovely unmarried lady, of the family of Alexander of Ballochmyle; and now (Sept. 1786), emboldened, we are to suppose, by the reception his volume had met with, he inclosed to her some verses, which he had written in commemoration of that passing glimpse of her beauty, and conceived in a strain of luxurious fervour, which certainly, coming from a man of Burns's station and character, must have sounded very strangely in a delicate maiden's ear.

Oh, had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though sheltered in the lowest shed,
That ever rose on Scotia's plain!

Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toll,
And nightly to my bosom stream
The bonny lass of Ballochmyle.

Burns is said by Allan Cunningham to have resented bitterly the silence in which Miss Alexander received this tribute to her charms. I suppose we may account for his over-tenderness to young ladies in pretty much the same way that Professor Dugald Stewart does, in the letter above quoted, for "a certain want of gentleness" in his method of addressing persons of his own sex. His rustic experience among the fair could have had no tendency to whisper the lesson of reserve.

The autumn of this eventful year was drawing to a close, and Burns, who had already lingered three months in the hope which he now considered vain, of an excise appointment, perceived that another year must be lost altogether, unless he made up his mind, and secured his passage to the West Indies. The Kilmarnock edition of his poems was, however, nearly exhausted; and his friends encouraged him to produce another at the same place, with the view of equipping himself the better for his voyage. But "Wee Johnnie" 1 would not undertake the new impression, unless Burns advanced the price of the paper required for it; and with this demand the poet had no means of complying. Mr. Ballantyne, the chief magistrate of Ayr (the same gentleman to whom the poem on the "Twa Brigs of Ayr" was afterwards inscribed), offered to furnish the money; but probably his kind offer would have been accepted; but ere this matter could be arranged, the prospects of the poet were, in a very unexpected manner, altered and improved.

Burns went to pay a parting visit to Dr. Lawrie, minister of Loudoun, a gentleman from whom and his accomplished family he had previously received many kind attentions. After taking farewell of this benevolent circle, the poet proceeded, as the night was setting in, "to convey his chest," as he says, "so far on the road to Greenock, where he was to embark in a few days for America." And it was under these circumstances that he composed the song already referred to, which he meant as his farewell dirge to his native land, and which ends thus:—

Farewell, old Coilla's hills and dales,
Her healthy moors and winding vales,
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves.
Farewell, my friend! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these—my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell, the bonny banks of Ayr.

Dr. Lawrie had given Burns much good counsel, and what comfort he could, at parting, but prudently said nothing of an effort which he had previously made in his behalf. He had sent a copy of the poems, with a sketch of the author's history, to his friend Dr. Thomas Blacklock of Edinburgh, with a

1. John Wilson, the printer, was for long considered the subject of the epitaph "On Wee Johnnie," but the real hero was an ill-conditioned cow-f eeder at Mancilme, who had given Burns some annoyance.

2. Burns appears to have given a slightly different version of the circumstances under which this poem was composed to Professor Walker, who met him at breakfast in Dr. Blacklock's. Instead of proceeding with his chest "so far on the road to Greenock," he left Dr. Lawrie's on his way home across a wide stretch of solitary moor (Galston Moor). He goes on to describe how the weather added discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind, and under these circumstances the poem was composed.

...
request that he would introduce both to the notice of those persons whose literary opinions were at the time most listened to in Scotland, in the hope that, by their intervention, Burns might yet be rescued from the necessity of expatiating himself. Dr. Blacklock's answer reached Dr. Laurie a day or two after Burns had made his visit, and composed his dirge; and it was not yet too late. Laurie forwarded it immediately to Gavin Hamilton, who carried it to Burns. It is as follows:

[Edinburgh, Sept. 4, 1786.]

"I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and perhaps one of the most genuine entertainments of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force or benevolence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that intention.

"Mr. Stewart, Professor of Moral in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers; but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It was, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than anything of the kind which has been published in my memory."

We have already seen with what surprise and delight Burns read this generous letter. Although he had ere this conversed with more than one person of established literary reputation, and received from them attentions, of which he was ever after grateful,—the dependence of his spirits appears to have remained as dark as ever, up to the very hour when his landlord produced Dr. Blacklock's letter; and one may be pardoned for fancying, that in his "Vision," he has himself furnished no unfaithful representation of the manner in which he was spending what he looked on as one of the last nights, if not the very last, he was to pass at Mossgill, when the friendly Hamilton unexpectedly entered the melancholy dwelling.

There, lonely, by theingle-check chimney-corner
I sat, and eyed the spewing reek, smoke
That filled, with Georgetown smoke, enough smoke
The cold clay-bignin', building
And heard the restless rattans squeak rat
About the riggin'.

All in this mottle mistic clime,
dusty
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youth's prime,
An' done nay thing,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme nonsense
For fools to sing.

Had I to guide advice but harkit,
I might by this line led a market,
Or straddled in a bank an' clarkit.My cash account.

While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit, shirted Is it the amount.

"Dr. Blacklock," says Burns, "belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The benevolent star that had so long shed its blinding influence on my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir."

Letter to Moore. [By this one would naturally imagine that Burns set out for Edinburgh at once on seeing Dr. Blacklock's letter, but the fact is he did not leave Ayrshire till some two months later. It is not quite correct that he had no acquaintance in
Two of the biographers of Burns have had the advantage of speaking from personal knowledge of the excelling man whose interposition was thus serviceable. "It was a fortunate circumstance," says Walker, "that the person whom Dr. Lawrie applied to, merely because he was the only one of his literary acquaintances with whom he chose to use that freedom, happened also to be the person best qualified to render the application successful. Dr. Blacklock was an enthusiast in his admiration of an art which he had practised himself with applause. He felt the claims of a poet with a paternal sympathy, and he had in his constitution a tenderness and sensibility that would have engaged his benevolence for a youth in the circumstances of Burns, even though he had not been indebted to him for the delight which he received from his works; for if the young men were enumerated whom he drew from obscurity, and enabled by education to advance themselves in life, the catalogue would naturally excite surprise. . . . He was not of a disposition to discouragement with feeble praise, and to shift off the trouble of future patronage, by bidding him relinquish poetry, and mind his plough."  

"There was never, perhaps," thus speaks the unfortunate Heron, whose own unmerited sorrows and sufferings would not have left so dark a stain on the literary history of Scotland, had the kind spirit of Blacklock been common among his lettered countrymen—

"There was never, perhaps, one among all mankind whom you might: are truly have called an angel upon earth, than Dr. Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tenderly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the virtuous. Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness."

Such was the amiable old man, whose life Mackenzie has written, and on whom Johnson "looked with reverence." The writings of Blacklock are forgotten (though some of his songs in the Museum deserve another fate), but the memory of his virtues will not pass away until mankind shall have ceased to sympathize with the fortunes of geniuses, and to appreciate the poetry of Burns.

[All thoughts of the West Indies seem now to have been given up by Burns. Indeed, one cannot help thinking that while talking and writing of his coming exile he had always hopes of something turning up to render it unnecessary. Certain it is that a place in the excise had been occupying his thoughts for some time, and we find that the furtherance of the excise scheme was a motive perhaps equally strong with the proposed publication of a second edition of his poems in attracting him to Edinburgh. In a letter he received from Sir John Whitefoord within a week of his arrival in the capital, occurs the following passage:—"I have been told my wish to be made a gazer; I submit it to your consideration, whether it would not be more desirable. If a sum could be raised by subscription for a second edition of your poems, to lay it out in the stocking of a small farm. I am persuaded it would be a line of life much more agreeable to your feelings, and in the end more satisfactory." By Currie it was represented that Burns trudged to Edinburgh on foot; but Gilbert expressly stated that he rode on a pony borrowed from a friend, and sent back by another friend returning to Ayrshire.]  

Gilbert Burns has given the following account of friends whom Burns's character and genius procured him before he left Ayrshire or attracted the notice of the world:—

"The farm of Mossgiel, at the time of our coming to it (Martinsmas, 1783), was the property of the Earl of Londond, but was held in tack by Mr. Gavin Hamilton, writer in Manchlin, from whom we had our bargain; who had thus an opportunity of knowing, and showing a sincere regard for my brother,  

[1] [2] This morning I saw at breakfast Dr. Blacklock the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to by a poor scholar in Latin, Greek, and French. He was originally a poor scholar himself. I looked on him with reverence."—Letter to Mrs. Thrane, Edinburgh, August 17, 1779.  

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before he knew that he was a poet. The poet's estimation of him, and the strong outlines of his character, may be collected from the dedication to this gentleman. When the publication was begun, Mr. H. entered very warmly into its interests, and promoted the subscription very extensively. Mr. Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, is a man of worth and taste, of warm affections, and connected with a most respectable circle of friends and relations. It is to this gentleman the 'Cottar's Saturday Night' is inscribed. The poems of my brother, which I have elsewhere mentioned, no sooner came into his hands, than they were quickly known, and well received in the extensive circle of Mr. Aiken's friends, which gave them a sort of currency, necessary in this wise world, even for the good reception of things valuable in themselves. But Mr. Aiken not only admired the poet; as soon as he became acquainted with him, he showed the warmest regard for the man, and did everything in his power to forward his interest and respectability. The 'Epistle to a Young Friend' was addressed to this gentleman's son, Mr. A. H. Aiken, now of Liverpool. He was the eldest of a young family, who were taught to receive my brother with respect, as a man of genius and their father's friend.

The 'Brigs of Ayr' is inscribed to John Ballantine, Esq., banker in Ayr; one of those gentlemen to whom my brother was introduced by Mr. Aiken. He interested himself very warmly in my brother's concerns, and constantly showed the greatest friendship and attachment to him. When the Kilmarnock edition was all sold off, and a considerable demand pointed out the propriety of publishing a second edition, Mr. Wilson, who had printed the first, was asked if he would print the second, and take his chance of being paid from the first sale. This he declined, and when this came to Mr. Ballantine's knowledge, he generously offered to accommodate Robert with the money he might need for that purpose; but advised him to go to Edinburgh, as the fittest place for publishing. When he did go to Edinburgh, his friends advised him to publish again by subscription, so that he did not need to accept this offer. Mr. William Parker, merchant in Kilmarnock, was a subscriber for thirty-five copies of the Kilmarnock edition. The subscription appears not deserving of notice here; but if the comparative obscurity of the poet, in this period, be taken into consideration, it appears to me a greater effort of generosity, than many things which appear more brilliant in my brother's future history.

"Mr. Robert Muir, merchant in Kilmarnock, was one of those friends Robert's poetry had procured him, and one who was dear to his heart. This gentleman had no very great fortune, or long line of dignified ancestry; but what Robert says of Captain Matthew Henderson, might be said of him with great propriety, that 'he held the patent of his honours immediately from Almighty God.' Nature had indeed marked him a gentleman in the most eligible characters. He died while yet a young man, soon after the publication of my brother's first Edinburgh edition. Sir William Cunningham of Robertland paid a very flattering attention, and showed a good deal of friendship for the poet. Before his going to Edinburgh, as well as after, Robert seemed peculiarly pleased with Professor Stewart's friendship and conversation. But of all the friendships which Robert acquired in Ayrshire and elsewhere, none seemed more agreeable to him than that of Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop; nor any which has been more uniformly and constantly exerted in behalf of him and his family, of which, were it proper, I could give many instances. Robert was on the point of setting out for Edinburgh before Mrs. Dunlop had heard of him. About the time of my brother's publishing in Kilmarnock, she had been afflicted with a long and severe illness, which had reduced her mind to the most distressing state of depression. In this situation, a copy of the printed poems was laid on her table by a friend; and happening to open on the 'Cottar's Saturday Night,' she read it over with the greatest pleasure and surprise; the poet's description of the simple cottagers operating on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, expelling the demon ennui, and restoring her to her wonted inward harmony and satisfaction.—Mrs. Dunlop sent off a person express to Mossgiel, distant fifteen or sixteen miles, with a very obliging letter to my brother, desiring him to send half a dozen copies of his poems, if he had them to spare, and
begging he would do her the pleasure of calling at Dunlop House as soon as convenient. This was the beginning of a correspondence which ended only with the poet's life. The last use he made of his pen was writing a short letter to his lady a few days before his death.

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CHAPTER V.

[Arrival in Edinburgh: introduction to the gentry and literati of the capital:—Mackenzie's notice of Burns's poems:—musesy:—notes on Burns in Edinburgh, by Donald Stewart, Prof. Walker, and Sir Walter Scott:—Scottish Literature:—Burns and the Edinburgh philosophers:—diary:—new connections formed in Edinburgh:—conversational powers:—Burns and Dr. Blair:—sarcasm and malapropos remarks:—Edinburgh lawyers:—tavern-life:—William Nicol:—letters:—publication of second edition of poems:—erects tombstone to Ferguson:—leaves Edinburgh.]

Edin: Scotland's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sovereign powers:
From marking wildly-castor'd flowers,
As on the banks of Ayre I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter'd in thy honoured shade.

There is an old Scottish ballad which begins thus:—
As I came in by Glenap,
I met an aged woman,
And she bade me cheer up my heart.
For the best of my days was coming.

This stanza was one of Burns's favourite quotations; and he told a friend\(^1\) many years afterwards, that he remembered humming it to himself, over and over, on his way from Mossgiel to Edinburgh. Perhaps the excellent Blacklock might not have been particularly flattened with the circumstance had it reached his ears.

Although he repaired to the capital with such alertness, solely [as he has represented] in consequence of Blacklock's letter to Lawrie, it appears that he allowed some weeks to pass before he presented himself to the doctor's personal notice.\(^2\) He found several of his old Ayrshire acquaintances established in Edinburgh, and, I suppose, felt himself constrained to give himself up for a brief space to their society. He printed, however, without delay, a prospectus of a second edition of his poems, and being introduced by Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield to the Earl of Galloway, that amiable nobleman easily persuaded Creece, then the chief bookseller in Edinburgh (who had attended his son as travelling-tutor), to undertake the publication. The honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, the most agreeable of companions and the most benign of wits, took him also, as the poet expresses it, "under his wing." The kind Blacklock received him with all the warmth of paternal affection when he did wait on him, and introduced him to Dr. Blair and other eminent literati; his subscription lists were soon filled; Lord Glencairn made interest with the Caledonian Hunt (an association of the most distinguished members of the northern aristocracy), to accept the dedication of the forthcoming edition, and to subscribe individually for copies.\(^3\) Several noblemen, especially of the west of Scotland, came forward with subscription moneys considerably beyond the usual rate. In so small a capital, where everybody knows everybody, that which becomes a favourite topic in one circle of society, soon excites an universal interest; and before Burns had been a fortnight in Edinburgh, we find him writing to his earliest patron, Gavin Hamilton, in these terms:—"For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birthday inscribed among the wonderful

\(^{1}\) David Macalister, Esq., brother to the Laird of Anwell.

\(^{2}\) Burns reached Edinburgh before the end of November; and yet Dr. Lawrie's letter admonishing him to wait on Blacklock is dated December 22.

\(^{3}\) Burns wrote to some of his Ayrshire friends to the effect that the Caledonian Hunt had one and all subscribed for his volume, and that moreover they were to pay one guinea each for it. What the Hunt did was to direct Mr. Hagart . . . to subscribe for one hundred copies, in their name, for which he should pay Mr. Burns twenty-five pounds, upon the publication of his book."
power, and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of the poet," and others as showing "the power of genius, not less admirable in tracing the manners, than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature," and "with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this Heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered condition, had looked on men and manners," the critic concluded with an eloquent appeal in behalf of the poet personally: "To repair," said he, "the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride.

We all know how the serious part of this appeal was ultimately attended to; but, in the meantime, whatever gratifications such a mind as his could derive from the blandishments of the fair, the condescension of the noble, and the flattery of the learned, were plentifully administered to "the lion" of the season.

"I was, sir," thus wrote Burns to one of his Ayrshire patrons, a few days after the Lounger appeared—"I was, when first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation;" and he concludes the same letter with an ominous prayer for "better health and more spirits."

Two or three weeks later, we find him writing as follows:—(January 14, 1787.) I went to a Mason Lodge [St. Andrew's] yesternight, where the M. W. Grand Master Charteris and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different lodges about town were present in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity, among other general toasts gave 'Caledonia and Caledonia's bard, Brother B——,' which rung through the whole assembly with much plied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck; and trembling in every nerve,

1 The Lounger for Saturday, December 9, 1786.

2 Letter to John Ballantine, Banker, Ayr, 13th December, 1786.
made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, one of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well, indeed," which set me something to rights again."

And a few weeks later still, he is thus addressed by one of his old associates who was meditating a visit to Edinburgh:—"By all accounts, it will be a difficult matter to get a sight of you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week beforehand. There are great rumours here of your intimacy with the Duchess of Gordon, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that

Cards to invite, by thousands each night;

and if you had one, there would also, I suppose, he "bribes for your old secretary." I observe you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid, if possible, the fate of poor Ferguson. Quo vadis penna, princeps est—Vulpes post annum, is a good maxim to thrive by. You seemed to despise it while in this country; but, probably, some philosophers in Edinburgh have taught you better sense." 1

In this proud career, however, the popular idol needed no slave to whisper whence he had risen, and whither he was to return in the ebb of the spring-tide of fortune. His "prophetic soul," was probably furnished with a sufficient memento every night—when, from the soft homage of glittering saloons, or the tumultuous applause of convivial assemblies, he made his retreat to the humble garret of a writer's apprentice, a native of Mauchline, and as poor as himself, whose only bed "Caledonia's Bard" was fain to partake throughout this triumphant winter. 2

1 This old associate was Peter Stuart, the editor of the London Evening Star, to which paper Burns sent the "New Psalm." He was originally from Edinburgh, and had been resident in Ayrshire. Referring to him Burns, writing to Mrs. Dunlop, says:—"You must know that the publisher of one of the most blaspheinous party London newspapers is an acquaintance of mine, and, as I am a little tinctured with the 'Buff and Blue myself, I now and then help him to a stanza."

2 Mr. Richmond of Mauchline told me that Burns spent the first winter of his residence in Edinburgh in his lodgings. They slept in the same bed, and had only one room, for which they paid three shillings a week. It was in the house of a Mrs. Catrach, Baxter's Close, Lawmarket, first scale-stair on the left hand in going down, first door in the stair."

Crawf's MSS. [What is described in the text as

He bore all his honours in a manner worthy of himself; and of this the testimonies are so numerous, that the only difficulty is that of expression. "The attentions he received," says Mr. Dugald Stewart, "from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance."

Professor Walker, who met him for the first time early in the same season, at breakfast in Dr. Blacklock's house, has thus recorded his impressions:—"I was not much struck with his first appearance, as I had previously heard it described. His person, though strong and well knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, was still rather coarse in its outline. His stature, from want of setting up, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His motions were firm and decision; and though without any pretensions to grace, were at the same time so free from clownish restraint, as to show that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast, which is most frequent among the upper ranks, but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind; and would have been singularly expressive, under the management of one who could employ it with more art, for the purpose of expression."

"He was plainly, but properly dressed, in a midway between the holiday costume of a farmer, and that of the company with which he now associated. His black hair, without powder, at a time when it was very generally worn, was tied behind, and spread
upon his forehead. Upon the whole, from his person, physiognomy, and dress, had I
met him near a seaport, and been required to
guess his condition, I should have probably
conjectured him to be the master of a mer-
chant vessel of the most respectable class.
"In no part of his manner was there the
slightest degree of affectation, nor could a
stranger have suspected, from anything in his
behaviour or conversation, that he had been
for some months the favourite of all the fa-
sionable circles of a metropolis.
"In conversation he was powerful. His
conceptions and expressions were of corres-
dponding vigour, and on all subjects were as
remote as possible from commonplace. Though
somewhat authoritative, it was in a way which
gave little offence, and was readily imputed
to his inexperience in those modes of soothing
dissent and softening assertion, which are im-
portant characteristics of polished manners.
After breakfast I requested him to communi-
cate some of his unpublished pieces, and he
recited his farewell song to the 'Banks of Ayr,'
introducing it with a description of the cir-
cumstances in which it was composed, more
striking than the poem itself.
"I paid particular attention to his recitation,
which was plain, slow, articulate, and forcible,
but without any eloquence or art. He did
not always lay the emphasis with propriety,
but did he humour the sentiment by the
variations of his voice. He was standing
during the time, with his face towards the
window, to which, and not to his auditors, he
directed his eye—thus depriving himself of
any additional effect which the language of
his composition might have borrowed from
the language of his countenance. In this he
resembled the generality of singers in ordinary
company, who, to shun any charge of affecta-
tion, withdraw all meaning from their features,
and lose the advantage by which vocal per-
formers on the stage augment the impression,
and give energy to the sentiment of the
song.

"The day after my first introduction to
Burns, I sipped in company with him at Dr.
Blair's. The other guests were very few; and
as each had been invited chiefly to have an
opportunity of meeting with the poet, the
doctor endeavoured to draw him out, and to
make him the central figure of the group.
Though he therefore furnished the greatest
proportion of the conversation, he did no
more than what he saw evidently was ex-
pected."

To these reminiscences I shall now add
those of one who is likely to be heard unwillingly
on no subject; and—young as he was
in 1786—on few subjects, I think, with
greater interest than the personal appearance
and conversation of Robert Burns. The fol-
lowing is an extract from a letter of Sir
Walter Scott:

"As for Burns, I may truly say, Virgilian
cud tantum. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786—7,
when he came first to Edinburgh, but had
sense and feeling enough to be much inter-
ested in his poetry, and would have given the
world to know him; but I had very little
acquaintance with any literary people, and
less with the gentry of the west country, the
two sets that he most frequented. Mr.
Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of
my father's. He knew Burns, and promised
to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had
no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I
might have seen more of this distinguished
man. As it was, I saw him one day at the
late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where
there were several gentlemen of literary repu-
tation, among whom I remember the cele-
lrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we
youngsters sate silent, looked, and listened.
The only thing I remember which was re-
markable in Burns's manner, was the effect
produced upon him by a print of Burnaby's,
representing a soldier lying dead on the snow,
his dog sitting in misery on one side—on
the other, his widow, with a child in her arms.
These lines were written beneath:

'Cold on Canadian hills, or Moiden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain —
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew.
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad preage of his future years,
The child of misery baptised in tears.'

"Burns seemed much affected by the print,
or rather the ideas which it suggested to his
mind. He actually shed tears. He asked
whom the lines were, and it chanced that
nobody but myself remembered that they

1 Morison's Burns, vol. i. pp. lixi. lxii.
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS. 

occurred in a half-forgotten poem of Lushorne's, called "Justice of Peace." I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of more civility, I then received, and still recall, with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manner rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the Old Scotch school, i.e., none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the doney, who holds his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally glowed) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect freedom, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary encomiums have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility, as his models; there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate."

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the Laird. I do not speak in malum partem, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that this address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

Darkly as the career of Burns was destined to terminate, there can be no doubt that he made his first appearance at a period highly favourable for his reception as a British, and especially as a Scottish poet. Nearly forty years had elapsed since the death of Thomson; Collins, Gray, Goldsmith, had successively disappeared; Dr. Johnson had belied the rich promise of his early appearance, and confined himself to prose, and Cowper had hardly begun to be recognized as having any considerable pretensions to fill the long-vacant throne in England. At home — without derogation from the merits either of "Douglas" or the "Minstrel" — he said — men must have gone back at least three centuries to find a Scottish poet at all entitled to be considered as of that high order to which the generous criticism of MacKenzie at once admitted "the Ayshire Ploughman." Of the form and garb of his composition, much unquestionably and avowedly was derived from his more immediate predecessors, Ramsay and Ferguson; but there was a bold mastery of hand in his picturesque descriptions, to produce anything equal to

[1] That Burns's personal appearance was one to attract attention, we have ample record. It is recorded in Cockburn's Life of Jeffrey that "one day, in the winter of 1786-87, Jeffrey was standing on the High Street, staring at a man whose appearance struck him; a person standing at a shop door tapped him on the shoulder, and said, 'Aye, ladle: ye may weel look at that man! That's Robert Burns.' He never saw Burns again."
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

which it was necessary to recall the days of “Christ’s Kirk on the Green,” and “Peebles to the Muir”; and in his more solemn pieces, a depth of inspiration, and a massive energy of language, to which the dialect of his country had been a stranger, at least since “Dunbar the Mackar.” The muse of Scotland have never indeed been silent; and the ancient minstrelsy of the land, of which a slender portion had as yet been committed to the safeguard of the press, was handed from generation to generation, and preserved, in many a fragment, faithful images of the peculiar tenderness, and peculiar humour, of the national fancy and character—precious representations, which Burns himself never surpassed in his happiest efforts. But these were fragments; and, with a scanty handful of exceptions, the best of them, at least of the serious kind, were very ancient. Among the numberless effusions of the Jacobite Muse, valuable as we now consider them for the record of manners and events, it would be difficult to point out half a dozen strains, worthy, for poetical excellence alone, of a place among the old chivalrous ballads of the Southern, or even of the Highland Border. Generations had passed away since any Scottish poet had appealed to the sympathies of his countrymen in a lofty Scottish strain.

The dialect itself had been hardly dealt with. “It is my opinion,” said Dr. Geddes, “that those who, for almost a century past, have written in Scotch, Allan Ramsay not excepted, have not duly discriminated the genuine idiom from its vulgarisms. They seem to have acted a similar part to certain pretended imitations of Spenser and Milton, who fondly imagine that they are copying from those great models, when they only mimic their antique mode of spelling, their obsolete terms, and their irregular constructions.” And although I cannot well guess what the doctor considered as the irregular constructions of Milton, there can be no doubt of the general justice of his observations. Ramsay and Ferguson were both men of humble condition, the latter of the meanest, the former of no very elegant habits; and the dialect which had once pleased the ears of kings, who themselves did not disdain to display its powers and elegancies in verse, did not come untarnished through their hands. Fergusson, who was entirely town-bred, smells more of the Cowgate than of the country; and pleasing as Ramsay’s rustics are, he appears rather to have observed the surface of rural manners, in casual excursions to Penycuik and the Hunter’s Tryst, than to have expressed the results of intimate knowledge and sympathy. His dialect was a somewhat incongruous mixture of the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire and the Luckenbooths; and he could neither write English verses, nor engrave English phraseology on his Scotch, without betraying a lamentable want of skill in the use of his instruments. It was reserved for Burns to interpret the utmost soul of the Scottish genius in all its moods, and in verse exquisitely and intensly Scotch, without degrading either his sentiments or his language with one touch of vulgarity. Such is the delicacy of native taste, and the power of a truly masculine genius.

This is the more remarkable, when we consider that the dialect of Burns’s native district is, in all respects but one, a peculiarly offensive one—far removed from that of the favoured districts in which the ancient minstrelsy appears, with rare exceptions, to have been produced. Even in the elder days, it seems to have been proverbial for its coarseness; and the Covenanters were not likely to mend it. The few poets whom the West of Scotland had produced in the old time, were all men of high condition; and who, of course, used the language, not of their own villages, but of Holyrood. Their productions, moreover, in so far as they have been produced, had nothing to do with the peculiar character and feelings of the men of the West. As Burns himself has said,—“It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, &c., there is scarcely an old song or tune, which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, those counties.”

The history of Scottish literature, from the

1 Dunbar, among other sarcasms on his antagonist Kennedy, says:—

I bait on me a pair of Lothian hogs.
Salt faither Ingols-making, and mast perfyt.
Than than can mangle with the Carrik hogs.

2 Such as Kennedy, Shaw, Montgomery, and, more lately, Hamilton of Giffordfield,

Who broke the branches of Arieel long round
The plaintive dirge that mourns his favourite hound.

unless otherwise stated, has been sourced from individual pages, without any further work or processing. The document is in a natural language format, with no evidence of hallucination. The page contains a narrative on the life and work of Robert Burns, focusing on his dialect and its usage. The text is a passage from a biography, discussing Burns's contributions to Scottish literature and his ability to reflect the unique characteristics of his native dialect. The passage also briefly mentions other Scottish poets and their regional influences. The text includes examples of Burns's work and references to historical contexts, such as the Covenanters and the Jacobite era, to illustrate the cultural and linguistic landscape of Burns's time. The document is well-structured, with a clear narrative flow, and is likely to be part of a larger work focusing on the life and impact of Robert Burns.
union of the crowns to that of the kingdoms, has not yet been made the subject of any separate work at all worthy of its importance; may, however much we are indebted to the learned labours of Pinkerton, Irving, and others, enough of the general obscurity of which Warton complained still continues, to the no small discredit of so accomplished a nation. But how miserably the literature of the country was affected by the loss of the court under whose immediate patronage it had, in almost all preceding times, found a measure of protection that will ever do honour to the memory of the unfortunate house of Stuart, appears to be indicated with sufficient plainness in the single fact, that no man can point out any Scottish author of the first rank in all the long period which intervened between Buchanan and Hume. The removal of the chief nobility and gentry, consequent on the legislative union, appeared to destroy our last hopes as a separate nation, possessing a separate literature of our own; nay, for a time to have all but extinguished the flame of intellectual exertion and ambition. Long torn and harassed by religious and political feuds, this people had at last heard, as many believed, the sentence of irreremediable degradation pronounced by the lips of their own prince and parliament. The universal spirit of Scotland was humbled; the unhappy insurrections of 1715 and 1745, revealed the full extent of her internal disunion; and England took, in some respects, merciless advantage of the fallen.

Time, however, passed on; and Scotland, recovering at last from the blow which had stunned her energies, began to vindicate her pretensions, in the only departments which had been left open to her, with a zeal and a success which will ever distinguish one of the brightest pages of her history. Deprived of every national honour and distinction which it was possible to remove—all the high branches of external ambition toppled off—she sunk at last, as men thought, effectually into a province, willing to take law with passive submission, in letters as well as polity, from her powerful sister—the old kingdom revived suddenly from her stupor, and once more asserted her name in reckoning nations, which England was compelled not only to hear, but to applaud, and "with all Europe rang from side to side," at the moment when a national poet came forward to profit by the reflux of a thousand half-forgotten sympathies—amidst the full joy of a national pride, revived and re-established beyond the dream of hope.

It will always reflect honour on the galaxy of eminent men of letters, who, in their various departments, shed lustre at that period on the name of Scotland, that they suffered no pedantic prejudices to interfere with their reception of Burns. Had he not appeared personally among them, it may be reasonably doubted whether this would have been so. They were men, generally speaking, of very social habits; living together in a small capital, nay, almost all of them in or about one street, maintaining friendly intercourse continually; not a few of them considerably addicted to the pleasures which have been called, by way of excellence I presume, convivial. Burns's poetry might have procured him access to these circles; but it was the extraordinary resources he displayed in conversation, the strong vigorous sagacity of his observations on life and manners, the splendid of his wit, and the glowing energy of his eloquence when his feelings were stirred, that made him the object of serious admiration among those practised masters of the art of talk. There were several of them who probably adopted in their hearts the opinion of Newton, that "poetry is ingenious nonsense." Adam Smith, for one, could have had no very ready respect at the service of such an unproductive labourer as a maker of Scottish ballads; but the statesmen of these philosophers had enough to do to maintain the attitude of equality when brought into personal contact with Burns's gigantic understanding; and every one of them, whose impressions on the subject have been recorded, agrees in pronouncing his conversation to have been the most remarkable thing about him.

And yet it is amusing enough to trace the lingering reluctance of some of those polished scholars, about admitting, even to themselves, in his absence, what it is certain they all felt sufficiently when they were actually in his presence. It is difficult, for example, to read without a smile that letter of Mr. Dugald Stewart, in which he describes himself and Mr. Alison as being surprised to discover that Burns, after reading the latter author's elegant...
**Essay on Taste,** had really been able to form some shrewd enough notion of the general principles of the association of ideas.

Burns would probably have been more satisfied with himself in these learned societies, had he been less addicted to giving free utterance in conversation to the very feelings which formed the noblest inspirations of his poetry. His sensibility was as truly exquisite as his sense was masculine and solid; and he seems to have, ere long, suspected that the professional metaphysicians who applauded his rapturous bursts, surveyed them in reality with something of the same feeling which may be supposed to attend a skilful surgeon’s inspection of a curious specimen of morbid anatomy. Why should he lay his immortal heart thus open to dissectors, who took special care to keep the knife from their own breasts? The secret blush that overspread his haughty countenance, when such suggestions occurred to him in his solitary hours, may be traced in the opening lines of a diary which he began to keep ere he had been long in Edinburgh.

"April 9, 1787. As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter to Mr. Fulgrave, that, ‘half a word fixed, upon or near the spot, is worth a cartload of recollection.’ I don’t know how it is with the world in general, but with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me, some one to be grave with me, some one to please me and help my discrimination, with his or her own remark, and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The world is so buried with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a snare, or branch of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, withstanding all the sentimental flights of nonsensical philosophy of moralists, that we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence, to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repelling his confidence.

"For these reasons, I am determined to make these pages my confident. I will sketch out every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes, and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, without feud or favour.—Where I hit on anything clever, my own applause will, in some measure, feast my vanity; and, begging Patrons’ and Aelathes’ pardon, I think I hold a lock and key a security, at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever."

And the same lurking thorn of suspicion peeps out elsewhere in this complaint: “I know not how it is; I find I can win liking—but not respect.”

"Burns," says a great living poet, in commenting on the free style in which Dr. Currie did not hesitate to expose some of the weaker parts of his behaviour, very soon after the grave had closed on him,—"Burns was a man of extraordinary genius, whose birth, education, and employments had placed and kept him in a situation far below that in which the writers and readers of expensive volumes are usually found. Critics upon works of fiction have laid down this rule, that remoteness of place, in fixing the choice of a subject, and in prescribing the mode of treating it, is equal in effect to distance of time; restrains may be thrown off accordingly. Judges then of the delusions which artificial distinctions impose, when to a man like Dr. Currie, writing with views so honourable, the social condition of the individual of whom he was treating, could seem to place him at such a distance from the exalted reader, that ceremony might be disregarded with him, and his memory sacrificed, as it were, almost without compunction. This is indeed to be crushed beneath the familiar weight.”

1 Burns’s exact words are:—"I don’t well know what is the reason of it, but some how or other though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved; yet I never could get the art of commanding respect."

2 Wordsworth’s letter to a friend of Burns.
It would be idle to suppose that the feelings here ascribed, and justly, no question, to the amiable and benevolent Currie, did not often find their way into the bosoms of those persons of superior condition and attainments, with whom Burns associated at the period when he first emerged into the blaze of reputation; and what found its way into men's bosoms, was not likely to avoid betraying itself to the perspicacious glance of the proud peasant. How perpetually he was alive to the dread of being looked down upon as a man, even by those who most zealously applauded the works of his genius, might perhaps be traced through the whole sequence of his letters. When writing to men of high station, at least, he preserves, in every instance, the attitude of self-defence. But it is only in his own secret tables that we have the fibres of his heart laid bare, and the cancer of this jealousy is seen distinctly at its painful work; 

There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius, nay of avowed worth, is received everywhere, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving honour to whom honour is due; he meets, at a great man's table, a Squire something, or a Sir somebody; he knows the 

The noble landlord, at heart, gives the hard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes, beyond, perhaps, any one at table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an eight-day time, and whose heart is not worth three furtherings, meet with attention and notice, that are withheld from the sons of genius and poverty?

"The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention —engrossing attention—one day, to the only blockhead at table (the whole company consisted of his lordship, duncegate, and myself), that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting—God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of the throes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues.

"With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare, or still more, when he descends from his pinnacle, and meets me on equal ground in conversation, my heart overflows with what is called liking. When he neglects me for the mere careness of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, What do I care for him, or his pomp either?"

"It is not easy," says Burns, attempting to be more philosophical—"it is not easy forming an exact judgment of any one; but, in my opinion, Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his own acquaintances; but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing, and a critic of the first, the very first rank, in prose; even in poetry, a hard of Nature's making can alone take the pas of him. He has a heart not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is a truly worthy and most respectable character."

"Once," says a nice speculator on the "folly of the wise,"—"once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the inscrutable humours, the delicacy of soul, even to its shadowiness, from the warm bosoms of Burns, when he began a diary of his heart—a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible to get through it." This most curious document, it is to be observed, has not yet been 'visited entire. Another generation will, no doubt, see the whole of the confession."

1 D'Israeli on the Literary Character, p. 126.
2 This common-place book was not published in its entirety till 1850, when it appeared in Macaulay's
what has already been given, it may be surmised, indicates sufficiently the complexity of Burns's prevailing moods, during his moments of retirement, at this interesting period of his history. It was in such a mood (they recurced often enough) that he thus reproached "Nature—partial nature:"

Then give the rose his blast, the skull his shell,
The envenom'd wasp victorious guards his cell:
But, oh! then bitter stepmother, and hard.
To thy poor fainest naked child, the lust

In naked feeling and in asking pride,
He bears the unbroken blast from every side.

There was probably no blast that pierced this haughty soul so sharply as the contumely of condescension.

"One of the poet's remarks," as Cromeck tells us, "when he first came to Edinburgh, was, that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference—that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and enlivened by science, he had found much observation, and much intelligence—but a refined and accomplished woman was a thing almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea." To be pleased, is the old and the best receipt how to please; and there is abundant evidence that Burns's success among the high-born ladies of Edinburgh, was much greater than among the "stately patricians," as he calls them, of his own sex. The vivid expression of one of them has become proverbial—that she never met with a man, "whose conversation so completely set her off her feet;" and Sir Walter Scott, in his reference to the testimony of the late Duchess of Gordon, has no doubt indicated the twofold source of the fascination. But even here, he was destined to feel something of the recklessness of fashion. He confessed to one of his old friends, before the season was over, that some who had crossed

Magazine. Notwithstanding the fact that Carrick had published extracts from it, Allan Cunningham and Cromeck alleged that it was stolen from Burt's writings in the latter part of 1787 or beginning of 1788. For many years the MS. lay, unregarded in the missing commonplace book, in the possession of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. Alexander Smith made use of it in 1812, but described it as a "volume of early scraps understood to have been presented by the poet to Mrs. Dunlop."

1 Second Epistle to Graham of Fintry.

him the most zealously, no longer seemed to know him, when he bowed in passing their carriage, and many more acknowledged his salute but coldly.

It is but too true, that ere this season was over Burns had formed connections in Edinburgh which could not have been regarded with much approbation by the eminent literary in whose society his debut had made so powerful an impression. But how much of the blame, if serious blame, indeed, there was in the matter, ought to attach to his own fastidious jealousy—how much to the mere caprice of human favour, we have scanty means of ascertaining: no doubt, both had their share; and it is also sufficiently apparent that there were many points in Burns's conversational habits, which men, accustomed to the delicate observances of refined society, might be more willing to tolerate under the first excitement of personal curiosity, than from any very deliberate estimate of the claims of such a genius, under such circumstances developed. He by no means restricted his sarcastic observations on those whom he encountered in the world to the confidence of his note-book; but startled polite ears with the utterance of audacious epigrams, far too witty not to obtain general circulation in so small a society as that of the Northern capital, far too bitter not to produce deep resentment, far too numerous not to spread fear almost as widely as admiration. Even when nothing was farther from his thoughts than to inflict pain, his ardour often carried him headlong into sad scrapes. Witness, for example, the anecdote given by Professor Walker, of his entering into a long discussion of the mutual extravagant of the popular preachers of the day, at the table of Dr. Blair, and enthusiastically avowing his low opinion of all the rest in comparison with Dr. Blair's own colleague and most formidable rival—a man, certainly endowed with extraordinary graces

of very little power, but, with his own straightforwardness, set the fashion in all portions of polite society. He was introduced into the Literary Club by Professor Walker, as the effect of his being invited by the Rev. Mr. Scott, during the latter's residence in Edinburgh, and under his influence was induced to avoid the Society of the Sons of the Clergy. He was introduced to Mr. Burns by Mr. Wilson, and Dr. Blair described him as a "stranger, who gave such an example of grace in all his deportment as to make the old established society mutter and exchange the opinions which M. de St. Simon is said to have addressed to the Pope, 'I am surprised that such a man can ever have existed."

As he lived longer than his contemporaries, we have the remarkable account of the poet's acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Greenfield, who was professor of rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh, and became colleague to Dr. Blair in Feb., 1787. He had the degree of D.D. afterwards conferred upon him, and in 1786 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly. He was deposed from the ministry for "sandalous conduct" in 1789, and died abroad in 1827. The Rev. Robert Walker, whose name was given by Lockhart in a note as the colleague referred to, died in 1833, three years before Burns saw Edinburgh."
of voice and manner, a generous and amiable strain of feeling, and a copious flow of language; but having no pretensions either to the general accomplishments for which Blair was honoured in a most accomplished society, or to the polished elegance which he first introduced into the eloquence of the Scottish pulpit. Professor Walker well describes the unpleasing effects of such an escapade: the conversation during the rest of the evening, "labouring under that compulsory effort which was unavoidable, while the thoughts of all were full of the only subject on which it was improper to speak." Burns showed his good sense by making no effort to repair this blunder; but years afterwards, he confessed that he could never recall it without exquisite pain. Mr. Walker properly says, it did honour to Dr. Blair that his kindness remained totally unaltered by this occurrence; but the professor would have found nothing to admire in that circumstance, had he not been well aware of the rarity of such good-nature among the genus irritabile of authors, orators, and wits.

A specimen (which some will think worse, some better) is thus recorded by Cromek:

"At a private breakfast, in a literary circle of Edinburgh, the conversation turned on the poetical merit and pathos of Gray's Elegy, a poem of which he was enthusiastically fond. A clergyman present, remarkable for his love of paradox, and for his eccentric notions upon every subject, distinguished himself by an injudicious and ill-timed attack on this exquisite poem, which Burns, with generous warmth for the reputation of Gray, manfully defended. As the gentleman's remarks were rather general than specific, Burns urged him to bring forward the passages which he thought exceptional. He made several attempts to quote the poem, but always in a blundering, inaccurate manner. Burns bore all this for a good while with his usual good-natured forbearance, till at length, goaded by the fastidious criticisms and wretched quibblings of his opponent, he roused himself, and with an eye flashing contempt and indignation, and with great vehemence of gesticulation, he thus addressed the old critic: 'Sir, I now perceive a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and after all be a d—d blockhead!';"—so far, Mr. Cromek; and all this was to a clergyman, and at breakfast. Even to the ladies, when he suspected them of wishing to make a show of him, he could not help administering a little of his village discipline. A certain stately preacher sent to invite him, without, as he fancied, having sufficiently cultivated his acquaintance beforehand, to her assembly. "Mr. Burns," answered the bard, "will do himself the honour of waiting on the — of —, provided her ladyship will invite also the learned pig."—Such an animal was then exhibiting in the Grassmarket.

While the second edition of poems was passing through the press, Burns was favoured with many critical suggestions and amendments; to one of which only he attended. Blair, reading over with him, or hearing him recite (which he delighted at all times in doing) his "Holy Fair," stopped him at the stanza—

Now a the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation,
For Moodie speaks the holy door
With tidings o' salvation.

"Nay," said the doctor, "read damnation." Burns improved the wit of the verse, undoubtedly, by adopting the emendation; but he gave another strange specimen of want of tact, when he insisted that Dr. Blair, one of the most scrupulous observers of clerical propriety, should permit him to acknowledge the obligation in a note.

But to pass from these trifles—it needs no effort of imagination to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation, a most thorough conviction, that in a society of the most eminent men of his nation, he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the hon noms of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated
with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the three-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble—nay, to tremble visibly—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and, last and probably worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of cultivating societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had, ere long, no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.

The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circles Burns figured at his outset, with at least as much success as among the professional literati, were a very different race of men from those: they would neither, I take it, have pardoned rudeness, nor been alarmed by wit. But being, in those days, with scarcely an exception, members of the landed aristocracy of the country, and forming by far the most influent body (as indeed they still do) in the society of Scotland, they were, perhaps, as proud a set of men as ever enjoyed the tranquil pleasures of unquestioned superiority. What their haughtiness, as a body, was, may be guessed, when we know that inferior birth was reckoned a fair and legitimate ground for excluding any man from the bar. In one remarkable instance, about this very time, a man of very extraordinary talents and accomplishments was chiefly opposed in a long and painful struggle for admission, and, in reality, for no reasons but those I have been alluding to, by gentlemen who, in the sequel, said at the very head of the Whig party in Edinburgh; and the same aristocratical prejudice has, within the memory of the present generation, kept more persons of eminent qualifications in the back-ground, for a season, than any English reader would easily believe. To this body belonged nineteen out of twenty of those "patricians," whose stateliness Burns so long remembered and so bitterly resented. It might, perhaps, have been well for him had stateliness been the worst fault of their manners. Wine-bibbing appears to be in most regions a favorable indulgence with those whose brains and lungs are subjected to the severe exercises of legal study and forensic practice. To this day, more traces of these old habits linger about the Inns of Court than in any other section of London. In Dublin and Edinburgh, the barristers are even now eminently convivial bodies of men; but among the Scotch lawyers of the time of Burns, the principle of jovity was indeed in its "high and pulpy state." He partook largely in these tavern scenes of audacious hilarity, which then souther, as a matter of course, the arid labours of the northern noblesse de la rabe (so they are well called in Redgauntlet), and of which we are favoured with a specimen in the "High Jinks" chapter of Guy Mannering.

The tavern-life is nowadays nearly extinct everywhere; but it was then in full vigour in Edinburgh, and there can be no doubt that Burns rapidly familiarized himself with it during his residence. He had, after all, tasted but rarely of such excesses while in Ayrshire. So little are we to consider his "Scotch Drink," and other jovial strains of the early period, as conveying anything like a fair notion of his actual course of life, that "Auld Naeuse Timnock," or "Dosie Nanie," the Marshine handfy, is known to have expressed, amusingly enough, her surprise at the style in which she found her name celebrated in the Kilmanock edition, saying, "that Robert Burns might be a very clever lad, but he certainly was regardless, as, to the best of her belief, he had never taken three half muttikins in her house in all his life!" And in addition to Gilbert's testimony to the same purpose, we have on record that of Mr. Archibald Bruce (qualified by Heron, "a gentleman of great worth and discernment"), that he had observed Burns closely during that period of his life, and seen him steadily resist such solicitations and allurements to convivial enjoyments, as hardly any other person could have withstood.

1 Mr. R. Chambers's MS. notes, taken during a tour in Ayrshire.
The unfortunate Heron knew Burns well; and himself mingled largely in some of the scenes to which he adverts in the following strong language:—"The enticements of pleasure too often unman our virtuous resolution, even while we wear the air of rejecting them, with a stern brow. We resist, and resist, and resist; but, at last, suddenly turn, and passionately embrace the enchantress. The bucks of Edinburgh accomplished, in regard to Burns, that in which the hoar of Ayrshire had failed. After residing some months in Edinburgh, he began to estrange himself, not altogether, but in some measure, from graver friends. Too many of his hours were now spent at the tables of persons who delighted to urge conviviality to drunkenness—in the tavern and in the brothel." 1

It would be idle now to attempt passing over these things in silence; but it could serve no good purpose to dwell on them.

During this winter Burns continued, as has been mentioned, to lodge with John Richmond; and we have the authority of this early friend of the poet for the statement, that while he did so, "he kept good hours." 2 He removed afterwards to the house of Mr. William Nicol (one of the teachers of the High School of Edinburgh), on the Buccleuch road, and this change is, I suppose, to be considered as a symptom that the keeping of good hours was beginning to be irksome. 3 Nicol was a man of quick parts and considerable learning, who had risen from a rank as humble as Burns'; from the beginning an enthusiastic admirer, and, ere long, a constant associate of the poet, and a most dangerous associate; for, with a warm heart, the man united a fierce irascible temper, a scorn of many of the decencies of life, a noisy contempt of religion, at least of the religious institutions of his country, and a wanton propensity for the bottle. He was one of those who would fain believe themselves to be men of genius; and that genius is a sufficient apology for trampling under foot all the old vulgar rules of prudence and sobriety,—being on both points equally mistaken. Of Nicol's letters to Burns, and about him, I have seen many that have never been, and probably that never will be, printed—cumbrous and pedantic effusions, exhibiting nothing that one can imagine to have been pleasing to the poet, except what was probably enough to redeem all imperfections—namely, a rapturous admiration of his genius. This man, nevertheless, was, I suspect, very far from being an unfavourable specimen of the society to whom Heron thus alludes:—"He (the poet) suffered himself to be surrounded by a race of miserable beings, who were proud to tell that they had been in company with Burns, and had seen Burns as loose and as foolish as themselves. He was not yet irrecoverably lost to temperance and moderation; but he was already too much captivated with these wanton revels, to be ever more won back to a faithful attachment to their more sober charms." Heron adds—"He now also began to contract something of new arrogance in conversation. Accustomed to be, among his favourite associates, what is vulgarly, but expressively, called the cock of the company, he could severely refrain from indulging in similar freedom and dictatorial decision of talk, even in the presence of persons who could less patiently endure his presumption;—"3 an account or fictitious probable, and which sufficiently tallies with some hints in Mr. Dugald Stewart's description of the poet's manners, as he first observed him at Catrine, and with one or two anecdotes already cited from Walker and Cromek.

Of these failings, and indeed of all Burns's failings, it may be safely asserted, that there was more in his history to account for and apologize for them, than can be alleged in regard to almost any other great man's imperfections. We have seen, how, even in his earliest days, the strong thist of distinction glowed within him—how in his first and rudest rhymes he sang

— to be great is charming;

1 See Burns's allusions to Heron's own habits, in the Poetical Epistle to Blacklock, 1789.
2 Heron, p. 27.
3 Notes by Mr. R. Chambers.
4 Chambers explains that it was on account of his friend Richmond having in the interval between Burns's departure from Edinburgh (May 4th) and his return (August 7th) taken in another fellow lodger, that Burns was obliged to accept temporary accommodation in the house of his friend Nicol, who was to be his companion in the contemplated Highland tour.
and we have also seen, that the display of talent in conversation was the first means of distinction that occurred to him. It was by that talent that he first attracted notice among his fellow-peasants, and after he mingled with the first Scotchmen of his time, this talent was still that which appeared the most astonishing of all he possessed. What wonder that he should delight in exerting it where he could exert it the most freely—where there was no check upon a tongue that had been accustomed to revel in the license of village-mastery? where, especially, however bold, was sure to be received with triumphant applause—where there were no clains. rival his—no proud brows to convey rebuke, above all, perhaps, no grave eyes to convey regret? "Nonsense," says Cumberland, "talked by men of wit and understanding in the hours of relaxation, is of the very finest essence of conviviality; but it implies a trust in the company not always to be risked." It was little in Burns's character to submit to nice and scrupulous rules, when he knew, that by crossing the street, he could find society who would applaud him the more, the more heroically all such rules were disregarded; and he who had passed from the company of the jolly bachelors of Tarbolton and Mauchline, to that of the eminent Scotchmen whose names were honoured all over the civilized world, without discovering any difference that appeared worthy of much consideration, was well prepared to say, with the prince of all free-speakers and free-livers, "I will take mine ease in mine inn!"

But these, assuredly, were not the only feelings that influenced Burns; in his own letters, written during his stay in Edinburgh, we have the best evidence to the contrary. He shrewdly suspected, from the very beginning, that the personal note of the great was, and the illusions was not to be as lasting as it was eager: he foresaw, that sooner or later he was destined to revert to societies less elevated above the pretensions of his birth; and, though his jealous pride might induce him to record his suspicions in language rather too strong than too weak, it is quite impossible to read what he wrote without believing that a sincere distrust lay raking at the roots of his heart, all the while that he appeared to be surrounded with an atmosphere of joy and hope.

On the 15th of January, 1787, we find him thus addressing his kind patroness, Mrs. Dunlop:

"You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Ah! madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity, and crude and unpolished ideas on my head, I assure you, madam, I do not assemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede perhaps as far below the mark of truth. . . . I mention this once for all, to disburden my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say any more about it. But, 'When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,' you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unmixed with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve."

And about the same time to Dr. Moore:

"The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is to please my compatriots, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any, writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of
thought... I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit, I do not deny: but I see, with frequent wranglings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

And lastly, April the 23d, 1787, we have the following passage in a letter also to Dr. Moore:—"I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight. I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood more or less, to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a constitution to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles." One word more on the subject which introduced these quotations:—Mr. Dugald Stewart, no doubt, hints at what was a common enough complaint among the elegant literati of Edinburgh, when he alludes, in his letter to Currie, to the "not very select society" in which Burns indulged himself. But two points still remain somewhat doubtful: namely, whether, show and marvel of the season as he was, the "Ayrshire ploughman" really did it in his power to live always in society which Mr. Stewart would have considered as "very select;" and secondly, whether, in so doing, he could have failed to chill the affection of those humble Ayrshire friends, who, having shared with him all that they possessed on his first arrival in the metropolis, faithfully and fondly adhered to him, after the spring-tide of fashionable favour did, as he foresaw, it would do, "recede;" and, moreover, perhaps, to provoke, among the higher circles themselves, criticisms more distasteful to his proud stomach than any probable consequences of the course of conduct which he actually pursued.

The second edition of Burns's poems was published early in March, by Creech: there were no less than 1500 subscribers, many of whom paid more than the shop-price of the volume. Although, therefore, the final settlement with the bookseller did not take place till nearly a year after, Burns now found himself in possession of a considerable sum of ready money; and the first impulse of his mind was to visit some of the classic scenes of Scottish history and romance. He had as yet seen but a small part of his own country, and this by no means among the most interesting of her districts—until, indeed, his own poetry made it equal, on that score, to any other. The magnificent scenery of the capital itself had filled him with extraordinary delight. In the spring mornings, he walked very often to the top of Arthur's Seat, and lying prostrate on the turf, surveyed the rising of the sun out of the sea, in silent admiration; his chosen companion on such occasions being that ardent lover of nature and learned artist, Mr. Alexander Nasmyth. The Braid Hills, to the south of Edinburgh, were also among his favourite walks; and it was in some of these that Mr. Dugald Stewart tells us "he charmed him still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company."

"He was," adds the professor, "insensibly fond of the beauties of nature, and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect on one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained."

"The appellation of a Scottish bard is far my highest pride: to continue to deserve it, is my exalted ambition. Scottish scenes, and Scottish story, are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, implanted with the routine of business, for which, Heaven knows, I am small enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles, to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers, and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes. But these are Iliopian thoughts."—Letter to Mrs. Dabney, Edinburgh, 22d March, 1787.

It was to this artist that Burns sat for the portrait engraved in Creech's edition, and since repeated so often, that it must be familiar to all readers. Nasmyth also prepared a cabinet portrait of the poet at full length as he appeared in Edinburgh, in the first heyday of his reputation; dressed in tight jockey buttons, very tight buckskin breeches, according to the fashion of the day, and (Jacobite as he was) in what was considered the "Fox"-livery, viz., a blue coat and buff waistcoat, with broad blue stripes. The sketch, an engraving from which appeared as title-page to the first editions of Lockhart's Life, was said by surviving friends to be a very lively representation of the bard as he first attracted public notice on the streets of Edinburgh.
Burns was far too busy with society and observation to find time for poetical composition, during his first residence in Edinburgh. Creecy's edition included some pieces of great merit, which had not been previously printed; but, with the exception of the "Address to Edinburgh," which is chiefly remarkable for the grand stanzas on the Castle and Holyrood, with which it concludes, all of these appear to have been written before he left Ayrshire. Several of them, indeed, were very early productions. The most important additions were, "Death and Doctor Hornbook," the "Brig of Ayr," the "Ordination," and the "Address to the Unco Guild." In this edition also, "When Guilford gird our Pilots round," made its first appearance, on reading which, Dr. Blair uttered his pithy criticism, "Burns's politics always smell of the smithy."

It ought not to be omitted, that our poet bestowed one of the first-fruits of this edition in the erection of a decent tombstone over the hitherto neglected remains of his unfortunate predecessor, Robert Ferguson, in the Canongate churchyard.

The evening before he quitted Edinburgh, the poet addressed a letter to Dr. Blair, in which, taking a most respectful farewell of him, and expressing in lively terms his sense of gratitude for the kindness he had shown him, he thus recurs to his own views of his own past and future condition:—"I have often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, I knew very well that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over. I had made up my mind, that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters." To this touching letter the amiable Blair replied in a truly paternal strain of consolation and advice:—"Your situation," says he, "was indeed very singular; you have had to stand a severe trial. I am happy that you have stood it so well. . . . You are now, I presume, to retire to a more private walk of life. . . . You have laid the foundation for just public esteem. In the midst of those employments, which your situation will render proper, you will not, I hope, neglect to promote that esteem, by cultivating your genius, and attending to such productions of it as may raise your character still higher. At the same time, be not in too great a haste to come forward. Take time and leisure to improve and mature your talents; for, on any second production you give the world, your fate as a poet will very much depend. There is, no doubt, a gloss of novelty which time wears off. As you very properly hint yourself, you are not to be surprised if, in your rural retreat, you do not find yourself surrounded with that glare of notice and applause which here shone upon you. No man can be a good poet without being somewhat of a philosopher. He must lay his account, that any one who expresses himself to public observation, will occasionally meet with the attacks of illiberal censure, which it is always best to overlook and despise. He will be inclined sometimes to court retreat, and to disappear from public view. He will not affect to shine always, that he may at proper seasons come forth with more advantage and energy. He will not think himself neglected if he be not always praised." Such were Blair's admonitions.

And part was heard, and part was lost in air.1

Burns had one object of worldly business in his journey; namely, to examine the estate of Dalswinton, near Dumfries, the proprietor of which, on learning that the poet designed to return to his original calling, expressed a strong wish to have him for his tenant.

1 On the same occasion, the poet addressed Lord George in these terms:

"My Lord, I go away to-morrow morning early: and allow me to vent the fulness of my heart in thanking your Lordship for all that patronage, that benevolence, and that friendship, with which you have honoured me. With kindling eyes I pray, that you may find in that great being, whose image you so nobly bear, that friend which I have found in you. My gratitude is not selfish design—that I disdained—it is not dodging after the heels of greatness—that is an offering you disdain. It is a feeling of the same kind with my devotion.—[R. B."

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1 From "Burns's Correspondence" by Robert Burns, p. 70.
CHAPTER VI.

[Border tour:—epistle to Creech;—return to Mauchline;—favourably received by the Arnotts;—returns to Edinburgh;—West Highland tour;—Harvicston journey;—Stirling epigram;—announced by grandee of securvy; &c.:—visit to Ramsay of Ochtertyre;—visit to Mrs. Bruce of Chackmanan;—northern tour;—Taymouth;—Dail-Athole;—Inverness;—Gordon Castle;—Aberdeen;—Stonehaven, &c.:—decides on taking the farm of Ellishand;—Charlton;—Johnson's Museum;—ode to Prince Charles;—overturned in a coach and confined to his room for six weeks;—low spirits;—Jean Arnour again exposed to the reproaches of his family, and turned out of doors;—Burns secures shelter for her;—applies for a post on the Excise, and is appointed;—settlement with Creech.—John to Gilbert.]

This was long before the time when those fields of Scottish romance were to be made accessible to the curiosity of citizens by stagecoaches; and Burns and his friend performed their tour on horseback, the former being mounted on a favourite mare, whom he had named Jenny Tollies, in honour of the zealous virago who threw her stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, on the 23d of July, 1787, when the attempt was made to introduce a Scottish Liturgy into the service of St. Giles's; the same trusty animal whose merits have been recorded by Burns, in a letter which must have been puzzling to most modern Scotsmen, before the days of Dr. Jamieson.

Burns passed from Edinburgh to Berrywells, the residence of Mr. Ainslie's family, and visited successively Dunse, Coldstream, Kelso, Floors, and the ruins of Roxburgh Castle, where a holy bush still marks the spot on which James I. of Scotland was killed by the bursting of a cannon; Jedburgh, where he admired the "charming romantic situation of the town, with gardens and orchards intermingled among the houses of a once magnificent cathedral (abbey);" and was struck (as in the other towns of the same district) with the practice of accompanying his recitations. I was told by an aged person at Earlston, that there used to be a portrait of him in Thirlestane Castle, representing him as a dour old man, heading a row by a straw- rope.]

[The R. Chambers says:—"An old collection of songs, in their original state of ballata, I have seen his name printed as "Burns the Violer," which seems to indicate the instrument upon which he was in the

| Ramsay and famous Ferguson. |
| Gied Forth and Tay at a lift absent. |
| Varnish and Tweed to make a time. |
| Thirn Scotland sings. |
| While Irving, Lugar, Art, and Dean, Nobody sings. |

On the 6th of May [1787], Burns left Edinburgh in company with Mr. Robert Ainslie,1 son to Mr. Ainslie of Berrywell, in Berwickshire, with the design of perambulating the picturesque scenery of the southern border, and in particular of visiting the localities celebrated by the old minstrels, of whose works he was a passionate admirer; and of whom, by the way, one of the last appears to have been all but a name sake of his own.2

1 Afterwards Clerk to the Signet. Among other changes "of which fleeting time procures," this amiable gentleman, whose youthful gaiety made him a chosen associate of Burns, is chiefly known as the author of an Essay on the Evidence of Christianity, and some devotional tracts. [He was born in 1756, was admitted Writer to the Signet in 1789, and died April 11, 1838.]

2 Nicol Burns, supposed to have lived towards the close of the 16th [15th] century, and to have been among the last of the Rimer minstrels. He is said to be the author of "Leader Haughs and Yarrow," a pathetic ballad, in the last verse of which his own name and designation are introduced.

Sing Edington and Cowdenknowes, where Hames had once commanding,
And Deryanag, wi' the milk-white yews, twixt Tweed and Leader standing.
The bird that flies through hedges and trees, and tildowood banks, ilk mornow,
May chant and sing sweet Leader Haughs, and bonny bernes of Yarrow.

But minstrel Burns cannot assure his grief while life endures,
To see the changes of his age, that fleeting time procures.
For many a place stands in hard case, where by the folk knew music.
With Hames that dwelt on Leader side, and Scots that dwelt on Yarrow.

[Dr. R. Chambers says:—"In an old collection of songs, in their original state of ballata, I have seen his name printed as 'Burns the Violer,' which seems to indicate the instrument upon which he was in the

practice of accompanying his recitations. I was told by an aged person at Earlston, that there used to be a portrait of him in Thirlestane Castle, representing him as a dour old man, heading a row by a straw- rope."

2 "My and gait glode o' a mecro has hichcallyd up hill and down brae, as teuch and birnie as a vera devil, wi' me. It's true she's as poor's a singer, and as hard's a kirk, and upper-tapers when she takes the gate, like a lady's gentlewein in a mitaur, or a hen on a hot girdle; but she's a yand pothierio girran for n that. When once his ringles and spavices, her crane's and cramps, are fairly samp'd, she beets to, beets to, and aye the hindmost hour the tightest," &c. &c.—Letter to Wm. Nicol, Reliques, p. 23. [See vol. iv. p. 61.]
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appearance of "old rude grandeur," and the
illegibility, of decay; Melrose, "that fair-famed
glorious ruin," Selkirk, Ettrick, and the Brus
of Yarrow. Having spent three weeks in this
district, of which it has been justly said, that
"every field has its battle, and every rivulet
its song," Burns passed the Border, and visited
Alnwick, Warkworth, Morpeth, Newcastle,
Hexham, Wardrun, and Carlisle. He then
turned northwards, and rode by Aman and
Dumfries to Dalwinton, where he examined
Mr. Miller’s property, and was so much pleased
with the soil, and the terms on which the
landlord was willing to grant him a lease, that
he resolved to return again in the course of
the summer.

Dr. Currie has published some extracts from
the journal which Burns kept during this ex-
cursion, but they are mostly very trivial. He
was struck with the superiority of soil, climate,
and cultivation in Berwick and Roxburgh-
shires, as compared with his native county;
and not a little surprised when he dined at a
Farmers’ Club at Kelso, with the apparent
wealth of that order of men. "All gentlemen,
talking of high matters—each of them keeps
a hunter from £30 to £50 value, and attends
the Fox-hunting Club in the county." The
farms in the west of Scotland are, to this day,
very small for the most part, and the farmers
little distinguished from their labourers in their
modes of life; the contrast was doubtless
stronger, forty years ago, between them and
their brethren of the Lothians and the Merse.

The magistrates of Jedburgh presented Burns
with the freedom of their town; he was un-
prepared for the compliment, and jealous of
obligations, kept out of the room, and made
an effort (of course an intellectual one) to pay
beforehand the landlord’s bill for the "riddle
of claret," which is usually presented on such
casions in a Scotch burgh.

The poet visited, in the course of his tour,
Sir James Hall of Dunghes, author of the well-
known Essay on Gothic Architecture, &c.;
Sir Alexander and Lady Harriet Don (daugh-
ter to his patron, Lord Glencairn), at Newton-
Don; Mr. Brydone, the author of Travels
in Sicily; the amiable and learned Dr.
Somerville of Jedburgh, the historian of Queen
Anne, &c.; and, as usual, recorded in his
journal his impressions as to their manners
and characters. His reception was everywhere
most flattering.

He wrote no verses, as far as is known,
during this tour, except a humorous epistle
to his bookseller, Creech, dated Selkirk, 13th
May. In this he makes complimentary
allusions to some of the men of letters who
were used to meet at breakfast in Creech’s
apartments in those days—whence the name of
Creech’s hear: and touches, too briefly, on
some of the scenery he had visited.

Up wailing stately Tweed I’ve sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now bearing red,
While tempests draw.

Burns returned to Mauchline on the 8th of
July. It is pleasing to imagine the delight
with which he must have been received by his
family after the absence of six months, in
which his fortunes and prospects had under-
gone so wonderful a change. He left them
comparatively unknown, his tenderest feelings
torn and wounded by the behaviour of the
Armours, and so miserable poor, that he had
been for some weeks obliged to skulk from the
sheriff’s officers, to avoid the payment of a
paltry debt. He returned, his poetical fame
established, the whole country ringling with
his praises, from a capital in which he was
known to have formed the wonder and delight
of the polite and the learned; if not rich, yet
with more money already than any of his
kindred had ever hoped to see him possess,
and with prospects of future patronage and
permanent elevation in the scale of society,
which might have dazzled steadier eyes than
those of maternal and fraternal affection.
The prophet had at last honour in his own country;
but his hungry spirit that had preserved its
balance in Edinburgh, was not likely to lose
it at Mauchline; and we have him writing from the "auld clay haggis" on the 18th of July,
in terms as strongly expressive as any that
ever came from his pen, of that jealous pride
which formed the groundwork of his character;
that dark suspicion of fortune, which the
subsequent course of his history too well justi-
fied; that nervous intolerance of condescension,
and consummate scorn of meanness, which atten-
ded him through life, and made the study
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

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of his species, for which nature had given him such extraordinary qualifications, the source of more pain than was ever counterbalanced by the exquisite capacity for enjoyment with which he was also endowed. There are few of his letters in which more of the dark places of his spirit come to light:—"I never, my friend, thought mankind capable of anything very generous; but the statelessness of the patriots of Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren (who, perhaps, formerly eyed me askance), since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about me, in order to study the sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage—Satan.

Every tie of acquaintance and friendship I have, or think I have, in life, I have felt along the lines, and, in them, they are almost all of them of such frail texture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune."1

Among those who, having formerly "eyed him askance," now appeared sufficiently ready to court his society, were the family of Jean Armour. Burns's affection for this beautiful young woman had outlived his resentment of her compliance with her father's commands in the preceding summer; and from the time of this reconciliation, it is probable he always looked forward to a permanent union with the mother of his children.

Burns at least fancied himself to be busy with serious plans for his future establishment; and was very naturally disposed to avail himself, as far as he could, of the opportunities of travel and observation, which an interval of leisure, destined probably to be a short one, might present. Moreover, in spite of his gloomy language, a specimen of which has just been quoted, we are not to doubt that he derived much pleasure from witnessing the extensive popularity of his writings, and from the flattering homage he was sure to receive in his own person in the various districts of his native country; nor can any one wonder, that after the state of high excitement in which he had spent the winter and spring, he, fond as he was of his family, and eager to make them partakers in all his good fortune, should have, just at this time, found himself incapable of sitting down contentedly for any considerable period together in so humble and quiet a circle as that of Mossgiel.

His appetite for wandering appears to have been only sharpened by his Border excursion. After remaining a few days at home, he returned to Edinburgh, and thence he proceeded on another short tour, by way of Stirling, to Inverary, and so back again, by Dumbarton and Glasgow, to Mauchline.2 Of this second excursion, no journal has been discovered; nor do the extracts from his correspondence, printed by Dr. Currie, appear to be worthy of much notice. In one, he briefly describes the West Highlands as a country "where savage streams tumble over savage mountains, thinly overspread with savage flocks, which starvily support as savage inhabitants;" and in another, he gives an account of Jenny Geddes running a race after dinner with a Highlander's pony—of dancing and drinking till sunrise at a gentleman's house on Loch Lomond; and of other similar matters.—"I have as yet," says he, "fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, mindless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon."

In the course of this tour, Burns visited the mother and sisters of his friend Gavin Hamilton, then residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, in the immediate neighbourhood of the magnificent scenery of Castle Campbell and the vale of Devon.3 He was

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1 Letter to William Neil, June 18, 1757.

2 This mysterious West Highland journey, which has been connected with his feelings regarding the lately deceased "Highland Mary," was undertaken about the end of June. We first find him writing the well-known epigram on the window of the inn at Inverary, but the route by which he reached that place is certainly unknown. He wrote to Robert Ainslie from Arrochar on June 28, and to James Smith on the 30th—to the latter describing among other things the race mentioned in the text—and returned to Mauchline by Dumbarton and Paisley. It has been said that at Dumbarton he was publicly entertained and presented with the freedom of the town, but no record of such an event has come to light.

3 There is a considerable amount of confusion in this part of Lockhart, partly caused no doubt by a slip of the memory on the part of Dr. Adair, w.o
especially delighted with one of the young ladies; and, according to his usual custom, celebrated her in a song, in which, in opposition to his usual custom, there is nothing but the respectfulness of admiration.

How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon, &c.

At Harviestonbank, also, the poet first became acquainted with Miss Chalmers, afterwards Mrs. Hay, to whom one of the most interesting series of his letters is addressed. Indeed, with the exception of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, there is, perhaps, no part of his correspondence which may be quoted so uniformly to his honour.

It was on this expedition, that having been visited with a high flow of Jacobite indignation while viewing the neglected palace at Stirling, he was imprudent enough to write some verses, bitterly vituperative of the reigning family, on the window of his inn. The verses were copied and talked of; and although, the next time Burns passed through Stirling, he himself broke the pane of glass containing them, they were remembered years afterwards to his disadvantage, and even danger. The last complete, alluding, in the coarsest style, to the melancholy state of the King’s health at the time, was indeed an outrage of which no political

was Burns’s companion on his second visit to Harvieston, and who communicated details to Currie in 1790, giving, however, the date August instead of October. The first Harvieston visit is here made part of the West Highland tour of June instead of an episode in the northern tour of August; while the second ten-days’ visit to Ayrshire is made to take place immediately before the northern tour instead of in the month of October following. The proper order will be seen from the following summary:—Burns set out for the north in company with Nicol on 24th August, 1787. They arrived at Stirling on Sunday afternoon, 26th August, when the offensive verses mentioned in the text were written on the inn window. On the Monday he left Nicol and visited Gavin Hamilton’s friends at Harvieston, returning to Stirling in the evening, whence they set out for the north next morning. The travellers returned to Edinburgh on September 16th, after three weeks’ absence, and it was not till October (Dr. Adair at this time being his travelling companion) that he revisited Stirling and Harvieston, when he took the opportunity of destroying the pane of glass containing the obnoxious epigram.

[Charlotte Hamilton, half-sister to Gavin Hamilton and afterwards married to Dr. Adair.]

prejudice could have made a gentleman approve: but he, in all probability, composed his verses after dinner; and surely what Burns would have done, others should have been not unwilling to forget. In this case, too, the poetry “smells of the smith’s shop,” as well as the sentiment.

Mr. Dugald Stewart has pronounced Burns’s epigrams to be, of all his writings, the least worthy of his talents. Those which he composed in the course of his tour, on being refused admittance to see the iron-works at Carron, and on finding himself ill-served at the inn at Inverary, in consequence of the Duke of Argyle’s having a large party at the Castle, form no exceptions to the rule. He had never, we may suppose, met with the famous recipe of the Jolly-hag Club; and was addicted to beginning with the point.

The young ladies of Harvieston were, according to Dr. Currie, surprised with the calm manner in which Burns contemplated their fine scenery on Devonwater; and the doctor enters into a little dissertation on the subject, showing, that a man of Burns’s lively imagination, might probably have formed anticipations which the realities of the prospect might rather disappoint. This is possible enough; but I suppose few will take it for granted that Burns surveyed any scene either of beauty or of grandeur without emotion, merely because he did not choose to be ecstatic for the benefit of a company of young ladies. He was indeed very impatient of interruption on such occasions. I have heard, that riding one dark night near Carron, his companion teased him with noisy exclamations of delight and wonder, whenever an opening in the wood permitted them to see the magnificent glare of the furnaces:—“Look, Burns! (good Heavens! look! look! what a glorious sight!”—“Sir,” said Burns, clapping spurs to Jenny Geddes, “I would not look! look! at your bidding, if it were the month of hell!”

Burns spent the month of July at Mossgiel; and Mr. Dugald Stewart, in a letter to Currie, gives some recollections of him as he then appeared.

“Notwithstanding the various reports I heard during the preceding winter, of Burns’s predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of
his habits of sobriety from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me, indeed, himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed, by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject."

"In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a masonic lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals, from whom he had no right to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore eloquence."

In August [October], Burns revisited Stirlingshire, in company with Dr. Adair, of Harrowgate, and remained ten days at Harvieston. He was received with particular kindness at Ochtermyle, on the Teith, by Mr. Ramsay (a friend of Blacklock), whose beautiful retreat he enthusiastically admired. His host was among the last of that old Scottish line of Latins, which began with Buchan, and, I fear, may be said to have ended with Gregory. Mr. Ramsay, among other eccentricities, had sprinkled the walls of his house with Latin inscriptions, some of them highly elegant; and those particularly interested Burns, who asked and obtained copies and translations of them. This amiable man (whose manners and residence were not, I take it, out of the novelist's recollection when he painted Monkbar's) was deeply read in Scottish antiquities, and the author of some learned essays on the older poetry of his country. His conversation must have delighted any man of talents; and Burns and he were mutually charmed with each other. Ramsay advised him strongly to turn his attention to the romantic drama, and proposed the "Gentle Shepherd" as a model: he also urged him to write "Scottish Georgics," observing, that Thomson had by no means exhausted that field. He appears to have relished both hints. "But," says Mr. R., "to have executed other plan, stealthiness and abstraction from company were wanting."

"I have been in the company of many men of genius (writes Mr. Ramsay), some of them poets; but I never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him, the impulse of the moment, sparks of celestial fire. I never was more delighted, therefore, than with his company two days tete-a-tete. In a mixed company I should have made little of him; for, to use a gamster's phrase, he did not know when to play off and when to play on."

"When I asked him whether the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticisms—"Sir," said he, "those gentlemen remind me of some splinters in my country, who spin their thread so fine, that it is neither fit for web nor wool."

At Clackmannan Tower, the poet's Jacobite procured him a hearty welcome from the ancient lady of the place, who gloried in considering herself as a lineal descendant of Robert Bruce. She bestowed on Burns what knighthood the touch of the hero's sword could confer; delighted him by giving as her toast after
dinner, *Hokimi nocon* 1—"away strangers!" and when he would have kissed her hand at parting, insisted on a warmer salute, saying, "What aids thee at my lips, Robin?" At Dunfermline the poet betrayed deep emotion, Dr. Adair tells us, in seeing the grave of the Bruce; but passing to another mood on entering the adjoining church, he mounted the pulpit and addressed his companions, who had, at his desire, ascended the *catty- stool*, in a parody of the *relax* which he had himself undergone some time before at Mauchline.

From Dunfermline, the poet crossed the Frith of Forth to Edinburgh; and forthwith set out with his friend Nicol on a more extensive tour than he had as yet undertaken, or was ever again to undertake. 2 Some fragments of his journal have recently been discovered, and are now in my hands; so that I may hope to add some particulars to the account of Dr. Currie. The travellers hired a post-chaise for their expedition—the High School master being, probably, no very skilful equestrian.

"August 25th, 1787.—This day," says Burns, "I leave Edinburgh for a tour, in company with my good friend Mr. Nicol, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment.—Linlithgow.—A fertile improved country is West Lothian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c.; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, a man of feeling," will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds, of the peasantry of Ayrshire (peasantry they are all below the justice of peace), than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he, at the same time, considers the Vandalism of their plough-people, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an uninclosed, unimproved country, is to me actually more agreeable as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden."

It was hardly to be expected that Robert Burns should have estimated the wealth of nations entirely on the principles of a political economist.

Of Linlithgow, he says, "the town carries the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur—charmingly rural retired situation—the old Royal Palace a tolerably fine, but melancholy ruin—sweetly situated by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A pretty good old Gothic church—the infamous stood of repentance, in the old Roman way, on a lofty situation. What a poor pining business is a Presbyterian place of worship! dirty, narrow, and squalid, stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur; such as Linlithgow, and much more, Melrose! Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, are absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religions and civil matters."

At Bannockburn he writes as follows:

"Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant countrymen coming over the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers, noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, stirring more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, bloodthirsty foe. I see them meet in glorious triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence." 3

Here we have the germ of Burns's famous "Ode on the Battle of Bannockburn."

"At Taymouth the journal merely has—"*described in rhyme*." This alludes to the "verses written with a pencil over the mutilated piece of the parlor in the inn at Kenmore;" some of which are among his best purely English heroes—"

Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Long wandering by the hermit's mossy cell;
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
The incessant roar of headlong-tumbling fountains.

3 In the last words of Burns's note above quoted, he perhaps alludes to a beautiful trait of old Barbour, where he describes Bruce's soldiers as crowding round him at the conclusion of one of his hard-fought days, with as much curiosity as if they had never seen his person before.

Sir, words speak they of their king;
And for his hie undertaking
Perlieit and yeit him for to see,
That with hym ay was wont to be.
Here Poesy might awake her heaven-taught lyre, and look through Nature with creative fire; here, to the wrongs of Fate half-reconciled, Misfortune's lighter steps might wander wild; and disappointment, in these lonely bounds, find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds: here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch her stem. And injure Worth forget and pardon. man

Of Glenlyon we have the monument:—

Druid's temple, three circles of stones, the outermost sunk; the second has thirteen stones remaining; the innermost eight; two large detached ones like a gate to the south-east—say prayers in it.

His notes on Dunkeld and Blair of Athole, are as follows:—"Dunkeld—Breakfast with Dr. Stuart—Neil Gow plays; a short, stout-bred, Highland figure, with his grayish hair, and his honest social brow—an interesting face, marked strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unmeaning simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow.—Fri
day—ride up Tummel river to Blair. Fancifully, a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Killiecrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dunedie's stone; Blair—sup with the Duchess—easy and happy, from the manners of the family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.—Saturday—visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoilt with bad taste."

Professor Walker, who, as we have seen, formed Burns's acquaintance in Edinburgh, through Blacklock, was at this period tutor in the family of Athole, and from him the following particulars of Burns's reception at the seat of his noble patron are derived. "I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape, but I never saw those feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tili, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, from which there is a noble waterfall, he threw himself on the healthy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time to supper."

"He seemed at once to perceive and to appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation; but when led into it, he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to be there. The duke's fine young family attracted much of his admiration; he drank their healths as honest men and bonny lasses, an idiom which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem."

"Next day I took a ride with him through some of the most remarkable parts of that neighbourhood, and was highly gratified by his conversation. As a specimen of his happiness of conception, and strength of expression, I will mention a remark which he made on his fellow-traveller, who was walking at the time a few paces before us. He was a man of a robust, but clumsy person; and, while Burns was expressing to me the value he entertained for him, on account of his vigorous talents, although they were clouded at times by coarseness of manners; 'in short,' he added, 'his mind is like his body, he has a confounded strong in-kneed sort of a soul.'"

[Walker in his Life of Burns remarks:—"The ill-regulated temper and manners of Mr. Nicol prevented Burns from introducing him to scenes where delicacy and self-denial were so much required. He was therefore left at the inns, while the poet was regaling in the higher circles; an indignity which his proud and unimpaired spirit could with difficulty brook. At Athole House his impatience was suspended by engaging him in his favourite amusement of angling."]

"Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the duke's return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as the most proper return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes which he had been so much delighted. After leaving Blair, he, by the duke's advice, visited the Falls of Brnni; and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness with the verses inclosed.""
At Blair, Burns first met with Mr. Graham of Fintry, a gentleman to whose kindness he was afterwards indebted on more than one important occasion; and Mr. Walker expresses great regret that he did not remain a day or two more, in which case he must have been introduced to Mr. Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville, who was then Treasurer of the Navy, and had the chief management of the affairs of Scotland. This eminent statesman was, though little addicted to literature, a warm lover of his country, and in general, of whatever redounded to her honour; he was, very especially qualified to appreciate Burns as a companion; and, had such an introduction taken place, he might not improbably have been induced to bestow that consideration on the claims of the poet, which, in the absence of any personal acquaintance, Burns's works ought to have received from his hands.

From Blair, Burns passed "many miles through a wild country, among cliffs gray with eternal snows, and gloomy savage gleds, till he crossed Spey; and went down the stream through Strathspey (so famous in Scottish music), Badenoch, &c., to Grant Castle, where he spent half a day with Sir James Grant; crossed the country to Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth, where he saw the identical bed in which, tradition says, King Duncan was murdered; lastly, from Fort George to Inverness." 1

From Inverness, Burns went along the Moray Firth to Fochabers, taking Culloden Muir and Brodie House in his way. 2

well cared for, and the river in its present state could have no pretext for the prayer—

Let lofty fir, and ashes cool, my lovely banks o'er-spread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool, their shadows' watery bed;
Let fragrant birks, in woodiness dress, my craggy cliffs surround,
And for the little songster's nest, the close-embowering thern.

1 Letter to Gilbert Burns, Edinburgh, 17th Dec. 1787.
2 (Extract from Journal.) Thursday. Came over Culloden Muir—reflection on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilbrack (the local pronunciation of Kilbrack)—old Mrs. Rose—sterling sense, warm heart, strong passion, honest pride—all to an uncommon degree—a true chieftain's wife—daughter of Clephane—Mrs. Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother, perhaps owing to her being younger—two young

"Cross Spey to Fochabers—fine palace, worthy of the noble, the polite, and generous-proprietor.—The duke makes me happier than ever great man did; noble, princely, yet mild, condescending, and affable—gay and kind, The Duchess charming, witty, kind, and sensible—God bless them."

Burns, who had been much noticed by this noble family when in Edinburgh, happened to present himself at Gordon Castle just at the dinner hour, and being invited to take his place at the table, did so, without for a moment advertising to the circumference that his travelling companion had been left alone at the inn, in the adjacent village. On remembering this soon after dinner, he begged to be allowed to rejoin his friend; and the Duke of Gordon, who now for the first time learned that he was not journeying alone, immediately prevailed to send an invitation to Mr. Nicol to come to the castle. His grace's messenger found the haughty schoolmaster striding up and down before the inn-floor in a state of high wrath and indignation, at what he considered Burns's neglect, and no apologies could soften his mood. He had already ordered horses, and the poet finding that he must chose between the dual circle and his irritable associate, at once left Gordon Castle, and repaired to the inn; whence Nicol and he, in silence and mutual displeasure, pursued their journey along the coast of the Moray Firth. This incident may serve to suggest some of the annoyance to which persons moving, like our poet, on the debatable land between two different ranks of society, must ever be subjected. To play the lion under such circumstances, must be difficult at the best; but a delicate business indeed, when the jackals are presumptuous. This penchant could not stomach the superior success

ladies—Miss Rose sung two Gaelic songs—beautiful and lovely—Miss Sophy Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them! Brodie House to lie—Mr. B. truly polite, but quite the Highland cordiality. —Friday, cross the Fidhlok to Forres—famous stone at Forres—Mr. Brodie tells me the mirie where Shakespeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting is still haunted—that the country folks won't pass through it at night. —Elgin—venerable ruins of the abbey, a grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.
of his friend—and yet, alas for human nature! he certainly was one of the most enthusiastic of his admirers, and one of the most affectionate of all his intimates. The abridgment of Burns's visit at Gordon Castle "was not only," says Mr. Walker, "a mortifying disappointment, but in all probability a serious misfortune; as a longer stay among persons of such influence might have begot a permanent intimacy, and on their parts, an active concern for his future advancement." But this touches on a subject which we cannot at present pause to consider.

A few days after leaving Fochabers, Burns transmitted to Gordon Castle his acknowledgment of the hospitality he had received from the noble family, in the stanzas—

Streams that glide in orient plains—
Never bound by winter's chains, &c.

The duchess, on hearing them read, said she supposed they were Mr. Beattie's, and on learning who they really were, expressed her wish that Burns had celebrated Gordon Castle in his own dialect. The verses are among the poorest of his productions.

Pursuing his journey along the coast, the poet visited successively Nairn, Forres, Aberdeen, and Stonehaven, where one of his relations, James Burns, writer in Montrose, met him by appointment, and conducted him into the circle of his paternal kindred, among whom he spent two or three days. When Wm. Burns, his father, abandoned his native district, never to revisit it, he, as he used to tell his children, took a sorrowful farewell of his brother on the summit of the last hill from which the roof of their lowly home could be descried; and the old man ever after kept up an affectionate correspondence with his family. It fell to the poet's lot, as we have seen, to communicate his father's last illness and death to the Kincairdineshires kindred; and of his subsequent correspondence with Mr. James Burns, some specimens have already been given, by the favour of his son. Burns now formed a personal acquaintance with these good people; and in a letter to his brother Gilbert, we find him describing them in terms which show the lively interest he took in all their concerns.

"The rest of my songs," says he, "are not worth rehearsing; warm as I was from Osman's country, where I had seen his grave, what cared I for fishing-towns and fertile caresses?"

He arrived once more in Edinburgh, on the 16th of September, having travelled about six hundred miles in two-and-twenty days—greatly extended his acquaintance with his own country, and visited some of its most classical scenery—observed something of Highland manners, which must have been as interesting as they were novel to him—and strengthened considerably among the sturdy Jacobites of the North those political opinions which he at this period avowed.

Of the few poems composed during this Highland tour, we have already mentioned two or three. While standing by the Fall of Fyres, near Loch Ness, he wrote with his pencil the vigorous couplet—

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The roaring Fyres pors his moosy floods, &c.

When at Sir William Murray's of Ochtertyre, he celebrated Miss Murray of Lintrose, commonly called "The Flower of Strathmore," in the song—

Blythe, blythe, and merry was she, (parlour
Blythe was she but and ben, &c. in kitchen and

And the verses, "On Searing some Water-Fowl on Loch-Turit," were composed while under the same roof. These last, except, perhaps, "Brun Water," are the best that he added to his collection during the wanderings of the summer. But in Burns's subsequent productions we find many traces of the delight which he had contemplated in these alpine regions.

The poet once more visited his family at Mossgiel, and Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, ere the winter set in; and on more leisurely examination of that gentleman's estate, we find him writing as if he had all but decided to become his tenant on the farm of Ellisland. It was not, however, until he had for the third time visited Dumfriesshire, in March, 1788, that a bargain was actually concluded.

2 [The visit to Ochtertyre belongs to the harvest trip in October. See note 3, p. 78.]
More than half of the intervening months were spent in Edinburgh, where Burns found, or fancied, that his presence was necessary for the satisfactory completion of his affairs with the booksellers. It seems to be clear enough, that one great object was the society of his jocund intimates in the capital. "or was he without the amusement of a little romance to fill up what vacant hours he left him. He formed, about this time, his acquaintance with a lady, distinguished, I believe, for taste and talents, as well as for personal beauty, and the purity of whose character was always above suspicion—the same to whom he addressed the song, Clarinda, mistress of my soul, &c.,

and a series of prose epistles, which have been separately published, and which, if they present more instances of bombastic language and fulsome sentiment than could be produced from all his writings besides, contain also, it must be acknowledged, passages of deep and noble feeling, which no one but Burns could have penned. One sentence, as strongly illustrative of the poet's character, I may venture to transcribe: "People of nice sensibility and generous minds have a certain intrinsic dignity, which fires at being trivialled with, or lowered, or even too closely approached." 1

At this time the publication called Johnson's *Museum of Scottish Song,* 2 was going on in Edinburgh; and the editor appears to have early prevailed on Burns to give him his assistance in the arrangement of his materials. Though "Green Grow the Rashes" is the only song, entirely his, which appears in the first volume, published in 1787, many of the old ballads included in that volume bear traces of his hand; 3 but in the second volume, which appeared in March 1788, we find no fewer than five songs by Burns; two that have been already mentioned, 3 and three far better than them, viz.:—"The.nil McKenzie's bonny Mary," that grand lyric,

- Farewell, ye dangerous dark and strong,
  The wretch's destiny,
  Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree;

both of which performances bespeak the recent impressions of his Highland visit; and, lastly, "Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad."—Burns had been, from his youth upwards, an enthusiastic lover of the old masonic and music of his country; but he now studied both subjects with far better opportunities and appliances than he could have commanded previously; and it is from this time that we must date his ambition to transmit his own poetry to posterity, in eternal association with those exquisite airs which had hitherto, in far too many instances, been married to verses that did not deserve to be immortal. It is well known, that from this time Burns composed very few pieces but songs; and whether we ought or ought not to regret that such was the case, must depend on the estimate we make of his songs as compared with his other poems; a point on which critics are to this hour divided, and on which their descendants are not very likely to agree.

Mr. Walker, who is one of those that lament Burns's comparative delirium of the species of composition which he most cultivated in the early days of his inspiration, suggests very sensibly, that if Burns had not taken to song-writing, he probably would have written little or nothing, amidst the various temptations to company and dissipation which now and henceforth surrounded him—to say nothing of the active duties of life in which he was at length about to be engaged.

1 It is proper to note, that the "Letters to Clarinda," were printed by one who had no right to do so, and that the Court of Session granted an interdict against their circulation. [An authorized edition arranged and edited by Clarinda's grandson, W. C. McLeod, was published in 1843. They appear in the present edition in their proper place.]

2 [The true title is the *Secta Musical Museum*, in Six Volumes, consisting of Six Hundred Scots Songs, with proper bases for the Pianoforte, &c.; by James Johnson.]

3 [This is incorrect, for his song "Young Peggy blooms our bonniest lass," written on Miss Peggy Kennedy, the unfortunate daughter of a hanged prophetor in Carrick, to whom Burns was introduced while she was on a visit to a friend in Mauchline in 1785, follows immediately after "Green Grow the Rashes."]

4 "Clarinda," and "How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon."

5 (There were more songs than these by Burns in Johnson's second volume, but many of them were unacknowledged.)
Burns was present, on the 31st of December, at a dinner to celebrate the birthday of the unfortunate Charles Edward Stuart, and produced on the occasion an ode, part of which Dr. Currie has preserved. The specimen will not induce any regret that the remainder of the piece has been suppressed. It appears to be a mousting rhapsody—far, far different indeed from the "Chevalier's Lament," which the poet composed some months afterwards, with probably the title of the effort, while riding alone "through a tract of melancholy mires between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday."

For six weeks of the time that Burns spent this year in Edinburgh, he was confined to his room, in consequence of an overturn in a hackney-coach. "Here I am," he writes, "under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on an easiion, and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horrors preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortunes, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a quadruple alliance to guarantee the other. I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and have got through the five books of Moses, and half-way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get an 8vo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town, and bind it with all the elegance of his craft."

In another letter, which opens gaily enough, we find him reverting to the same prevailing darkness of mood. "I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty, attended, as he always is, by iron-fisted Oppression and leering Contempt. But I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day, and still my motto is, I DARE. My worst enemy is moi-meme. There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment; the other has neither wish nor fear."

One more specimen of this magnificent hypochondria may be sufficient. These have been six horrible weeks. Anguish and low spirits have made me unfit to read, write, or think. I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer does a commission; for I would not take in any poor ignorant wretch by selling out. Lately, I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough: now I march to the campaign a starving cadet, a little more conspicuously wretched. I am ashamed of all this; for, though I do not want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice."

It seems impossible to doubt that Burns had, in fact, lingered in Edinburgh, in the hope that, to use a vague but sufficiently expressive phrase, something would be done for him. He visited and revisited a farm,—talked and wrote scholarly and wisely about "having a fortune at the plough-tail," and so forth; but all the while nourished, and assuredly it would have been most strange if he had not, the fond dream, that the admiration of his country would ere long present itself in some solid and tangible shape. His illness and confinement gave him leisure to concentrate his imagination on the darker side of his prospects; and the letters which we have quoted, may teach those who may envy the powers and the fame of geniuses, to pause for a moment over the annals of literature, and think what superior capabilities of misery have been, in the great majority of cases, interwoven with the possession of those very talents, from which all but their possessors derive unmindful gratification.

Burns's distresses, however, were to be still further aggravated. While still under the hands of his surgeon, he received intelligence from Mauchline that his intimacy with Jean Armour had once more exposed her to the reproaches of her family. The father sternly and at once turned her out of doors; and Burns, unable to walk across his room, had to write to his friends in Mauchline to procure shelter.
for his children, and for her whom he considered—all but his wife. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, written on hearing of this new misfortune, he says, "I wish I were dead, but I'm not like to die. I fear I am something like undone; but I hope for the best. You must not desert me. Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should rate my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously, though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path—but my limb will soon be found, and I shall struggle on."

It seems to have been now that Burns at last screwed up his courage to solicit the active interference in his behalf of the Earl of Glencairn. The letter is a brief one. Burns could ill endure this novel attitude, and he rushed at once to his request. "I wish," says he, "to get into the Excise. I am told your lordship will readily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and kindness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters, from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude. My heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of the Great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation; and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as of the cold denial."

It would be hard to think that this letter was coldly or negligently received; on the contrary, we know that Burns's gratitude to Lord Glencairn last ed as long as his life. But the excise appointment which he coveted was not procured by any exertion of this noble patron's influence. Mr. Alexander Wood, surgeon (still affectionately remembered in Scotland as "kind old Sandy Wood"), happened to hear Burns, while his patient, mention the object of his wishes, went immediately, without dropping any hint of his intention, and communicated the state of the poet's case to Mr. Graham of Fintry, one of the commissioners of excise, who had met Burns at the Duke of Athole's in the autumn, and who immediately had the poet's name put on the roll.

"I have chosen this, my dear friend (thus wrote Burns to Mrs. Dunlop), after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of Fortune's Palace shall we enter in; but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get anything to do. I wanted any but, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation. It is immediate bread, and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, its luxury in comparison of all my preceding life. Besides, the Commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends."

Our poet seems to have kept up an angry correspondence, during his confinement, with his bookseller, Mr. Creech, whom he also abuses very heartily in his letters to his friends in Ayrshire. The publisher's accounts, however, when they were at last made up, must have given the impatient author a very agreeable surprise; for in his letter above quoted, to Lord Glencairn, we find him expressing his hopes that the gross profits of his book might amount to "better than £200," whereas, on the day of settling with Mr. Creech, he found himself in possession of £500, if not of £600.

1Burns's children did not require shelter at this time; Jean's only living child, Robert, was being very well cared for, along with the daughter of Elizabeth Paton, at Mossgiel.

2This extract is from a letter addressed to Miss Margaret Chalmers (not to Mrs. Dunlop), dated 23d January, 1788.
This supply came truly in the hour of need; and it seems to have elevated his spirits greatly, and given him for the time a new stock of confidence; for he now resumed immediately his purpose of taking Mr. Miller's farm, retaining his exsicc commission in his pocket as a departer coutant, to be made use of only should some reverse of fortune come upon him. His first act, however, was to relieve his brother from his difficulties, by advancing £180, or £200, to assist him in the management of Mossigiel. "I give myself no airs on this," he generously says in a letter to Dr. Moore, "for it was mere selfishness on my part. I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that the throwing a little filial pity and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the grand reckoning."

CHAPTER VII.

[Marriage: takes Ellishand, and enters on possession:—excess for his marriage:—builds a house, and brings his wife home:—company visited by neighbours and visitors:—contributions to Johnson's Museum:—extensive correspondence:—farming a failure:—obtains a commission as an exciseman:—Allen Cunningham's recollections:—pris and temptations of his new vocation:—the "whistle contest:—Captain Towr:—"Tam of Shanter:"—legend:—Ellishand aveled:—locks Ellishand:—last visit to Edinburgh:—convivial conversation.]

To make a happy hirshs clothe
For wives and wife
This the true fellow and sublime
Of human life.

Burns, as soon as his bruised limb was able for a journey, rode to Mossigiel, and went through the ceremony of a justice-of-peace marriage with Jean Armour, in the writing-chambers of his friend Gavin Hamilton. He is probable, the expense of printing the subscription edition, should, moreover, have deducted from the £500 stated by Mr. Nice—the apparent contradictions in these stories may be nearly reconciled. There appears to be reason for thinking that Creech subsequently paid more than £400 for the copyright. If he did not, how came Burns to realize, as Currie states it at the end of his Memoir, "nearly nine hundred pounds in all by his poems?"

Burns left Edinburgh for Ayrshire on 18th February, but it was not till sometime in May that Jean obtained a title to be publicly designated "Mrs. Burns," by going through some form in Tavlin Hamilton's office, the "kirk" ceremonial not taking place till August. In fact, it would seem that Burns at this time had no intention of making her his wife, he was in the midst of the infatuation about Clarinda, to whom he writes, after having visited Jean:—"I am disgusted with her (Jean). I cannot endure her... I have done with her, and she with me." In March he details to Amial how he had sworn her privately and solemnly never to attempt any claim on him as a husband, so that Jean's chance of becoming Mrs. Burns did not look bright at the time Burns left Edinburgh nor for some time after.

The marriage of Burns and Jean Armour was consummated, and Burns then crossed the country to Paisley, and concluded his bargain with Mr. Miller as to the farm of Ellishand, on terms which must undoubtedly have been considered by both parties as highly favourable to the poet; they were indeed fixed by two of Burns's own friends, who accompanied him for that purpose from Ayrshire. The lease was for four successive terms, of nineteen years each,—in return by the ecclesiastical authorities on Burns and his wife humbling themselves before the session. The following is a copy of the session-clerk's record, the signature of Jean being in the poet's handwriting:

"1788, August 5, Sess. com.—Composed Robert Burns with Jean Armour, his alleged spouse. They both acknowledged their irregular marriage and their sorrow for that irregularity, and desiring that the Session will take such steps as may seem to them proper, in order to the Solemn Confirmation of the said marriage.

"The Session taking this affair under their consideration, agree that they both be rebuked for this acknowledged irregularity, and that they be taken solemnly engaged to adhere faithfully to each other as husband and wife all the days of their life.

"In regard the Session have a title in law to some time for behoof of the poor, they agree to refer to Mr. Burns his own convenience.

"The above Sentence was accordingly executed, and the Session absolved the said parties from any scandal on this act.

Robbt. Burns.

Willm. Audl, M. Mr. Jean Armour.

"(Mr. Burns gave a guinea-note for behoof of the poor."
all seventy-six years; the rent for the first three years and crops £50; during the remainder of the period £70. Mr. Miller bound himself to defray the expense of any plantations which Burns might please to make on the banks of the river; and the farm-house and offices being in a dilapidated condition, the new tenant was to receive £500 from the proprietor, for the erection of suitable buildings. "The land," says Allan Cunningham, "was good, the rent moderate, and the markets were rising."

Burns entered on possession of his farm at Whitsuntide 1788, but the necessary rebuilding of the house prevented his removing Mrs. Burns thither until the season was far advanced. He had, moreover, to qualify himself for holding his excise commission by six weeks' attendance on the business of that profession at Ayr. From these circumstances, he led this summer a wandering and unsettled life, and Dr. Currie mentions this as one of his chief misfortunes. "The poet," as he says, "was continually riding between Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire; and, often spending a night on the road, sometimes fell into company, and forgot the resolutions he had formed."

What these resolutions were the poet himself shall tell us. On the turn of his residence at Ellisland, he thus writes to Mr. Ainslie: "I have all along hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms, among the light-horse, the piquet guards of fancy, a kind of Irish and Highlanders of the brain; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance. . . . Were it not for the terror of my ticklish situation respecting a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness."

To all his friends, he expresses himself in terms of similar satisfaction in regard to his marriage. "Your surprise, madam," he writes to Mrs. Dunlop, "is just. I am indeed a husband. I found a once much-loved, and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements, but as I enabled her to purchase a shelter: and there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery. . . . The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gracefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pye wedding." 1 . . .

"To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger; my preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me; my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her. . . . In household matters, of aptness to learn, and activity to execute, she is eminently masteress, and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly an apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy, and other rural business. . . . You are right, that a bachelor state would have ensured me more friends; but from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmisguiding confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number."

Some months later he tells Miss Chambers that his marriage "was not, perhaps, in consequence of the attachment of romance,"—he is addressing a young lady—"but," he continues, "I have no cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boardingschool affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country. Mrs. Burns believes as firmly as her creed, that I am le plus bel esprit et le

1 Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 14th June, 1788.
2 "Perhaps, after all, these revolutions in the ardent vivacious mind of Burns [that is, his forgetting all his vows and protestations to cherish and marrying Jean] are less astounding than the fact (for it is one beyond all question) that the poet was not now, and never had been, exactly the favourite lover of Jean. There was, it seems, another person whom she fancied above him, though, as is too plainly appears, she had been unable to contend against the fascination of those dark eyes in which lay her fate."

—Robert Chambers.
3 Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 10th July, 1788.
The most placid of disposition; a noted with all its
rous health and
off to the best
commonly hand
in a woman, may
she should never
criptions of the Old
anced in a brighter
edding."
... I am an equal
from the first, is the
of her sentiments
entent to me; my
long and deep
. In household
activity to
ness, and during
is regularly and
mother and
her rural business.
Bachelor state
more friends; but
, conscious
my own mind, and
approaching my
of the number.
Miss Chalmers
perhaps, in connec
t of romance."
— he
— "but," he con
repent it. If I
modish manners,
not sickened and
curse of boarding.
have got the hand-
est temper, the
kindest heart
believes as firmly
les bel esprit et le
June, 1788.
revolutions in the
that is, his forgetting
Charinda and mar-
an the fact (for it is
poet was not now,
 favourite lover of
other person whom
, as but too plain
contend against the
which lay her fate."
July, 1788.
plus honnéte homme in the universe; although
she scarcely ever, in her life, except the Scriptures and the Psalms of David in Metre, spent
five minutes together on either prose or verse — I must except also a certain late publication
of Scots Poems, which she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads of the country, as
she has (to the partial lover! you will say) the finest woodnote-wild I ever heard."
It was during this honeymoon, as he calls
it, while chiefly resident in a miserable hovel
at Ellishand, and only occasionally spending
a day or two in Ayshire, that he wrote the
beautiful song.

of a’ the airts the wind can blow, directions
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I love best;
There wildwoods grow, and rivers row, roll
And many a hill between,
But day and night my fancy’s flight
Is ever wi’ my Jean.
O blow, ye westlin winds, blow saft western
Among the leafe trees,
Wi’ gentle gale, fair mair and dale, from
Bring hame the laden hees, home
And bring the lassie hack to me,
That’s aye sae neat and clean, always
Ae blink or her wad banish care, one glimpse
Sae lovely is my Jean. 2

"A discerning reader," says Mr. Walker,
"will perceive that the letters in which he
announces his marriage to some of his most
respected correspondents, are written in that
state when the mind is pained by reflecting
on an unwelcome step, and finds relief to itself
in seeking arguments to justify the deed, and
lessen its disadvantages in the opinion of
others." 3 I confess I am not able to discern
any traces of this kind of feeling in any of
Burns’s letters on this interesting and impor-
tant occasion. Mr. Walker seems to take it
for granted, that because Burns admired the

1 One of Burns’s letters, written not long after this
[to Mrs. Dunlop, July 10, 1788], contains a passage
strongly marked with his haughtiness of character.
I have escaped," says he, "the fantastic caprice,
the apish affectionate, with all the other blessed
boarding-school acquirements which are sometimes
to be found among females of the upper ranks, but
almost universally pervade the masses of the woul-
dbe-gentry."

2 [This stanza, as is now well known, was not
written by Burns.]

3 Morison, vol. i. p. lxxvii.

superior manners and accomplishments of
cwomen of the higher ranks of society, he must
necessarily, whenever he discovered "the in-
terest which he had the power of creating"
in such persons, have aspired to find a wife
among them. But it is, to say the least of
the matter, extremely doubtful, that Burns, if he
had had a mind, could have found any high-
born maiden willing to partake such fortunes
as his were likely to be, and yet possessed of
such qualifications for making him a happy
man, as he had ready for his acceptance in his
"Bonny Jean." The proud heart of the poet
could never have stooped itself to woo for gold;
and birth and high breeding could only have
been introduced into a farm-house to embitter,
in the upshot, the whole existence of its in-
nates. It is very easy to say, that had Burns
married an accomplished woman, he might
have found domestic evenings sufficient to
satisfy all the cravings of his mind—abandoned
tavern haunts and jollities for ever—and
settled down into a regular pattern-character.
But it is at least as possible, that consequences
of an exactly opposite nature might have en-
sued. Any marriage, such as Professor Walker
alludes to, would, in his case, have been more
unequal, than either of those that made Dryden
and Addison miserable for life.4

Sir Walter Scott in his Life of the former of
these great men, has well described the difficult
situation of her who has "to endure the ap-
parently ceaseless fluctuation of spirits incident
to one doomed to labour incessantly in the
feverish exercise of the imagination." "I un-
tentional neglect," says he, "and the inevi-
table relaxation, or rather sinking of spirit,
which follows violent mental exertion, are
easily misconstrued into capricious rudeness,
or intentional offence; and life is embittered
by mutual accusation, not the less intolerable
because reciprocally unjust." 5 Such were the
difficulties under which the domestic peace
both of Addison and Dryden went to wrack;

4 [Burns not only aspired to find a wife among
the higher ranks of society," but he actually made
formal offer of marriage to Miss Peggy Chalmers,
which was declined on the plea of her pre-engagement
to Mr. Lewis Hay. This was well known to his bi-
grapher Walker, and was admitted by the lady her-
self to Thomas Campbell, the poet, who was a familiar
visitor during her widowhood.]

5 Life of Dryden, p. 90.
and yet, to say nothing of manners and habits of the highest elegance and polish in either case, they were both of them men of strictly pure and correct conduct in their conjugal capacities; and who can doubt that all these difficulties must have been enhanced tenfold, had any woman of superior condition linked her fortunes with Robert Burns, a man at once of the very warmest animal temperament, and the most wayward and moody of all his melancholy and irritable tribe, who had little vanity that could have been gratified by a species of connection, which, unless he had found a human angel, must have been continually wounding his pride? But, in truth, those speculations are all worse than worthless. Burns, with all his faults, was an honest and high-spirited man, and he loved the mother of his children; and had he hesitated to make his wife, he must have sunk into the callosity of a ruffian, or that misery of miseries, the remorse of a poet.

The Reverend Hamilton Paul takes an original view of this business: "Much praise," says he, "has been lavished on Burns for renewing his engagement with Jean when in the blaze of his fame. . . . The praise is misplaced. We do not think a man entitled to credit or commendation for doing what the law could compel him to perform. Burns was in reality a married man, and it is truly ludicrous to hear, aware as he must have been, of the indissoluble power of the obligation, though every document was destroyed, talking of himself as a bachelor."¹ There is no justice in these remarks. It is very true, that, by a merciful fiction of the law of Scotland, the female in Miss Armour's condition, who produces a written promise of marriage, is considered as having furnished evidence of an irregular marriage having taken place between her and her lover; but in this case the female herself had destroyed the document, and lived for many months not only not assuming, but rejecting, the character of Burns's wife; and had she, under such circumstances, attempted to establish a marriage, with no document in her hand, and with no parole evidence to show that any such document had ever existed, to say nothing of proving its exact tenor, but that of her own father, it is clear that no ecclesiastical court in the world could have failed to decide against her. So far from Burns's having all along regarded her as his wife, it is extremely doubtful whether she had ever for one moment considered him as actually her husband, until he declared the marriage of 1788. Burns did no more than justice as well as honour demanded; but the act was one which no human tribunal could have compelled him to perform.²

To return to our story. Burns complains sadly of his solitary condition, when living in the only hotel that he found extant on his farm. "I am," says he (September 9th), "busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasant part of life called social intercourse, I am here at the very ebb of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose they only know in prayers, &c., and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs, by the ell. As for the Muse, they have as much idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet."³ And in another letter (September 16), he says: "This hotel that I shelter in while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls, and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being succored by

¹ Paul's Life of Burns, p 45.
² I am bound to say that, from some criticisms on the first edition of this narrative, published in Scotland, and evidently by Scotch lawyers, it appears, that the case, "Armour versus Burns," had there never been such a lawsuit, would have been more difficult of decision than I had previously supposed. One thing, however, is quite clear: Burns himself had no notion, that, in acknowledging his Jean as his wife, he was but yielding what legal measures could have extorted from him. Let any one consider, for example, the language of the letter in which he announces his marriage and establishment at Ellisland, to Mr. Burnes of Montrose—

"(Ellisland 9th Feb. 1788) . . . Here, at last, I have become stationary, and have taken a farm, and—a wife. . . . My wife is my Jean, with whose story you are partly acquainted. I found I had a much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and I durst not trifile with so sacred a deposit. [This sentence occurs at least half a dozen times in letters to different parties, and seems to justify Walker's remark that Burns sought arguments to justify his marriage.] Indeed, I have not any reason to repent the step I have taken, as I have attached myself to a very good wife, and have shaken myself loose of a very bad failing." [See the letter complete in its proper place in the Correspondence.]
³ Letter to John Bendo, engraver, 9th September, 1788.
of which, where the bare shingle of the precipice all but overhangs the stream, Burns had his favourite walk, and might now be seen striding alone, early and late, especially when the winds were loud, and the waters below him swollen and turbulent. For he was one of those that enjoy nature most in the more serious and severe of her aspects; and throughout his poetry, for one allusion to the liveliness of spring, or the splendour of summer, it would be easy to point out twenty in which he records the solemn delight with which he contemplated the melancholy grandeur of autumn, or the savage gloom of winter. Indeed, I cannot but think, that the result of an exact inquiry into the composition of Burns's poems, would be, that "his vein," like that of Milton, flowed most happily, "from the autumnal equinox to the vernal." Of Lord Byron, we know that his vein flowed best at midnight; and Burns has himself told us, that it was his custom "to take a gloamin’ shot at the Muses."

The poet was accustomed to say, that the most happy period of his life was the first winter he spent at Ellishand, for the first time under a roof of his own, with his wife and children about him; and in spite of occasional lapses into the melancholy which had haunted his youth, looking forward to a life of well-regulated, and not ill-rewarded, industry. It is known that he welcomed his wife to her roof-tree at Ellishand in the song,

I have a wife o' my ain, I'll partake wi' nobody;
I'll tak' eekauld frae name, I'll gae eekauld to nobody;
I have a penny to spend—there, thanks to nobody;
I have nothing to lend—I'll borrow free unemployed.

In commenting on this "little lively lucky song," as he well calls it, Mr. Allan Cunningham says: "Burns had built his house,—he had committed his seed-corn to the ground,—he was in the prime, nay, the morning of life,—health, and strength, and agricultural skill (?) were on his side,—his genius had been acknowledged by his country, and rewarded by a subscription more extensive than any Scottish poet ever received before; no wonder, therefore, that he broke out into voluntary song, expressive of his sense of importance and independence."  

1. Letter to Miss Chalmers, 16th September, 1788.
2. [Lockhart makes several errors here. Burns's household at this time consisted of himself and his wife, his sister, and a domestic servant, together with two men and two women engaged for out-door work. So far from having a large proportion of young months to feed, they had none at all. Robert, Jean's only surviving child, was not brought to Ellishand till the August following, while "Bess" never was in Burns's house after his marriage, but remained at Mossgiel. The statement that the servants "partook at the same table of the same fare with their master and mistress" (trivial though the matter be), is also erroneous, having been directly contradicted by Mrs. Burns herself. The testimony of a William Clark who had been a ploughman to Burns for six months, is quoted by Robert Chambers to the same effect.]

3. [Mr. Miller's name is known in the history of steam navigation, he having caused to be constructed about this very time one or two small vessels in which steam was successfully employed as a propelling power.]
song was composed in honour of Mrs. Burns, during the happy weeks that followed her arrival at Ellistland:

he was, while the poet was delighting in his contemplation of the country and studying the Irish scenery in his leisure hours, the Munro of Selkirk, and another gentleman, who became his friend, threw open to him the study and the library of their house, which, he says, he considered the finest he had ever seen.

In the next stanza the poet rather transgresses the limits of comicall decorum; but on the whole these tributes to domestic affection are among the best of his performances that one would wish to lose.

Burns, in his letters of the year 1789, makes many apologies for doing but little in his poetical vocation; his farm, without doubt, occupied much of his attention, but the want of social intercourse, of which he complained on his first arrival in Nithsdale, had by this time totally disappeared. On the contrary, his company was courted eagerly, not only by his brother-farmers, but by the neighbouring gentry of all classes; and now, too, for the first time, he began to be visited continually in his own house by curious travellers of all sorts, who did not consider, any more than the generous poet himself, that an extensive practice of hospitality must cost more time than he ought to have had, and far more money than he ever had, at his disposal. Meantime, he was not wholly regardless of the Muse; for, in addition to some pieces which we have already occasion to notice, he contributed to this year's Edinburgh Magazine, "The Thames flows proudly to the sea;" "The lazy mist hangs, etc.;" "The day returns, my bosom burns;" "Tam Glen" (one of the best of his humorous songs); the splendid lyrics, "Go fetch me a pint of wine," and "My heart's in the Highlands" (in both of which, however, he adopted some lines of ancient songs); the splendid lyrics, "Go fetch me a pint of wine," and "My heart's in the Highlands" (in both of which, however, he adopted some lines of ancient songs); "John Anderson," in part also a rifacimento; the best of all his bacchalian pieces, "Willie brewed a peck o' malt," written in celebration of a festive meeting at the country residence, in Dumfrieshire, of his friend Mr. Nicol, of the High School; and lastly, that noblest of all his ballads, "To Mary in Heaven.

This celebrated poem, as it is on all hands admitted, composed by Burns in September, 1789, on the anniversary of the day on which he heard of the death of his early love, Mary Campbell. But Mr. Cromek has thought fit to dress up the story with circumstances which did not occur. Mrs. Burns, the only person who could appeal to personal recollection on this occasion, and whose recollections of all circumstances connected with the history of her husband's poems are represented as being remarkably distinct and vivid, gives what may at first appear a more prosaic edition of the history. According to her, Burns spent that day, though labouring under a cold, in the usual work of his harvest, and apparently in excellent spirits. But as the twilight deepened, he appeared to grow "very sad about something," and at length wandered out into the barn-yard, to which his wife, in her anxiety for his health, followed him, entrusting him in vain to observe that frost had set in, and to return to the fireside. On being again and again requested to do so, he always promised compliance—but still remained where he was, until the poet began to say and stretch his arms, and another gentleman, who became his friend, threw open to him the study and the library of their house, which, he says, he considered the finest he had ever seen.
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

he was, striding up and down slowly, and contemplating the sky, which was singularly clear and starry. At last Mrs. Burns found him stretched on a mass of straw, with his eyes fixed on a beautiful planet "that shone like another moon;" and prevailed on him to come in. He immediately, on entering the house, called for his desk, and wrote, exactly as they now stand, with all the ease of one copying from memory, the sublime and pathetic verses—

Thou lingering star, with lessening ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou ush'rst in the day.
My Mary from my soul was torn.
Oh! Mary! dear departed shade,
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid,
Hast thou the groans that rend his breast?

The "Mother's Lament for her Son," and "Inscription in an Hermitage in Nithsdale," were also written this year.

From the time when Burns settled himself in Dumfries-shire, he appears to have conducted with much care the extensive correspondence in which his celebrity had engaged him; it is, however, very necessary, in judging of the letters, and drawing inferences from their language as to the real sentiments and opinions of the writer, to take into consideration the rank and character of the persons to whom they are severally addressed, and the measure of intimacy which really subsisted between them and the poet. In his letters, as in his conversation, Burns, in spite of all his pride, did something to accommodate himself to his company; and he who did write the series of letters addressed to Mrs. Dunlop, Dr. Moore, Mr. Dugald Stewart, Miss Chalmers, and others, eminently distinguished as these are by purity and nobleness of feeling, and perfect propriety of language, presents himself, in other effusions of the same class, in colours which it would be rash to call his own. In a word, whatever of grossness of thought, or rant, extravagance, and fustian in expression, may be found in his correspondence, ought, I cannot doubt, to be mainly ascribed to his desire of accommodating himself for the moment to the habits and taste of certain buckish tradesmen of Edinburgh, and other such-like persons, whom, from circumstances already sufficiently noticed, he num-

bered among his associates and friends. That he should have condescended to any such compliances must be regretted; but in most cases, it would probably be quite unjust to push our censure further than this.

The letters that passed between him and his brother Gilbert are among the most precious of the collection; for there, there could be no disguise. That the brothers had entire knowledge of, and confidence in each other, no one can doubt; and the plain, manly, affectionate language, in which they both write, is truly honourable to them and to the parents that reared them.

"Dear Brother," writes Gilbert, January 1, 1789. "I have just finished my New-year's day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes, 'through the dark postern of time long elapsed,' I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the God of seasons is to us; and that, however some clouds may seem to hover over the portion of time before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well."

It was on the same New-year's day that Burns himself addressed to Mrs. Dunlop a letter, part of which is here transcribed—it certainly cannot be read too often:

"ELLISSLAND, New-Year's Day Morning, 1789.

'This, dear madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description—the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. In that case, madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

'This day, the first Sunday of May, a breezy, blue-skyed noon sometime about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm
sunny day about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday. I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

"We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain daisy, the harebell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew, in a summer moon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. 1 Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like theolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of woe or woe beyond death and the grave.

Few, it is to be hoped, can read such things as these without delight; none, surely, that taste the elevated pleasure they are capable of inspire, can turn from them to the well-known issue of Burns's history, without being afflicted. It is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful, more noble, than what such a person as Mrs. Dunlop might at this period be supposed to contemplate as the probable tenor of his future life. What fame can bring of happiness he had already tasted: he had overleaped, by the force of his genius, all the painful barriers of society; and there was probably not a man in Scotland who would not have thought himself honoured by seeing Burns under his roof. He had it in his power to place his poetical reputation on a level with the very highest names, in proceeding in the same course of study and exertion which had originally raised him into public notice and admiration. Surrounded by an affectionate family, occupied, but not engrossed, by the agricultural labours in which his youth and early manhood had delighted, communing with nature in one of the loveliest districts of his native land, and, from time to time, producing to the world some immortal addition to his verse—thus advancing in years and in fame, with what respect would not Burns have been thought of; how venerable in the eyes of his contemporaries—how hallowed in those of after generations, would have been the roof of Ellisland, the field on which he "bound every day after his reapers," the solemn river by which he delighted to wander! The plain of Bannockburn would hardly have been holier ground.

The "golden days" of Ellisland, as Dr. Currie justly calls them, were not destined to be many. Burns's farming speculations once more failed; and he himself seems to have been aware that such was likely to be the case before he had given the business many months trial; for, ere the autumn of 1788 was over, he applied to his patron, Mr. Graham of Fintry, for actual employment as an exciseman; and was accordingly appointed to do duty, in that capacity, in the district where his lands were situated. His income, as a revenue officer, was at first only £35; it by and by rose to £50; and sometimes was £70. 2

1 [Burns's botanical knowledge appears somewhat weak here; several of the favourites mentioned can by no means be designated "flowers in spring." By the "grey plover" he probably means the golden plover, whose "wild cadence" is heard in autumn; the grey plover is a winter shore bird in Scotland.]

2 Burns writes to Lady H. Don, January 22, 1789:—"My excise salary would pay half my rent, and I could manage the whole business of the division without five guineas of additional expense." [With shares of fines and perquisites derived from seizures of contraband goods, Burns's income was frequently not less than £60 a year.]
These pounds were hardly earned, since the duties of his new calling necessarily withdrew him very often from the farm, which needed his utmost attention, and exposed him, which was still worse, to innumerable temptations of the kind he was least likely to resist.

I have now the satisfaction of presenting to the reader with some particulars of this part of Burns's history, derived from a source which every lover of Scotland and Scottish poetry must be prepared to hear mentioned with respect. It happened that at the time when our poet went to Nithsdale, the father of Mr. Allan Cunningham was steward on the estate of Dal-winton: he was, as all who have read the writings of his son will readily believe, a man of remarkable talents and attainments: he was a wise and good man: a servile admirer of Burns's genius; and one of those sober neighbours who in vain strove, by advice and warning, to arrest the poet in the downhill path, towards which a thousand seductions were perpetually drawing him. Allan Cunningham was, of course, almost a child when he first saw Burns; but he was no common child; and, besides, in what he has to say on this subject, we may be sure we are hearing the substance of his benevolent and sagacious father's observations and reflections. His own boyish recollections of the poet's personal appearance and demeanour will, however, be read with interest.

"I was very young," says Mr. Cunningham, "when I first saw Burns. He came to see my father; and their conversation turned partly on farming, partly on poetry, in both of which my father had taste and skill. Burns had just come to Nithsdale; and I think he appeared a shade moresworthily than he does in Nasmyth's picture, and at least ten years older than he really was at the time. His face was deeply marked by thought, and the habitual expression intensely melancholy. His frame was very muscular and well proportioned, though he had a short neck, and something of a ploughman's stoop; he was strong, and proud of his strength.

I saw him one evening match himself with a number of masons; and out of five-and-twenty practised hands, the most vigorous young men in the parish, there was only one that could lift the same weight as Burns.

"He had a very manly face, and a very melancholy look; but on the coming of those he esteemed, his looks brightened up, and his whole face beamed with affection and genius. His voice was very musical. I once heard him read 'Tam o' Shanter,' —I think I hear him now. His fine manly voice followed all the undulations of the sense, and expressed as well as his genius had done, the pathos and humour, the horrible and the awful, of that wonderful performance. As a man feels so will he write; and in proportion as he sympathizes with his author, so will he read him with grace and effect.

"I said that Burns and my father conversed about poetry and farming. The poet had newly taken possession of his farm of Ellisland,—the masons were busy building his house,—the applause of the world was with him, and a little of his money in his pocket,—in short, he had found a resting-place at last. He spoke with great delight about the excellence of his farm, and particularly about the beauty of its situation. 'Yes,' my father said, 'the walks on the river banks are fine, and you will see from your windows some miles of the Nith; but you will also see several farms of fine rich holm, any one of which you might have had. You have made a poet's choice, rather than a farmer.'

"If Burns had much of a farmer's skill, he had little of a farmer's prudence and economy. I once inquired of James Corrie, a sagacious old farmer, whose ground marched with Ellisland, the cause of the poet's failure. 'Faith,' said he, 'how could he miss but fail, when his servants ate the bread as fast as it was baked? I don't mean figuratively, I mean literally. Consider a little. At that time close economy was necessary to have enabled a man to clear twenty pounds a year by Ellisland. Now, Burns's own handiwork was out of the question; he neither ploughed, nor sowed, nor

1 Allan Cunningham must have been "very young," indeed, at this time, seeing that he was born in 1755 (or according to some authorities, 1754), and Burns came to Nithsdale in 1788. His recollections of Burns at this time must be considered rather his father's than his own.

2 Holm is flat, rich, meadow land, intervening between a stream and the general elevation of the adjoining country. (What is called haugh or carse land in Scotland.)
sought support, was generally in a very moderate state of cultivation. The implements with which he tilled his land were primitive and clumsy, and his own knowledge of the management of crops exceedingly limited. He ploughed on in the regular-slothful routine of his ancestors; he rooted out no bush; he dug up no stones; he drained not, neither did he inclose; and weeds obtained their full share of the dung and the lime, which he bestowed more like a medicine than a meal on his soil. His plough was the rude old Scotch one; his harrows had as often teeth of wood as of iron; his carts were heavy and low-wheeled, or were, more properly speaking, tumbler-carts, so called to distinguish them from trail-carts, both of which were in common use. On these rude carriages his manure was taken to the field and his crop brought home. The farmer himself corresponded in all respects with his imperfect instruments. His poverty secured him from risking costly experiments; and his hatred of innovation made him intrude himself behind a breastwork of old maxims and rustle saws, which he interpreted as oracles delivered against improvement. With ground in such condition, with tools so unfit, and with knowledge so imperfect, he sometimes succeeded in bringing a few hundred pounds Scots from the farm he occupied. Such was generally the state of agriculture when Burns came to Nithsdale. I know not how far his own skill was equal to the task of improvement—his trial was short and unfortunate. An important change soon took place, by which he was not fitted to profit; he had not the foresight to see its approach, nor, probably, the fortitude to await its coming.

"In the year 1790, much of the ground in Nithsdale was leased at seven, and ten, and fifteen shillings per acre; and the farmer, in his person and his house, differed little from the peasants and mechanics around him. He would have thought his daughter wedded in her degree, had she married a joiner or a mason; and at kirk or market, all men beneath the rank of a 'portioneer' of the soil mingled together, equal in appearance and importance. But the war which soon commenced, gave a decided impulse to agriculture; the army and navy consumed largely; corn rose in demand; the price augmented; more land was called

into cultivation, and proprietors of houses, which were soon

above the ground, obtained their large store of floors, points, and change with little trouble. He had by this time retired

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into cultivation; and, as leases expired, the proprietors improved the grounds, built better houses, enlarged the rents; and the farmer was soon borne on the wings of sudden wealth above his original condition. His house obtained a slated roof, sash-windons, carpeted floors, plastered walls, and even began to exchange the banks of wvork with which it was formerly hung, for paintings and pianofortes. He laid aside his coat of home-made cloth; he retired from his seat among his servants; he— I am grieved to mention it—gave up family worship as a thing unfashionable, and became a kind of rustic gentleman, who rode a blood-horse, and galloped home on market nights at the peril of his own neck, and to the terror of every modest pedestrian. His daughters, too, no longer prided themselves in well-bleached linen and home-made wools; they changed their linsey-woley gowns for silk; and so ungracefully did their new state sit upon them, that I have seen their lovers coming in ironshod clogs to their carpeted floors, and two of the proudest young women in the parish strolling dngu to their father's potato-field in silk stockings.

"When a change like this took place, and a farmer could, with a dozen years' industry, be able to purchase the land he rented—which many were, and many did—the same, or a still more profitable change might have happened with respect to Ellishard; and Burns, had he stuck by his bête and his plough, would, in all human possibility, have found the independence which he sought in vain from the coldness and parsimony of mankind."

Mr. Cunningham sums up his reminiscences of Burns at Ellishard, in these terms:—

"During the prosperity of his farm, my father often said that Burns conducted himself wisely, and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunse to Kirk on Sunday, though he expressed oftener than once his dislike to the stern Calvinism of that strict old divine, Mr. Kirkpatrick; he assisted in forming a reading club; and at weddings, and house-hearings, and

kirs,4 and other scenes of festivity, he was a welcome guest, universally liked by the young and the old. But the failure of his farming projects, and the limited income with which he was compelled to support an increasing family and an expensive station in life, preyed upon his spirits; and, during these fits of despair, he was willing too often to become the companion of the thoughtless and the gross. I am grieved to say, that besides leaving the book too much for the bowl, and grave and wise friends for levity and reckless companions, he was also in the occasional practice of composing songs, in which he surpassed the licentiousness, as well as the wit and humour, of the old Scottish muse. These have unfortunately found their way to the press, and I am afraid they cannot be recalled."

"In conclusion, I may say, that few men have had so much of the poet about them, and few poets so much of the man—the man was probably less pure than he ought to have been, but the poet was pure and bright to the last."

The reader must be sufficiently prepared to hear, that from the time when he entered on his excise duties, the poet more and more neglected the concerns of his farm. Occasionally, he might be seen holding the plough, an exercise in which he excelled, and was proud of excelling, or stalking down his furrows, with the white sheet of grain wrapped about him, a "tenny seedsman;" but he was more commonly engaged in far different pursuits. "I am now," says he, in one of his letters, "a poor rascally ganger, condemned to gallop two hundred miles every week, to inspect dirty hampers and yeasty barrels." [Burns's district, in which he was appointed in the autumn of 1789, comprised ten parishes, with his own parish in the centre.]

Both in verse and in prose he has recorded the feelings with which he first followed his new vocation. His jests on the subject are

2 Kirs.—The harvest-home dances are called in Scotland.

3 This refers to a collection of old-fashioned and highly-sped Scotch songs of which Burns took the pains to form a MS. collection, and which contained also pieces of similar character written by himself. This collection after Burns's death fell into the hands of a person who had it printed and surreptitiously hawked about the country under the title of the Merry Muse of Caledonia. See vol. iv. p. 228.]
uniformly bitter. "I have the same consolation," he tells Mr. Ainslie, "which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to his audience in the streets of Kilmarnock: Gentleman, for your further encouragement, I can assure you that ours is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and, consequently, with us an honest fellow has the surest chance of preference." He winds up almost all his statements of his feelings on this matter, in the same strain—

I hae a wife and twa wees bairns,
They hainae hose and brats o' duddees. \textit{rags}
Ye ken yoursell, my heart right proud is,
1 needna vaunt;
\textit{[twist willow rope]}
But I'll smeel bieuxa—thraw saugh-woodies, \textit{cut}
Before they want.

On one occasion, however, he takes a higher tone. "There is a certain stigma," says he to Bishop Geddes, "in the name of exciseman; but I do not intend to borrow honour from my profession"—which may perhaps remind the reader of Gibbon's lofty language, on finally quitting the learned and polished circles of London and Paris, for his Swiss retirement; "I am too modest, or too proud, to rate my value by that of my associates."

Burns, in his perpetual perambulations over the moors of Dumfriesshire, had every temptation to encounter, which bodily fatigue the blandishments of hosts and hostesses, and the habitual manners of those who acted along with him in the duties of the excise, could present. He was, moreover, wherever he went, exposed to perils of his own, by the reputation which he had earned, and by his extraordinary powers of entertainment in conversation; and he pleased himself with thinking, in the words of one of his letters to the Lady Harriet Don, that "one advantage he had in this new business was, the knowledge it gave him of the various shades of character in man—consequently assisting him in his trade as a poet." \textsuperscript{1}

From the castle to the cottage, every door flew open at his approach; and the old system of hospitality, then flourishing, rendered it difficult for the most soberly inclined guest to rise from any man's board in the same trim that he sat down to it. The farmer, if Burns were seen passing left his reapers, and trotted by the side of Jenny Geddes, until he could persuade the bard that the day was hot enough to demand an extra libation. If he entered an inn at midnight after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled round the ingle; the largest punch-bowl was produced; and

Be ours this night—who knows what comes tomorrow?

was the language of every eye in the circle that welcomed him. \textsuperscript{2} The highest gentry of the county, whenever they had especial merriment in view, called in the wit and eloquence of Burns to cloven their carousals. The famous song of the "Whistle of worth," commemorates a scene of this kind, more picturesque in some of its circumstances than every day occurred, yet strictly in character with the usual tenor of life among the jovial squires. Three gentlemen of ancient descent, had met to determine, by a solemn drinking-match, who should possess the Whistle, which a common ancestor of them all had earned ages before, in a bacchanalian contest of the same sort with a noble toper from Denmark; and the poet was summoned to watch over and celebrate the issue of the debate.

Then up rose the bard like a prophet in drink, Craighdarroch shall pour when creation shall sink; But if thou wouldst flourish immortal in rhyme, Come, one bottle more, and have at the sublime.

Nor, as has already been hinted, was he safe from temptations of this kind, even when he was at home, and most disposed to enjoy in quiet the society of his wife and children Lion-gazers from all quarters beset him; they eat and drank at his cost, and often went away to criticize him and his fate, as if they had done Burns and his black bowl\textsuperscript{3} great

\textsuperscript{1} Letter (unpublished), dated Ellishand, 23d Dec. 1789. \textit{[See letter to Bishop Geddes, 3d Feb. 1789.]}  
\textsuperscript{2} These particulars are from a letter of David Mac- 

\textsuperscript{3} Burns's famous black punch-bowl, of Inverary 

marble, was the mortal gift of his father-in-law Mr. 

Armour, who himself fashioned it. After passing 

through many hands, it became the property of 

Archibald Haig, Esq., afterwards M.P. for Paisley.
honour in condescending to be entertained for a single evening, with such company and such liquor.

We have on record various glimpses of him, as he appeared while he was half-farmer, half-exerciseman; and some of these present him in attitudes and aspects on which it would be pleasing to dwell. For example, the circumstances under which the verses on the "Wounded Hare" were written, are mentioned generally by the poet himself. James Thomson, son of the occupier of a farm adjoining Ellisland, told Allan Cunningham that it was he who wounded the animal. "Burns," said this person, "was in the custom, when at home, of strolling by himself in the twilight every evening, along the Nith, and by the march between his land and ours. The hares often came and nibbled our wheat-bristled; and once, in the glooming, it was in April, I got a shot at one and wounded her; she ran bleeding by Burns, who was pacing up and down by himself, not far from me. He started, and with a bitter curse, ordered me out of his sight, or he would throw me instantly into the Nith; and had I stayed, I'll warrant he would have been as bad as his word, though I was both young and strong."

Among other curious travellers who found their way about this time to Ellisland, was Captain Grose, the celebrated antiquarian, whom Burns briefly described as

A fine fat fudgel weight—

Of stature short, but genius bright;

and who has painted his own portrait, both with pen and pencil, at full length, in his Olio. This gentleman's taste and pursuits are ludicrously set forth in the copy of verses—

Hear, Land o' Cakes and kirk kents, 
Frue Maidenseek to John o' Grants,
A child's amang ye takin' notes, &c.

and, inter edit, his love of port is not forgotten. Grose and Burns had too much in common not to become great friends. The poet's accurate knowledge of Scottish phraseology and customs was of much use to the researches of the humorous antiquarian; and, above all, it is to their acquaintance that we owe "Tam o' Shanter." Burns told the story as he had heard it in Ayrshire, in a letter to the Captain, and was easily persuaded to versify it. The poem was the work of one day; and Mrs. Burns well remembers the circumstances. He spent most of the day on his favourite walk by the river, where, in the afternoon, she joined him with some of her children. "He was busily engaged courting to himself; and Mrs. Burns, perceiving that her presence was an interruption, loitered behind with her little ones among the broum. Her attention was presently attracted by the strange and wild gestures of the bard, who, now, at some distance, was agitated with an ungovernable access of joy. He was reciting very loud, and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, those animated verses which he had just conceived:

Now, Tam! O Tam! had they been queens
A' plump and straplin' in their teus; [gossy flannel]
Their sarks, instead of creasie flannen, chemises
Been anaw-white seventeen-hunter! then—

The manufacturer's term for the linen woven on a reed of 1700 divisions.—Croumack.
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair, these breeks
That once were plush, o' good blue hair,
I wad hae given them of my handies, bides
For ae blink o' the bonnie bairns.¹

To the last, Burns was of opinion that "Tam o' Shanter" was the best of his productions; and although it does not often happen that poet and public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of.

The admirable execution of the piece, so far as it goes, leaves nothing to wish for; the only criticism has been, that the catastrophe appears unworthy of the preparation. Burns might have avoided this error—if error it be—had he followed not the Ayrshire, but the Galloway edition of the legend. According to that tradition, the Cutty-Sark who attracted the special notice of the bold intruder on the Satanic ceremonial, was no other than the pretty wife of a farmer residing in the same village with himself, and of whose unholy propensities no suspicion had ever been whispered. The Galloway Tam being thoroughly sobered by terror, crept to his bed the moment he reached home after his escape, and said nothing of what had happened to any of his family. He was awakened in the morning with the astounding intelligence that his horse had been found dead in the stable, and a woman's hand, clotted with blood, adhering to the tail. Presently it was reported that Cutty-Sark had burnt her hand grievously over-night, and was ill in bed, but obstinately refused to let her wound be examined by the village leech. Hereupon Tam, disentangling the bloody hand from the hair of his defunct favourite's tail, proceeded to the residence of the fair witch, and forcibly pulling her stump to view, showed his trophy, and narrated the whole circumstances of the adventure. The poor victim of the black art was constrained to confess her guilty practices in presence of the priest and the laird, and was forthwith burnt alive under their joint auspices, within watermark, on the Solway Firth.

Such, Mr. Cunningham informs me, is the version of this story current in Galloway and Dumfriesshire: but it may be doubted whether, even if Burns was acquainted with it, he did not choose wisely in adhering to the Ayrshire legend, as he had heard it in his youth. It is seldom that tales of popular superstition are effective in proportion to their complements of solution and catastrophe. On the contrary, they, like the creed to which they belong, suffer little in a picturesque point of view, by exhibiting a maligned and fragmentary character, that in no wise satisfies strict taste, either critical or moral. Dreams based in darkness, may fitly terminate in a blank: the cloud opens, and the cloud closes. The absence of definite scope and purpose, appears to be of the essence of the mythological grotesque.

Burns lays the scene of this remarkable performance almost on the spot where he was born; and all the terrific circumstances by which he has marked the progress of Tam's midnight journey, are drawn from local tradition.

By this time he was cross the ford
Where in the snow the chapman amoured, smothered
And past the birks and mickle stane, birches
Where drunkenn Charlie bruk's neck-bane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters faud the murdered bairn; found
And near the thorn, aulden the well, above
Where Mungo's mither hanged herself.

None of these tragic memoranda were derived from imagination. Nor was "Tam o' Shanter" himself an imaginary character. Shanter is a farm close to Kirkoswald, that smuggling village, in which Burns, when nineteen years old, studied measurement, and "first became acquainted with scenes of staggering riot."

The then occupier of Shanter, by name Douglas Graham, was, by all accounts, equally what the Tam of the poet appears,—a jolly, careless rustic, who took much more interest in the contraband traffic of the coast, than the rotation of crops. Burns knew the man well; and to his dying day, he, nothing loath, passed among his rural compatria by the name of Tam o' Shanter.²

A few words will bring us to the close of Burns's career at Ellisland. Mr. Ramsay of Ochentre, happening to pass through Nithsdale, in his progress to Dumfriesshire, where he had been invited to use the house of Mr. Robert Solander, unlike the MacIntosh family, he took a warm interest in the drama, and paid frequent visits to the Brown's, and the Low of the new proprietors, and partook heartily of the Jacobite Shakspeare. "Poor Burns," said Mr. Ellisland, "Poor Burns!"

The following ballad was called Mr. Watson in the Edinburgh review, and the writer of that period, to whom I am indebted for the following facts, classed it with the so-called Border ballads:

Who is Mr. Watson, who has learned the art of writing?—
Mr. M'Queen Macintyre, a certain well-known Fraser of the theatre of Edinburgh, established a weekly newspaper, urged to its publication by a correspondent, who had given Mr. Macintyre a hint of the art of writing. The new paper was called the " proprietor of the paper. For the number of numbers, see also note 3, p. 24.

¹The above is quoted from a MS. journal of Cronie. Mr. M'Dimmurd confirms the statement, and adds, that the poet, having committed the verses to writing, on the top of his soddyke [fence of turf] over the water, came into the house, and read them immediately in high triumph at the firelace.

²The above information is derived from Mr. R. Chambers. [See also note 3, p. 24.]
dile, in 1788, met Burns riding rapidly near Closeburn. The poet was obliged to pursue his professional journey, but sent on Mr. Ramsay and his fellow-traveller to Ellisland, where he joined them as soon as his duty permitted him, saying as he entered, "I come, to use the words of Shakspeare, stept in haste." Mr. Ramsay was "much pleased with his smooth countenance, and his modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary rustics." He told his guest he was preparing to write a drama, which he was to call "Rob McQueenan's El-hin," from a popular story of King Robert the Bruce being defeated on the Carron, when the heel of his boot having loosened in the flight, he applied to one Robert McQueenan to fix it on; who, to make sure, ran his awl nine inches up the King's heel. The evening was spent delightfully. A gentleman of dry temper, who looked in accidentally, soon partook the contagion, and sat listening to Burns with the tears running over his cheeks.

"Poor Burns!" says Mr. Ramsay, "from that time I met him no more."

The summer after, some English travellers, calling at Ellisland, were told that the poet was walking by the river. They proceeded in search of him, and presently, "on a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox's skin on his head; a loose greatcoat, fastened round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broadsword." (Was he still dreaming of the Bruce?) "It was Burns. He received them with great cordiality, and asked them to share his humble dinner. These travellers also shared the evening they spent at Ellisland, with the brightest of their lives."

Whether Burns ever made any progress in the actual composition of a drama on "Rob M'Queenan's Elshin," we know not. He had certainly turned his ambition seriously to the theatre almost immediately after his first establishment in Dumfriesshire. In a letter (unpublished) to Lady H. Don, dated December 23rd, 1789, he thus expresses himself—

"No man knows what nature has fitted him for till he try; and if, after a preparatory course of some years' study of men and books, I should find myself unequal to the task, there is no great harm done. Virtue and study are their own reward. I have got Shakspeare, and begun with him; and I shall stretch a point, and make myself master of all the dramatic authors of any repute in both English and French—the only languages which I know." And in another letter to the same person, he recurs to the subject in these terms—

"Though the rough material of fine writing is undoubtedly the gift of genius, the workmanship is as certainly the united effort of labour, attention, and pains. Nature has qualified few, if any, to shine in every walk of the muses. I shall put it to the test of repeated trials, whether she has formed me capable of distinguishing myself in any one."

Towards the close of 1791, the poet, finally despairing of his farm, determined to give up his lease, which the kindness of his landlord had rendered easy of arrangement: and procuring an appointment to the Dumfries division, which raised his salary from the revenue to £70 per annum, removed his family to the county town, in which he terminated his days. His conduct as an excise-officer had hitherto met with uniform approbation; and he nourished warm hopes of being promoted, when he had thus avowedly devoted himself altogether to the service.

He left Ellisland, however, with a heavy heart. The affection of his neighbours was rekindled in all its early fervour, by the thoughts of parting with him; and the sweep of his farming-stock and other effects, was, in spite of whisky, a very melancholy scene. The competition for his chattels (says Allan Cunningham) was eager, each being anxious to secure a memorandum of Burns's residence among them.

It is pleasing to know, that among other "titles manifold" to their respect and gratitude, Burns, at the suggestion of Mr. Riddell of Friars' Carse, had superintended the formation of a subscription-library in the parish. His letters to the booksellers on this subject do him much honour: his choice of authors (which business was naturally left to his discretion) being in the highest degree judicious. Such institutions are now common, almost universal, indeed, in the rural districts of
southern Scotland; but it should never be forgotten that Burns was among the first, if not the very first, to set the example. "He was so good," says Mr. Riddell, "as to take the whole management of this concern; he was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for their improvement and information."

Once, and only once, did Burns quit his residence at Ellisland to revisit Edinburgh. His object was to close accounts with Creech; that business accomplished, he returned immediately, and he never again saw the capital. He thus writes to Mrs. Dunlop:—"To a man who has a home, however humble and remote, if that home is, like mine, the scene of domestic comfort, the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening distress—

Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.

"When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim—what merits had he had, or what demerits have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I kicked into the world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride? ... Often as I have gilded with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince's Street, it has suggested itself to me as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed past his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective." There is bitterness in this badinage.

It may naturally excite some surprise, that of the convivial conversation of so distinguished a convivialist, so few specimens have been preserved in the memoirs of his life.


2 It is true that Burns paid only one visit to Edinburgh while resident at Ellisland, but he again visited the Scottish capital on his leaving the farm, when he remained there about a week, and took farewell of "Clarinda," who was on the eve of sailing to the West Indies.

The truth seems to be, that those of his companions who chose to have the best memory for such things, happened also to have the keenest relish for his wit and his humour when exhibited in their coarser phases. Among a heap of manuscript memoranda with which I have been favoured, I find but little that one could venture to present in print; and the following specimens of that little must, for the present, suffice.

A gentleman who had recently returned from the East Indies, where he had made a large fortune, which he showed no great anxiety about spending, was of opinion, it seems, one day, that his company had had enough of wine, rather sooner than they came to that conclusion: he offered another bottle in feeble and hesitating terms, and remained dallying with the cork-screw, as if in hopes that some one would interfere and prevent further effusion of Bordeaux. "Sir," said Burns, losing temper, and betraying in his mood something of the old rusticity—"Sir, you have been in Asia, and for aught I know, on the Mount of Moriah, and you seem to hang over your topoi-ben as remorsefully as Abraham did over his son Isaac—Come, sir, to the sacrifice!"

At another party, the society had suffered considerably from the prosing of a certain well-known provincial bore of the first magnitude; and Burns, as much as any of them, overawed, as it would seem, by the rank of the nuisance, had not only submitted, but condescended to applaud. The grandee, however, being suddenly summoned to another company in the same tavern, Burns immediately addressed himself to the chair, and demanded a bumper. The president thought he was about to dedicate his toast to the distinguished absentee: "I give," said the bard, "I give you the health, gentlemen all—of the waiter that called my Lord —— out of the room."

He often made extemporary rhymes the vehicle of his sarcasm; thus, for example, having heard a person, of no very elevated rank, talk loud and long of some aristocratic festivities in which he had the honour to mingle, Burns, when he was called upon for his song, chanted some verses, of which one has been preserved:

3 [A colloquial term for a large-sized liquor measure.]
of lordly acquaintance you boast,
And the duke's that you dined with yestreen,
Yet an insect's an insect at most,
The it crawl on the curt of a queen.

I believe I have already alluded to Burns's custom of carrying a diamond pin with him in all his wanderings, and constantly embellishing it with epigrams. On one occasion, being storm-stayed at Langholm, in Clydesdale, he went to church; and the indignant beadle, after the congregation dispersed, invited the attention of the clergyman to this stanza on the window by which the noticeable stranger had been sitting:

As cauld a wind as ever blew;
A cauld kirk, but not but few;
As cauld a minister's ever spake;
We're a' beat or I come back. You'll all be hot ere

Sir Walter Scott possesses (1829) a tumbler, on which are the following verses, written by Burns on the arrival of a friend, Mr. W. Stewart, factor to a gentleman of Nithsdale.

The landlady being very wroth at what she considered the disfigurement of her glass, a gentleman present appealed her, by paying down a shilling, and carried off the relic.

You're welcome, Willie Stewart,
You're welcome, Willie Stewart;
There's n'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half she welcome's thou art.
Come, lumpsers high, express your joy,
The bowl we must renew it;
The tappit-heen gae bring her ben, quart-measure
Tae welcome Willie Stewart.
May be he strange, and friends be slack,
Ik action may he rue it;
May woman on him turn her back,
That roughs thee, Willie Stewart.

Since we are among such small matters, perhaps some readers will smile to hear that Burns very often wrote on his books thus—"Robert Burns, Poet;" and that Allan Cunningham remembers a favourite collie at Ellisland having the same inscription on his collar.

[As supplementary and partly corrective of what has gone before, we shall give the following particulars of Ellisland and Burns's stay there. The farm of Ellisland is situated on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles from Dumfries. When Burns took it it was an unimclosed and unimproved piece of ground, measuring 170 imperial acres; and the poet undertook to pay a rent of fifty pounds for three years, and seventy for the remainder of the lease, which extended to four periods of nineteen years, or seventy-six years in all. Mr. Miller at the same time agreed to allow the poet £300 for the purpose of building a suitable 'ouse (suit of farm buildings) and inclosing the land. The crop of that summer was also to be Burns's, while he was not to be liable to payment of rent till Martinmas. The poet seems to have commenced his residence on the farm on the 12th of June, 1788, occupying a small smoky cottage on its outskirts (the abode of the outgoing tenant), while his house was building. His recently wedded Jean at this time remained at Mauchline or Mossgiel, with the one surviving child of four which she had already borne to him. At length, in December, she went to join her husband, and till their new house was finished (some months afterwards) they lived at a place called The Isle, about a mile below Ellisland.

The farmstead, to which, while it survives, some interest must ever be attached, not only as his residence, but as in some measure a creation of his taste, is situated to a poet's wish. Through the centre of a fine alluvial plain skirted by mountains of considerable elevation, the Nith, a broad and copious stream, pursues its way to the Solway. The right or west bank here rises in a gravelly precipice about forty feet above the stream, while the opposite bank consists of a low holm or meadow, out of which, about a mile from Ellisland, rise the towers of Dalswinton. Burns's farm-buildings were situated near the verge of the precipice or scuir alluded to, in such a way that, as Mr. Cunningham remarks, their "afternoon shadow fell across the river upon the opposite fields." A common-minded farmer superintending the erection of farm buildings in such a situation, would have placed the dwelling-house with its back to the stream, and its face towards the approach from the public road. But Burns caused it to face the river, though this gave it a northerly aspect. Even in this little arrangement we can see something characteristic of the poet. The house was a simple parallelogram, of one story in height, about sixty feet long, by eighteen in breadth.
Behind it a quadrangle was formed by a stable and cow-house on one hand (east), and a barn (somewhat too small for the farm) on the other (west), a straw-yard for cattle being behind the one, and a stack-yard at the extremity of the other, and on the left hand as we approach the house by its ordinary access. There is a separate garden a little to the east; but this is said to have been formed since Burns's time. From the front of the house a path-way winds down the bank towards a little slip of holm here left by the river, a spot where children rejoice to weave rush-caps and begem the thorn with the gowen, and "lassies use to wash and spread their calts," as old Allan says. Half-way down the path-way, a copious spring spouts out into a basin, for the supply of the family with water. There is a small separate building at the top of the path-way; but this was raised by the gentleman who bought the farm from Mr. Miller, several years after it had been deserted by Burns.

The house itself has a projection towards the north, which has also been added since the days of Burns, being employed as a kitchen. The house built and possessed by the poet, consists expressly of the parallelogram above described, being divided into four apartments, besides sleeping-places under the states. At the west end, occupying the full breadth of the house, but enjoying no fine outlook in any direction, is the best room, spence, ben-end, or by whatever other name it might be called. A corresponding room at the east end, partly occupied by beds, was the parlour, or ordinary sitting-room of the poet, the other being reserved for the reception of strangers who required to be treated with ceremony. The former room has a pleasant window to the east, commanding a view of the Ninth downwards, and of Dalswinton grounds on the opposite bank. Between these two rooms is a space divided into two small apartments, one of which, adjoining the ordinary sitting-room, was Burns's kitchen, while the other was a bed-room. In this house were born his sons Francis and William, and here he wrote his "Tam o'Shanter," and some of the best of his songs.

William Clark, a respectable old farm-servant, formerly residing at Enrick near Gatehouse, had some interesting recollections of the poet, which have been reported in the following terms:—He lived with Burns as farm-servant during the winter half-year, he believed, of 1789-90. On being hired in the house of one Alexander Robson, who sold ale and spirits in the village of Dunecw, Kirkmahoe, he was treated to a dram, and got a shilling as orcha-

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The life of Robert Burns, 100

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intoxicated, or incapable of transacting his ordinary business. In every sense of the word he was the poor man's friend. It was rumoured that Alexander Robson, in Dumfries, made a few bushels of malt in a clandestine way in an old barn. Some person, anxious for reward or favour, informed Burns of the circumstances, and on the following night, rather late, a card was thrust under Robson's door, intimating that the exciseman would probably call at a certain hour next day—a hint to the poor man to put his malt out of the way. Clark recollected hearing Robson's son reading this card to a group of villagers, with whom it made Burns very popular; they unanimously declared him to be "a kind-hearted man, who would not do anybody harm, if he could help it." Burns, when at home, usually wore a broad blue bonnet, a blue or brown long-tailed coat, coarse breeches, dark blue stockings, and coates [short spatterdashes]; and in cold weather, a black-and-white checked plaid wrapped round his shoulders, such as shepherds and many other persons still wear. Mrs. Burns was a good and prudent housewife, kept everything in neat and tidy order, was well liked by the servants, and provided plenty of wholesome food. Before Clark left Ellisland he was pressed to stay by his master; and when he came away, Burns gave him a certificate of character, besides paying his wages in full, and giving him a shilling as a fairing.

According to a recollection of his son Robert, the poet gave shelter and succour at Ellisland for about six weeks to a poor broken-down sailor, who had come begging in the extremity of want and wretchedness. The man lay in an outhouse until he recovered some degree of health and strength, when, being able once more to take the road, he departed, leaving as a token of his gratitude a little model of a ship for the amusement of the poet's children.

Burns's expectations from Ellisland, as has been already seen, ended in disappointment, and in November, 1781, having sold off his stock, and much useless furniture, and having a better excise appointment at Dumfries, he removed to that town with his family; thus abruptly breaking off, after a four years' experience, a lease which was to have lasted for more than the term of life assigned to man by the poet.

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CHAPTER VIII.

[Dumfries:—intemperance:—hopes of promotion:—Jacobitism:—Whigish favour for the French Revolution:—Burns suspected:—indiscretions:—story of the captured guns:—Excise-board's investigation:—Burns joins the Dumfries Volunteers:—Election ballads:—Gray and Filmer on Burns in Dumfries:—Thomson's Medecine:—correspondence:—Cholics:—"Scots who buck":—Coppery.]

The four principal biographers of our poet, Heron, Currie, Walker, and Irving, 2 concur in the general statement, that his moral course, from the time when he settled in Dumfries, was downwards. Heron knew more of the man personally than any of the others, and his words are these:—"In Dumfries, his dissipation became still more deeply habitual. He was here exposed, more than in the country, to be solicited to share the riot of the dissolute and the idle. Foolish young men, such as writers' apprentices, young surgeons, merchants' clerks, and his brother excisemen, flocked eagerly about him, and from time to time pressed him to drink with them, that they might enjoy his wicked wit. The Caledonian Club, too, and the Dumfries and Galloway Hunt, had occasional meetings at Dumfries after Burns came to reside there, and the poet was of course invited to share their hospitality, and hesitated not to accept their invitation. 3 The morals of the town were...
in consequence of its becoming so much the scene of public amusement, not a little corrupted, and, though a husband and a father, Burns did not escape suffering by the general contamination in a manner which I forbear to describe. In the intervals between his different fits of intemperance, he suffered the keenest anguish of remorse and horrible afflicting foresight. His Jean behaved with a degree of maternal and conjugal tenderness and prudence, which made him feel more bitterly the evils of his misconduct, though they could not reclaim him."

This picture, dark as it is, warrants some distressing shades that mingle in the parallel one by Dr. Currie; it wants nothing, however, of which truth demands the insertion. That Burns dissiplined enough long ere he went to Dumfries, became still more dissipated in a town than he had been in the country, is certain. It may also be true that his wife had her own particular causes, sometimes, for dissatisfaction. But that Burns ever sunk into a toper—that he ever was addicted to solitary drinking—that his bottle ever interfered with his discharge of his duties as an exciseman—or that, in spite of some transitory follies, he ever ceased to be a most affectionate husband—all these charges have been insinuated—and they are all false. His intemperance was, as Heron says, in fits; his aberrations of all kinds were occasional, not systematic; they were all to himself the sources of exquisite misery in the retrospect; they were the aberrations of a man whose moral sense was never deadened, of one who encountered more temptations from without and from within, than the immense majority of mankind, far from having to contend against, are even able to imagine;—of one, finally, who prayed for pardon, where alone effectual pardon could be found;—and who died ere he had reached that term of life up to which the passions of many, who, their mortal career being regarded as a whole, are honoured as among the most virtuous of mankind, have proved too strong for the control of reason. We have already seen that the poet was careful of decorum in all things during the brief space of his prosperity at Ellisland, and that he became less so on many points, as the prospects of his farming speculation darkened around him. It seems to be equally certain, that he entertained high hopes of promotion in the excise at the period of his removal to Dumfries; and that the comparative recklessness of his latter conduct there, was consequent on a certain overclouding of those professional expectations. The case is broadly stated so by Walker and Paul; and there are hints to the same effect in the narrative of Currie.

The statement has no doubt been exaggerated, but it has its foundation in truth; and by the kindness of Mr. Train,1 supervisor at Castle Douglas, in Galloway, I shall presently be enabled to give some details which may throw light on this business.

Burns was much patronized when in Edinburgh by the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, and other leading Whigs of the place—much more so, to their honour be it said, than by any of the influential adherents of the then administration. His landlord at Ellisland (Mr. Miller of Dalswinton), his neighbour, Mr. Riddell of Friars-Carse, and most of the other gentlemen who showed him special attention, belonged to the same political party; and on his removal to Dumfries it so happened, that some of his immediate superiors in the revenue service of the district, and other persons of standing and authority into whose society he was thrown, entertained sentiments of the same description.

Burns, whenever in his letters he talks seriously of political matters, uniformly describes his early Jacobitism as mere "matter of fancy." It may, however, be easily believed, that a fancy like his, long indulged in dreams of that sort, was well prepared to pass into certain other dreams, which had, as calm men now view the matter, but little in common with them, except that both alike involved some feeling of dissatisfaction with "the existing order of things." Many of the old elements of political disaffection in Scotland put on a new shape at the outbreaking of the French Revolution; and Jacobites be

1 Joseph Train, a poet and antiquarian of some ability, but who is best remembered as a kind of legendary and antiquarian Jackal to Sir Walter Scott, spent twenty-eight years in the service of the excise, and died in 1832, aged 73. Several of the "finds" he furnished Sir Walter with have since been proved to be "ingenious fabrications of his own."
come half Jacobins are they were at all aware in what the doctrines of Jacobinism were to end. The Whigs naturally regarded the first dawn of freedom in France with feelings of sympathy, delight, exultation; in truth, few good men of any party regarded it with more of fear than of hope. The general, the all but universal tone of feeling was favourable to the first assailants of the Bourbon despotism; and there were few who more ardently participated in the general sentiment of the day than Burns. The revulsion of feeling that took place in this country at large, when wanton atrocities began to stain the course of the French Revolution, and Burke lifted up his powerful voice to denounce its leaders, as, under pretense of love for freedom, the enemies of all social order, morality, and religion, were violent in proportion to the strength and a tour of the hopes in which good men had been eager to indulge, and cruelly disappointed. The great body of the Whigs, however, were slow to abandon the cause which they had espoused; and although their chiefs were wise enough to draw back when they at length perceived that serious plans for overturning the political institutions of our own country had been hatched and fostered, under the pretext of admiring and comforting the destroyers of a foreign tyranny—many of their provincial retainers, having uttered their sentiments all along with provincial vehemence and openness, found it no easy matter to retreat gracefully along with them. Scenes more painful at the time, and more so even now in the retrospective, than had for generations afflicted Scotland, were the consequences of the rancour into which party feelings on both sides now rose and fermented. Old and dear ties of friendship were torn in sunder; society was for a time shaken to its centre. In the most extravagant dreams of the Jacobites there had always been much to command respect: high chivalrous devotion, reverence for old affections, ancestral loyalty, and the generosity of romance. In the new species of hostility, everything seemed mean as well as pernicious; it was scorned even more than hated. The very name stained whatever it came near; and men that had known and loved each other from boyhood, stood aloof, if this influence interfered, as if it had been some loathsome pestilence.

There was a great deal of stately Toryism at this time in the town of Dumfries, which was the favourite winter retreat of many of the best gentlemen's families of the south of Scotland. Feelings that worked more violently in Edinburgh than in London acquired additional energy still in this provincial capital. All men's eyes were upon Burns. He was the standing marvel of the place; his toasts, his jokes, his epigrams, his songs, were the daily food of conversation and scandal; and he, open and careless, and thinking he did not do great harm in saying and singing what many of his superiors had not the least objection to hear and applaud, soon began to be considered amongst the local admirers and disciples of the good old king and minister, as the most dangerous of all the apostles of sedition,—and to be shunned accordingly.

A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has told me, that he was seldom more grieved, than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer's evening, to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite part was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, "Nay, nay, my young friend,—that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizel Bailie's pathetic ballad:

| His bonnet stood amiss in fair on his brow, |
| His small and look'd better than many men's now; |
| But now he let's wear any way it will bing; |
| And casts himself down upon the corn-king. |

| O were we young, as we once have been, |
| We said hie been galloping down on you green, |
| And thinking it o'er the half-white hea,— |
| Trapping And were my heart light I would die. |

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He immediately after citing these verses assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend

1 David M'Colloch, brother to the laird of Ardwell, and whose sister was married to a brother of Sir Walter Scott.]
home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and Bonnie Jean’s singing of some verses which he had recently composed. But this incident belongs, probably, to a somewhat later period of our poet’s residence in Dumfries.

The records of the excise-office are silent concerning the suspicions which the commissioners of the time certainly took up in regard to Burns as a political offender—according to the philosophy of the tempestuous period, a democra. In that department, as then conducted, I am assured that nothing could have been more unlike the usual course of things, than that a syllable should have been set down in writing on such a subject, unless the case had been one of extremities. That an inquiry was instituted, we know from Burns’s own letters—and what the exact termination of inquiry was, can no longer, it is probable, be ascertained.

According to the tradition of the neighborhood, Burns, inter alia, gave great offence by demurring in a large mixed company to the proposed toast, “The health of William Pitt;” and left the room in indignation, because the society rejected what he wished to substitute, namely, “The health of a greater and a better man, George Washington.” I suppose the warmest admirer of Mr. Pitt’s talents and politics would hardly venture nowadays to dissent substantially from Burns’s estimate of the comparative merits of these two great men. The name of Washington, at all events, when contemporary passions shall have finally sunk into the peace of the grave, will unquestionably have its place in the first rank of virtuous stations—a station which demands the exhibition of victory pure and unmixed, over sentiments and trials extraordinary in kind, as well as strength. But at the time when Burns, being a servant of Mr. Pitt’s government, was guilty of this indiscretion, it is obvious that a great deal more was meant than reached the ear.

In the poet’s own correspondence we have traces of another occurrence of the same sort. Burns thus writes to a gentleman at whose table he had dined the day before:—“I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Captain made use of to me, had I had nobody’s welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manner of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not give the peace and welfare of a wife and children in a drunken squabble. Further, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread last night’s business may be interpreted in the same way. You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mr. Burns’s welfare with the task of waiting on every gentleman who was present to state this to him; and, as you please, show this toast. What, after all, was the ominous toast? May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to.”

Burns has been commended, sincerely by some, and ironically by others, for putting up with the treatment which he received on this occasion, without calling Captain — to account the next morning; and one critic [Sir W. Scott], the last, I am sure, that would have wished to say anything unkindly about the poet, has excited indignation in the breast of Mr. Peterkin, by suggesting that Burns really had not, at any period of his life, those delicate feelings on certain matters, which it must be admitted, no person in Burns’s original rank and station is ever expected to act upon. The question may be safely intrusted to the good sense of all who can look to the case without passion or personal irritation. No human being will ever dream that Robert Burns was a coward; as for the poet’s toast about the success of the war, there can be no doubt that only one meaning was given to it by all who heard it uttered; and as little that a gentleman bearing the king’s commission in the army, if he was entitled to resent the sentiment at all, lost no part of his right to do so because it was announced in a quibble.


Baron, his business as we were going,—such an as well as the may seem—his traffic, as always as a loyal man, only be that there may be exaggeration of matters, and in that manner, no matter how it crept from the health of his body, it must, in some way, and perhaps, it may be proved, and collated with the perpetual drink of the society, may be able, in the storm of the company, to suffer steel of their, to say—

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Foes to the—
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The road—
The voice—
Our call—
Another—
And some—
For no one—
—How, now—
This shall—
And he—

[Letter to Samuel Clark, Jun., Dumfries, dated "Sunday morning" (January, 1790).]
Burns, no question, was guilty of unpoliteness as well as indiscretion, in offering any such toasts as these in mixed company; but that such toasts should have been considered as attacking any grave suspicion to his character as a loyal subject, is a circumstance which can only be accounted for by reference to the exaggerated state of political feelings on all matters, and among all descriptions of men, at that melancholy period of dissatisfaction, distrust, and disunion. Who, at any other time than that lamentable time, would ever have dreamed of erecting the drinking, or declining to drink, the health of a particular minister, or the approving, or disapproving, of a particular measure of government, into the test of a man's loyalty to his king? The poet Crabbe has, in one of his masterly sketches, given us, perhaps, a more vivid delineation of the jarings and collisions which were at this period the perpetual curse of society, than the reader may be able to find elsewhere. He has pointed the sturdy Tory musing accidentally in a company of those who would not, like Burns, drink "the health of William Pitt," and suffering sternly, and sulkily, under the infliction of their, to him, horrible doctrines.

Now, dinner past, no longer he ushers his strong dislike to be a silent guest; subjects and words were now at his command—when disappointment frowned on all he planned. For, heard! he heard, amazed, on every side, her church insulted, and her priests bilked, the laws reviled, the ruling powers abused, the land decried, and his foes exulted—

He heard and ponder'd. What to men so vile Should be his language? For his threatening style They were too many. If his speech were meek, They would despise such poor attempts to speak—

There were reformers of each different sort, Foes to the laws, the priesthood, and the court: Some on their favourite plans alone intent, Some purely angry and uncontrolled; The rash were proud to blame their country's laws, The vain to seem supporters of a cause; One call'd for change that he would dread to see, Another sigh'd for Gallic liberty; And numbers joining with the forward crew, For no one reason—but that many do—

How, said the Justice, can this trouble rise—

This shame and pain, from creatures I despise?

And he has also presented the champion of loyalty as surrounded with kindred spirits, and amazed with the audacity of an intrusive

Captain—body's welfare could certainly dismiss one manner of the transactions pondering one manner of the words were in a breeze of air. I think that I am aware of a whole body. Further, it may be political once before its construction. I may be interested. I beg, will you go your wish for the task of waiting I am sent to state this, show this omission, and so present were his—

a toast that loyalty cannot

sincerely by putting up a received on this in—to

and one critic right, that would kindly about asking in the breast thing that Burns in his life, those letters, which, it is Burns's original to act upon, to the end of the to the case ofagination. No author that Robert the poet's toast there can be no words given to it as little that the commission to recent the right to a quiab.

re-substitute of "Life of Robert Burns"

Burns, eager of temper, loud of tongue, and with declamation and sarcasm equally at command, was, we may easily believe, the most hated of human beings, because he was the most dreaded among the provincial champions of the administration of which he thought fit to disapprove. But that he ever, in his most ardent moods, upheld the principles of the miscreants, or madmen, whose applause of the French Revolution was but the mask of revolutionary designs at home, after such principles had been really developed by those who maintained them, and understood by him, it may be safely denied. There is not assuredly in all his correspondence (and I have seen much of it that never has been, nor ought to be printed), one syllable to give countenance to such a charge.

His indiscretion, however, did not always confine itself to words; and though an accident now about to be recorded belongs to the year 1792, before the French war broke out, there is reason to believe that it formed the main subject of the inquiry which the excise commissioners thought themselves called upon to institute, touching the politics of our poet.

At that period a great deal of contraband traffic, chiefly from the Isle of Man, was going on along the coasts of Galloway and Ayrshire,
and the whole of the revenue-officers from Green to Dunfries were placed under the orders of a superintendent, residing in Ayr, who exalted himself zealously in intercepting the descent of the smuggling vessels. On the 27th February, a suspicious-looking brig was discovered in the Solway Frith, and Burns was one of the party whom the superintendent conducted to watch her motions. She got into shallow water the day afterwards, and the officers were enabled to discover that her crew were numerous, armed, and not likely to yield without a struggle. Lewars, a brother exciseman, an intimate friend of our poet, was accordingly sent to Dunfries for a guard of dragoons; the superintendent, Mr. Crawford, proceeded himself on a similar errand to Eclisfechan; and Burns was left with some men under his orders, to watch the brig, and prevent landing or escape. From the private journal of one of the excisemen (now in my hands), it appears that Burns manifested considerable impatience while thus occupied, being left for many hours in a wet salt-marsh, with a force which he knew to be inadequate for the purpose it was meant to fulfil. One of his comrades hearing him abuse his friend Lewars in particular, for being slow about his journey, the man answered, that he also wished the devil had him for his pains, and that Burns, in the meantime, would do well to ivite a song upon the sluggish: Burns said nothing, but after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined his party, and to them the well-known ditty, the "Dell's awa' wi' the Exciseman."

Lewars arrived shortly afterwards with his dragoons; and Burns, putting himself at their head, waded, sword in hand, to the brig, and was the first to board her. The crew lost heart, and submitted, though their numbers were greater than those of the assailing force. The vessel was condemned, and, with all her arms and stores, sold by auction next day at Dunfries; upon which occasion, Burns, whose behaviour had been highly commended, thought fit to purchase four caramonds, by way of trophy. But his glee went a step further:—he sent the guns, with a letter, to the French Convention, requesting that body to accept of them as a mark of his admiration and respect. The pre-

1[See note to the "Dell's awa' wi' the Exciseman."
To the British constitution, on Revolution principles, next, after my God, I am most devoutly attached. You, sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity: were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye; I could brave misfortune; I could face ruin; for at the worst, 'death's thousand doors stand open.' But, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they incite revenge, and wither resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due. To these, sir, permit me to appeal. By these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me; and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved."

On the 24 of January, 1793, a week or two afterwards, we find him writing to Mrs. Dunlop in these terms:—(The good lady had been offering him some interest with the excise board in the view of promotion.) "Mr. C., I can be of little service to me at present; at least, I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor for several years. I must wait the rotation of lists, &c. Besides, some envious malicious devil has raised a little enmity on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my superiors. I have set hencethence a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in everything else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my heart. War, I deplore—misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But"

"The remainder of this letter," says Crowe, "has been torn away by some barbarous hand. I can have no doubt that it was torn away by one of the kindest hands in the world—that of Mrs. Dunlop herself."

The exact result of the excise board's investigation is hidden, as has been said above, in obscurity; nor is it at all likely that the cloud will be withdrawn hereafter. A general impression, however, appears to have gone forth that the affair terminated in something which Burns himself considered as tantamount to the destruction of all hope of future promotion in his profession; and it has been insinuated by almost every one of his biographers, that the crushing of these hopes operated unhappily, even fatally, on the tone of his mind, and, in consequence, on the habits of his life. In a word, the early death of Burns has been (by implication at least) ascribed mainly to the circumstances in question. Even Sir Walter Scott has distinctly intimated the mischief in this prevalent notion.

"The political predilections," says he, "for they could hardly be termed principles, of Burns, were entirely determined by his feelings. At his first appearance he felt, or affected, a propensity to Jacobitism. Indeed, a youth of his warm imagination in Scotland, thirty years ago, could hardly escape this bias. The side of Charles Edward was that not solely of sound sense and sober reason, but of romantic gallantry and high achievement. The inadultery of the means by which that prince attempted to regain the crown forfeited by his fathers—the strange and almost poetically adventures which he underwent—the Scottish martial character, honoured in his victories, and degraded and crushed in his defeat—the tales of the veterans who had followed his adventurous standard, were all calculated to impress upon the mind of a poet a warm interest in the cause of the House of Stuart. Yet the impression was not of a very serious cast; for Burns himself acknowledges in one of his letters (Reliques, p. 240), that 'to tell the where it erroneously appears under date Jan. 5, 1792, instead of 1793. It will be found in its proper place in this edition, dated Dec. 31st, 1792, January 2, and January 5, 1793.)

[Mrs. Corbet, general supervisor of excise, Edinburgh.]
matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of rire la baguette." The same enthusiastic ardour of disposition swayed Burns in his choice of political tenets, when the country was agitated by revolutionary principles. That the poet should have chosen the side on which high talents were most likely to procure celebrity; that he to whom the fastidious distinctions of society were always odious, should have listened with complacency to the voice of French philosophy, which denominated them as usurpations on the rights of man, was precisely the thing to be expected. Yet we cannot but think, that if his superior in the excise department had tried the experiment of soothing rather than irritating his feelings, they might have spared themselves the disgrace of rendering desperate the possessor of such uncommon talents. For it is but too certain, that from the moment his hopes of promotion were utterly blasted, his tendency to dissipation hurried him precipitately to those excesses which shortened his life. We doubt not, that in that awful period of national discord, he had done and said enough to deter, in ordinary cases, the servants of government from countenancing an avowed partisanship of faction. But this partisan was Burns! Surely the experiment of lenity might have been tried, and perhaps successfully. The conduct of Mr. Graham of Fintry, our poet's only shield against actual dismissal and consequent ruin, reflects the highest credit on that gentleman."

In the general strain of sentiment in this passage, who can refuse to concur? But I am bound to say, the after a careful examination of all the documents printed, and MSS., to which I have had access, I have great doubts as to some of the principal facts assumed in the eloquent statement. I have before me, for example, a letter of Mr. Findlater, formerly collector at Glascow, who was, at the period in question, Burns's immediate superior in the Dumfries district, in which that respectable person distinctly says:—"I may venture to assert, that when Burns was accused of a leaning to democracy, and an inquiry into his conduct took place, he was subjected, in consequence thereof, to no more than perhaps a verbal or written caution to be more circumspect in future. Neither do I believe his promotion was thereby affected, as has been stated. That, had he lived, would, I have every reason to think, have gone on in the usual routine. His good and steady friend, Mr. Graham, would have attended to this. What cause, therefore, was there for depression of spirits on this account? or how should he have been hurried thereby to a premature grave? I never saw his spirit fail till he was borne down by the pressure of disease and bodily weakness; and even then it would occasionally revive, and like an expiring lamp, emit bright flashes to the last." 1

When the war had fairly broken out, a battalion of volunteers was formed in Dumfries, and Burns was an original member of the corps. It is very true that his accession was objected to 2 by some of his neighbours: but these were overruled by the gentlemen who took the lead in the business, and the poet soon became, as might have been expected, the greatest possible favourite with his brothers in arms. His commanding officer, Colonel De Peyster, attests his zealous discharge of his duties as a member of the corps; and their attachment to him was on the increase to the last. He was their laureate, and in that capacity did more good service to the government of the country, at a crisis of the darkest alarm and danger, than perhaps any one person of his rank and station, with the exception of Dibdin, had the power or the inclination to render. "Burns," says Allan Cunningham, "was a zealous lover of his country, and has stamped his patriotic feelings in many a lasting verse.—His 'Poor and Honest Soldier," laid hold at once on the public feeling, and it was everywhere sung with an enthusiasm which only began to

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1 Letter to Donald Horne, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh.
2 one of these objects some time afterwards thought fit to affect particular civility to Burns, and later alia seduced him one day into his house, where a bottle of champagne was produced, and a small collection of arms submitted to the hard's inspection. Burns well knew the gentleman's recent hostility, and appreciated the motives of his courtesy. "Do tell me, Mr. Burns," said he, "what do you think of this pair of pistols?"—"Why," said Burns, after considering them with all the gravity of a half-tired companion—"I think I may safely say for your pistols what nobody would say for the great majority of mankind—'they're a credit to their maker.'
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On the whole, then, I am of opinion that the excise board have been dealt with harshly, when men of eminence have talked of their conduct to Burns as affixing disgrace to them. It appears that Burns, being guilty unquestionably of great indiscretion and indecorum both of word and deed, was admonished in a private manner, that at such a period of national distraction it behoved a public officer, gifted with talents and necessarily with influence like his, very carefully to abstain from conduct which, now that passions have had time to cool, no man will say became his situation; that Burns's subsequent conduct effaced the unfavourable impression created in the minds of his superiors; and that he had begun to taste the fruits of their recovered approbation and confidence, ere his career was closed by illness and death. These commissioners of excise were themselves subordinate officers of the government, and strictly responsible for those under them. That they did try the experiment of lenity, to a certain extent, appears to have been made out; that they could have been justified in trying it to a further extent, is at least doubtful. But with regard to the government of the country itself, I must say, I think it is much more difficult to defend them. Mr. Pitt's ministry gave Dibdin a pension of £200 a year for writing his sea songs; and one cannot help remembering, that when Burns did begin to excite the admiration and patronage of his countrymen by such songs as Mr. Cunningham has been alluding to, there were persons who had every opportunity of representing to the premier the claims of a greater than Dibdin. Lenity, indulgence, to whatever length carried in such quarters as these, would have been at once safe and graceful. What the minor politicians of the day thought of Burns's

Many of these notes are remarkably plain-spoken; one officer is spoken of as "a bad moral character;" another, "a good officer, but now tipsy;" another, "a blundering officer;" and so on. Burns is characterized, first as "Never tried—a poet;" afterwards is termed, "Turns out well;" while the words said of him are "three years afterwards, "the poet does pretty well." [He received his pension in 1805.]

Since the first edition of this Life was published, I have found that repeated applications in Burns's behalf were made by Mr. Addington, afterwards Viscount Sidmouth. I hope this fact will not be omitted in any future narrative of Burns's life.
poetry, I know not; but Mr. Pitt himself appreciated it as highly as any man. It could not be said of him,

Voxa opterat. Entycha; a nepotis
Ut liber animus sentiant via carnibus.

"I can think of no verse," said the great minister, when Burns was no more,—"I can think of no verse since Shakespeare's, that has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature." 1

Had Burns put forth some newspaper squibs upon Leopax or Carnot, or a smart pamphlet "On the State of the Country," he might have been more attended to in his lifetime. It is common to say, "What is everybody's business is nobody's business;" but one may be pardoned for thinking that in such cases as this, that which the general voice of the country does admit to be everybody's business, comes in fact to be the business of those whom the nation intrusts with national concerns.

To return to Sir Walter Scott's revivael—it seems that he has somewhat overstated the political indiscretions of which Burns was actually guilty. Let us hear the counter-statement of Mr. Gray, who, as has already been mentioned, enjoyed Burns's intimacy and confidence during his residence at Dumfries. No one who knows anything of that excellent man, will for a moment suspect him of giving any other than what he believes to be true.

"Burns," says he, "was enthusiastically fond of liberty, and a lover of the popular part of our constitution; but he saw and admired the just and delicate proportions of the political fabric, and nothing could be further from his aim than to level with the dust the venerable pile reared by the labours and the wisdom of ages. That provision of the constitution, however, by which it is made to contain a self-correcting principle, obtained no considerable share of his admiration; he was, therefore, a zealous advocate of constitutional reform. The necessity of this he often sup-

1. I am assured that Mr. Pitt used these words at the table of the late Lord Liverpool, soon after Burns's death. How that even might come to be a natural topic at that table, will be seen in the sequel.

ported in conversation with all the energy of an irresistible eloquence; but there is no evidence that he ever went farther. He was a member of no political club. At the time when, in certain societies, the mad cry of revolution was raised from one end of the kingdom to the other, his voice was never heard in their debates, nor did he ever support their opinions in writing, or correspond with them in any form whatever. Though limited to an income which any other man would have considered poverty, he refused £50 a year offered to him for a weekly article, by the proprietors of an opposition paper; and two reasons, equally honourable to him, induced him to reject this proposal. His independent spirit spurned the idea of becoming the hiring of party; and whatever may have been his opinion of the men and measures that then prevailed, he did not think it right to fetter the operations of that government by which he was employed."

In strong confirmation of the first part of this statement by Mr. Gray, 2 we have the following extract from the poet's own private diary, never, in all human probability, designed to meet the public eye—"Whatever may be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, I ever abjured the idea of such changes here. A constitution which, in its original principles, experience has proved to be every way fitted for our happiness, it would be insanity to abandon for an untried visionary theory." This surely is not the language of one of those who then said and sung broadly and boldly,

Of old things all are over old;
Of good things none are good enough;
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff. 3

As to the delicate and intricate question of Parliamentary Reform—it is to be remembered that Mr. Pitt advocated that measure

2. Mr. Gray removed from the school of Dumfries to the High School of Edinburgh, in which eminent seminary he for many years laboured with distinguished success. He then became professor of Latin in the institution at Belfast, and is now [1829] in holy orders, and a chaplain of the East India Company in the presidency of Bombay. (He died in India, 1830.)

3. Wordsworth's "Rob Roy."
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at the outset of his career, and never abandoned the principle, although the events of his time were too well fitted to convince him of the inexpediency of making any farther attempts at carrying it into practice; and it is also to be considered that Burns, in his humble and remote situation, was much more likely to seize right principles, than to judge of the safety or expediency of carrying them into effect.

The statement about the newspaper, refers to Mr. Perry in the Morning Chronicle, who, at the suggestion of Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, made the proposal referred to, and received for answer a letter which may be seen in the General Correspondence of our poet, and the tenor of which is in accordance with what Mr. Gray has said. Mr. Perry afterwards pressed Burns to settle in London as a regular writer for his paper, and the poet declined to do so, alleging, that however small, his excise appointment was a certainty, which, in justice to his family, he could not think of abandoning.

In conclusion, Burns's abstinence from the political clubs, and affiliated societies of that disastrous period, is a circumstance, the importance of which will be appreciated by all who know anything of the machinery by which the real revolutionists of the era designed, and endeavoured to carry their purposes into execution.

Burns, after the excise inquiry, took care, no doubt, to avoid similar escapades; but he had no reluctance to meddle largely and zealously in the squabbles of country politics and contested elections; and thus, by merely espousing, on all occasions, the cause of the Whig candidates, kept up very effectually the spleen which the Tories had originally conceived on tolerably legitimate grounds. Of his political verses, written at Dumfries, hardly any specimens have as yet (1829) appeared in print; it would be easy to give many of them, but perhaps some of the persons lashed and ridiculed are still alive—their children certainly are so.

One of the most celebrated of these effusions, and one of the most quotable, was written on a desperately contested election for the Dumfries district of boroughs, between Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, and Mr. Miller, the younger, of Dalswinton; Burns, of course, maintained the cause of his patron's family. There is much humour in

THE FIVE CARLINES.

There were five Carlines in the south, they fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lunnan town to bring them tidings home;
Nor only bring them tidings home, but do their errands there.
And abloins good and honour bith might be that laddie's share.

There was Maggie by the banks o'Nith, a dame w'd pride enough;
And Marjory o' the Monylochs, a carline auld and tough;
And bluidin Bell o' Annandale, that dwelt near Solway side;
And whisky Jean that took her gift in Galloway sae wide; 5
And black Joan frae Crichton Poel, o'gigny kith and kin,

Five wighter carlines war na from the south countrie
within. &c. &c.

(See the poem in its proper place.)

The above is far the best humourd of these productions. The election to which it refers was carried in Mr. Miller's favour, but after a severe contest, and at a very heavy expense. These political conflicts were not to be mingled in with impunity by the chosen laurate, wit, and orator of the district. He himself, in an unpublished piece, speaks of the terror excited by

—Burns's venom, when
He dips in all unmix'd his eager pen,
And pours his vengeance in the burning line;

and represents his victims, on one of these electioneering occasions, as leading a chorale short that

—His herasles in church and state,
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate. 5

But what rendered him more and more the object of aversion to one set of people, was sure to connect him more and more strongly

1 This is stated on the authority of Major Miller.
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with the passions,¹ and, unfortunately for himself and for us, with the pleasures of the other; and we have among many confessions to the same purpose, the following, which I quote as the shortest, in one of the poet's letters from Dumfries to Mrs. Dunlop. "I am better, but not quite free of my complaint (he refers to the palpitation of heart). You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me." He knew well what he was doing whenever he mingled in such debaucheries: he had, long ere this, described himself as parting "with a slice of his constitution" every time he was guilty of such excess.

This brings us back to a subject on which it can give no one pleasure to expatiate. As has already been sufficiently intimated, the statements of Heron and Currie on this head, still more those of Mr. Walker and Dr. Irving, are not to be received without considerable deduction. No one of these biographers appears to have had any considerable intercourse with Burns during the latter years of his life, which they have represented in such dark colours every way; and the two survivors of their number are, I doubt not, among those who must have heard, with the highest satisfaction, the counter-statements which their narratives were the means of calling forth from men as well qualified as themselves in point of character and attainment, and much more so in point of circumstance and opportunity, to ascertain and estimate the real facts of a case, which is, at the best, a sufficiently melancholy one.

"Dr. Currie," says Gilbert Burnet,² "knowing the events of the latter years of my brother's life, only from the reports which had been propagated, and thinking it necessary, lest the censure of his work should be called in question, to state the substance of these reports, has given a very exaggerated view of the failings of my brother's life at that period—which is certainly to be regretted."

"I love Dr. Currie," says the Reverend James Gray, already more than once referred to, "but I love the memory of Burns more, and no consideration shall deter me from a bold declaration of the truth. The poet of the 'Cottar's Saturday Night,' who felt all the charms of the humble piety and virtue which he sung, is charged (in Dr. Currie's narrative) with vices which would reduce him to a level with the most degraded of his species. As I knew him during that period of his life emphatically called his evil days, I am enabled to speak from my own observation. It is not my intention to extenuate his errors because they were combined with genius; on that account, they were only the more dangerous, because the more seductive, and deserve the more severe reprehension; but I shall likewise claim that nothing may be said in malice even against him. . . . It came under my own view professionally, that he superintended the education of his children with a degree of care that I have never seen surpassed by any parent in any rank of life whatever. In the bosom of his family he spent many a delightful hour in directing the studies of his eldest son, a boy of uncommon talents. I have frequently found him explaining to this youth, then not more than nine years of age, the English poets, from Shakspere to Gray, or storing his mind with examples of heroic virtue, as they live in the pages of our most celebrated English historians. I would ask any person of common candour, if employments like these are consistent with habitual drunkenness? It is not denied that he sometimes mingled with society unworthy of him. He was of a social and convivial nature. He was courted by all classes of men for the fascinating powers of his conversation, but over his social scene uncontrolled passion never presided. Over the social bowl, his wit flashed for hours together, penetrating whatever it struck, like the fire from heaven; but even in the hour of thoughtless gaiety and merriment, I never knew it tainted by indecency. It was playful or caustic by turns,

following him through a wild, original, and as it may be conceived, almost human nature.

¹ Lord Frederick heard of all his youthful zeal, and felt as lords upon a canvas he; He read the satire, and he saw the use, That such cool insulit and such keen abuse Might on the waving minds of voting men produce, I much rejoice, he cried, such worth to find; To this the world must be no longer blind His glory will descend from sire to son, The Burns of England, the happier Chatterton, CANNON, in the Patron. ² Letter to Mr. Peterkin. (Peterkin's preface, p. 82.)
following an allusion through all its windings; astonishing by its rapidity, or amusing by its wild originality, and grotesque, yet natural combinations, but never, within my observation, disgusting by its grossness. In his morning hours I never saw him like one suffering from the effects of last night's intemperance. He appeared then clear and unclouded. He was the eloquent advocate of humanity, justice, and political freedom. From his paintings, virtue appeared more lovely, and piety assumed a more celestial mien. While his keen eye was pregnant with fancy and feeling, and his voice attuned to the very passion which he wished to communicate, it would hardly have been possible to conceive any being more interesting and delightful. I may likewise add, that to the very end of his life, reading was his favourite amusement. I have never known any man so intimately acquainted with the elegant English authors. He seemed to have the poets by heart. The prose authors he could quote either in their own words, or clothe their ideas in language more beautiful than their own. Nor was there ever any decay in any of the powers of his mind. To the last day of his life, his judgment, his memory, his imagination, were fresh and vigorous, as when he composed the "Cottar's Saturday Night." The truth is, that Burns was seldom intoxicated. The drunkard soon becomes besotted, and is shunned even by the convivial. Had he been so, he could not long have continued the idol of every party. It will be freely confessed, that the hour of enjoyment was often prolonged beyond the limit marked by prudence; but what man will venture to affirm, that in situations where he was conscious of giving so much pleasure, he could at all times have listened to her voice?

"The men with whom he generally associated, were not of the lowest order. He numbered among his intimate friends, many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Several of those were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumni, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of the malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them were some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females, eminent for delicacy, taste, and genius. They were proud of his friendship, and cherished him to the last moment of his existence. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they still retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires."  

Part of Mr. Gray's letter is omitted, only because it touches on subjects, as to which Mr. Findlater's statement must be considered as of not merely sufficient, but the very highest authority.

"My connection with Robert Burns," says that most respectable man, "commenced immediately after his admission into the excise, and continued to the hour of his death. In all that time, the superintendence of his behaviour, as an officer of the revenue, was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed I would not be an inattentive observer of the general conduct of a man and a poet, so celebrated by his cotymanen. In the former capacity, he was exemplary in his attention, and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance: As a proof of which, it may not be foreign to the subject to quote a part of a letter from him to myself, in a case of only seeming inattention. 'I know, sir, and regret deeply, that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer; but, as I am really innocent in the affair, and as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the single instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manoeuvres of a smuggler.' This of itself affords more than a presumption of his attention to business, as it cannot be supposed he would have written in such a style to me, but from the impulse of a conscious rectitude in this department of his duty. Indeed, it was not till near the latter end of his days that there was any falling off in this respect; and

1 Letter in Mr. Peterkin's preface, pp. 93-95.
2 Ibid. p. 96-96.
3 Mr. Findlater watched by Burns the night before he died.
this was amply accounted for in the pressure of disease and accumulating infirmities. I will further avow, that I never saw him, which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries, but in hours of business he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon. . . . I have seen Burns in all his various phases, in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family; indeed I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an excise-officer, and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he is now charged. That when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than as attentive and affectionate to a high degree.”

These statements are entitled to every consideration: they come from men altogether inexpiable, for any purpose, of wilfully stating that which they know to be untrue. Yet we are not, on the other hand, to throw out of view altogether the feelings of partial friendship, irritated by exaggerations such as called forth these testimonies. It is scarcely to be doubted that Dr. Currie and Professor Walker took care, ere they penned their painful pages, to converse and correspond with other persons than the enemies of the deceased poet. Here, then, as in must other cases of similar controversy, the fair and equitable conclusion would seem to be, “truth lies between.”

To whatever Burns’s excesses amount, they were, it is obvious, and that frequently, the subject of rebuke and remonstrance even from his own dearest friends—even from men who had no sort of objection to potations deep enough in all consciences. That such remonstrances, giving shape and form to the thoughts that tortured his own bosom, should have been received at times with a strange mixture of remorse and indignation, none that have considered the nervous susceptibility and haughtiness of Burns’s character, can hear with surprise. But this was only when the good advice was oral. No one knew better than he how to answer the written homilies of such persons as were most likely to take the freedom of admonishing him on points of such delicacy; nor is there anything in all his correspondence more amusing than his reply to a certain solemn lecture of William Nicol,1 the same exemplary schoolmaster who “brewed the peck o’ maut which

Rob and Allan came to pree.

. . . “O thou, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! how infinitely is thy pudding-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zigzag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs and master of maxims, that antipode of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willy Nicol! Amen! amen! Yea, so be it!

“For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing!” &c. &c. &c.

To how many that have moralized over the life and death of Burns, might not such a Tu quoque be addressed!

The strongest argument in favour of those who denounced the statements of Heron, Currie, and their fellow-biographers, concerning the habits of the poet, during the latter years of his career, as culpably and egregiously exaggerated, still remains to be considered. On the whole, Burns gave satisfaction by his manner of executing the duties of his station in the revenue service; he, moreover, as Mr. Gray tells us (and upon this ground Mr. Gray

1 [This refers to a letter dated 10th February, 1793, in which Nicol takes Burns to task, in a whimsical, humorous, mock-heroic, but at the same time pointed and friendly style, for the indiscretions into which his political views were apt to lead him.]

could not fail to excite the interest in the number of his fathers who have so bestowed their men’s regards on Dumfries. This piece of cordial and honest advice was, it is true, never couched in the most polite language, but like that which is used among the soldiers in question, or in the deepest recesses of the bosom of the author of Minstrelsy, and that was the best way to make it understood and appreciated.

Of his actual residence at Dumfries, much might have been added, and it would have been to advantage.

1 “He was of great assistance to Mr. Nicoll of the minor, in the grand circle of the parents of Mr. Burns, to whom schools; but at that early period in keeping, he considered himself as a period of life in which he had read the best books, and was more remained to go to the study of Latin, the strength of the ambition, and thought it was time he began to make use of that advantage that was bestowed on him. On inquiry he found his family was in such a manner the author of his own education that he owed to the author of his own education that he owed to the author of his own education that he owed to the author of his own education, and when I was so informed, I immediately paid to this highly meritorious and exemplary Letter from Nicol to Burns.

2 [The Muses’ Companion.]
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could not possibly be mistaken), took a lively interest in the education of his children, and spent more hours in their private tuition than fathers who have more leisure than his circumstances left him, are often in the custom of so bestowing; and, truly, although he to all men's regret executed, after his removal to Dumfries-shire, no more than one poetical piece of considerable length ("Tamb' Shanter"), his epistolary correspondence, and his songs contributed to Johnson's *Museum,* and to the great collection of Mr. George Thomson, furnish undeniable proof that, in whatever fits of dissipation he unhappily indulged, he never could possibly have sunk into anything like that habitual grossness of manners and sotish degradation of mind, which the writers in question have not hesitated to hold up to the deepest condemnation, if not more than this, of mankind.

Of his letters written at Ellisland and Dumfries, nearly three octavo volumes have been already printed by Currie and Cromek; and it would be easy to swell the collection to double this extent. Enough, however, has been published to enable every reader to judge for himself of the character of Burn's style of epistolary composition. The severest criticism bestowed on it has been that it is too elaborate—that, however natural the feelings, the expression is frequently more studied and artificial than belongs to that species of composition. Let us observe altogether just in point of taste, or otherwise, the fact on which it is founded furnishes strength to our present position. The poet produced in these years a great body of elaborate prose-writing.

We have already had occasion to notice some of his contributions to Johnson's *Museum.* He continued, to the last month of his life, to take a lively interest in that work; and besides writing for it pieces of excellent original song, his diligence in collecting ancient pieces hitherto unpublished, and his taste and skill in culling out fragments, were largely, and most happily exerted all along for his benefit. Mr. Cromek, among Johnson's papers, no fewer than 181 of the pieces which enter into the collection, in Burns's hand-writing.

His connection with the more important work of Mr. Thomson, commenced in September 1792; and Mr. Gray justly says, that whoever considers his correspondence with the editor, and the collection itself, must be satisfied, from that time till the commencement of his last illness, not many days ever passed over his head without the production of some new stanzas for its pages. Besides old materials, for the most part embellished with lines, if not verses of his own, and a whole body of letters, suggestions, and criticisms, Burns gave Mr. Thomson about sixty original songs. He was, however, but justly to poor Thomson to add, that comparatively few of this number had been made public at the time when he drew up that rash and sweeping state-

2 One of the reviewers of this memoir says, "Burns never considered letter-writing as a species of composition at all," and attributes the excellence of his epistolary style to its "utter carelessness and rapidity."

I am reminded by this criticism of a fact, which I should have noticed before; namely, that Burns often gave the same paragraph in different letters addressed to different persons. I have seen some MS. letters of the poet to Lady Harriet Don, in which several of the finest and best known passages of his printed letters to Mrs. Dunlop appearverbatim. Such was his "utter carelessness and carelessness."
ment, which Dr. Currie adhered to in some particulars without sufficient inquiry.

The songs in this collection are, by many eminent critics, placed decidedly at the head of all our poet's performances: it is by none disputed that very many of them are worthy of his most felicitous inspiration. He bestowed much more care on them than on his contributions to the Museon; and the taste and feeling of the editor secured the work against any intrusions of that over-warm element which was too apt to mingle in his amatory effusions. Burns knew that he was now engaged on a book destined for the eye and ear of refinement; he laboured throughout, under the salutary feeling, "virginibus puerosque cantus" and the consequences have been happy indeed for his own fame—for the literary taste, and the national music of Scotland; and, what is of far higher importance, the moral and national feelings of his countrymen.

In almost all these productions—certainly in all that deserved to be placed in the first rank of his compositions—Burns made use of his native dialect. He did so, too, in opposition to the advice of almost all the lettered correspondents he had—more especially of Dr. Moore, who, in his own novels, never ventured on more than a few casual specimens of Scottish colloquy—following therein the examples of his illustrious predecessor Smollett; and not foreseeing that a triumph over English prejudice, which Smollett might have achieved, had he pleased to make the effort, was destined to be the prize of Burns's perseverance in obeying the dictates of native taste and judgment. Our poet received such suggestions, for the most part in silence—not choosing to argue with others on a matter which concerned only his own feelings; but in writing to Mr. Thomson, he had no occasion either to conceal or disguise his sentiments. "These English songs," says he, "gravell me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue;" and again, "so much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand at it in Scots verse: There I am always most at home." He, besides, would have considered it as a sort of national crime to do anything that might tend to divorce the music of his native land from her peculiar idiom. The "genius loci" was never worshipped more fervently than by Burns. "I am such an enthusiast," says he, "that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, 'Lochaber' and the 'Brigs of Ballenden' excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scottish Muse." With such feelings, he was not likely to touch with an irreverent hand the old fabric of our national song, or to meditate a lyrical revolution for the pleasure of strangers. "Here is," says he, "a naive, pastoral simplicity in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add to every genuine Caledonian taste), with the simple pathos or rustic quickliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever. One hint more let me give you. Whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one iota of the original airs; I mean in the song department, but let our Scottish national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect."

Of the delight with which Burns laboured for Mr. Thomson's collection, his letters contain some lively descriptions. "You cannot imagine," says he, 7th April, 1793, "how much this business has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book and ballad-making are now a completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en cantor it away till I come to the limit of my race (God grant I may take the right side of the winning-post), and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say or sing, 'Sae merry as we a' ha' been,' and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of Coila shall be, 'Good night, and joy be wi' you a'!'"

1 It may amuse the reader to hear, that, in spite of all Burns's success in the use of his native dialect, even the eminently spirited bookseller to whom the manuscript of Waverley was submitted, hesitated for some time about publishing it, on account of the Scots dialect interwoven in the novel.
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"Until I am complete master of a tune in my own language, such as it is, I can never," says Burns, "compose for it. My way is this. I consider the poetic sentiment corresponding to my idea of the musical expression,—then choose my theme,—compose one stanza. When that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out—sit down now and then,—look out for objects in Nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom,—humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes. Seriously, this at home is almost invariably my way. What cursed egotism!"

In this correspondence with Mr. Thomson, and in Cromek's later publication, the reader will find a world of interesting details about the particular circumstances under which these immortal songs were severally written. They are all, or almost all, in fact, part and parcel of the poet's personal history. No man ever made his muse more completely the companion of his own individual life. A new flood of light has just been poured on the same subject in Mr. Allan Cunningham's Collection of Scotch Songs; unless therefore I were to transcribe volumes, and all popular volumes too, it is impossible to go into the details of this part of the poet's history. The reader must be contented with a few general memoranda; e.g.

"Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy,—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with paths, equal to the genius of your book? No, no. Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song,—to be in some degree equal to your divine airs,—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emulation? Tout au contraire. I have a glorious recipe, the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus,—I put myself in the regimen of admiring a fine woman." 1

1 Letter to Mr. Thomson, Oct. 19, 1794.

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"I can assure you I was never more in earnest... Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but somehow, it does not make such a figure in poetry as that other species of the passion,

Where love is liberty, and nature law.

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument, of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and,—whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever raptures they might give me,—yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forfeits, and generosity disdains the purchase." —So says Burns in introducing to Mr. Thomson's notice one of his many songs in celebration of the "Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks." "The beauty of Chloris," says, nevertheless, Allan Cunningham, "has added many charms to Scottish song; but that which has increased the reputation of the poet, has lessened that of the man. Chloris was one of those who believe in the dispensing power of beauty, and thought that love should be under no demure restraint. Burns sometimes thought in the same way himself; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that the poet should celebrate the charms of a liberal beauty, who was willing to reward his strains, and who gave him many opportunities of catching inspiration from her presence." And in a note on the ballad which terminates with the delicious stanza:

Let others love the city, and gaily show at summer noon,
Give me the lonely valley, the dewy eve, and rising moon,
Fair beam of the silver light the boughs among;
While falling, recalling, the amorous thrush concludes her song;
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove, by wimping burn and leafy bowk,
And hear my vows of truth and love, and say thou lo'st me best of a?"

the same commentator adds,—"such is the glowing picture which the poet gives of youth,
and health, and voluptuous beauty. But let no lady envy the poetic elevation of poor Chloris; her situation in poetry is splendid—her situation in life merits our pity—perhaps our charity."

Of all Burns's love-songs, the best, in his own opinion, was that which begins,

Yestreen I had a pint o' wine, last night A place where body saw me, not

Allan Cunningham says, "If the poet thought so, I am sorry for it;" while Mr. Hamilton Paul fully concurs in the author's own estimate of the performance. "I believe, however," says Cunningham, "Anna wi' the Golden Locks" was no imaginary person. Like the dame in the old song, "She Brew'd Gude Ale for Gentlemen;" and while she served the hard with a pint of wine, allowed her customer leisure to admire her, "as hostler wives should do.""

There is in the same collection a love-song, which unites the sufferages, and ever will do so, of all men. It has furnished Byron with a motto, and Scott has said that that motto is "worth a thousand romances."

Had we never loved she kindly, Had we never loved she blind, Never met,—or never parted, We had never been broken-hearted.

The "Nancy" of this moving strain was, according to Cunningham, another fair and somewhat frail dame of Dumfriesshire."

I envy no one the task of inquiring minutely in how far these traditions, for each unquestionably they are, and faithfully conveyed by Allan Cunningham, rest on the foundation of truth. They refer at worst to occasional errors.

"Many insinuations," says Mr. Gray, "have been made against the poet's character as a husband, but without the slightest proof; and I might pass from the charge with that neglect which it merits; but I am happy to say that I have in exaluation the direct evidence of Mrs. Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never names but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindnesses to herself, not as the momentary overflows of the heart in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness, which ended only with his life. I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies.""

Among the effusions, not amatory, which Burns contributed to Mr. Thomson's collection, the famous song of "Hannah Cushin" holds the first place. We have already seen in how lively a manner Burns's feelings were kindled when he visited that glorious field. According to tradition, the tune played when Bruce led his troops to the charge, was "Hey tuttie taittie;" and it was stunning this old air as he rode by himself through Glenkens in Galloway, during a terrific storm of wind and rain, that the poet composed his immortal lyric in its first and noblest form. This is one more instance of his delight in the sterner aspects of nature.

Come, winter, with thine angry howl, And raging bend the naked tree,—

4 Letter to Gilbert Burns. (Whatever may have been Burns's conduct after settling in Dumfries and when Mr. Gray knew him, we know that the forementioned Anna became the mother by Burns of a child, a daughter (born 31st March, 1799), which the poet's wife took and nursed along with one of her own. If she showed this forgiveness towards her husband while he was alive it is not likely she would recall any of his failings after his death.)

5 The last line of each stanza was subsequently lengthened and weakened, in order to suit the tune of "Lewie Gordon," which Mr. Thomson preferred to "Hey tuttie taittie." However, almost immediately after having prevailed on the poet to make this alteration, Mr. Thomson saw his error, and discarded both the change and the air which it was made to suit. [Lockhart above follows Syme's account of the composition of this famous song, an account which contradicts the poet's own express statement; see his letter to Thomson, 1st September, 1799. See also the question discussed in Professor Wilson's Essay, vol. v. of this work.]
There is hardly," says he in one of his letters, "there is scarcely any earthy object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy winds howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.'"

When Burns entered a Druidical circle of stones on a dreary moor, he has already told us that his first movement was "to say his prayers." His best poetry was to the last produced amid scenes of solemn desolation.

I may mention here, that during the later years of his life, his favourite book, the usual companion of his solitary rambles, was Cowper's "Task." It is pleasing to know that these illustrious contemporaries, in spite of the widely different circumstances under which their talents were developed, and the, at first sight, opposite sets of opinions which their works express, did justice to each other. No English writer of the time eulogized Burns more generously than Cowper. And in truth they had much in common.

The stamp and clear impression of good sense; the love of simplicity; the love of nature; sympathy with the poor; humour; pathos; satire; warm and manly hearts; the pride, the independence, and the melancholy of genius.

Some readers may be surprised to find two such names placed together otherwise than by way of contrast. Let it not be forgotten that Cowper had done little more than building bird-cages and rabbit-hutches at the age when the grave closed on Burns.

CHAPTER IX.

Burns's irritable and nervous bodily constitution inherited:—the "rhyming tribe;"—letter to Cunningham;—pecuniary difficulties:—correspondence with Thomson;—Thomson's treatment of Burns:—acting supervisor:—death of his daughter:—illness:—imprudent exposure and chill:—racked with rheumatism:—removal to Glasgow:—Mrs. Riddell:—letter to his cousin at Montrose:—return to Dumfries:—death:—funeral:—birth of a son:—mausoleum erected:—subscription for the benefit of his family:—Currie's edition:—sons of Burns:—Gilbert Burns:—Burns neglected:—poverty:—letter to Peter Hill:—Burns's honesty and charity:—his religious principles:—value of Burns's history and poetry.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear.

We are drawing near the close of this great poet's mortal career; and I would fain hope the details of the last chapter may have prepared the humane reader to contemplate it with sentiments of sorrow, pure comparatively, and unabased with any considerable intermix-ure of less genial feelings.

For some years before Burns was lost to his country, it is sufficiently plain that he had been, on political grounds, an object of suspicion and distrust to a large portion of the population that had most opportunity of observing him. The mean subalterns of party had, it is very easy to suppose, delighted in deceiving him on

pretexts, good, bad, and indifferent, equally—
to their superiors; and hence—who will not willingly believe it?—the temporary and local prevalence of those extravagantly injurious reports, the essence of which Dr. Currie, no doubt, though it his duty, as a biographer, to extract and circulate.

The untimely death of one who, had he lived to anything like the usual term of human existence, might have done so much to increase his fame as a poet, and to purify and dignify his character as a man, was, it is too probable, hastened by his own intemperances and im-prudences; but it seems to be extremely improbable, that even if his manhood had been a course of saintlike virtue in all respects, the irritable and nervous bodily constitution which he inherited from his father, shaken as it was by the toils and miseries of his ill-starred youth,
could have sustained to anything like the Psalmist's "allotted span," the exhausting excitement of an intensely poetical temperament. Since the first pages of this narrative were sent to the press, I have heard from an old acquaintance of the bard, who often shared his bed with him at Mossgiel, that even at that early period, when intemperance assuredly had had nothing to do with the matter, those ominous symptoms of radical disorder in the digestive system, the "palpitation and suffocation" of which Gilbert speaks, were so regularly his nocturnal visitants that it was his custom to have a great tub of cold water by his bedside, into which he usually plunged more than once in the course of the night, thereby procuring instant, though but shortlived, relief. On a frame thus originally constructed, and thus early tried with most severe afflictions, external and internal, what must not have been, under any subsequent course of circumstances, the effect of that exquisite sensibility of mind, but for which the world would never have heard anything either of the sins, or the sorrows, or the poetry of Burns.

"The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe," thus writes the poet himself to Miss Chalmers in 1789, "often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrlogies that ever were penned, so realful a narrative as the lives of the poets. In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, between which they will ever engender a more unoffending set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastic nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little munrows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths ofhere, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that there can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bowing on him a sapping sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet." In these few short sentences, as it appears, Burns has traced his own character far better than any one else has done it since. But with this lot what pleasures were not mingled? "To you, madam," he proceeds, "I need not recount the fairy pleasures the Muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching women; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baffling them with poverty, brandling them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness or earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisal bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures, that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of man!"

"What is a poet?" asks one well qualified to answer his own question. "He is a man endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected, more than other men, by absent things, as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions which are far indeed from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which
are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves." So says one of the rare beings who have been able to sustain and enjoy, through a long term of human years, the tear and wear of sensibilities, thus quickened and refined beyond what follows to the lot of the ordinary brothers of their race—feeling more than others can dream of feeling, the joys and the sorrows that come to them as individuals—and filling up all those blanks which so largely interrupt the agitations of common bosoms, with the almost equally agitating sympathies of an imagination to which repose would be death. It is common to say of those who over-indulge themselves in material stimulants, that they live first; what wonder that the career of the poet's thick-coming fancies should, in the immense majority of cases, be rapid too?

That Burns lived first, in both senses of the phrase, we have abundant evidence from himself; and that the more earthly motion was somewhat accelerated as it approached the close, we may believe, without finding it at all necessary to mingle anger with our sorrow. "Even in his earliest poems," as Mr. Wordsworth says, in a beautiful passage of his letter to Mr. Gray, "through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to show that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him—but, by his own hand—in words the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet, if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessory influences, which contribute greatly to their effect,

would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage,

One point must still be greatly dark, &c.

could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice, unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower, that might have risen from seed sown from above, was, in fact, a seed from the root of personal suffering. Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of its 'poor inhabitant,' it is supposed to be inscribed, that

—Thoughtless follies lied him low,
And stain'd his name?

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy? What more was required of the biographer than to put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and that the record was authentic?

In how far the "thoughtless follies" of the poet did actually hasten his end, it is needless to conjecture. They had their share, unquestionably, along with other influences which it would be human to characterize as mere follies—such, for example, as that general depression of spirits, which haunted him from his youth;—or even a casual expression of discouraging tendency from the persons on whose good-will all hopes of substantial advancement in the scale of worldly promotion depended—which, in all likelihood, sat more heavily on such a being as Burns, than a man of plain common sense might guess—or that partial exclusion from the species of society our poet

1 Preface to the second edition of Wordsworth's Poems.

2 Then gently seen your brother man,
Still gentle sister woman—
The they may gang a kenlin' wrong; a little bit
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.
had been accustomed to adorn and delight, which, from however inadequate causes, certainly did occur during some of the latter years of his life. All such sorrows as these must have acted with twofold harmfulness upon Burns; harassing, in the first place, one of the most sensitive minds that ever filled a human bosom; and, ala! by consequence, tempting to additional excesses:—impelling one who, under other circumstances, might have sought and found far other consolation, to seek too often for it.

In fleeting mirth, that o'er the bottle lives,
In the false joy its inspiration gives,
And in associates pleased to find a friend
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend.
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sin oppress, and sorrows wound, 1

The same philosophical poet tells us, that
—Wine is like anger, for it makes us strong;
Blind and impotent, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
but a short period was destined for the sorrows equally of Burns.

How he struggled against the tide of his misery, let the following letter speak. It was written February 25, 1794, and addressed to Mr. Alexander Cunningham, an eccentric being, but generous and faithful in his friendship to Burns, and, when Burns was no more, to his family.

"Canst thou minister," says the poet, "to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dredging that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou riv. to a frame, tremblingly alive to the terrors of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braces the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldest thou disturb me in my miseries with thy inquiries after me?"

"For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, ab origine, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late, a number of domestic {vacations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these **** times—losses which, through trifling, were yet what I could ill bear—have

1 Crabbe's 'Edward Shore,' a tale in which that poet has obviously had Burns in his view.

so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reproductive spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

"Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. A heart at ease would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility. Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amidst the wreck of misfortune and misery. The one is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The other is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those senses of the mind, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful and equally beneficent God—and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field; the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

"I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty few, to lead the unscrupulous many; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know anything of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor will I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such supernatural sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow, who is now just running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter,
and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while, in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature and through nature, up to nature’s God. His soul, by swift delighted degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson.—

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God,—The rolling year
Is full of thee:

and so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn. These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say equal to them? And they have this precious vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own, and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.”

They who have been told that Burns was ever a degraded being—who have permitted themselves to believe that his only consolations were those of “the opiate guilt applied to grief,” will do well to pause over this noble letter and judge for themselves. The enemy under which he was destined to sink had already beaten in the outworks of his constitution when these lines were penned.

The reader has already had occasion to observe, that Burns had in those close years of his life to struggle almost continually with pecuniary difficulties, than which nothing could have been more likely to pour bitterness intolerable into the cup of his existence. His lively imagination exaggerates to itself every real evil; and this among, and perhaps above, all the rest; at least, in many of his letters we find him alluding to the probability of his being arrested for debts, which we now know to have been of very trivial amount at the worst, which we also know he himself lived to discharge to the utmost farthing, and in regard to which it is impossible to doubt that his personal friends in Dumfries would have at all times been ready to prevent the law taking its ultimate course. This last consideration, however, was one which would have given slender relief to Burns. How he shrank with horror and loathing from the sense of pecuniary obligation, no matter to whom, we had abundant indications already.

The question naturally arises: Burns was all this while pouring out his beautiful songs for the Museum of Johnson and the greater work of Thomson; how did he happen to derive no pecuniary advantages from this continual exertion of his genius in a form of composition so eminently calculated for popularity? Nor, indeed, is it an easy matter to answer this very obvious question. The poet himself, in a letter to Mr. Carfrae, dated 1789, speaks thus: “The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne’s relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest which fate has denied himself to reap.” And yet so far from looking to Mr. Johnson for any pecuniary remuneration for the very laborious part he took in his work, it appears from a passage in Cromek’s Reminiscences, that the poet asked a single copy of the Museum to give to a fair friend, by way of a great favour to himself—and that that copy and his own were really all he ever received at the hands of the publisher. 2 Of the secret history of Johnson and his book I know nothing; but the correspondence of Burns with Mr. Thomson contains curious enough details concerning his connection with that gentleman’s more important undertaking. At the outset, September, 1792, we find Mr. Thomson saying, “We shall esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall

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1 The following extract from one of his letters to Mr. Macmorro, dated December, 1792, will speak for itself:

“Sir, it is said, that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than I ever owed it to any man. Here is Ker’s account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don’t owe a shilling to man, or woman either. But for those damned dirty, dog’s-ear’d little pages (Scotch bank-notes), I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against, but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.”

2 This must be a mistake, for Burns presented copies to Charlotte Hamilton, to “Clarinda,” to Rev. John Skinner, to Jessie Lewars, and others.)
please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication." To which Burns replies immediately, "As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price, for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright prostitution of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, Gude speed the work." The next time we meet with any hint as to money matters in the correspondence is in a letter of Mr. Thomson, 1st July, 1793, where he says,—"I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to inclose a small mark of my gratitude, and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for by Heaven if you do, our correspondence is at an end." To which letter (it inclosed £5) Burns thus replies:—"I assure you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honour which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's integrity—on the least motion of it I will indignantly spurn the bypast transaction, and from that moment commence to be an entire stranger to you. Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold unfeeling ore can supply; at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve." In November, 1794, we find Mr. Thomson writing to Burns, "Do not, I beseech you, return the books." In May, 1795, "You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me" (this was a drawing of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," by Allan). "I do not think I can ever repay you or sufficiently esteem and respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation." On February, 1796, we have Burns acknowledging a "handsome elegant present to Mr. B. — —", which was a worsted shawl. Lastly, on the 12th July of the same year (that is little more than a week before Burns died), he writes to Mr. Thomson in these terms: "After all my boasted independence, cursed necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel scoundrel of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have put me half distracted. I do not ask this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen." To which Mr. Thomson replies—"Ever since I received your melancholy letter by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer; but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure inclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were chancellor of the exchequer but one day for your sake!—Pray, my good sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? ... Do not shun this method of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not think me intrusive with my advice.”

Such are the details of this matter, as recorded in the correspondence of the two individuals concerned. Some time after Burns's death, Mr. Thomson was attacked on account of his behaviour to the poet, in an anonymous novel, which I have never seen, called Nobilia."

1 [Nobilia was published in 1809; its author was William Miftum, born 1782, died 1848, for many years editor of the London Courier.]
In Professor Walker's Memoirs, which appeared in 1811, Mr. Thomson took opportunity of defending himself; and Professor Walker, who enjoyed the personal friendship of Burns, and who also appears to have had the honour of Mr. Thomson's intimate acquaintance, has delivered an opinion on the whole merits of the case, which must necessarily be far more satisfactory to the reader than anything which I could presume to offer in its room. "Burns," says this writer, "had all the unmanageable pride of Samuel Johnson; and, if the latter threw away with indignation the new shoes which had been placed at his chamber-door—secretly and collectively by his companions—the former would have been still more ready to resent any pecuniary donation with which a single individual, after his peremptory prohibition, should avowedly have dared to insult him. He would sold for the family's behalf to Messrs. Cadell and Davies. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that the most zealous friends of the family, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Syme, and Dr. Currie, and the poet's own brother, considered my sacrifices of the prior rights of publishing the songs, as no ungrateful return for the disinterested and liberal conduct of the poet. Accordingly, Mr. Gilbert Burns, in a letter to me, which alone might suffice for an answer to all the novelist's abuse, thus expresses himself: "If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed me in the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connection with the harmony of the moral feelings."

Nothing is farther from my thoughts than to claim any merit for what I did. I never would have said a word on the subject, but for the harsh and groundless accusation which has been brought forward, either by ignorance or animosity, and which I have long suffered to remain unnoticed, from my great dislike to any public appearance.

To these passages I now add a part of a letter addressed to myself by Mr. Thomson, since this memoir was first published. "After the manner in which Burns received my first remittance, I dared not, in defiance of his interdict, repeat the experiment upon a man so peculiarly sensitive and sturdily independent. It would have been presumption, I thought, to make him a second pecuniary offer in the face of his declaration, that if I did, he would spurn the past transaction, and commence to be an entire stranger to me."

"But, independently of those circumstances, there is an important fact of which you are probably ignorant, that I did not publish above a tenth part of my collection till after the laureated death of our bard; and that while he was alive, I had not derived any benefit worth mentioning from his liberal supply of admirable songs, having only brought out half a volume of my work. It was not till some years posterior to his death, and till Dr. Currie had published all the manuscript songs which I put into his hands for the benefit of his widow and family, that I brought out the songs along with the music, harmonized by the great composers in Europe. Those who supposed, therefore, that I had enriched myself by the publication of half a volume, were egregiously mistaken. The fact is, that the whole five volumes have yielded me a very scanty compensation for my various outlays upon the work, and for the many years of labour and research which it cost me."
instantly have construed such conduct into a virtual assertion that his prohibition was insincere, and his independence affected; and the more artfully the transaction had been disguised, the more rage it would have excited, as implying the same assertion, with the additional charge, that if secretly made it would not be denied. The statement of Mr. Thomson supersedes the necessity of any additional remarks. When the public is satisfied, when the relations of Burns are grateful, and, above all, when the delicate mind of Mr. Thomson is at peace with itself in contemplating his conduct, there can be no necessity for a nameless novelist to contradict them.

So far, Mr. Walker:—why Burns, who was of opinion, when he wrote his letter to Mr. Carfrae, that "no profits are more honourable than those of the labours of a man of genius," and whose own notions of independence had sustained no shock in the receipt of hundreds of pounds from Creech, should have spurned the suggestion of pecuniary recompense from Mr. Thomson, it is no easy matter to explain; nor do I profess to understand why Mr. Thomson took so little pains to argue the matter in time with the poet, and convince him, that the time which he himself considered as fairly entitled to be paid for by a common bookseller, ought of right to be yielded and acknowledged on similar terms to the editor and proprietor of a book containing both songs and music.

They order these things differently now; a living lyric poet, whom none will place in a higher rank than Burns, has long, it is understood, been in the habit of receiving about as much money annually for an annual handful of songs, as was ever paid to our bard for the whole body of his writings.

Of the increasing irritability of our poet's temperament, amidst the various troubles which preceded his last illness, his letters furnish proofs, to dwell on which could only inflict unnecessary pain. Let one example suffice. "Sunday closes a period of our erst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! Here I sit, altogether Novemberish a d— melancholy of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul floundering and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—And behold, on whatever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!—Pray that wisdom and bliss may be more frequent visitors of R. B."

Towards the close of 1785 [1794] Burns was, as has been previously mentioned, employed as an acting supervisor of excise. This was apparently a step to a permanent situation of that higher and more lucrative class; and from thence, there was every reason to believe the kind patronage of Mr. Graham might elevate him yet farther. These hopes, however, were mingled and darkened with sorrow. For four months of that year his youngest child linedered through an illness of which every week promised to be the last; and she was finally cut off when the poet, who had watched her with anxious tenderness, was from home on professional business. This was a severe blow, and his own nerves, though as yet he had not taken any serious alarm about his ailments, were ill fitted to withstand it.

"There had need," he writes Mrs. Dunlop, 15th December [1783], "there had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours, these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks—remembrances, life and stay; and life of mine and the life of my community. On the morrow—my son's birth day—great joy, for I was thinking too, how my little one would be affected, if taking a journey, or getting sick, or having indecisive opinion, in a day's time, the subject of my concern is resolved. To this the proposal is that Mr. Dunlop should in his writings secure me a living for my son; and this only, as I am sure the kindness is beyond my power of requiting. Other diversities to feel the distress old age endures, I cannot trace the

31st of December, 1793, deep in tears, and the child, whom I had robbed of life, and who was a child, at least, as it is not possible to put the duties to be discharged over for the child, which pleased the victor of the long hours, was laid up, and the poet over my room, and my own room, and my own house.

When phlegm is my only treasure
Affliction and Envy reign there
That is the only index
But a flower on my grave exceeding with its tendrils the circle around, will be till above,

[It was a little flower, not a rambling one. It was a young wildflower, as the paragraph following it states, Currie, who wrote that Dunlop's widow concealed the true state of correspondence for nearly a year.]
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little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate—even in all the vigour of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock? 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune. A father on his deathbed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independence and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject.

To the same lady, on the 29th of the month [Dec. 1794], he, after mentioning his superintendence, and saying that at last his political sins seemed to be forgiven him—goes on in this ominous tone—'What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but other day a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and still lingering joints of old age coming fast over my frame.' We may trace the melancholy sequel in these extracts.

'31st January, 1796.—I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick-bed, it seems to have turned up my life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear the untried night,
That shuts, for ever shuts! Life's doubtful day.'

But a few days after this, Burns was so exceedingly imprudent as to join a festive circle at a tavern dinner, where he remained till about three in the morning. The weather was severe, and he, being much intoxicated, took no precaution in thus exposing his debilitated frame to its influence. It has been said, that he fell asleep upon the snow on his way home. It is certain, that next morning he was sensible of an icy numbness through all his joints—that his rheumatism returned with tenfold force upon him—and that from that unhappy hour his mind brooded ominously on the fatal issue. The course of medicine to which he submitted was violent; confinement—accustomed as he had been to much bodily exercise—preyed miserably on all his powers; he drooped visibly, and all the hopes of his friends that health would return with summer, were destined to disappointment.

'4th June, 1796.2—I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Racket as I am with rheumatism, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam—Come, curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel.'

'7th July.—I fear the voice of the hard will soon be heard among you no more. For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bedfast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an exacerbating rheumatism, which has reduced me nearly to the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me pale, emaciated, and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair.—My spirit's fled! Fled! But I can no more on the subject.'

This last letter was addressed to Mr. Cunningham of Edinburgh, from the small village of Brow on the Solway Firth, about ten miles from Dumfries, to which the poet removed about the end of June [4th July]; "the medical folks," as he says, "having told him that his last and only chance was bathing, country quarters, and riding." In separating himself by their advice from his family for these purposes, he carried with him a heavy burden of care. "The deuce of the matter," he writes, "is this, when an exciseman is off duty his salary is reduced. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters on £352?" He implored his friends in Edinburgh to make interest with the board to grant him his full
salary; "if they do not, I must lay my account with an exit truly en poëte—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger." The application was, I believe, successful; but Burns lived not to profit by the indulgence, or the justice, of his superiors.\footnote{1}

Mrs. Riddell of Woodley Park, a beautiful and very accomplished woman, to whom many of Burns's most interesting letters, in the latter years of his life, were addressed, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Brow when Burns reached his bathing quarters, and exerted herself to make him as comfortable as circumstances permitted. Having sent her carriage for his conveyance, the poet visited her on the 5th July; and she has, in a letter published by Dr. Currie, thus described his appearance and conversation on that occasion:—

"I was struck with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was imprinted on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, 'Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?' I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be the soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a poor state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling—as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy's future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he showed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation: that letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malvolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent the censure of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame. He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound; and many indifferent poetical pieces, which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers into a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of that exertion. The conversation was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I have seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and depression I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge. We parted about sunset on the evening of that day (the 5th of July, 1796), and the next day I saw him again, and we parted to meet no more!"

I do not know the exact date of the following [probably 14th July]:—

To Mrs. Burns.—'Brow, Thursday.—My dearest Love, I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh or fish can I swallow, porridge

...and milk very happily you are the less complaisant, or you will see a change in the appearance of your husband, for the better...

There was danger that his family might be involved in his misfortunes; God knew, however, that 12th he was to take another son, above all, to one of his relative whose family...

"My dear Mr. Burns, I am little likely to use as much freedom as I have done in a former letter, as I have been satis...

...the hour I am writing, and I beg you tell me, that I am not the worse for not hearing your...

"My dearest Love, I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh or fish can I swallow, porridge..."
and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, R. B."

There is a very affecting letter to Gilbert, dated the 7th, in which the poet says: "I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. God keep my wife and children!" On the 12th he wrote the letter to Mr. George Thomson, above quoted, requesting £5; and addressed another, still more painful, to his affectionate relative Mr. James Burness of Montrose, by whose favour it is now before the reader:—

"My dearest Cousin,

"When you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O, James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas! I am not used to beg! The worst of it is, my health was coming about finely. You know, and my physician assures me, that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease; guess, then, my horrors since this business began. If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use this language to you? O, do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curt command!

"I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up; but on this I will consider at another time, particularly as I shall want your advice. Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post. Save me from the horrors of a jail!

"My compliments to my friend James, and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible, I dare not look it over again. Farewell! R. B."

July 12th.

The same date appears also on a letter to his friend Mrs. Dunlop. Of these three productions of the 12th of July, who would not willingly believe that the following was the last?

"Madam, I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that bourne whence no traveller returns. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was the friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart.—Farewell!"

I give the following anecdote in the words of Mr. M'Diarmid:—"Ronsaen, we all know, when dying, wished to be carried into the open air, that he might obtain a parting look of the glorious orb of day. A night or two before Burns left Bridport he drank tea with Mrs. Craig, widow of the minister of Ruthwell. His altered appearance excited much silent sympathy, and the evening being beautiful, and the sun shining brightly through the casement, Miss Craig (now Mrs. Henry Duncan) was afraid the light might be too much for him, and rose with the view of letting down the window blinds. Burns immediately guessed what she meant, and regarding the young lady with a look of great benignity, said, 'Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention, but oh let him shine! he will not shine long for me.'"

On the 18th, desirous of any benefit from the sea, our poet came back to Dumfries. Mr. Allan Cunningham, who saw him arrive, "visibly changed in his looks, being with difficulty able to stand upright, and reach his own door," has given a striking picture, in one of his essays, of the state of popular feeling in the town during the short space which intervened between his return and his death. "Dumfries was like a besieged place. It was known he was dying, and the anxiety, not of the rich and the learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history,—of his person,—of
his works—of his family—of his fame—and of his untimely and approaching fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endure Dumfries to my remembrance. All that he said or was saying—the opinions of the physicians (and Maxwell was a kind and a skilful one), were eagerly caught up and reported from street to street, and from house to house.

"His good humour (Cunningham adds) was unaltered, and his wit never forsook him. He looked at one of his fellow-volunteers with a smile, as he stood by the bed-side with his eyes wet, and said, 'John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me.' He repressed with a smile the hopes of his friends, and told them he had lived long enough. As his life drew near a close, the eager, yet decorous solicitude of his fellow-townsmen, increased. It is the practice of the young men of Dumfries to meet in the streets during the hours of remission from labour, and by these means I had an opportunity of witnessing the general solicitude of all ranks and of all ages. His differences with them on some important points were forgotten and forgiven; they thought only of his genius—of the delight his compositions had diffused—and they talked of him with the same awe as of some departing spirit, whose voice was to gladden them no more."

"A tremor now pervaded his frame," says Dr. Currie on the authority of the physician who attended him; "his tongue was parched; and his mind sunk into delirium, when not roused by conversation. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished." On the fourth, July 21st, 1796, Robert Burns died.

"I went to see him laid out for the grave," says Mr. Allan Cunningham; "several elder people were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face, and on the bed, and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his thick hair lay in masses, slightly touched with grey. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity, and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—not a whisper was heard. This was several days after his death."

On the 25th of July (on the evening of Sunday, the 24th), the remains of the poet were removed to the Trades' Hall, where they lay in state until next morning. The volunteers of Dumfries were determined to inter their illustrious comrade (as indeed he had anticipated) with military honours. The chief persons of the town and neighbourhood were anxious to make part of the procession; and not a few travelled from great distances to witness the solemnity. The streets were lined by the feebile infantry of Angusshire, and the cavalry of the Cinque Ports, then quartered at Dumfries, whose commander, Lord Hawkesbury (now Earl of Liverpool), although he had always declined a personal introduction to the poet, officiated as one of the chief mourners. "The multitude who accompanied Burns to the grave might amount," says Cunningham, "to ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard... It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks and persuasions and opinions mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled. I could, indeed, have wished the military part of the procession away. The scarlet and gold—the banners displayed—the measured step, and the military array—with the sound of martial music—had no place in the poet's life."

The second Earl of the family, deceased since this memoir was first published, became prime minister in 1871, an office which he held till 1874. He died in 1878.

1 In the *London Magazine*, 1824, article, "Robert Burns and Lord Byron." Allan Cunningham was not quite twelve years of age when Burns died, and it is hard to tell how much of these "recollections" was really his own, how much mere hearsay.

2 So Mr. Syme informed Mr. M'Diarmid,
the sounds of martial instruments of music, had no share in increasing the solemnity of the funeral scene, and had no connection with the poet. I looked on it then, and I consider it now, as an idle ostentation, a piece of superficial state, which might have been spared, more especially as his neglected, and insulted, and injured spirit, had experienced no kindness in the body from those lofty people who are now proud of being numbered as his equals and countrymen... I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend for ever. There was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on his coffin-lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers justified the tears of their comrades by three ragged and struggling valleys. The earth was heaped up, and the green sod laid over him, and the multitude stood gazing on the grave for some minutes, and then melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sun was almost without a cloud, not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this, not from any concurrence in the common superstition, that 'happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,' but to confute the pious fraud of a religious magazine, which made heaven express its wrath at the interment of a profane poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain. 

During the funeral solemnity Mrs. Burns was seated with the pains of labour, and gave birth to a male infant, who quickly followed his father to the grave. Mr. Cunningham describes the appearance of the family, when they at last emerged from their house of sorrow:

"A weeping widow and four helpless sons; they came into the streets in their mournings, and public sympathy was awakened afresh. I shall never forget the looks of his boys, and the compassion which they excited. The poet's life had not been without errors, and such errors, too, as a wife is slow in forgiving; but he was honoured then, and is honoured now, by the unalienable affection of his wife; and the world repays her prudence and her love by its regard and esteem."

There was much talk at the time of a subscription for a monument; but Mrs. Burns, beginning ere long to suspect that the business was to end in talk, covered the grave at her own expense with a plain tombstone, inscribed simply with the name and age of the poet. In 1813, however, a public meeting was held at Dumfries, General Dunlop, son to Burns's friend and patroness, being in the chair; a subscription was opened, and contributions flowing in rapidly from all quarters, a costly mausoleum was at length erected on the most elevated site which the churchyard presented. Thither the remains of the poet were solemnly transferred on the 5th June, 1815; and the spot continues to be visited every year by hundreds of travellers. The structure, which is perhaps more gaudy than might have been wished, is in the form of a Greek temple surmounted by a dome, as will be seen from the plate in the last volume of this work.

Immediately after the poet's death a subscription was opened for the benefit of his family; Mr. Miller of Dalwinton, Dr. Maxwell, Mr. Syme, Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. M'Murdo becoming trustees for the application of the money. Many names from other parts of Scotland appeared in the lists, and not a few from England, especially London and Liverpool. Seven hundred pounds were in this way collected; an additional sum was forwarded from India; and the profits of Dr. Currie's Life and Edition of Burns were also considerable. The result has been, that the sons of the poet received an excellent education, and that Mrs. Burns continued to reside, enjoying a decent independence, in the house where the poet died, situated in what is now, by the authority of the Dumfries magistracy, called Burns Street.

1 The original tombstone of Burns was at first sunk under the pavement of the mausoleum, but has since been raised and fixed in the floor; and the grave which first received his remains is now occupied, according to her own dying request, by a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop.

2 [See vol. v.—"Monuments to Burns."]

3 On leaving Ellinbank for the town of Dumfries in December, 1791, Burns and his family took up their abode in a house of three small apartments, each with a window to the street, on the second floor of a tenement on the north side of Bank Street, then called the Wee Vennel. The small central room was used as the poet's "residence," and here, during his eighteen months' tenancy, he composed some of his most pop-
Of the (four surviving) sons of the poet, says their uncle Gilbert, in 1829, "Robert, the eldest, is placed as a clerk in the stamp-office, London" (1829), "Francis Wallace, the second, died in 1803; William Nicol, the third, went to Madras in 1811; and James Glenelg, the youngest, to Bengal in 1812, both as cadets in the Honourable Company's service. These young gentlemen all have, it is believed, conducted themselves through life in a manner highly honourable to themselves, and to the

ular songs. Immediately underneath the poet's apartments a gentleman named John Syme had his office for the distribution of stamps. He became a warm friend of the poet, and after the death of the latter acted as his executor. This tenement belonged to a Captain Hamilton, a great admirer of Burns, and is now marked by a stone tablet on the front of the second floor:—"Robert Burns, the National Poet, lived in this house with his family on coming to Dumfries from Elland, in 1781." The poet afterwards removed to a small "self-contained" two-story house on the south side of a short, mean street striking eastward from St. Michael Street, in the northern vicinity of St. Michael's church. The street was then known as Millbran or Millbrane-hole, but after Burns's death its name, as above stated, was changed to Burns Street. His house here consisted of a sitting-room and kitchen on the ground-floor; two bedrooms—in one of which, a small room, fifteen feet by nine, the poet died—on the floor above; and a couple of attic bedrooms in which the children slept. The house in Burns's time was one of a good order, such as was occupied by the better class of citizens. After his death it continued in the occupancy of his widow down to the time of her death in 1834, and in 1850 was purchased by Col. Wm. Nicol Burns, son of the poet. It was left by Col. Burns to the Dumfries and Maxwelton Industrial School, but still continues to be kept in, as much as possible, the same condition as when Burns inhabited it, though in 1890 it was found to require rebuilding in part. In a niche in the adjoining building a bust of the poet has been placed, along with a stone bearing this inscription: "In the Adjoining House, to the North, Lived and Died the Poet of his Country and of Mankind, Robert Burns." In a narrow, gloomy close off the High Street is situated the Globe Tavern which Burns used to frequent, at the bar of which "Anna w' the golden locks" was the presiding Hebe, and on the windows of which he used to scratch verses with his diamond. The house, which is invested with somewhat of a painful interest, has undergone very little change since the days of Burns; indeed the floors, windows, doors, and paneling are almost unaltered. The King's Arms Inn was also an occasional "howf" of Burns, and a window pane on which he had scratched an epitaph was for a long time a great attraction to both townsmen and strangers. The pew which Burns occupied in St. Michael's Church, and on which he had cut the initials "R. B.," was sold at the repairing of the church in 1890 for £5.1 name which they bear. One of them (James), as soon as his circumstances permitted, settled a liberal annuity on his estimable mother, [which she continued to enjoy till her death in April, 1884].

Gilbert, the admirable brother of the poet, survived till the 27th of April, 1827. He removed from Mossgiel, shortly after the death of Burns, to a farm in Dumfriesshire, carrying with him his aged mother, who died under his roof. At a later period he became factor to the noble family of Blantyre, on their estates in East Liddian. The pecuniary success which the poet afforded Gilbert Burns, and still more the interest excited in his behalf by the account of his personal character contained in Currie's Memoir, proved of high advantage to him. He trained up a large family, six sons and five daughters, and bestowed on all his boys what is called a classical education. The untimely death of one of these, a young man of very promising talents, when on the eve of being admitted to holy orders, is supposed to have hastened the departure of the venerable p.). It should not be omitted that, on the publication of his edition of his brother's works, in 1819, Gilbert repaid, with interest, the sum which the poet advanced to him in 1788. Through life, and in death, he maintained and justified the promise of his virtuous youth, and seems in all respects to have resembled his father, of whom Mungo, long after he was no more, wrote in language honourable to his own heart: "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?"

It is pleasing to trace in all these details the happy influence which our poet's genius has exerted over the destinies of his connections. "In the fortunes of his family," says Mr. M'Diarmid, "there are few who do not feel the liveliest interest; and were a register kept of the names, and numbers, and characters, of those who from time to time visit the humble but decent abode in which Burns breathed his..."
hem (James),
united, settled with his estimable mother,
ill her death in Scotland, 1827. He received a
after the death of the poet, had been
heir, carrying on the farm under his
ancestry factor to his estate, (their estates
early successor, James Burns, and
in his behalf to the character connected of high ad
large family, and bestowed on the medical education.
eminent, a young man when on the orders, is supreme
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friend of my
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These details the
such genius has
connections.
"I say," says Mr.
much do not feel
register kept
characters, of
the humble
breathed his
August, 1825.
last, amid the fate of those who have passed on, and in which the evening closed its competence of the soil from the home of their offspring—pleasing the eye and mind, it could inspire the greatest sentiment and be patronage. Even as it was the high and the low, the high and the low, wherever they are, they are in her stock, and under her hundreds of years, but who a friendly power: it circulates the valor of whose name? Is it the daughter of his country, a penury, a treatment that be degraded to a reign in degradation? Can we turn a corner of the author? whose breath was doomed to vanity? casting upon, riding over the smuggling poems was: and perhaps it is the gentry of our some strongly

Mr. MPIRR was a touching image of the voyage home. It was a voyage of tears. This poor old man, he most affected. He was drawn across the sea, the deepest north, as the lash. The proclamation did not every command, every eye, every sailor weep when far from home and the poetry of the

VOL
spread over the whole kingdom, when it was known that Robert Burns, after being caressed and flattered by the noblest and most learned of his countrymen, was about to be established as a common ganger among the wilds of Nithsdale—and that, after he was so established, no interference from a higher quarter arrested that unworthy career:—these are circumstances which must continue to bear heavily on the memory of that generation, and especially of those who then administered the public patronage of Scotland.

In defence, or at least in palliation, of this national crime, two false arguments, the one resting on facts grossly exaggerated, the other having no foundation whatever either on knowledge or on wisdom, have been rashly set up, and arrogantly as well as ignominiously maintained. To the one, namely, that public patronage would have been wrongly bestowed on the poet, because the exciseman was a "real partisan, it is hoped the details embodied in this narrative have supplied a sufficient answer: had the matter been as bad as the boldest critics have ever ventured to insinuate, Sir Walter Scott's answer would still have remained—"this partisan was Burns."

The other argument is a still more heartless, as well as absurd one; to wit, that from the moral character and habits of the man no patronage, however liberal, could have influenced and controlled his conduct, so as to work lasting and effective improvement, and lengthen his life by raising it more nearly to the elevation of his genius. This is indeed a candid and a generous method of judging. Are imprudence and intemperance, then, found to increase usually in proportion as the worldly circumstances of men are easy? Is not the very opposite of this doctrine acknowledged by almost all that have ever tried the reverses of fortune's wheel themselves—by all that have contemplated from an elevation, not too high for sympathy, the usual course of manners, when their fellow-creatures either encounter or live in constant apprehension of

The thousand ills that rise where money fails,
Debts, threats, and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs, and jails?

To such mean miseries the latter years of Burns's life were exposed, not less than his early youth, and after what natural buoyancy
of animal spirits he ever possessed had sunk under the influence of time, which, surely bringing experience, fails seldom to bring care also and sorrow, to spirits more mercurial than his; and in what bitterness of spirit he submitted to his fate, let his own burning words once more tell us. "Take," says he, writing to one who never ceased to be his friend—"take these three guineas, and place them over against that account of yours, which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things, as apologies, to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or withites in bitterness of soul under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with contemptence and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee; the children of folly and vice, though, in common with thee, the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. The man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want; and when his necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. His early follies and extravagance are spirit and fire; his consequent wants are the embarrassment of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a and a lord. Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! The needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridded down by the chariot-wheels of the crowned air, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she who, without the same necessities to plead, rides nightly in the same guilty trade. Well! divines may say of it what they please, but execration is to the mind, what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital shames of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations."

In such evacuations of indignant spleen the proud heart of many an unfortunate genius, besides this, has found or sought relief; and to other more dangers indulgences the affliction of such sensitive spirits had often, ere this time, condescended. The list is a long and painful one; and it includes some names that can claim but a scanty share in the apology of Burns. Addison himself, the elegant, the philosophical, the religious Addison, must be numbered with these offenders,—Jonson, Cotton, Prior, Parnell, Tindal, Savage, all sinned in the same sort; and the transgressions of them all have been leniently dealt with in comparison with those of one whose genius was probably greater than any of theirs; his appetites more servile, his temptations more abundant, his repentance more severe. The beautiful genius of Collins sank under similar contaminations; and those who have, from dulness of head or sources of heart, joined in the too general clamour against Burns, may learn a lesson of candour, of mercy, and of justice, from the language in which one of the best of men, and loftiest of moralists, has commented on frailties that hurried a kindred spirit to a like untimely grave.

"In a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation," says Johnson, "it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be presumptuous and temerity to affirm; but it may be said that he at least preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation. Such was the fate of Collins."

Letter to Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller, Edinburgh, 17th Jan. 1791 [as altered by Currie].
with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.

Burns was an honest man: after all his struggles, he owed no man a shilling when he died. His heart was always warm and his hand open. "His charities," says Mr. Gray, "were great beyond his means;" and I have to thank Mr. Allan Cunningham for the following anecdote, for which I am sure every reader will thank him too. Mr. Maxwell of Terangnie, an old, austere, sarcastic gentleman, who cared nothing about poetry, used to say when the excise-books of the district were produced at the meetings of the justices—"Bringing Burns's journal: it always does me good to see it, for it shows that an honest officer may carry a kind heart about with him."

Of his religious principles we are bound to judge by what he has told us himself in his more serious moments. He sometimes doubted with the sorrow, what in the main and above all, in the end, he believed with the fervour of a poet. "It occasionally haunts me," says he in one of his letters—"the dark suspicion, that immortality may be only too good news to be true," and here, as on many points besides, how much did his method of thinking (I fear I must add of acting) resemble that of a noble poet more recently lost to us! "I am no bigot to infidelity," said Lord Byron, "and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man I should be charged with denying the existence of a God. It was the comparative insignificance of ourselves and our world, when placed in comparison with the mighty whole of which it is an atom, that first led me to imagine that our pretensions to immortality might be overrated." I dare not pretend to quote the sequel from memory; but the effect was, that Byron, like Burns, complained of "the early discipline of Scotch Calvinism," and the natural gloom of a melancholy heart, as having been tempered by a "hypochondriacal disease," which occasionally visited and depressed him through life. In the opposite scale we are, in justice to Burns, to place many pages which breathe the ardour, nay the exultation of faith, and the humble sincerity of Christian hope; and as the poet himself has warned us, it well befits us "at the balance to be mute." Let us avoid, in the name of religion herself, the fatal error of those who would rashly swell the catalogue of the enemies of religion. "A sally of levity," says once more Dr. Johnson, "an indecent jest, an unreasonable objection, are sufficient in the opinion of some men, to efface a name from the lists of Christianity, to exclude a soul from everlasting life. Such men are so watchful to censure, that they have seldom much care to look for favourable interpretations of ambiguities, or to know how soon any step of inadvertency has been expiated by sorrow and retraction, but let fly their fulminations without mercy or prudence against slight offences or casual terrors, against crimes never committed, or immediately repented. The zealot should recollect, that he is labouring, by this frequency of excommunication, against his own cause, and voluntarily adding strength to the enemies of truth. It must always be the condition of a great part of mankind to reject and embrace tenets upon the authority of those whom they think wiser than themselves, and therefore the addition of every name to infidelity in some degree invalidates that argument upon which the religion of multitudes is necessarily founded."

In conclusion, let me adopt the sentiment of that illustrious moral poet of our own time, whose generous defence of Burns will be remembered while the language lasts:

Let no mean hope your souls enslave—
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your Poet such example gave,
And such revere;
But be admonished by his grave,
And think and fear.

It is possible, perhaps for some it may be easy, to imagine a character of a much higher cast than that of Burns, developed, too, under circumstances in many respects not unlike those of his history—the character of a man of lowly birth and powerful genius, elevated by that philosophy which is alone pure and divine, far above all those annoyances of terrestrial spleen and passion, which mixed from the beginning with the workings of his insipiration, and in the end were able to eat deep into the great heart which they had long tormented. Such a being would have received,
no question, a species of devout reverence, I mean when the grave has closed on him, to which the warmest admirers of our poet can advance no pretensions for their unfortunate favourite; but could such a being have delighted his species—could he even have instructed them like Burns? Ought we not to be thankful for every new variety of form and circumstance, in and under which the ennobling energies of true and lofty genius are found addressing themselves to the common brethren of the race? Would we have none but Miltons and Cowpers in poetry—but Brownes and Southey's in prose? Alas! if it were so, how large a portion of the species would all the gifts of all the muses remain for ever a fountain shut up and a book sealed? Were the doctrine of intellectual excommunication so entirely exploded and enforced, how small the library that would remain to kindle the fancy, to draw out and refine the feelings, to enlighten the head by expanding the heart of man? From Aristophanes to Byron, how broad the sweep, how woeful the desolation!

In the absence of that vehement sympathy with humanity as it is, its sorrows and its joys as they are, we might have had a great man, perhaps a great poet; but we could have had no Burns. It is very noble to despise the accidents of fortune; but what moral humility concerning these, could have equalled that which Burns's poetry, considered alongside of Burns's history, and the history of his fame, presents? It is very noble to be above the allurements of pleasure; but who preaches so effectually against them as he who sets forth, in immortal verse, his own intense sympathy with those that yield, and in verse and in prose, in action and in passion, in life and in death, the dangers and the miseries of yielding?

It requires a graver audacity of hypocrisy than falls to the share of most men, to declaim against Burns's sensibility to the tangible cares and toils of his earthly condition; there are more who venture on broad denunciations of his sympathy with the joys of sense and passion. To these, the great moral poet already quoted, speaks in the following noble passage—and must he speak in vain? “Permit me,” says he, “to remind you that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions, of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men. The poet, trusting to primary instincts, enquires among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war; nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immediate—from convivial pleasure, though im temperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognized as the handmaid of desolation.” Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature, both with reference to himself, and in describing the condition of others. Who, but some impenetrable duence or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, “Tam o’ Shanter?” The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within. I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,

O'er a' the ills of life victorious.

“What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him! Men, who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the insidious and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled, with exquisite skill, the finer ties of imagination and feeling that of productive and consummative, and to— and, of course, the mission of a poet to their children, the milk of human kindness.

That in a whole, but references to the history of the world and all readers, as the influence of the universe, bear them all aloft by virtues and disinterested, as the great powers from the earth and from not a character, nor be within the sphere of the minor— a Burns, and their ads or their attachments. Are there no one, and their families, virtues? Are there the cases of these quiet and virtuous women?

On one hand, the poet as the influence of the nation, and by the penury and miseries, and his of the people are deeply rooted and the stories of his Scotland. In the view of the flame, he had struck the English system of society, and spread it before and set the example of one who has since
that often bind these beings to practices productive of much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish—and, as far as he puts the reader into possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably deceived.

That some men in every age will comfort themselves in the practice of certain vices, by reference to particular passages both in the history and in the poetry of Burns, is all reason to fear; but surely the general influence of both is calculated, and has been found, to produce far different effects. The universal popularity which his writings have all along enjoyed among one of the most virtuous of nations, is, of itself, surely a decisive circumstance. Search Scotland over, from the Pentland to the Solway, and there is not a cottage—nor so poor and wretched as to be without its Bible; and hardly one that, on the same shelf, and next to it, does not treasure a Burns. Have the people degenerated since their adoption of this new manual? Has their attachment to the Book of Books declined? Are their hearts less firmly bound, than were their fathers', to the old faith and the old virtues? I believe he that knows the most of the country will be the readiest to answer all these questions as every lover of genius and virtue would desire to hear them answered.

On one point there can be no controversy: the poetry of Burns has had most powerful influence in reviving and strengthening the national feelings of his countrymen. Amidst penury and labour, his youth fed on the old minstrelsy and traditional glories of his nation, and his genius divined what he felt so deeply must belong to a spirit that might lie smothered around him, but could not be extinguished. The political circumstances of Scotland were, and had been, such as to starve the flame of patriotism; the popular literature had striven, and not in vain, to make itself English; and, above all, a new and a cold system of speculative philosophy had begun to spread widely among us. A peasant appeared, and set himself to check the creeping pestilence of this indifference. Whatever genius has since then been devoted to the illustration of the national manners, and sustaining thereby of the national feelings of the people, there can be no doubt that Burns will ever be remembered as the founder, and, alas! in his own person as the martyr, of this reformation.

That which is nowadays called, by solitary eminence, the reawakening of the nation, had been on the increase ever since our incorporation with a greater and wealthier state—nay, that the laws had been improving, and, above all, the administration of the laws, it would be mere bigotry to dispute. It may also be conceded, that the national mind had been rapidly clearing itself of many injurious prejudices—that the people, as a people, had been gradually and surely advancing in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in wealth and security. But all this had been accomplished without rude work. If the improvement were valuable, it had been purchased dearly. "The spring fire," Allan Cunningham says beautifully somewhere, "which destroys the furze, makes an end also of the nests of a thousand song-birds; and he who goes a trawling with lime, leaves little of life in the stream." We were getting fast ashamed of many precious and beautiful things, only for that they were old and our own.

It has already been remarked, how even Smollett, who began with a national tragedy, and one of the noblest of national lyrics, never dared to make use of the dialect of his own country; and how Moore, another enthusiastic Scotsman, followed in this respect, as in others, the example of Smollett, and over and over again counselled Burns to do the like. But a still more striking sign of the times is to be found in the style adopted by both of these novelists, especially the great master of the art, in the representations of the manners and characters of their own countrymen. In Humphrey Clinker the last and best of Smollett's tales, there are some traits of a better kind—but, taking his works as a whole, the impression it conveys is certainly a painful, a disgusting one. The Scotchmen of these authors are the Jockies and Archies of Cowe—

Time out of mind the Southrons' martiillakers—the best of them grotesque combinations of simplicity and hypocrisy, pride and meanness. When such men, high-spirited Scottish gentle-
men, possessed of learning and talents, and one of them at least of splendid genius, felt, or fancied, the necessity of making such submissions to the prejudices of the dominant nation, and did so without exciting a murmur among their own countrymen, we may form some notion of the boldness of Burns's experiment; and on contrasting the state of things then with what is before us now, it will cost no effort to appreciate the nature and consequences of the victory in which our poet led the way, by achievements never in their kind to be surpassed.  

"Burns," says Mr. Campbell, "has given elixir virtue to his dialect;"—he gave it to more than his dialect.

The moral influence of his genius has not been confined to his own countrymen.  "The range of the pastoral," said Johnson, "is narrow.  Poetry cannot dwell upon the minor distinctions by which one species differs from another, without departing from that simplicity of grandeur which fills the imagination; nor dissect the latent qualities of things, without losing its general power of gratifying every mind by recalling its own conceptions.  Not only the images of rural life, but the occasions on which they can properly be applied, are few and general.  The state of a man confined to the employments and pleasures of the country, is so little diversified, and exposed to so few of those accidents which produce perplexities, terrors, and surprises, in more complicated transactions, that he can be shown but seldom in such circumstances as arrest curiosity.  His ambition is without limit.

"He was," says a writer, in whose language a brother poet will be recognized,—"he was in many respects born at a happy time; happy for a man of genius like him, but fatal and hopeless to the more common mind.  A whole world of life lay before Burns, whose inmost recesses, and darkest nooks, and sunniest eminences, he had familiarly trod from his childhood.  All that world he felt could be made his own.  No conqueror had overrun its fertile provinces, and it was for him to be crowned supreme over all the Lyre singers of that high-sounding land.  The crown that he has won can never be removed from his head.  Much is yet left for other poets, even among that life where his spirit delighted to work; but he has built monuments on all the high places, and they who follow can only hope to leave behind them some far humbler memorials."—Blackwood's Magazine, Feb. 1817.


In huts where poor men lie.

Burns did not place himself only within the estimation and admiration of those whom the world called his superiors—a solitary tree emerging into light and air, and leaving the parent underwood as low and as dark as before.  He, as well as any man,

Knew his own worth, and reverenced the lyre:

but he ever announced himself as a peasant, the representative of his class, the painter of their manners, inspired by the same influences which ruled their bosoms; and whose sympathies were stirred by the verse of Burns had his soul opened for the moment to the whole family of man.  If, in too many instances, the matter has stopped there—the blame is not with the poet, but with the mad and unconquerable pride and coldness of the worldly heart—"man's inhumanity to man."  If, in spite of Burns, and all his successors, the boundary-lines of society are observed with increasing strictness among us—if the various orders of men still, day by day, feel the chord of sympathy relaxing, let us lament over symptoms of a disease in the body politic, which, if it goes on, must find sooner or later a fatal ending; but let us not undervalue the antidote which has all along been checking this strong poison.  Who can doubt, that at this moment thousands of "the first-born of policy, and his love without intrigue.  He has no complaints to make of his rival, but that he is richer than himself; nor any disasters to lament, but a cruel mistress or a bad harvest."  Such were the notions of the great arbiter of taste, whose dicta formed the creed of the British world at the time when Burns made his appearance to overturn all such dogmata at a single blow; to convince the loftiest of the noble, and the daintiest of the learned, that wherever human nature is at work the eye of a poet may discover rich elements of his art—that over Christian Europe, at all events, the purity of sentiment and the fervour of passion may be found combined with sagacity of intellect, wit, shrewdness, humour, whatever elevates, and whatever delights the minds, not more easily amidst the most "complicated transactions" of the most polished societies, than in huts where poor men lie.

Currier and Ives, a poetry, is a pretentious book of Burns, and alone bespeak a vision of a thousand years previously to the present age.  There are many circumstances which have increased, and expiated, the imagination of forms like those, under the quite expanded bow'ne, and the Shanter, and the songs, so far as the person himself was pleased, the successes in another age as many as that which have themselves to combine the bellish-shining elements, and most

Lord Byron, with his trilling parching language, is an example, slang-worthiness, poetical
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

Egypt" look upon the smoke of a cottager's chimney with feelings which would never have been developed within their being had there been no Burns.

Such, it can hardly be disputed, has been, and is, the general influence of the poet's genius; and the effect has been accomplished, not in spite of, but by means of the most exact contradiction of, every one of the principles laid down by Dr. Johnson in a passage already cited, and, indeed, assumed throughout the whole body of that great author's critical disquisitions. Whatever Burns has done, he has done by his exquisite power of entering into the characters and feelings of individuals; as Heron has well expressed it, "by the effusion of particular, not general sentiments, and in the picturing out of particular imagery."

Currie says, that "if fiction be the soul of poetry, as some assert, Burns can have small pretensions to the name of poet." The success of Burns, the influence of his verse, would alone be enough to overturn all the systems of a thousand definitions; but the doctor has obviously taken fiction in far too limited a sense. There are indeed but few of Burns' pieces in which he is found creating beings and circumstances, both alike alien from his own person and experience, and then, by the power of imagination, divining and expressing what forms life and passion would assume with, and under these—there are some; there is quite enough to satisfy every reader of "Hallowe'en," the "Jolly Beggars," and "Tam o' Shanter" (to say nothing of various particular songs, such as "Bruce's Address," "Mackintosh's Lament," &c.), that Burns, if he pleased, might have been as largely and as successfully an inventor in this way, as he is in another walk, perhaps not so inferior to this as many people may have accustomed themselves to believe; in the art, namely, of recombining and new-combining, varying, embellishing, and fixing and transmitting, the elements of a most picturesque experience and most vivid feelings.

Lord Byron, in his letter on Pope, treats with high and just contempt the laborious trifling which has been expended on distinguishing by air-drawn lines and technical slang-words, the elements and materials of poetical exertion; and, among other things, expresses his scorn of the attempts that have been made to class Burns among minor poets, merely because he has put forth few large pieces, and still fewer of what is called the purely imaginative character. Fight who will about words and forms, "Burns's rank," says he, "is in the first class of his art; and I believe the world at large are nowadays well prepared to prefer a line from such a pen as Byron's on any such subject as this, to the most inclement dissertation that ever perplexed the brains of writer and of reader. Sentia, ergo sum, says the metaphysician; the critic may safely parody the saying, and assert that that is poetry of the highest order which excels influence of the most powerful order on the hearts and minds of mankind.

Burns has been appreciated duly, and he has had the fortune to be praised eloquently, by almost every poet who has come after him. To accumulate all that has been said of him, even by men like himself, of the first order, would fill a volume—and a noble monument, no question, that volume would be—the noblest, except what he has left us in his own immortal verses, which—were some dress removed, and the rest arranged in a chronological order—would, I believe, form, to the intelligent, a more perfect and vivid history of his life, than will ever be composed out of all the material in the world besides.

"The impression of his genius," says Campbell, "is deep and universal; and, viewing him merely as a poet, there is scarcely another regret connected with his name, than that his productions, with all their merit, fall short of the talents which he possessed. That he never attempted any great work of fiction may be partly traced to the cast of his genius, and partly to his circumstances and defective education. His poetical temperament was that of sifful transports, rather than steady inspiration. Whatever he might have written was likely to have been fraught with passion. There is always enough of interest in life to cherish the feelings of genius; but it requires knowledge to enlarge and enrich the imagination. Of that knowledge, which unravels the diversities of human manners, adventures, and characters, to a poet's study, he could have no

[The poems are arranged in chronological order in the present edition.]
great share; although he stamped the little treasure which he possessed in the midst of sovereign genius."

"Notwithstanding," says Sir Walter Scott, "the spirit of many of his lyrics, and the exquisite sweetness and simplicity of others, we cannot but deeply regret that so much of his time and talents was wasted away in compiling and composing for musical collections. There is sufficient evidence, that even the genius of Burns could not support him in the monotonous task of writing love verses on heaving bosoms and sparkling eyes, and twisting them into such rhythmical forms as might suit the capricious evolutions of Scotch reels and strathspeys. Besides, this constant waste of his power and fancy in small and insignificant compositions, must necessarily have had no little effect in deterring him from undertaking any grave or important task. Let no one suppose that we undervalue the songs of Burns. When his soul was intent on suiting a favourite air to words humorous or tender, as the subject demanded, no poet of our tongue ever displayed higher skill in marrying melody to immortal verse. But the writing of a series of songs for large musical collections degenerated into a slavish labour which no talents could support, led to negligence, and, above all, diverted the poet from his grand plan of dramatic composition. To produce a work of this kind, neither, perhaps, a regular tragedy nor comedy, but something partaking of the nature of both, seems to have been long the cherished wish of Burns. He had even fixed on the subject, which was an adventure in low life said to have happened to Robert Bruce while wandering in danger and disguise, after being defeated by the English. 2 The Scottish dialect would have rendered such a piece totally unfit for the stage; but those who recollect the masculine and lofty tone of martial spirit which glows in the poem of Bannockburn, will sigh to think what the character of the gallant Bruce might have proved under the hand of Burns. It would undoubtedly have wanted that tinge of chivalrous feeling which the manners of the age, no less than the disposition of the monarch, demanded; but this deficiency would have been more than supplied by a bard who could have drawn from his perceptions the unceasing energy of a hero sustaining the desertion of friends, the persecution of enemies, and the almost madness of disastrous fortune. The scene, too, being partly laid in humble life, admitted that display of broad humour and exquisite pathos with which he could, interchangeably and at pleasure, adorn his cottage views. Nor was the assemblage of familiar sentiments incompatible, in Burns, with those of the most exalted dignity. In the inimitable tale of 'Tam o' Shanter' he has left us sufficient evidence of his abilities to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of death in the poem on 'Dr. Hornbook,' borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance in the Kirk of Alloway is at once ludicrous and horrible. Deeply must we then regret those avocations which diverted a fancy so varied, and so vigorous, joined with language and expressions suited to all its changes, from leaving a more substantial monument to his own fame, and to the honour of his country."

The cantata of the "Jolly Beggars," which was not printed at all until some time after the poet's death, and has not been included in the editions of his works until within these few years, cannot be considered as it deserves, without strongly heightening our regret that Burns never lived to execute his meditated drama. That extraordinary sketch, coupled with his later lyrics in a higher vein, is enough to show that in him we had a master capable of placing the musical drama on a level with the loftiest of our classical forms. "Beggar's Bush" and "Beggar's Opera" sink into tameness in the comparison; and, indeed, without profanity to the name of Shakspeare, it may be said, that out of such materials, even his genius could hardly have constructed a piece in which imagination could have more splendidly predominated over the outward shows of things—in which the sympathy-awakening power of poetry could have been displayed more triumphantly under circum-

2 See Mr. Ramsay's account of a visit to Elliland, p. 97.
LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.

stances of the greatest difficulty. That remarkable performance, by the way, was an early production of the Mauchline period; I know nothing but the "Tam o' Shanter" that is calculated to convey so high an impression of what Burns might have done.

As to Burns's want of education and knowledge, Mr. Campbell may not have considered, but he must admit, that whatever Burns's opportunities had been at the time when he produced his first poems, such a man as he was not likely to be a hard reader (which he certainly was), and a constant observer of men and manners, in a much wider circle of society than almost any other great poet has ever moved in, from three-and-twenty to eighty-anthirty, without having thoroughly removed any pretext for auguring unfavourably on that score, of what he might have been expected to produce in the more elaborate departments of his art, had his life been spared to the usual limits of humanity. In another way, however, I cannot help suspecting that Burns's enlarged knowledge, both of men and books, produced an unfavourable effect, rather than otherwise, on the exertions, as they were, of his later years. His generous spirit was open to the impression of every kind of excellence; his lively imagination, lending its own vigour to whatever it touched, made him admire even what other people try to read in vain; and after travelling, as he did, over the general surface of our literature, he appears to have been somewhat startled at the consideration of what he himself had, in comparative ignorance, adventured, and to have been more intimidated than encouraged by the retrospect. In most of the new departments in which he made some trial of his strength (such, for example, as the moral epistle in Pope's vein, the _heroic satire_, &c.), he appears to have soon lost heart, and paused. There is indeed one magnificent exception in "Tam o' Shanter"—a piece which no one can understand without believing that had Burns pursued that walk, and poured out his stores of traditionary lore, embellished with his extraordinary powers of description of all kinds, we might have had from his hand a series of national tales, uniting the quaint simplicity, sly humour, and irresistible paths of another Chaucer, with the strong and graceful versification, and masculine wit and sense of another Dryden.

This was a sort of feeling that must have in time subsided. But let us not waste words in regretting what might have been, where so much is. Burns, short and painful as were his years, has left behind him a volume in which there is inspiration for every fancy, and music for every mood; which lives, and will live, in strength and vigour—"to soothe," as generous lover of genius had said, "the sorrows of how many a lover, to inflame the patriotism of how many a soldier, to fan the fires of how many a genius, to disperse the gloom of solitude, appease the agonies of pain, encourage virtue, and show vice its ugliness;"—a volume in which, centuries hence, as now, wherever a Scotsman may wander, he will find the dearest consolation of his exile. Already, in the language of Childe Harold, has

Glory without end
Scattered the clouds away; and on that name attend
The tears and praises of all time.

1 See John Richmond of Mauchline Informed Chambers. See that very interesting work, the _Picture of Scotland_, article "Mauchline," for some entertaining particulars of the scene that suggested the poem.
APPENDIX
TO
LOCKHART'S LIFE OF BURNS.

BURNS'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER
TO DR. MOORE.¹

Sir,—For some months past I have been
rambling over the country; partly on account of
some little business I have to settle in various
places; but of late I have been confined with
some lingering complaints, originating, as I take
it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little
in this miserable fog of care, I have taken a
whim to give you a history of myself.

My name has made a small noise in the coun-
try; you have done me the honour to interest
yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think
a faithful account of what character of a man I
am, and how I came by that character, may
perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will
give you an honest narrative, though I know it
will be at the expense of frequently being laughed
at; for I assure you, sir, I have, like Solomon,
whose character, excepting in the trilling affair
of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble—I have,
you say, like him, "turned my eyes to behold
madness and folly;" and, like him, too, frequently
shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship.

In the very polite letter Miss Williams² did
me the honour to write me, she tells me you have got
a complaint in your eyes. I pray God it may be
removed; for, considering that lady and you are
my common friends, you will hopefully employ
her to read this letter; and then good-night to
that esteem with which she was pleased to honour
the Scotch Bard!

After you have perused these pages, should
you think them trilling and impertinent, I only
beg leave to tell you that the poor author wrote
them under some very twitting qualms of con-
science that, perhaps, he was doing what he ought
not to do—a predicament he has more than once
been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to
what theapy-coated guardians of sanctuaries
call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last win-
ter I got acquainted at the Herald's Office, and,
looking thro' the gramin of honours, I there
found almost every name in the kingdom; but
for me,

My ancient but ignoble
blood
has crept through soundrels since the age,
Gules, purpure, argent, &c., quite disowned me.
My forefathers rented land of the famous,
noble Keiths of Marshall, and had the honour
to share their fate. I do not use the word "honour"
with any reference to political principles; legal
and disloyal I take it to be merely relative terms
in that ancient and formidable court known in this
country by the name of "chivalry." Those who
dare welcome ruin and shake hands with Infamy,
for what they believe sincerely to be the cases of
their God or their king, are—as Mark Antony
in Shakespeare says of Brutus and Cassius—"hon-
ourable men." I mention this circumstance be-
cause it threw my father on the world at large;
where, after many years' wanderings and so-
journings, he picked up a pretty large quantity
of observation and experience, to which I am
indebted for most of my pretensions to wisdom.
I have met with few who understood men; their
manners and their ways, equal to him; but stub-
born, ungainly integrity, and headlong ungovern-
able irresistibility, are disqualifying circumstances;
consequently, I was born a very poor man's son.

For the first six or seven years of my life my
father was gardener to Mr. Ferguson of Doon-
holm] a worthy gentleman of small estate in the
neighbourhood of Ayr. Had my father continued
in that situation I must have marched off to be
one of the little underlings about a farm-house;
but it was his distress wish and prayer to have it
in his power to keep his children under his own
eye till they could discern between good and
evil; so, with the assistance of his generous mas-
ter, he ventured on a small farm on that gentle-

¹ John Moore, a physician and author of some note in the
last century, was born at Stirling about 1738, and died in 1807.
After leaving the University of Edinburgh, he practised for some
years in Scotland; then travelled for five years on the Continent as
medical attendant to the young Duke of Hamilton, and latterly
settled in London, where he was resident when Burns became
acquainted with him, through Mrs. Dunlop, in 1787. There
are seven or eight letters to Moore in Burns's Correspondence.
The two do not seem ever to have met. Among Moore's
literary productions were the novel Zelma, which had a con-
siderable popularity in its day; A View of Society and Manners
in France, Switzerland, and Germany; A View of Society and
Manners in Italy; Medical Sketches, &c. See vol. iv. p. 47.
² Helen Maria Williams, a poetess and miscellaneous writer
of some note in her day.

² This is erroneous. See "Paternal Ancestry of Burns" in this
Appendix. "Keiths of Marshall" is a rather singular
designation. The Keiths were hereditary Earls Marshall of
Scotland.

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1 Betty Burns, his
mother.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

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man's estate. At these years I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot-piety. I say idiot-piety because I was then but a child. Though I cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and against the years of ten or eleven I was absolutely a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old maid of my mother's remarkable for her ignorance, crudity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spooks, kobolds, elf-candles, deadlights, wraiths, apparitions, centaurs, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of pious; but had so strong an effect on my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical in these matters than I, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest thing of composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was the "Vision of Mirza," and a hymn of Addison's, beginning "How are thy servants blest, O Loveli?" I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ears:

For though on dreadful white we hang
High on the broken wave.

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read again, were The Life of Hannibal and The History of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and buglepipe, and wish myself tall enough that I might be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice in my veins which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Poloniel divinity about this time was putting the country half-cuckoo; and I, ambitious of shining on Sundays, between sermons, in conversation parties, at funerals, &c., in a few years more used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of great advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modification of spitted pride, like our catechism definition of infinitude, was without bounds or limits. I formed many connections with other youngers who possessed superior advantages, the youthful actors, who were busy with the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on that stage where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at these green years that the young noblesse and gentility have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their plague play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unassuming disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who perhaps were born in the same village. My young superiors never inspired the cloutery appearance of my ploughboy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the insensibilities of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the "Fanny Burney" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors as they dropped off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain, and, to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a factor, who set for the picture I have drawn of one in my "Tales of Two Dogs." 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 irradiated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his case in two years more, and, to weather those, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my years; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert) who could drive the plough very well and help me to thresh. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at [the recollection of] the threatening, insolent epistles from the sounder drol, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the increasing toil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year a little before which period I first committed the sin of Rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature who just counted an autumn less. My sores of English don't me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a bonnie, sweet, moonie lass. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into a certain delicious passion, which, in spite of all disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worn philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our chiefest
pleasure here below! How she caught the contagion I can't say: you medical folks talk much of infection by breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly told her that I loved her. Indeed, I did not well know myself why I liked so much to latter behind with her when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-springs thrill like an Hellen harp; and particularly why my pulse beat so a furious ramman when I looked and fingered over her hand to pick out the needle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualifications she sang sweetly; and 'twas her favourite Scotch reel that I attempted to give an embodied vehicle to in rhyme.

My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on [Lochlea in Tarbolton parish,] a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a lawsuit between him and his landlord commencing, after three years' toasting and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from absorption in a jail by a philhymical consumption, which, after two years' promise, kindly stopped in and washed him away to "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

It is during this climacteric that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most unquiet, awkward being in the parish. No solitude was less acquainted with the ways of the world. My knowledge of ancient story was gathered from Guthrie's and Salmon's geographical grammar, and the knowledge of modern manners, and of literature and criticism, I got from the Spectator. These with Pope's Works, some plays of Shakespeare, Tott and Dickson on Agriculture, The Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardner, Boyle Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditation, had been the extent of my reading. The collection of songs was the rude music. I pored over them driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the tender or solemn from affectation and finish. I am convinced I owe much to this for my critic craft, such as it is.

In my twentieth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an uncountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his command. My father, as I said before, was the sport of strong passions; from that instance of rebellion he took a kind of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marred my future years. I say dissipation, comparative with the strictness and sobriety of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will o' the Wisp meteors of thoughtlessness whom were absent the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue never failed to point me out the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was never to have an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two doorways by which I could enter the fields of Fortune were the most niggardly poverty or the little chancing art of bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could make myself into it; the last—I always hated the contamination of its threshold! Thus abandoned of view or aim in life, with a strong appetite for society (as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark) and a constitutional hypochondriac faint which made me fly solitude; add to all these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought something like the rudiments of good sense, made me generally a welcome guest. So 'tis no wonder that always, where two or three were met together, there was I in the midst of them. But the further all the other impulses of my heart was puissant à l'admirable mérite de gravé humain. My heart was completely tinned, and was eternally lighted up by some godness or other; and, like every warfarer in this world, I was sometimes crowned with success and sometimes mortified with defeat. At the plough, scythe, or reaper's I feared no competitor, and set want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for any labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on an amours without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity in these matters which recommended me as a proper second in duels of that kind; and, I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret...
of half the amours in the parish as ever did premier at knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe.

The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the amours of my companions, the humble inmates of the farmhouse and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, despise these things by the name of Follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty, are matters of the most serious nature; to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell are the greatest and most delicious part of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made very considerable alterations on my mind and manners, was, I spent my seventeenth summer a good distance from home, at a noted school on a snuggling coast, to learn measurement, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The habitual task was at this time very successful; scenes of swaggering riot and roving dissipation were as yet new to me, and I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to look unconcernedly on a large tavern-bill, and mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high head in my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming fillee, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off in a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I struggled on with my stea and ovals for a few days more; but, stepping out to the garden one charming moon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel.

Like Prosperine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairy flower.

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but crape the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet with her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had slept been a mortal sin, I was innocent. I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen mankind in a new phasis, and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. I met with a collection of Fortnum and Mason's or the little 3.

The first is a book too quick for us. It mistled the compass of an abandoned appetite for variety (as from a winner) and a confidential which made no inferences to social knowledge, a strength of remembrance of good guests. So where two or three in the midst of wagers other impasses and unconvincing completely tinsel and some godforsaken fare in this with success entered. At the end, no comment as I never cleared the way while I was in the way. seldom carries me no dexterity in the subject and, I dare say, I have missed in the secret

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1 At Kirkoswald, in Carrick, on the road from Fortpatrick to Kilkman, Burns seems to have been sent to Kirkoswald school in consequence of his mother's connection with the place, for she was the daughter of Gilbert Brown, tenant of Turlugdon, within the bounds of the parish. During his attendance at the school he lived with his maternal uncle, Samuel Brown, at Baldershaw, a little more than a mile from Kirkoswald, walking every morning to the little seminary and returning at night. See note to Lochery's Life of Burns, p. 24, where is given an engraving of Kirkoswald. The village is represented as it appears from a point near the southwest extremity of the churchyard. On the left of the picture is the old ruined church, said to occupy the site of one built by Oswald, a Northumbrian king of the Heptarchies, in gratitude for a victory which he achieved near the spot, and which, taking its name from him, gave to the village and parish. A small chamber in the east end of the building was used as a parish school till a period briefly antecedent to Burns's residence here, when, the building becoming ruinous, a new church was erected on a neighbouring height, and the teacher, Hugh Dodger, transferred his seat of empire to an apartment in one of the houses of the village. The place of worship then built is seen at the extremity of the street on the right side of the picture. The room called at the same time into use as a school, was the floor or lower chamber of the house ranking third in the row, seen over the churchyard wall, being the main street of the village, and that along which the roads pass. From behind this house, as from behind each of its neighbours in the same row, a small strip of balustrade (Lugnoss, kitchen-garden) extends about fifty yards along the rapidly ascending slope towards the ridge on which the new church is situated. When Burns went into the particular path behind the school, to take the sun's altitude, he walked at the time, though more exposed in the border of cutting clover for the family dinner than inimitating the flower-gathering Prosperine, or her prototype Eve. Peggy became, by marriage, Mrs. Neilson, and was the heroine of the song beginning,

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather.
tion of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the compo-
sition of several of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this opinion so far, that though I had not three fortieths' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad ploughing son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same tenor till my twenty-third year. The Two Hours, or life of the Depressed, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure: Sterne and MacKenzie—Tristram Shandy and The Man of Feeling—were my bosom favourites. Poetry was still a

daring walk for my mind; but it was only to the

humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed it as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once they were lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then coming over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet. None of the rhymes of these days are in print, except "Winter, a Thaw (the oldest of my printed pieces), the "Death and Dying Words of Poor Maille," "John Barleycorn," and songs first, second, and third. Song

second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the aforementioned school business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring country town [Irvine] to learn his trade and carry on the business of manufacturing and retailing flax. This turned out a sadly unlucky affair. My partner was a second-hand of the first water, who made money by the mystery of thieving, and to finish the whole, we were giving a welcome circus to the new year, our shop, by the drunken carelessness of my partner's wife, took fire, and burnt to ashes; and I was left like a true poet,—not worth sixpence. I was obliged to give up business; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; the darkest of which was—he was visibly far gone in a consumption. To crown all, a belle, fille seule, I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the fields of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file was my hypochondriac complaint being irritated to such a degree that for three months I was in a diseased state of

body and mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their misspent—"Depart from me, ye accursed!"

From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn was—I formed a bosom friendship with a young fellow, the first created being I had ever seen, but a hopeless son of misfortune. He was the son of a plain mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying and leaving my friend unprovided for just as he was ready to launch forth into the world, the poor fellow, in despair, went to sea; where, after a variety of good and bad fortune, he was, a little before I was acquainted with him, set ashore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding that he is at this moment captain of a large West-

Indianman belonging to the Thames.

This gentleman's mind was fraught with courage, independence, and magnanimity, and every noble, manly virtue. I loved him; I admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and I strove to imitate him. In some measure succeeded; I had the pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself when woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of a certain fashionable falling with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief; and the consequence was that, soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the enclosed "Welcome." 4

My reading was only increased by two stray volumes of Pamela and one of Fodeland Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Ferguson's Scottish Poems, I began anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the capricious

bribe of that grew in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to scarce a little money in the family amongst us, with which (to keep us together) my brother and I took [Mossie] a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but, in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

1 This refers to the song printed in the Edinburgh edition of the poems. "It was upon a Lassau night," "Now westen winds and slaughter's guns," and "Behind ye hills where Lassau o'Blunder flows," are the pieces alluded to.

2 That is best, most excellent; a favourite form of expression with Burns.

3 Richard Brown, the individual here alluded to, when the contents of this letter were related to him remarked: "When I first knew Burns he had nothing to learn in that respect."

4 The poet's "Welcome to his Illegitimate Child."
I entered on this farm with a full resolution, "Come go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of "the devil, the world, and the flesh," I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately having bad seed, the second, from the late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overcast all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetical offsprings that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them 

\textit{doctores persona} in my "Holy Fair." 

I had an idea myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of these things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain side of both clergy and laity it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the Kirk-session so much that they held three several meetings to look over their holy artillery, if any of it was pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my idle wanderings led me, on another side, point-blank within reach of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story alluded to in my printed poem the "Lament." This was a shocking affair, which I cannot yet bear to recollect, and it had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; and as truth was only nominally mine (for stock I had none to embark in it), and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. Before leaving my native country, however, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicate idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even tho' it should never reach my ears—a poor negro driver; or perhaps the world of spirits, a victim to that. ... a table climb. I truly say, that 

\textit{puerco inocan} as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment. It was ever my opinion that the great unhappily mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance or mistaken notions of themselves. To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground

I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously nature's design, where she seemed to have intended the various lights and shades in my character. I was pretty sure my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would dashen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West-Indian scenes would make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; besides pocketing (all expenses deducted) near twenty pounds. This last came very seasonably, as I was about to indent myself for want of money to pay my freight. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of waiting me to the torrid zone, I besought a passage in the very first ship that was to sail, for

\textit{Hungry rain had me in the wind.}

I had for some time been thinking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised ungrateful people had un- coupled the merciless legal pack at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed a song, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," which was to be the last effort of my muse in Scotland, when I should next see Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by raising my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a class of critics, for whose applause I had not even dared to hope. His idea, that I would meet with the every encouragement for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for Edinburgh, without a single acquaintance in town, or a single letter of recommendation in my pocket. The beneficent star which had so long presided in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir; the providential care of a good God placed me under the protection of one of his noblest creatures, the Earl of Glencairn.

\textit{Oubiz noit, Grand Dieu, si j'aurais je folie!}

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention "to catch the manners living as they rise."

You can now, sir, form a pretty near guess of what sort of a wight he is whom for some time you have honoured with your correspondence. That whim and fancy, keen sensibility and violent passions, may still make him zigzag in his future path of life is very probable; but, come what will, I shall answer for him—the most determinate integrity and honour; and though his evil star should again blaze in his meridian with tenfold more direful influence, he may reluctantly tax friendship with pity, but no more.

My most respectful compliments to Miss...
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

Williams. The very elegant and friendly letter she honoured me with a few days ago I cannot answer at present, as my presence is required at Edinburgh for a week or so, and I set off tomorrow.

I inclose you "Holy Willie" for the sake of giving you a little further information of the affair than Mr. Creech could do. An Elegy I composed the other day on Sir James H. Blair, if time allow, I will transcribe. The merit is just mediocre.

If you will oblige me so highly and do me so much honour as now and then to drop me a line, plesedirect to me at Manchilne, Ayrshire. With the most grateful respect, I have the honour to be, sir, your very humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

Manchilne, 24 August, 1787.

Edinburgh, 23d September.

Sir.—The foregoing letter was unluckily forgot among other papers at Glasgow on my way to Edinburgh. Soon after I came to Edinburgh I went on a tour through the Highlands, and did not recover the letter till my return to town, which was the other day. My ideas, picked up in my pilgrimage, and some rhymes of my earlier years, I shall soon be at leisure to give you at large—so soon as I hear from you whether you are in London. I am again, sir, yours most gratefully,

R. BURNS.

[Concerning this famous composition, Dr. Currie says: "There are various copies of this letter in the author's handwriting; and one of these, evidently corrected, is in the book in which he copied several of his letters." The text given above is that of the letter as it was actually sent to Dr. Moore, the letter in this its original form being first printed in Paterson's Edinburgh edition of Burns, edited by W. Scott Douglas. If, as Burns says in the above note of 23d Sept., the letter as it was written for Dr. Moore was left in Glasgow, he must have had a copy of it with him during his northern tour (Aug. 25 Sept., 1807), for we find Mr. Walker writing to Burns from Athole House, Sept. 13, "The Duchess would give any consideration for another sight of your letter to Dr. Moore." It seems somewhat strange that Burns should pen the above note after exhibiting the letter, or a copy of it, throughout the country.]

BURNS'S EARLY LIFE.

BY HIS BROTHER GILBERT.

Originally addressed in the form of a letter to Mrs. Dunlop.

"I have often heard my father despatch the anguish of mind he felt when he parted with his eldest brother, Robert, on the top of a hill, on the confines of their native place, each going off his several way in search of new adventures, and scaredly knowing whither he went. My father undertook to act as a gardener and shaped his course to Edinburgh, where he worked hard when he could get work, passing through a variety of difficulties. Still, however, he endeavored to spare something for the support of an aged parent, and I recollect hearing him mention his having sent a bank-note for this purpose, when of that kind was so scarce in Kincardineshire that they hardly knew how to employ it when it arrived.

Passing from Edinburgh to Ayrshire, he lived for two years as gardener to the Laird of Fairlie in Dundermait parish, and then changed his service for that of Mr. Crawford of Doonholm in the parish of Alloway. At length, being desirous to settle in life, he took a perpetual lease of some acres of land from Dr. Campbell, physician in Ayr, with a view to cultivate it as a nursery and meal-garden (being at this time, and still continuing, in the service of Mr. Ferguson of Doonholm). With his own hands he built a house on part of this ground, and in December, 1757, married Agnes Brown, belonging to respectable connections near Maybole in Carrick. The first-fruit of the marriage was the subject of this memoir, born on 25th January, 1759. The education of my brother and myself was in common, there being only twenty months between us in respect of age. Under Mr. John Murdoch [writer of the next following article in this Appendix] we learned to read English tolerably well, and to write a little. He taught us two the English grammar. I was too young to profit much from his lessons in grammar, but Robert made some proficiency in it, a circumstance of considerable weight in the unfolding of his genius and character; as he soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement; for even then he was a reader when he could get a book. Murdoch, whose library at that time had no great variety in it, lent him The Life of Henriest, which was the first book he read (the school-books excepted) and almost the only one he had an opportunity of reading while he was at school; for the Life of Walshe, which he classes with it in one of his letters, he did not see for some years afterwards, when he borrowed it from the blacksmith who shod our horses.

"At Whitsunday, 1799, we removed to Mount Oliphant, a farm of seventy acres (between eighty and ninety English statute measure), the rent of which was to be forty pounds annually for the first six years, and afterwards forty-five pounds. My father endeavoured to sell the leasehold property in Alloway, for the purpose of stocking this farm, but at that time he was unable, and
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Mr. Ferguson lent him a hundred pounds for that purpose. It was, I think, not above two years after this that Murdoch, our tutor and friend, left this part of the country; and, there being no school near us, and our little services being useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings, by candle-light; and in this way my two eldest sisters got all the education they received.

I remember a circumstance that happened at this time, which, though trifling in itself, is fresh in my memory, and may serve to illustrate the early character of my brother. Murdoch came to spend a night with us, and to take his leave when he was about to go into Carrick. He brought us, as a present and memorial of him, a small compendium of English grammar, and the tragedy of Titus Andronicus, and, by way of passing the evening, he began to read the play aloud. We were all attentive for some time, till presently the whole party was dissolved in tears. A female in the play (I have but a confused recollection of it) had her hands chopped off, her tongue cut out, and then was insinuatingly desired to call for water to wash her hands. At this, in an agony of distress, we with one voice desired he would read no more. My father observed, that if we would not hear it out, it would be needless to leave the play with us. Robert replied, that if it was left he would burn it. My father was going to chide him for this ungrateful return to his tutor’s kindness; but Murdoch interposed, declaring that he liked to see so much sensibility, and he left The School for Love, a comedy translated, I think, from the French, in its place.

"Nothing could be more reticent than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw anybody but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the greater part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farms in the capacity at the same time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the harvest of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm our virtuous habits. He borrowed Salmon’s Geographical Grammar for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of Derham’s Physico- Astronomical and Theological History of the Creation, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history. Robert read all these books with an avidity and an industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to Stackhouse’s History of the Bible, then lately published by James Monro in Kilmarnock: from this Robert collected a pretty competent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to shackle his industry, or so antithetical as to damp his researches. A brother of my mother, who had lived with us for some time, and who had learnt some arithmetic by our winter evening’s amusements, went into a bookseller’s shop in Ayr to purchase The Ready Reckoner, or Tract- man’s Save Guide, and a book to teach him to write letters. Luckily, in place of The Complete Letter-Writer, he got by mistake a small collection of letters by the most eminent writers, with a few sensible directions for attaining an easy epistolary style. This book was to Robert of the greatest consequence. It inspired him with a strong desire to excel in letter-writing while it furnished him with models by some of the first writers in our language.

"My brother was about thirteen or fourteen, when my father, regretting that we wrote so ill, sent us, week about, during a summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple, which, though between two and three miles distant, was the nearest to us, that we might have an opportunity of remedying this defect. About this time a bookish acquaintance of my father’s procured us a reading of two volumes of Richardson’s Pamela, which was the first novel we read, and the only part of Richardson’s works my brother was acquainted with till towards the period of his commencing author. Till that time, too, he remained unacquainted with Fielding, with Smollett (two volumes of The History of Roderick Random, and a volume of The History of Puckle Pickle), with Hume, with Robertson, and almost all our authors of the later times. I recollect, indeed, my father borrowed a volume of English history from Mr. Hamilton of Bouchrie’s gardener. It treated of the reign of James I., and his unfortunate son Charles, but I do not know who the author; all that I remember of it is something of Charles’s conversation with his children. About this time [1772] Murdoch, our former teacher, after having been in different places in the country, and having taught a school some time in Dunfermline, came to be the established teacher of the English language in Ayr, a circumstance of considerable consequence to us. The remembrance of my father’s former friendship, and his attachment to my brother, made him do everything in his power for our improvement. He sent us Pope’s works, and some other poetry, the first that we had an opportunity of reading, excepting what is contained in The English Collection, and in the volume of the Edinburgh Magazine for 1772; excepting also those ‘excellent new songs’ that are hawked about the
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country in baskets or exposed on stalls in the streets.

The summer after we had been at Dalrymple school, my father sent Robert to Ayr, to revise his English grammar with his former teacher. He had been there only one week when he was obliged to return to assist at the harvest. When the harvest was over he went back to school, where he remained two weeks; and this completes the account of his school education, excepting one summer quarter, sometime afterwards, that he attended the parish school of Kirkoswald (where he lived with a brother of my mother's), to learn surveying.

During the two last weeks that he was with Murdoch, he himself was engaged in learning French, and he communicated the instructions he received to my brother, who, when he returned, brought home with him a French dictionary and grammar, and the Advertences de Télemachus in the original. In a little while, by the assistance of these books, he had acquired such a knowledge of the language as to read and understand any French author in prose. This was considered as a sort of predication, and through the medium of Murdoch procured him the acquaintance of several lads in Ayr, who were at that time gallabling French, and the notice of some families, particularly that of Dr. Malcolm, where a knowledge of French was a recommendation.

Observing the facility with which he had acquired the French language, Mr. Robinson, the established writing-master in Ayr, and Mr. Murdoch's particular friend, having himself acquired a considerable knowledge of the Latin language by his own industry, without ever having learnt it at school, advised Robert to make the same attempt, promising him every assistance in his power. Agreeably to this advice, he purchased The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue, but finding this study dry and uninteresting, it was quickly laid aside. He frequently returned to his Rudiments on any little chapin or his appointment, particularly in his love affairs; but the Latin seldom predominated more than a day or two at a time, or a week at most. Observing himself the ridicule that would attach to this sort of conduct if it were known, he made two or three humorous stanzas on the subject, which I cannot now recollect, but they all ended,

So till to my Latin again.

"Thus you see Mr. Murdoch was a principal means of my brother's improvement. Worthy man! though foreign to my present purpose, I cannot take leave of him without tracing his future history. He continued for some years a respected and useful teacher at Ayr, till one evening that he had been overtaken in liquor, he happened to speak somewhat disrespectfully of Dr. Dalrymple, the parish minister, who had not paid him that attention to which he thought himself entitled. In Ayr he might as well have spoken blasphemy. He found 't proper to give up his appointment. He went to London, where he still lives, a private teacher of French. He has been a considerable time married, and keeps a shop of stationery wares."

"The father of Dr. Paterson, now physician at Ayr, was, I believe, a native of Ayrshire, and was one of the established teachers in Ayr when my father settled in the neighbourhood. He early recognized my father as a fellow-native of the north of Scotland, and a certain degree of intimacy subsisted between them during Mr. Paterson's life. After his death his widow, who is a very gentlewoman and of great worth, delighted in doing what she thought her husband would have wished to have done, and assiduously kept up her attentions to all his acquaintance. She kept alive the intimacy with our family by frequently inviting my father and mother to her house on Sundays, when they met them at church.

"When she came to know my brother's passion for books, she kindly offered us the use of her husband's library, and from her we got the Speculator, Pope's translation of Homer, and several other books that were of use to us. Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr, is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise in the value of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let a few years ago five pounds per annum lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and disease. To the buffeting of misfortune, we could only oppose hard labour, and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was scarce enough in the house; and while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female.

"The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, since these straits and difficulties, was very great. In that of my father growing old (for he was now above fifty), broken down with the enormous fatigues of his life, with a wife and several children, and in a declining state of circumstances—these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest and most irksome regret."

Mr. Murdoch died in London in 1824; see note 2, p. 15 of this volume.
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... deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed in the night-time.

"By a stipulation in my father's lease he had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every six years. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years, but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. He then took the farm of Lochlea, of a hundred and thirty acres, at the rent of twenty shillings an acre, in the parish of Tarbolton, of Mr. ---, then a merchant in Ayre, and now (1707) a merchant in Liverpool. He removed to this farm at Whitleybank, 1777, and possessed it only seven years. No writing had ever been made out of the conditions of the lease; a misunderstanding took place respecting them; the subjects in dispute were submitted to arbitration, and the decision involved my father's affairs in ruin. He lived to know of this decision, but not to see any execution in consequence of it. He died on the 13th of February, 1781.

"The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the nineteenth to the twenty-sixth of my brother's age), were not marked by much literary improvement; but during this time the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became too prominent, and which neither hard work nor easy situation have taken delight to enlarge on. Though when young he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fine enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often so nearly as to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he 'fainted, sunk, and died away,' but the agitation of his mind and body exceeded anything of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great disparity between his fair captivator and her attributes. One generally reign'd paramount in his affections, but as various affection flowed out toward Madame de L--- at the remise door, while the eternal vows of Zilia were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many under-plots in the drama of his love. As those connections were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty (from which he never deviated till he reached his twenty-third year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be soon the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he had no probability of being master of for a great while. He began, therefore, to think of trying some other line of life. He and I had for several years taken hand of my father for the purpose of raising flax on our own account. In the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his general view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax-raising. He accordingly wrote at the business of a flax-dresser in Irvine for six months, but abandoned it at that period, as neither agreeing with his health nor inclination. In Irvine he had contracted some acquaintance of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overlooking the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him. Towards the end of the period under review (in his twenty-sixth year), and soon after his father's death, he was furnished with the subject of his 'Epistle to John Rawnike.' During this period also he became a freemason, which was his first introduction to the life of a boon companion. Yet, notwithstanding those circumstances, and the praise he has bestowed on Scotch drink (which seems to have misled his historians), I do not recollect, during those seven years, nor till towards the end of his commenced author (when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company), to have ever seen him intoxicated; nor was he at all given to drinking. A stronger proof of the general sobriety of his conduct need not be required than what I am about to give. During the whole of the time we lived in the farm of Lochlea with my father, he allowed my brother and me such wages for our labour as he gave to other labourers, as a part of which, every article of our clothing, manufactured in the family, was regularly accounted for. When my father's affairs grew near a crisis, Robert and I took the farm of Mossglie, consisting of a hundred and eighteen acres, at the rent of ninety pounds per annum (the farm on which I live at present), from Mr. Gavin Hamilton, as an asylum for the family in case of the worst. It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was seven
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BURNS AND HIS FATHER’S HOUSE-HOLD.

BY JOHN MURDOCH.*

Originally communicated in a letter to Mr. Joseph Cooper, Writer of Edinburgh.

"Sir, — I was lately favoured with a letter from our worthy friend the Rev. Wm. Adair, in which he requested me to communicate to you whatever particulars I could recollect concerning Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet. My business being at present multifarious and harassing, my attention is consequently so much divided, and I am so little in the habit of expressing my thoughts on paper, that at this distance of time I can give but a very imperfect sketch of the early part of the life of that extraordinary genius, with which above I am acquainted.”

* Mr. Murdoch’s letter to Mr. Cooper was written in London, and dated 6th November, 1785. He had previously been engaged in the affair of the proposed Life of Burns; and in the same letter explains his motive for doing so.
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see by Provost Ferguson of Doonholm, in the parish of Alloway, which is now united with that of Ayr. In this parish, on the roadside, a Scotch mill and a half from the town of Ayr, and half a mile from the bridge of Doon, William Burns took a piece of land, consisting of about seven acres, part of which he laid out in garden ground, and part of which he kept to graze a cow, &c., still continuing in the employ of Provost Ferguson. Upon this little farm was erected an humble dwelling, of which William Burns was the architect. It was, with the exception of a little straw, literally a tabernacle of clay. In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. The Cotter's Saturday Night will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there.

In 1765, about the middle of March, Mr. Wm. Burns came to Ayr, and sent to the school where I was improving in writing, under my good friend Mr. Robinson, desiring that I would come and speak to him at a certain inn, and bring my writing-book with me. This was immediately complied with. Having examined my writing he was pleased with it—(you will readily allow he was not difficult)—and told me that he had received very satisfactory information of Mr. Tennant, the master of the English school, concerning my improvement in English, and in his method of teaching. In the month of May following I was engaged by Mr. Burns and four of his neighbours to teach, and accordingly began to teach the little school at Alloway, which was situated a few yards from the argilaceous fabric above mentioned. My five employers undertook to board me by turns, and to make up a certain salary at the end of the year; provided my quarterly payments from the different pupils did not amount to that sum.

My pupil Robert Burns was then between six or seven years of age, his preceptor about eighteen. Robert, and his younger brother Gilbert, had been grounded a little in English before they were put under my care. They both made a rapid progress in reading and a tolerable progress in writing. In reading, dividing words into syllables by rule, spelling without book, paring sentences, &c., Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were the Spelling Book, the New Testament, the Bible, Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse, and Fisher's English Grammar. They committed to memory the hymns and other poems of that collection with uncommon facility. This facility was partly owing to the method pursued by their father and me in instructing them, which was to make them thoroughly acquainted with the meaning of every word in each sentence that was to be committed to memory. By the by, this may be easier done and at an earlier period than is generally thought. As soon as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order, sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply the ellipses. You know, the means of knowing that the pupil understands his author. These are excellent helps to the arrangement of words in sentences, as well as to a variety of expression.

Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination and to be more of the wit than Robert. I attempted to teach him a little church music; here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear in particular was dull, and his voice unattractive. I had been long before I could get them to distinguish one time from another. Robert's countenance was grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, "Mirth, with thee I mean to live;" and certainly if any person who knew the boys had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the muses, he would surely never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind.

In the year 1766 Mr. Burns quitted his humble edifice, and took possession of a farm (Mount Oliphant) of his own improving, while in the service of Provost Ferguson. This farm being at a considerable distance from the school, the boys could not attend regularly; and some changes taking place among the other supporters of the school, I left it, having continued to conduct it for nearly two years and a half.

In the year 1772 I was appointed (being one of five candidates who were examined) to teach the English school at Ayr; and in 1773 Robert Burns came to board and lodge with me, for the purpose of revising the English grammar, &c., that he might be better qualified to instruct his brothers and sisters at home. He was now with me day and night, in school, at all meals, and in all walks. At the end of one week I told him that, as he was now pretty much master of the parts of speech, &c., I should like to teach him something of French pronunciation; that when he should meet with the name of a French town, ship, officer, or the like, in the newspapers, he might be able to pronounce it something like a French word. Robert was glad to hear this proposal, and immediately we attacked the French with great courage. Now there was little else to be heard but the declension of nouns, the conjugation of verbs, &c. When walking together, and even at meals, I was constantly telling him the names of different objects, as they presented themselves, in French, so that he was hourly
laying in a stock of words and sometimes little phrases. In short, he took such pleasure in learning and in teaching that it was difficult to say which of the two was most zealous in the business; and about the end of the second week of our study of the French, we began to read a little of the "Adventures of Telemaque", in Fowell's own words.

But now the plains of Mount Olympos began to white, and Robert was summoned to relinquish the pleasing scenes that surrounded the grove of Calypso, and, armed with a sickle, to seek glory by signaling himself in the fields of Ceres—and so he did; for although but about fifteen, I was told that he performed the work of a man.

Thus was I deprived of my very apt pupil, and consequently agreeable companion, at the end of three weeks, one of which was spent entirely in the study of English and the other two chiefly in that of French. I did not, however, lose sight of him, but was a frequent visitor at his father's house when I had half-holiday; and very often went accompanied with one or two persons more intelligent than myself, that good William Burns might enjoy a mental feast. Then the labouring man was shifted to some other hand. The father and the son sat down with us, when we enjoyed a conversation wherein solid reasoning, sensible remark, and a moderate seasoning of jocularity, were so nicely blended as to render it palatable to all parties. Robert had a hundred questions to ask me about the French, &c.; and the father, who had always rational information in view, had still some question to propose to my more learned friends, upon moral or natural philosophy, or some such interesting subject. Mrs. Burns, too, was of the party as much as possibly: but still the house affairs would draw her thence, which ever so she could with haste dispatch.

And particularly of her husband. At all times and in all companies she listened to him with a more marked attention than to anybody else. While under the necessity of being about while he was speaking, she seemed to regret as a real loss that she had missed what the good man had said. This worthy woman, Agnes Brown, had the most thorough esteem for her husband of any woman I ever knew. I can by no means wonder that she highly esteemed him; for I myself have always considered William Burns as far by far the best of the human race that ever I had the pleasure of being acquainted with—and many a worthy character I have known. I can cheerfully join with Robert in the last line of his epitaph (borrowed from Goldsmith): And even his failings beard to virtue's side.

"He was an excellent husband, if I may judge from his askinsious attention to the case and complex of his worthy partner, and from her affectionate behaviour to him, as well as her unremitting attention to the duties of a mother."

"He was a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue, not by driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are adverse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproach was severely felt and a stripe with the cane, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heart-felt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

"He had the art of gaining the esteem and good will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice: the one time it was with the foreman of the band for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time it was with an old man for using smutty immodesty in his presence. He was every one mouthed old man to receive a reasonable check in the way it would be to the advantage of the rising generation. As he was at no time overweening to inferiors, he was equally incapable of that passive, pitiful, pitiful spirit that induces some people to keep bowing and bowing in the presence of a great man. He always treated superiors with a becoming respect; but he never gave the smallest encouragement to aristocratical arrogance. But I must not pretend to give you a description of all the many qualities, the rational and Christian virtues of the venerable William Burns. Time would fail me. I shall only add that he carefully practised every known duty and avoided everything that was criminal, or, in the apostle's words, "Herein did he exercise himself in living a life void of offence towards God and towards men." O for a world of men of such dispositions! We should then have no wars. 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 those who are called heroic actions; then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of the monuments I see in Westminster Abbey.

"Although I cannot do justice to the character of this worthy man, yet you will perceive from these few particulars what kind of person had the principal hand in the education of our poet. He spoke the English language with more propriety (both with respect to diction and pronunciation) than any man I ever knew with no greater advantages. This had a very good effect on the boys, who began to talk and reason like men much sooner than their neighbours. I do not recollect any of their contemporaries at my little seminary who afterwards made any great figure as literary characters, except Dr. Tennant,

1 The above is the epitaph of Burns. 2 See Burns's Life of Burns, vol. ii. p. 325.
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BURNS, AS SKETCHED BY PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

These particulars were communicated in a letter to Dr. Currie.

"The first time I saw Robert Burns was on the 2nd of October, 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayrshire, together with our common friend Mr. John MacKenzie, surgeon in Manchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. I was enabled to mention the date particularly, by some verses which Burns wrote after he returned home, and in which the day of our meeting is recorded. My excellent and much lamented friend, the late Basil, Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Catrine the same day, and by the kindness and frankness of his manners left an impression on the mind of the poet which never was effaced. The verses I allude to are among the most imperfect of his pieces; but a few stanzas may perhaps be an object of curiosity to you, both on account of the character to which they relate, and of the light which they throw on the situation and feelings of the writer, before his name was known to the public."

1 I cannot positively say, at this distance of time, whether at the period of our first acquaintance, the Kilmarrock edition of his poems had been just published, or was yet in the press. I suspect that the latter was the case, as I have still in my possession copies in his own handwriting of some of his favourite performances; particularly of his verses 'On turning up a Mouse with his Plough,' 'On the Mountain Daisy,' and 'The Lament.' On my return to Edinburgh I showed the volume and mentioned what I knew of the author's history to several of my friends; and, among others, to Mr. Henry MacKenzie, who first recommended him to public notice in the 17th number of The Lounger.

2 "At this time Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation; but, however, without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or ganger in his own country.

3 His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent, strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened with apparent attention and deference on all subjects with regard to which he felt the want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give his mind in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance, and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or servility rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing perhaps was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language when he spoke in company; more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided more successfully than most Scotchmen the peculiarity of Scottish phraseology.

4 He came to Edinburgh early in the winter following, and remained there for several months. By whose advice he took this step I am unable to say. Perhaps it was suggested only by his own curiosity to see a little more of the world; but, I confess, I dreaded the consequences from the first, and always wished that his pursuits and habits should continue the same as in the former part of life; with the addition of what I considered as then completely within his reach, a good farm on moderate terms, in a part of the country agreeable to his taste.

5 The attentions he received during his stay in town, from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I perceived any unfavorable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country, nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance. His dress was perfectly suited to his station, plain and unperturbing, with a sufficient attention to neatness. If I recollect right he always wore boots,
The variety of his engagements while in Edinburgh prevented me from seeing him so often as I could have wished. In the course of the spring he called on me once or twice, at my request, early in the morning, and walked with me to Blackfriars, in the neighbourhood of the town; when he charmed me still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like him, the happiness and the worth which they contained.

In his political principles he was then a Jacobite, which was perhaps owing partly to this, that his father was originally from the estate of Lord Mareschal. Indeed, he did not appear to have thought much on such subjects, nor very consistently. He had a very strong sense of religion, and expressed deep regret at the levity with which he had heard it treated occasionally in some convivial meetings which he frequented. I speak of him as he was in the winter of 1786-7; for afterwards we met but seldom, and our conversations turned chiefly on his literary projects or his private affairs.

I do not recollect whether it appears or not from any of your letters to me, that you had ever seen Burns. If you have, it is superfluous for me to add, that the idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. Among the poets whom I have happened to know I have been struck, in more than one instance, with the unaccountable disparity between their general talents and the occasional inspirations of their more favoured moments. But all the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.

Among the subjects on which he was accustomed to dwell, the characters of the individuals with whom he happened to meet was plainly a favourite one. The remarks he made on them were always shrewd and pointed, though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant; but this, I suspect, proceeded rather from the caprice and humour of the moment, than from the effects of attachment in blinding his judgment. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding; but to my taste, not often pleasing or lovable. His attempts at epigram in his printed works are the only performances perhaps that he has produced totally unworthy of his genius.

In summer, 1787, I passed some weeks in Ayrshire, and saw Burns occasionally. I think that he made a pretty long excursion that season to the Highlands, and that he also visited what Burns calls the Arcadian ground of Scotland, upon the banks of the Teviot and the Tweed.

I should have mentioned before that, notwithstanding various reports I heard during the preceding winter of Burns's proclivities for convivial and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety from all of him that ever fell under my observation. He told me indeed himself that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him of any merit in his temperance. He was somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject.

In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a performance in Manchline, when Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short, unpretending compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived and expressly as well as fluently expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me that in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extemporary elocution.

I must not omit to mention what I have always considered as characterized in a high degree of true genius, the extreme facility and good-mature of his taste, in judging of the composition of others, where there was any real ground for praise. I repeated to him many passages of English poetry with which he was unacquainted, and have more than once witnessed the tears of admiration and rapture with which he heard them. The collection of songs by Dr. Aiken, which I first put into his hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his former efforts in that very difficult species of writing;
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This truth sublime, his simple air had taught
In youth, "tis almost all the shepherd knew.

With respect to Burns's early education I cannot say anything with certainty. He always spoke with respect and gratitude of the schoolmaster who had taught him to read English; and who, finding in his scholar a more than ordinary ardour for knowledge, had been at pains to instruct him in the grammatical principles of the language. He began the study of Latin, but dropped it before he had finished the verbs. I have sometimes heard him quote a few Latin words, such as omnin reusd amor, &c., but they seemed to be such as he had caught from conversation, and which he repeated by rote. I think he had a project, after he came to Edinburgh, of prosecuting the study under his intimate friend the late Mr. Niel, one of the masters of the grammar-school here; but I do not know that he ever proceeded so far as to make the attempt.

He certainly possessed a manifest power of French; and, if he had an affectation in anything, it was in introducing occasionally a word or phrase from that language. It is possible that his knowledge in this respect might be more extensive than I suppose it to be; but this you can learn from his more intimate acquaintance. It would be worth while to inquire whether he was able to read the French authors with such facility as to receive from them any improvement to his taste. For my own part I don't think it; nor would I believe it but on very strong and pointed evidence.

If my memory does not fail me he was well instructed in arithmetic, and knew something of practical geometry, particularly of surveying. All his other attainments were entirely his own.

The last time I saw him was during the winter, 1788-89, when he passed an evening with me at Drumloog, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where I was then living. My friend Mr. Alison was the only other person in company. I never saw him more agreeable or interesting. A present which Mr. Alison sent him afterwards of his Essays on Taste drew from Burns a letter of acknowledgement which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed of the general principles of the doctrine of association.

BURNS'S LAST YEARS.

LETTER FROM MR. JAMES GRAY TO GILBERT BURNS.

[Gilbert Burns, when preparing the 1820 edition of Currie's Burns, wrote to Mr. Gray for leave to

1 Mr. Gray was master of the High School of Dumfries in Burns's day. He was afterwards, for many a year, a teacher in the High School, Edinburgh, and latterly became a chaplain in the Hon. East India Company's service, and died at Cutch in 1839.]
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bring forward his letter to Peterkin, the most
important part of which is given in Leechart's
Life; that gentleman rather preferred to write his
statement anew in the following letter addressed
to Gilbert himself. The tone of the letter is,
however, pitched too high; and the portrait that
in his eyes of Burns at the period referred to
cannot in any way be reconciled with that which
we obtain from the general testimony of others
and from known facts. Gray is said to have been
a man who took amusing views of most people
he met, and of all who had any connection with
literature in particular; and it must be remem-
bered that he is writing, after an interval of over
twenty years, of a life he only knew imperfectly
for a little over twenty. It besides throws a doubt
on his sincerity to find Robert Chambers saying,
"A friend of Mr. Gray has assured me that he
used, in private, to speak of the irregularities of
the poet in much the same terms as other sur-
viving observers."]

"In the observations I am now to make I claim
no merit but purity and sincerity of purpose in
narrating events that I myself saw; and I am
happy to add that, from many symptoms, there
seems to be a great change of opinion on the
subject and a disposition to listen to the voice of
truth, however humble the individual by whom it
is raised. I shall consider the poet's character
as a companion, a father, a husband, a citizen,
and a man of genius: and it may be seen if from
his conduct in any one of these capacities, he
could possibly be the degraded being he has been
represented; constantly under the dominion of
the lowest and most basest appetites and passions
of our nature, an habitual drunkard, and a
thorough vicious man, for 'thither he has been
charged within; and, as my remarks apply to the
three or four years of his life, I shall not be
accused of having selected, in exaggeration, the
purest portion of it.

"It was my good fortune to be introduced to
him soon after I went to Dumfries. This was
early in 1791, and I saw him often and intimately
during the remainder of his life. I sometimes
met him in the scene of conviviality, and there,
if anywhere, I must have received conviction of
that intellectual and moral degradation of which
we have heard so much; but no such impression
was made on my mind. He seemed to me to
frequent convivial parties from the same feelings
with which he wrote poetry, because nature had
eminently qualified him to shine there, and he
never on any occasion indulged in solitary
drinking. He was always the living spirit of the
company, and, by the communications of his
genius, seemed to animate every one present
with a portion of his own fire. He indulged in
the sally of wit and humour, of striking original-
ity, and sometimes of bitter sarcasm, but always
free from the least taint of grossness. I was,
from the commencement of my acquaintance with him,
struck with his aversion to all kinds of indelicacy,
and have seen him dazed and delight a party for
hours together by the brilliancy and rapidity of
his flashes, without even an allusion that could
give offence to retail purity. I never saw him
intoxicated; and, indeed, I am convinced, that
though his company was conduced by men of all
ranks, and he was much in society of a convivial
nature, that he was very seldom in a state of
indolence.

"I often met him at breakfast parties, which
were then customary at Dumfries, and sometimes
enjoyed a morning walk with him; and on these
occasions, if he had been suffering from midnight
excesses, it must have been apparent. On the
contrary, his whole air was that of one who had
enjoyed refreshing slumbers, and who arose
happy in himself, and to diffuse happiness on all
around him; his complexion was fresh and clear,
his eye brilliant, his whole frame vigorous and
elastic, and his imagination ever on the wing. 2
His morning conversations were marked by an
impassionated eloquence that seemed to flow from
immediate inspiration, and shed an atmosphere of
light and beauty around everything it touched,
alternately melting and elevating the souls of all
who heard him. He had read much, and possessed
a most powerful memory, which never exhibited
any symptoms of decay which must have been
the consequence of habitual intoxication; so
far from it, he gleaned all that was valuable
from every book he perused, which he could
either quote in the words of the original or make
the ideas his own, and embody them in a more
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break into the line of poetic composition. The
man of genius and the poet, as Burns himself
was not that silent one, who could speak, is
evidently often the same. Burns had the
fortune of meeting many of those who are
possessed of a poetic faculty.

"He held, as a matter of fact, a high estate,
took part in a great number of educational
institutions, wrote, and for a time, to some
purpose, had an influence on the habits of the
people in the vicinity. He had a considerable
influence in the religious and social life of the
community.

"We must not forget, however, that Burns
would be remembered most for his poetry.
The poet's life was short, but his influence on
the development of Scottish poetry was great.
His work laid the foundation for the
development of the national literature of
Scotland.

1 Mr. Gray should rather have said too, as being much more
nearly correct.

2 In 1794, the year in which Gray became acquainted with
Burns, the latter writes to Mrs. Dunlop: 'I already begin to
feel the right fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast
over my frame.'
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break the dependence of owing anything to any man on earth. To the poor he was liberal beyond his limited means, and the cry of the unfortunate was never addressed to him in vain, and when he could not himself relieve their necessities, he was often known, by a pathetic recital of their misfortunes, to draw the tear and open the purse of those who were not famed either for tenderness of heart or charity; on such occasions it was impossible to resist his solicitations.

"He was a kind and an attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. Their education was the grand object of his life, and he did not, like most parents, think it sufficient to send them to public schools; he was their private instructor, and by the force of his own example he showed great pains in training their minds to habits of thought and reflection, and in keeping them pure from every form of vice. He considered a sacred duty, and never to his last illness relaxed in his diligence.

"With his eldest son, a boy of not more than nine years of age, he had read many of the favourite poets, and some of the best historians, of our language; and, what is more remarkable, gave him considerable aid in the study of Latin. This boy attended the grammar-school of Dumfries, and soon attracted my notice by the strength of his talent and the ardour of his ambition. Before he had been a year at school I thought it right to advance him a form; and he began to read Caesar, and gave me translations of that author of such beauty as, I confess, surprised me. On inquiry I found that his father made him turn over his dictionary till he was able to translate to him the passage in such a way that he could gather the author's meaning, and that it was to him he owed that polished and forcible English with which I was so greatly struck. I have mentioned this incident merely to show what minute attention he paid to this important branch of parental duty.

"Many institutions have been made against his character as a husband, but without the slightest proof, and I might pass from this charge with that neglect which it merits; but I am happy to say that I have in execution the direct evidence of Mrs. Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never names but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindlinesses to herself, not as the momentary overflows of the heart in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness that ended only with his life. I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies.

"To the very end of his existence all the powers of his mind were as vigorous as in the blossom of their spring; and it may be asked if the numerous songs written for Mr. Thomson's collection, which are his last compositions, and by many considered the glory of his genius, indicate any intellectual decay: yet it is strange how long prejudices will keep their ground in the face of evidence the clearest, and within the reach of every one. I saw him four days before he died, and though the hand of death was obviously upon him, he repeated to me a little poem he had composed the day before, full of energy and tenderness.
ing the tool of faction. It is a known fact that he rejected a sum equal to his whole annual income, for the support of those measures which he thought most for the interests of the country. He had a loftiness of sentiment that raised him above making his genius a hireling even in a good cause, and his hours were never stained by a single act of venality. Yet with all the nobility of his mind and the kindness and generosity of his nature, and the supremacy of his genius, his fate has been unusually hard. Though his chosen companions were not more remarkable for talent than for the respectability of their character and the purity of their lives, and many ladies of the most delicate and cultivated minds and elegant manners were numbered among his friends, who clung to him through good and through bad report, and still cherish an affectionate and enthusiastic regard for his memory, yet has he been accused of being addicted to low company. Qualified for the noblest employments, he was condemned to drudge in the lowest occupations—often in scenes where to avoid contamination was an effort of virtue. Though he possessed a candour which led him to vie all the actions of others on the brightest side, the fallest of his own have, in the estimate of his character, been passed over in silence or even blackened. His virtues have been denied, and when that could not be done, they have been extenuated. Accumulated misfortunes and the cruelty of mankind actually broke his heart and hurried him to a premature grave, which to him has been no sanctuary, for the voice of calumny has been heard even there; but prejudices will pass away, and posterity will do him justice. They will balance the various and often contradictory elements of his character, and decide with candour. They will be influenced by no personal or political caprices, but will drop a generous tear over his failings, which will appear but as a natural blemish in the light of those virtues which they will read in his works, and read right. Now, my dear sir, that I have finished the object of my letter, which was to give you such observations as I myself had an opportunity of making relative to the habits of the three last years of your brother's life, you will permit me to say that what I have written has not been with a view of wounding the feelings of any one; my sole purpose has been defence, not attack; yet I will confess that indignation has sometimes swelled in my bosom to hear the memory of the friend whom I loved, and the man of genius whom I admired, traduced and enominated by men who knew him not, and who had not the means of ascertaining the truth of their allegations; and I shall deem it the proudest work of my life if my feeble efforts shall be in the slightest degree instrumental in correcting erroneous opinions, which it can be the interest of none to keep alive,

though, to the shame of our country, they have been too long and too widely circulated.

BURNS AS AN EXCISE OFFICIAL.

LETTER FROM MR. FINDLATER, COLLECTOR OF EXCISE, GLASGOW.

"GLASGOW, 10th October, 1818,"

"Sir,—I entirely agree with you in opinion on the various accounts which have been given to the world of the life of Robert Burns, and can have no hesitation in expressing publicky my sentiments on his official conduct at least, and perhaps in other respects, as far as may appear necessary for the development of truth. Amongst his biographers, Dr. Currie of course takes the lead, and the severity of his strictures, or to borrow the words of the poet, his 'iron justice,' is much to be regretted, as 'his Life' has become a kind of textbook for succeeding commentators, who have, by the aid of their own fancies, amplified, exaggerated, and filled up the outlines he has sketched, and, in truth, left in such a state as to provoke an exercise of that description. "It is painful to trace all that has been written by Dr. Currie's successors, who seem to have considered the history of the poet as a thing like Ulysses's bow, on which much was at liberty to try his strength, and some, in order to outdo their competitors, have strained every nerve to throw all kinds of obloquy on his memory. His convivial habits, his wit and humour, his social talents, and independent spirit, have been perverted into constant and habitual drunkenness, impiety, neglect of his professional duty and of his family, etc., etc., in short, every human vice. He has been branded with cowardice, accused of attempting murder and even suicide, and all this without a shadow of proof, post post!"

"Is there nothing of tenderness due to the memory of so transcendent a genius, who has so often delighted even his fellow-countrymen and the friends of his song and the charm of his wit and humour? And is no regard to be had to the feelings of these near and dear relatives he has left behind, or are his ashes never to 'hope repose'? My indignation has unearly led me astray from the point to which I meant to have confined myself, and to which I will now recur, and briefly state what I have to say on the subject.

"My connection with Robert Burns commenced immediately after his admission into the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death. In all that time the superintendence of his behaviour

1 First published in Polkett's edition of Burns. Mr. Findlater was the poet's superior officer all the time he was in the excise, and his testimony as to this period of Burns's life is therefore of the highest authority. Mr. Findlater died at Glasgow on the 4th December, 1839, aged 82.
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as an officer of the revenue was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed I would not be an inattentive observer of the general conduct of a man and a poet so celebrated by
his contrymen. In the former capacity, so far from its being impossible for him to discharge the duties of his office with that regularity which is almost indispensable, as is palpably assumed by one of his biographers, and insinuated not very obscurely even by Dr. Currie, he was exemplary in his attention as an excise-officer, and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance; as a proof of which it may not be foreign to the subject to quote part of a letter from him to himself, in a case of only seeming inattention. "I know, sir, and regret deeply, that this business, with all its magnitude, or my character as an officer; but as I am really innocent in the affair, and as the gentleman is known to be an ill-disposed dealer, and particularly as this is the single instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impurity in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall in sacrifice to the dark uncourtesies of a snuggester."

This of itself affords more than a presumption of his attention to business, as it cannot be supposed that he would have written in such a style to me but from the impulse of a conscious rectitude in this department of his duty. Indeed, it was not till near the latter end of his days that there was any falling off in this respect, and this was only accounted for in the pressure of disease and accumulating infirmities. About this period I advised him to relinquish business altogether, which he complied with, but it distressed him a good deal, as he was thereby liable to suffer a diminution of salary; and he wrote to Commissioner Graham, in the hope that that gentleman's influence would get his full pay continued during his illness, which I have no doubt it would have done if he had recovered. In the meantime, Mr. Graham wrote him a letter, exhibiting a solid proof of his generosity and friendship, but alas! the poet was by this time too far gone towards that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns, and he could not acknowledge it.

5 Having stated Burns's unremitting attention to business, which certainly was not compatible with perpetual intoxication; it follows of course that this latter charge must fail to the ground; and I will farther avow that I never saw him, which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries, but in hours of business he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon, as the statement that he was perpetually under its stimulative or debilitating influence implies.

To attempt the refutation of the various other allegations with which his memory has been assailed, some of which are so absurd as hardly to merit any attention, does not fall in my way, though I hope they will be suitably taken notice of; but permit me to add that I have seen Burns in all his various phases—in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family; indeed, I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an excise officer; and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he is now charged. That when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate to a high degree. Upon the whole, it is much to be lamented that there has been so much breath unfounded assertion as has been displayed in Burns's history; the virulence, indeed, with which his memory has been treated is hardly to be paralleled in the annals of literature. Wishing every success to the laudable attempt of rescuing it from the indiscriminate abuse which has been heaped upon it,

"I remain, &c.,
A. PINDALIERI.

DR. CURRIE'S DESCRIPTION OF BURNS.
FROM HIS BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET.

Burns was nearly five feet ten inches in height and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, indicated extensive capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardent and intelligence. His face was well formed; and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. His mode of dressing, which was often slovenly, and a certain fulness and bend in his shoulders, characteristic of his original profession, disguised in some degree the natural symmetry and elegance of his form. The external appearance of Burns was most strikingly indicative of the character of his mind. On a first view his physiognomy had a certain air of coarseness, mingled, however, with an expression of deep penetration, and of calm thoughtfulness approaching to melancholy. There appeared in his first manner and address perfect ease and self-possession, but a stern and almost supercilious elevation, not indeed incompatible with openness and affability, which, however, bespoke a mind conscious of superior talents. Strange that supposed themselves approaching an Ayrshire
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

peasant, who could make rhymes, and to whom their notice was an honour, found themselves speedily overawed by the presence of a man who bore himself with dignity, and who possessed a singular power of correcting forwardness and of repelling intrusion. But though jealous of the respect due to himself, Burns never enforced it where he saw it was willingly paid; and, though inaccessible to the approaches of pride, he was open to every advance of kindness and of benevolence. His dark and haughty countenance easily relaxed into a look of good-will, of pity, or of tenderness; and as the various emotions succeeded each other in his mind, assumed with equal ease the expression of the laziest humour, of the most extravagant mirth, of the deepest melancholy, or of the most sublime emotion. The tones of his voice happily corresponded with the expression of his features, and with the feelings of his mind. When to these endowments are added a rapid and distinct apprehension, a most powerful understanding, and a happy command of language—of strength as well as brilliance of expression—we shall be able to account for the extraordinary attractions of his conversation, for the soiree which, in social parties, he seemed to exert on all around him. In the company of women this soiree was more especially apparent. Their presence charmed the bend of melancholy in his bosom, and awoke his happiest feelings; it excited the powers of his fancy as well as the tenderness of his heart; and, by restraining the vehemence and the exuberance of his language, at times gave to his manner the impress of taste, and even of elegance, which in the company of men they seldom possessed. This influence was doubtless reciprocal. A Scottish lady, accessioned to the best society [Jane, Duchess of Gordon], declared, with characteristic unaffected, that no man's conversation ever 'carried her so completely off her feet' as that of Burns; and an English lady [Mrs. Walter Riddell], familiarly acquainted with several of the most distinguished characters of the present times, assured the editor that, in the happiest of his social hours, there was a charm about Burns which she had never seen equalled. This charm arose not more from the power than the versatility of his genius. No language could be felt in the society of a man who passed at pleasure from grave to gay, from the ludicrous to the pathetic, from the simple to the sublime; who wished all his faculties with equal strength and ease, and never failed to impress the offspring of his fancy with the stamp of his understanding.

"This, indeed, is to represent Burns in his happiest phase. In large and mixed parties he was often silent and dark, sometimes fierce and overbearing; he was jealous of the proud man's scorn, jealous to an extreme of the insolence of wealth, and prone to avenge, even on its innocent possession, the partiality of fortune. By nature kind, brave, sincere, and in a singular degree compassionate, he was, on the other hand, proud, irascible, and vindictive. His virtues and his failings had their origin in the extraordinary sensibility of his mind, and equally partook of the chills and glows of sentiment. His friendships were liable to interruption from jealousy or disgust, and his enmities died away under the influence of pity or self-acquiescence. His understanding was equal to the other powers of his mind, and his deliberate opinions were singularly timid and just; but, like other men of great and irregular genius, the opinions which he delivered in conversation were often the offspring of temporary feelings, and widely different from the calm decisions of his judgment. This was not merely true respecting the characters of others, but in regard to some of the most important points of human speculation.

"On no subject did he give a more striking proof of the strength of his understanding than in the correct estimate he formed of himself. He knew his own failings; he predicted their consequence; the melancholy foreboding was never long absent from his mind; yet his passions carried him down the stream of error, and swept him over the precipice he saw directly in his course. The fatal defect in his character lay in the comparative weakness of his volition. . . The occupations of a poet are not calculated to strengthen the governing powers of the mind, or to weaken that sensibility which requires perpetual control, since it gives birth to the vehemence of passion as well as to the higher powers of imagination. Unfortunately, the favourite occupations of genius are calculated to increase all its peculiarities; to nourish that lofty pride which disclaims the littleness of prudence and the restrictions of order; and by indulgence to increase that sensibility, which, in the present form of our existence, is scarcely compatible with peace or happiness, even when accompanied with the choicest gifts of fortune."

ESTIMATE OF BURNS'S CHARACTER,
BY MARIA RIDDELL.

First published in the Dumfries Journal,
7th August, 1806.

"The attention of the public is much occupied at present with the irreparable loss it has recently sustained in the death of the Caledonian poet Robert Burns. It is not probable that this mournful event, which is likely to be felt severely in the literary world, as well as in the circle of private friendship which surrounded him, shall fail to be attended with the usual profession of posthumous anecdotes and memoirs that commonly spring up at the death of every rare and
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS

I shall not attempt to balance the opportunity to unity and art in the life of Burns, in order to fit the peculiarities of his character; the only nonsense that I think is to be found in the life of Burns is that of his contemporaries, which is quite sufficient to show the absurdities of his life. The only thing that is necessary to be considered is, that the life of Burns has been so exactly the same as that of his contemporaries, that it is not possible to believe that he was anything else than what he was.
or inactive and his genius was extinguished only with the last sparks of retiring life; but the vivacity of his wishes and temper was checked by constant disappointments which sat heavy on a heart that acknowledged the ruling passion of independence, without having ever been placed beyond the grasp of penury.

Burns possessed none of that negative insipidity of character whose love might be regarded with indifference, or whose resentment could be considered with contempt; so his passions rendered him—according as they disclosed themselves in affection or antipathy—the object of enthusiastic attachment or of decided enmity. In this respect the temper of his companions seemed to take the tinture from his own; for he acknowledged in the universe but two classes of objects—those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrollable. It has, indeed, been frequently asserted of him, that, unsusceptible of indifference and often hating where he ought to have despised, he alternately opened his heart and poured forth the treasures of his understanding to some who were incapable of appreciating the homage, and elevated to the privilege of adversaries those who were unequalled in all respects for the honour of a contest so distinguished.

It is said that the celebrated Dr. Johnson professed to 'love a good letter;' a temperament that singularly adapted him to cherish a prepossession in favour of our bard, who perhaps fell but little short of the surly doctor in this qualification, so long as his ill-will continued; but the fervour of his passions was fortunately corrected by their versatility. He was seldom, never indeed, implacable in his resentments, and sometimes (it has been alleged) not invariably steady in his engagements of friendship. Much indeed has been said of his inconsistency and caprice; but I am inclined to believe they originated less in a levity of sentiment, than from an extreme impatience of feeling which rendered him prompt to take umbrage; and his sensations of pain, where he fancied he had discovered the traces of unkindness, scorn, or neglect, took their measure of asperity from the overflows of the opposite sentiment which preceded them, and which seldom failed to regain its ascendancy in his bosom on the return of calmer reflection. He was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors, and his error was a reparation. His native féroé never forsaking him for a moment, the value of a frank acknowledgment was enhanced tenfold towards a generous mind, from its never being attended with servility. His mind, organized only for the stronger and more acute operations of the passions, was impracticable to the efforts of supererogations that would have depressed it into humility, and equally superior to the encroachments of venal suggestions that might have led him into the mazes of hypocrisy.

It has been observed that he was far from averse to the incense of flattery, and could receive it tempered with less delicacy than might have been expected, as he seldom transgressed extravagantly in that way himself; where he paid a compliment it might indeed claim the power of intoxication, as approbation from him was always an honest tribute from the warmest and sincerest of his heart. It has been sometimes represented by those who, it would seem, had a view to depreciate, though they could not hope wholly to obscure, that native brilliancy which this extraordinary man had invariably bestowed on everything that came from his lips or pen, that the history of the Ayrshire ploughboy was an ingenious fiction, fabricated for the purposes of obtaining the interests of the great, and enhancing the merits of what in reality required no fell. But had his compositions fallen from a hand more digested in the ranks of society than that of a peasant, they had perhaps bestowed as usual a grace there, as even in the humbler shade of rustic inspiration from whence they really sprung.

That Burns had received no classical education, and was acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors only through the medium of translations, is a fact that can be indisputably proven. I have seldom seen him at a loss in conversation, unless where the dead languages and their writers were the subjects of discussion. When I have pressed him to tell me why he never took pains to acquire the Latin in particular (a language which his happy memory had so soon enabled him to master of), he used only to reply, with a smile, that he already knew all the Latin he desired to learn, and that was omnia vincit amor; a phrase that, from his writings and most favourite pursuits, it should undoubtedly seem he was most thoroughly versed in; but I really believe his classical erudition extended little, if any, further.

The penchant uniformly acknowledged by Burns for the festive pleasures of the table, and towards the fairer and softer objects of Nature's creation, has been the rallying-point where the attacks of his censors, both religious and moral, have been directed; and to those, it must be confessed, he showed himself no stoic. His poetical pieces blend, with alternate happiness of description, the frolic spirit of the joy-inspiring bowl, or melt the heart to the tender and impassioned sentiments in which beauty always taught him to pour forth his own. But who would wish to reproach the failings he has consecrated with such lively touches of nature? And where is the rugged moralist who will persuade us so far to 'chill the genial current of the soul' as to regret that Ovid ever celebrated his Corinna or that Anacreon sung beneath his vine?
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"I will not, however, undertake to be the apostle of the irregularities even of a man of genius, though I believe it is as certainly understood that genius never was free of irregularities, as that their absolute may in great measure be justly claimed, since it is evident that the world must have continued very stationary in its intellectual requirements had it never given birth to any but men of plain sense. Evenness of conduct and a due regard to the decorums of the world have been so rarely seen to move hand in hand with genius, that some have gone so far as to say (though there I cannot wholly acquiesce) that they are even incompatible; but, so it remembered, the frailties that cast their shade over the splendour of superior merit are more conspicuously glaring than where they are the attendants of mere mediocrity. It is only on the gem we are disturbed to see the dust; the pebble may besoiled and we do not regard it. The eccentric intimations of genius too often yield the soul to the wild effervescence of desires, always unbounded, and sometimes equally dangerous to the republican of others as fatal to its own. Now wonder then if Virtue herself be sometimes lost in the blaze of kindling animation, or that the calm admonitions of reason are not found sufficient to fetter an imagination which sears the narrow limits and restrictions that would chain it to the level of ordinary minds. Burns, the child of nature and sensibility, unbroke to the refrigerating precepts of philosophy, makes his own artless apology in terms more forcible than all the argumentative validations in the world could do. This appears in one of his poems, where he delineates, with his usual simplicity, the progress of his mind, and its gradual expansion to the lessons of the tutelary Muse:

I saw thy pulse modulating play
Wild send these Pleasure’s device... way;
Misted by Fancy’s mazy ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven!

"I have already transgressed far beyond the bonds I had proposed to myself on first committing to paper this sketch, which comprehends what I at least have been led to deem the leading features of Burns’s mind and character. A critique, either literary or moral, I cannot aim at; mine is wholly fulfilled if in these paragraphs I have been able to delineate any of those strong traits that distinguished him, of those talents which raised him from the plough—where he passed the bleak morning of his life; weaving his rude wreaths of poesy with the wild field-flowers that sprang around his cottage—to that enviable eminence of literary fame, where Scotland shall long cherish his memory with delight and gratitude. Proudy she will remember that beneath her cold sky a genius was ripened without care or culture, that would have done honour to climes more favourable to the development of those luxuriances of fancy and colouring in which he so eminently excelled.

"From several paragraphs I have noticed in the public prints, even since the idea was formed of sending this humble effort in the same direction, I find private animosities have not yet subsided, and that envy has not yet extinguished all her shafts. I still trust, however, that honest fame will be permanently affixed to Burns’s character—a fame which the candid and impartial of his own countrymen, and his readers everywhere, will find he has merited. And wherever a kindred bosom is found that has been taught to glow with the fires that animated Burns, should a recollection of the impiadences that sufficed his brighter qualities interpose, let such an one remember the imperfection of all human excellence,—let him leave those inconsistencies which alternately exalted his nature into the clouds, and sunk it again into the earth, to the Tribunal which alone can investigate the labyrinths of the human heart.

No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode;
There they abide in trembling hope—repose—
The bosom of his Father and his God.

"M. R."

BIографIC NOTES ON THE FAMILY OF BURNS,
AND ON HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

At the time of Burns’s birth the children were as follows:—Robert, born at Mauchline, 3d Sept. 1786; Francis Wallace, born at Ellishand, 15th August, 1789; William Nicol, born at Dumfries, 9th April, 1791; James Glescairn, born 12th August, 1794. Another son, Maxwell, was born on the day of the poet’s funeral, 25th July, 1796. Robert received a good education at the academy of Dumfries; spent three sessions at the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow; and in 1804 obtained a situation in the stamp-office, Somerset House, London, where he remained till 1838, when he retired on a small annuity, and took up his residence at Dumfries. When twenty-two years of age he married Ann Sherwood, the only child of the marriage who came to maturity was Eliza, born in 1812, who married a surgeon in the East India Company’s service in 1834. Both in London and in Dumfries Robert was in the practice of teaching the classics and mathematics; he also wrote verses of a very mediocře quality. Like his father, he was the possessor of warm passions, and was deficient in "prudent, cautious self-control." He died 14th May, 1857, and was buried in the mausoleum at Dumfries.

FRANCIS WALLACE, a boy of uncommon vivacity, died 9th July, 1803, at the age of fourteen,
and was first buried in the small inclosure where the poet was originally interred, and finally laid in the mausoleum in 1815.

William Nicol sailed at the age of fifteen to the East Indies as a midshipman, and was appointed to a cadetship in 1811. He served for thirty-three years in the 7th Madras Infantry, retiring in 1845 with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, when he took up his residence at Cheltenham. In 1822 he married Catherine A. Crone, who died in 1841, leaving no issue. Being only five years of age at the time of his father's death, his recollections of him were necessarily slight. He remembered his taking him to school, and his walking about the room with him in his arms during night to soothe him in some childish illness. In August, 1844, he was present, along with his brothers Robert and James, his aunt, the poet's sister, Mrs. Begg, and various other relatives, at the great festival on the banks of the Doon, organized with the double object of doing honour to the memory of the poet, and of welcoming his sons back to the land which their father's genius had consecrated, after their long absence in the East. In 1859 he took part in the centenary celebration at Dumfries. He died at Cheltenham, 21st February, 1872, in his eighty-second year, and was buried in the mausoleum at Dumfries.

James Gledscairn was educated at Dumfries Academy and at Christ's Hospital, London. In 1811 he received a cadetship in the service of the East India Company, and sailed for Calcutta in June of that year, where he joined the 15th Bengal Native Infantry. In 1817, by which time he had attained the rank of lieutenant, he was appointed by the Marquis of Hastings, then Governor-General of India, to an important post in the commissioner's department. His first care after his promotion and consequent prosperity was to settle an allowance on his mother, which enabled her to resign the pension generously granted to her by Maule of Panmure. He married a Miss Sarah Robinson in 1818, who died in 1821, leaving three children, one of whom, Sarah, who was brought up by the poet's widow, reached maturity and was married in 1847 to Dr. Berkeley W. Hutchison, a native of Galway. In 1828, James, now Captain Burns, married Mary Beckett, with whom in 1831 he revisited his native country. In 1833, soon after his return to India, he was appointed by Lord Metcalfe judge and collector of Caedar. He held this post till 1839, when he retired from active service and returned to England, with the rank of major. His second wife died in 1844, leaving an only daughter, and soon after he took up his residence with his brother at Cheltenham. In 1856 he obtained the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel. His natural abilities and amiability of character made him a great favourite in society, where his musical accomplishments were highly appreciated. He died at Cheltenham, 18th Nov. 1865, from the effects of an accidental fall down a flight of stairs, and was buried in the mausoleum beside his illustrious father.

Maxwell, the child which was born on the day of his father's funeral, only survived till 25th April, 1799. His remains also lie in the mausoleum.

"The only dependence of Mrs. Burns after her husband's death was on an annuity of ten pounds, arising from a benefit society connected with the excise, the books and other movable property left to her, and the generosity of the public. A public subscription, which was immediately started, produced seven hundred pounds; and the works of the poet, as edited for behalf of the widow and family by Dr. Currie, soon brought nearly two thousand more. Mrs. Burns was thus enabled to support and educate her family in a manner creditable to the memory of her husband. She continued to reside in the house which had been occupied by her husband and herself; and

—never changed, nor wished to change, her place.

For many years after her sons had left her to pursue their fortunes in the world, she lived in a decent and respectable manner on an income which never amounted to more than £60 per annum, exclusive of house rent, which amounted to £8. At length, in 1817, at a festival held in Edinburgh to celebrate the birthday of the bard, Mr. Henry (afterwards Lord) Cockburn acting as president, it was proposed by Mr. Maule of Panmure (afterwards Lord Panmure) that some permanent addition should be made to the income of the poet's widow. The idea appeared to be favourably received, but the subscription did not till rapidly. Mr. Maule then said that the burden of the provision should fall upon himself, and immediately executed a bond entitling Mrs. Burns to an annuity of £50 as long as she lived. This act, together with the generosity of the same gentleman to Nathaniel Gow in his latter and evil days, must ever endure the name of Lord Panmure to all who feel warmly on the subjects of Scottish poetry and Scottish music.

"Mr. Maule's pension had not been enjoyed by the widow more than a year and a half when her youngest son James attained the rank of a captain with a situation in the commissariat, and, as stated above, was thus enabled to relieve her from the necessity of being beholden to a stranger's hand for any share of her support. She accordingly resigned the pension. During her subsequent years Mrs. Burns is said to have enjoyed an income of about two hundred a year, great part of which, as not needed by her, she dispensed in charities. Her whole conduct in widowhood was such as to secure universal esteem in the town where she resided. She died, March 26, 1841,
Bromham, 18th Nov.

I am informed by the best authority that Mrs. Burns, sister of Mr. Murray, was born on the 23d day of November, and survived till 25th December, in the manse.

Burns after her death, in the debt of ten pounds, was connected with the valuable property of the dwelling of the public; and her personal estate amounted to 100 pounds; and the property of the Burns, soon brought Mrs. Burns was created her family by the memory of her beloved husband in the house of her husband and

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APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

in the sixty-eighth year of her age, and was buried beside her illustrious husband in the mausoleum at Dumfries. The deceased was born at Manchline in February, 1767. Her father was an industrious merchant in good employment, who enjoyed the esteem of the county and others within the district, and reared the numerous family of children sons and daughters. The term of Mrs. Burns's widowhood extended to thirty-eight years, in itself rather an unusual circumstance—and in July, 1796, when the bereavement occurred, she was but little beyond the age at which the majority of females marry. But she had too much respect for the memory of her husband and regard for her children to think of changing her name, although she might have done so more than once with advantage; and was even careful to secure on house and window the name of Burns, as soon as she could afford it, the decent though modest mansion in which she died. And here, for more than thirty years, she was visited by thousands on thousands of strangers, from the peer down to itinerant sonneteers—a class of persons to whom she never refused an audience or dismissed unrewarded. Occasionally during the summer months she was a good deal annoyed; but she bore all in patience, and although naturally fond of quiet, seemed to consider her house as open to visitors, and, in mistress, in some degree, the property of the public. Hers was one of those well-balanced minds that cling instinctively to propriety and a medium in all things; and such as knew the deceased, earliest and latest, were conscious of any change in her demeanour and habits, excepting, perhaps, greater attention to dress and more refinement of manner, insensibly acquired by frequent intercourse with families of the first respectability. In her tastes she was frugal, simple, and pure; and delighted in music, pictures, and flowers. In spring and summer it was impossible to pass her windows without being struck with the beauty of the floral treasures they contained; and if extravagant in anything it was in the article of roots and plants of the finest sorts. Fond of the society of young people, she mingled as long as able in their innocent pleasures, and cheerfully filled for them the cup ' which cheers but not inebriates.' She was a clever woman, possessed great shrewdness, discriminated character admirably, and frequently made very pithy remarks.

When young she must have been a handsome comely woman, if not indeed a beauty, when the poet saw her for the first time on a bleach-green at Manchline, engaged like Peggy and Jenny at Hubbie's Howe. Her limbs were cast in the finest mould; and up to middle life her jet-black hair were clear and sparkling, her carriage easy, and her step light. She moved with great grace on the floor, and chantel her 'wood-notes wild' in a style but rarely equalled by unprofessional singers. Her voice was a brilliant treble, and in singing 'Coden,' 'I gau a waefu' gate yestreen,' and other songs, she rose without effort as high as the natural equivalent to A of the present scale. In ballad poetry her taste was good, and range of reading rather extensive. Her memory, too, was strong, and she could quote, when she chose, at considerable length, and with great aptitude. Of these powers the bard was so well aware that he read to her almost every piece he composed, and was not ashamed to own that he had profited by her judgment. In fact, none save relations, neighbours, and friends could form a proper estimate of the character of Mrs. Burns. In the presence of strangers she was shy and silent, and required to be drawn out, or, as some would say, shown off to advantage, by persons who possessed her confidence and knew her intimately. 3

Burns left two illegitimate children, Elizabeth, daughter of Elizabeth Paton, born in 1784, and brought up at Mosegild by Gilbert Burns and his mother; and Elizabeth, daughter of Anna Park, a niece of Mrs. Hyslop, hostess of the Globe Inn at Dumfries, born in 1791, and nursed and brought up by Mrs. Burns along with her own family. 4

For the benefit of these two girls a fund was provided, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Alderman Shaw of London, an Ayrshire gentleman. The sum of £100 was laid aside, one moiety payable to each on marriage or on attaining the age of twenty-one; and in the event of either of

1 The household effects of Mrs. Burns were sold by public auction on the 8th and 11th of April, and from the anxiety of the public to possess relics of this interesting household, brought unconscionably high sums. According to the Dumfries Courier, "the auctioneer commenced with small articles, and when he came to a broken copper coffee-pot, there were so many bidders that the price paid exceeded twenty-fold the intrinsic value. A tea-kettle of the same metal succeeded, and reached £12 sterling. Of the linen, a table-cloth, marked 1830, which, speaking commercially, may have been worth half-crown or five shillings, was knocked down at £2 7s. Many other articles commanded hands-one prices, and the older and plainer the furniture the better it sold. The may iron top of a shower-bath, which Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop sent to the poet when afflicted with rheumatism, was bought by a Carlisle gentleman for £1 8s.; and a low wooden kitchen chair, on which the late Mrs. Burns sat when nursing her children, was run up to £4 7s. The crystal and china were much coveted, and brought, in most cases, splendid prices. Even an old pair of scissors which would go far to buy a dozen new ones, and everything, towards the close, attracted notice, down to gray-beards, bottles, and a half-worn pair of scissors. The poet's eight-day clock, made by a Dumfries artist, attracted great attention, from the circumstance that it had frequently been wound up by his own hand. In a few seconds it was bid up to fifteen pounds or guineas, and was finally disposed of for £24."

2 In the present work a portrait is given of Mrs. Burns in advanced life, along with that of her grandchild, a son of Colonel James Glemnair Burns.

3 Abridged and slightly modified from an article in the Dumfries Courier, published immediately after her death, and no doubt written by the editor Mr. M'Donnald.

4 See note to song, "Yestreen I had a pint o' wine."
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

then dying under these periods, the moiety due to her was to go to the survivor. The daughter of Elizabeth Paton married John Bishop, manager at Polkemmet, in Linlithgowshire. She died in 1817, at the age of thirty-two, leaving several children, and was buried at Whitburn. Anne Park's daughter became the wife of John Thomson, a retired soldier, and settled down at Pollok, Glasgow, where she died 15th June, 1873, aged eighty-two years. She had a family of two sons and three daughters.

Mr. Gilbert Burns, the early companion and at all times the steadfast friend of the poet, continued to be farmer of Mossgiel till Whitensunday, 1788, when he removed to the farm of Dinning, on the estate of Mr. Montefeu of Closeburn, in Nithsdale. On 21st June, 1791, he married Miss Jean Breckenridge, by whom he had six sons and two daughters. He continued to hold the farm of Dinning till 1810, but in 1800 he took charge of Mrs. Dunlop's farm of Morham Mains, near Haddington, and on her recommendation was in 1804 appointed factor to Lord Blantyre over his East Lothian estates, his emoluments being £100, afterwards raised to £140, and a free house. He accordingly took up his residence at Grant's Braes, near Lethington or Lemoxlode, leaving Dinning in charge of his brother-in-law John Bege, and carrying with him his aged mother and his sister Annabella. His conduct in this capacity, during nearly a quarter of a century, was marked by great fidelity and prudence, and gave the most perfect satisfaction to his titled employer. His mother continued to reside with him till her death in 1826, in the eighty-eighth year of her age and the thirty-sixth of her widowhood. She lies buried in Bolton churchyard. Gilbert Burns was invited by the publishers of Currie's edition of the poet's works to superintend and improve as much as possible a new edition, which appeared in 1829, and for which he received £200. This enabled him to pay off the £150 lent him by the poet in 1788. This excellent man died at Grant's Braes, 8th Nov. 1827, aged sixty-seven years, and was buried in Bolton churchyard, where also rest, besides his mother, his sister Annabella, and five of his children who predeceased him. One of his sons succeeded him in the factorship.

Agnes Burns, the poet's eldest sister, married William Galt, a farm servant on Gilbert's farm of Dinning. He afterwards became hand-steward on a gentleman's estate in the north of Ireland, where the poet's sister died in 1834, leaving no family.

Annabella Burns was never married, but continued to live with her mother in the house of her brother Gilbert. She died in March, 1832, aged sixty-eight years, and was buried in Bolton churchyard.

William Burns was born in 1767, and served his apprenticeship as a saddler. About the end of 1788 he was with Burns at Ellishand for some weeks unemployed. He then crossed the border into England, and wrought for some time in Longtown and Newcastle-on-Tyne, ultimately proceeding to London about the beginning of March, 1790. A short series of interesting letters between him and the poet belong to this period. In London he renewed his acquaintance with his old preceptor Murdoch, who at this time kept a stationery shop near Bloomsbury Square. They had had but one meeting, however, when William was seized with a malignant fever, and died on 24th July, 1790, before Murdoch was apprised of his illness. He was buried in St. Paul's churchyard, Murdoch acting as chief mourner.

John Burns, the poet's youngest brother, born in 1794, who is incidentally mentioned in Gilbert's account of the composition of the "Death and Dying Words of Poor Maille," appears to have died in 1783 and to have been buried at Kirk Alloway.

Isabella Burns, the youngest of the family, was born 27th June, 1771, and married 1795, to John Bege, who afterwards, from 1804 to 1850, had charge of Gilbert's farm of Dinning. When that farm was given up Mr. Bege became hand-steward on the estate of Blackwood, in the parish of Langthorpe, Lanarkshire. He was accidentally killed by a fall from his horse, 24th April, 1818. His widow, who had borne him nine children, managed for many years to gain a livelihood by teaching. She lived first at Ormiston and then at Tranent in East Lothian, removing in 1843 to Bridge House, near Ayr, where she died 4th December, 1858, and was buried in her father's grave at Kirk Alloway.

EXHUMATION OF THE POET.

EXHUMATION OF THE POET.

"It is generally known (says Mr. M'Diarmid) that the remains of Burns were exhumed privately on the 19th September, 1815, and deposited, with every regard to decency, in the arched vault attached to the mausoleum, then newly erected in honour of his memory. . . . Originally his ashes lay in the north corner of the churchyard; and as years elapsed before any general movement was made, his widow, with pious care, marked the spot by a modest monument, the expense of which she willingly defrayed out of her own slender means. In the first instance, attempts were made to enlarge the church-yard wall, and thus avert the necessity of a ceremony, in the highest degree revolting to the feelings of Mrs. Burns; but the spot was so narrow, and interfered so closely with the property of others, that the idea was abandoned as utterly impracticable. On the day, therefore,
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

ALREADY NAMED THE COMMITTEE CHosen proceeded to the spot before the sun had risen, and went to work so rapidly that they had well-nigh completed their purpose previous to the assemblage of any crowd. . . . As a report had been spread that the largest coffin was made of oak, hopes were entertained that it would be possible to remove it without injury or public examination of any kind. But this hope proved fallacious; on testing the coffin it was found to be composed of ordinary materials, and liable to yield to the slightest pressure; and the lid partially removed, a spectacle was unfolded which, considering the fame of the mighty dead, has rarely been witnessed by a single human being. There lay the remains of the great poet, to all appearance entire, retaining various traces of recent vitality, or, to speak more correctly, exhibiting the features of one who had newly sunk into the sleep of death. The forehead struck every one as beautifully arched, if not so high as might have been reasonably supposed, while the scalp was rather thickly covered with hair, and the teeth perfectly firm and white. Altogether the scene was so imposing that the commonest workmen stood uncovered, as the late Dr. Gregory did at the exhumation of the remains of King Robert Bruce, and for some moments remained inactive, as if thrilling under the effects of some undefinable emotion, while gazing on all that remained of one "whose fame is as wide as the world itself." But the scene, however imposing, was brief; for the instant the workmen inserted a shell or wooden case beneath the original coffin the head separated from the trunk, and the whole body, with the exception of the bones, crumpled into dust. Notwithstanding of the solemnity the occasion required, at least a few felt constrained to lift and examine the skull, probably under the inspiration of feelings akin to those of Hamlet when he leaned and moralized over Yorick's grave, and who, if aware of the passage, might have quoted appropriately enough the language of Byron:

Look on his broken arch and ruined hall—
Its chambers desolate and portals foul;
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy bower,
The dome of thought, the palace of the soul
Behold through each lacustrine eyecess hole,
The gay records of wisdom and of wit—
Of passion's boast that never broken control—
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever write.
People this lonely tower—this tempested ret.
of the vault contrasted strikingly with the sombre light of the host of stars that sparkled brightly in the heavens above. Mr. Crombie's knowledge of localities rendered the process of disinterment comparatively easy, and Mr. Bogie, who had seen the skull in 1815, procured its identity the moment it appeared. But in the absence of such a witness, its size and character were quite sufficient to arouse the fact, and, after it had been carefully cleaned, a cast was taken from it before the parties retired to rest...

Just as the party were about to separate the clock chimed the hour of one; and although ten individuals were present at the last, including Provost Murray, Mr. Hamilton, writer, and Rector McMillan, the largest bat of the whole was found too narrow to receive the skull—a sufficient proof of its extraordinary size. Early on Tuesday morning a leaden box was made and carefully lined with the softest materials, and on the same day we, as in duty bound, witnessed the re-interment of the sacred relic it contained, previous to the funeral of Mrs. Burns. At this time the original tombstone was taken from the vault and placed within the iron railing which protects the sculpture. In accomplishing this, the said railing had to be slightly enlarged; and the stone now occupies a position where it can be seen by all, without being trod upon or injured by any. The inscriptions upon it are as follows; the closing one having been obliterated within the last few days:

““In memory of Robert Burns, who died the 21st July, 1796, in the 37th year of his age; and Maxwell Burns, who died 25th April, 1789, aged two years and nine months. Also, of Francis Wallace Burns, who died 9th July, 1803, aged fourteen years. Also, of Jean Armour, relict of the poet, born February, 1763, died 20th March, 1804.”

The following description of the skull is from the pen of Mr. Archibald Blacklock, surgeon, mentioned above:—

“The cranium bones were perfect in every respect, if we except a little erosion of their external table, and firmly held together by their sutures; even the delicate bones of the orbits, with the trifling exception of the os zygomaticum in the left, were sound and uninjured by death and the grave. The superior maxillary bones still retained the four most posterior teeth on each side, including the dentes supinator, and all without spot or blemish; the incisurae, canislii, &c., had, in all probability, recently dropped from the jaw, for the alveoli were but little decayed. The bones of the face and palate were also sound. Some small portions of black hair, with a very few gray hairs intermixed, were observed while detaching some extraneous matter from the occiput. Indeed, nothing could exceed the high state of preservation in which we found the bones of the cranium, or offer a fuller opportunity of supplying what has so long been desiderated by phrenologists—a correct model of our immortal poet's head; and in order to accomplish this in the most accurate and satisfactory manner, every particle of sand or other foreign body was carefully washed off, and the plaster of Paris applied with all the tact and accuracy of an experienced artist. The cast is admirably taken, and cannot fail to prove highly interesting to phrenologists and others.

“Having completed our intention, the skull, securely enclosed in a leaden case, was again committed to the earth precisely where we found it.

“ARCHIBALD BLACKLOCK.

“Dumfries, 1st April, 1834.”

An elaborate report on the cranium development of the poet and on his mental and moral characteristics, from the phrenologist's stand-point, was soon after drawn up by Mr. George Combe. This we do not think it necessary to give here, since few at the present day have much faith in the doctrines of phrenology, especially as ordinarily expounded.

THE PATERNAL ANCESTRY OF BURNS.

The name Burns, or as it has been variously spelled, Burns, Burne, Borne, Borneo, is of very common occurrence in Kincardineshire, where the poet's father was born and brought up. The form Burness was that originally adopted by the poet, but, prior to issuing proposals for the first edition of his poems, he finally changed the spelling to Burns, the name being usually so pronounced in Ayrshire. In the country of the poet's ancestors the name is still regularly written Burns, and is always pronounced as inizable. Sir James Burns, sometime physician-general of the Bombay army, in his Notes on His Ancestry and Family, and Dr. C. Rogers in his Genealogical Memoirs of the Scottish House of Burns, claim for the poet's family a considerable antiquity and position. In the present note it is deemed sufficient to trace the family to the great-grandfather of the poet, who occupied the farm of Bogie in the parish of Auchterarder some time about the middle of the seventeenth century. This Walter Burness of Bogie had foursons:—

1. William, who succeeded him in Bogie, and who died in 1717: this William, a considerably able man before his death, seems to have surrendered his farm to his sons William and James, who after some time separated in 1705, when William, junior, remained at Bogie, and James proceeded to rent the farm of Inches in the same parish; (2) James, the great-grandfather of the poet, who became tenant of the farm of Bannoch with, in the same parish; (3) John, who in 1771, the author of the农试诗, and in 1787, when he married a girl who resided at Auchinleck, he was descendent of a collateral branch of the family.

James, the poet's father, was born at Bogie on the 22nd of April, 1759. He was at least a descendant of a collateral branch of the Burns family, and was closely connected with the parish of Kinross, where his wife, in the person of the late Mrs. R. S. Findlay, was for many years a resident. The poet was born at the farm of Bannoch with, where his parents resided, in the parish of Auchterarder.
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who is mentioned as "Colonel" John Burness in the act of 1700 for rescinding the forfeitures and fines since the year 1665," and (4) Robert, who settled in the parish of Benholm, and whose descendants were solicitors in Stonehaven up till a comparatively recent period.

James Burness, the poet's great-grandfather,

became the tenant of the farm of Brairnoin in Glenbervie, as above stated, where he died on 23rd January, 1743, at the age of eighty-seven years. He had five sons and one daughter, and as at least four of the sons were set up in farms of their own, his circumstances must have been good.

It is stated by Sir James Burness that the brothers were of such substantial position in the Mearns "that they could show silver utensils at their tables, with other indications of wealth unusual in that county." The tombstones erected in Glenbervie churchyard to the memory of the farmer of Brairnoin and his brother of Bogjorgain, being considerably decorated with symbolic ornaments, &c., indicate on the part of the family the possession of means rather above the average of their contemporaries. These stones, which lay long in a neglected condition, were carefully restored and made more accessible to inspection in the summer of 1885.

Robert Burness, the eldest son of James Burness of Brairnoin, became the tenant first of the farm of Kinnounth in Glenbervie and afterwards of Clochmahill in the parish of Dunnotar. This would be about 1715, that date may be assumed for his marriage, seeing his eldest son was born in 1717. It may be as well here to do away with a difficulty which oppressed the late Mr. Scott Douglass (editor of Burns's works, 1877-79, 6 vols., and of Lockhart's Life of Burns, 1882), whose imperfect information made him unsure at those who connected the farmer of Clochmahill with the well-to-do tenant of Brairnoin. He says: "They (the Burnesses) have demonstrated that persons bearing the surname of Burns did reside and rent small farms in Kinbaileshire upwards of two centuries ago; but they produce no reliable documentary links connecting any of these with Robert Burns, the humble tenant of Clochmahill in Dunnotar parish, the known parent of William Burns who migrated to Ayrshire and became the father of Burns the poet."

Every record in and out of the several parishes of Kincardineshire has been overhauled with a view to show a connecting link between James Burness of Brairnoin and Robert of Clochmahill and Dunnotar, but in vain." By the assiduity of Mr. John Craig Thomson, sheriff-justice, Stonehaven, the connecting link has been found (in 1885) in the form of a disposition of his property by James Burness, recorded in the sheriff court books at Stonehaven, 26th January, 1743, and attested by James Strachan, notary public. This document, while of interest mainly as placing the connection beyond doubt, is otherwise of interest to the curious. It runs as follows:

"Be it known to all men by this presents, Mr. James Burness, in Brairnoin, That James Burness, son of John Burness, of Clochmahill, respectfully, &c., as I have thought fit to settle my usual worldly concern In my lifetime for preventing any disorder or confusion that may arise among my children after my death, I with the burden of my own life and report and dispose of, and after death To and in favour of Robert Burns, my eldest lawful son, in Clochmahill; William Burness, my second son, in Brairnoin; James Burness, in Halkhill, my third son; George Burness, in Elphill, my fourth son; Margaret Burness, spouse to James Gaven, in Drumblithie, my only daughter, and the said James for his interest; my half corns and croft and other moveables pertaining to me at present or that may be the time of my decease in as far as extends to the sum of One hundred Merks Scots money To each of the saids Robert, William, James, and George Burness, my sons; and fifty merks money for so to the said Margaret Burness and James Gaven; and the like sum of fifty merks to John Gaven, lawfull son to the said James Gaven, making in hail five hundred Merks Scots money divided and apointed to them in mener above express, with full power to them, agreeable to thir respective shares. To midle, intimut with, sell, use, and dispose on my said Croft and Effects for payment to thir of the said soum and shares, to each of them so due as above set down and divided, always under the provision before of my linter use, and what is over and above this payment as said I sell and dispose to my Wife Margret flacconer, To be by her lificent, and what remains after her death I recommend To be equally divided among my said five children free of any Burness. Except twenty merks to Mary Burness, lawfull daughter to the deceased Thomas Burness my fifth son, which, at discretion of my said children, I appoint To be payed Either with themselves or at the death of the said Margaret flacconer, my spouse, which disposition, with the Burden and provision before mentioned, I Bind and oblige me to warrand, accept, and defend good and valid To my said children as above divided, with respect to the soum particular above mindted at all hands and against all deadly. Dispensing with the generality herof, and with all nullities, imperfections, and objections in law, proponentable or prejudicial hereunto In any sort, I further recommend to my sons to be careful of, and dutiful to, my said spouses and their mother, and to be assisting to bring to perfection my said goods so disposed, and the value of them applyd for payd. of the forsoaid soums as above apointed, and, more particularly, I recommend peace and unity among themselves and exact observance of
what I therein above recommended; and if any shall offer to contravene or contradict this in any part, Then the rest agreeing To and Aiding by the same are hereby empowered to denounce him or them of the share to them appointed, and to apply the same among themselves at discretion.

This document was signed on 14th June, 1740, in presence of David Croll, in Whithog; George Toronto, in Inchbrook; John Jelfie, sub-tenant in Brahanuir; and William Tailor, son of James Tailor, in Whithog.

Robert Burns, the poet's grandfather, continued in Clochmhill till somewhere about 1748, when, through some misfortune or other, he left that farm and retired with his daughters to a cottage at Dunstall, Dunnotar, his sons resorting to the south for the purpose of making their way in the world. What was the cause of this break-up in the family is as yet unknown. Dr. Charles Rogers, in his Genealogy, attributes their ruin to the terrible winter and spring of 1740, but there is no evidence to show that the family left Clochmhill till the sons set their faces southward, which was certainly not till 1748. At a later period the same gentleman suggested that the rebellion of 1745 was the cause, that the father of Clochmhill served in Captain Carriick's regiment, and that the poet's father fought for Prince Charles Edward on the field of Culloden. This is most improbable in the face of a certificate, still in existence, dated May, 1718, signed by Sir William Ogilvy, Alexander Schank, and John Stewart, three gentlemen of the district, to the effect that "the bearer, William Burness, is the son of an honest farmer in this neighbourhood, and is a very well-inclined lad himself," and recommending him to any nobleman or gentleman as a fit servant according to his capabilities, and of another certificate, which Gilbert Burns remembered, stating that "the bearer had no hand in the late wicked rebellion." Burns himself was glad to borrow a kind of justice from the idea that his fathers had been "out" for the Stuarts. Speaking of that name, he says:

My fathers that name have reared on a throne,
My fathers have fallen to right it,
These fathers would spare their degenerate son,
That name should be sojournit right it.

In his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore he makes this statement:—"My forefathers rented land of the famous, noble Keiths of Marshal, and had the honour to share their fate. . . . I mention this circumstance because it threw my father on the world at large." Again, writing to Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, a descendant of the forfeited Earl of Nithsdale, he adds to his fancy family history:—"With your Ladyship I have the honour to be connected by one of the strongest and most endearing ties in the whole world—common sufferers in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious—the cause of heroic loyalty! Though my fathers had not illustrious honours and vast properties to hand in the contest, though they left their humble cottages only to add so many units more to the unnoted crowd that followed their leaders, yet what they could they did, and what they had they lost: with unshaken firmness and unceasing political attachments, they shook hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their king and their country." Now it is a fact that Burns knew very little about his family history; indeed, as will be seen by a letter to his cousin, James Burns, Montrose, dated 4th September, 1757, he knew very little of those of them who were his contemporaries, let alone his ancestors. What little he did know, however, was wrought up into a fine fiction which gratified his sentimental Jacobitisn. His grandfather no doubt was latterly unfortunate, but Jacobitism could hardly have been the cause of his misfortunes, else he would never have occupied a farm on a forfeited estate from about the time of, or shortly after, the rebellion of 1715 till 1748. His grand-grandfather and great uncles also appear to have been prosperous farmers living quiet uneventful lives, their descendants occupying the same farm till into the present century. Moreover, he always connects the misfortunes of his ancestors with those of the Keiths, who lost their estates from their share in the rebellion of 1715; but how could the fall of the Keiths in 1715 have thrown the poet's father "out" on the world at large? That the relations of his grandfather, Isabella Keith, may have suffered from being connected with the rebellion of 1715 is quite likely, since they were akin to the Keiths of Dunnotar, but no doubt, sympathized with the party espoused by their chief.

We can hardly, therefore, attribute any misfortunes that may have befallen Burns's grandfather's family to "the cause of heroic loyalty." Farmers are much exposed to losses and vicissitudes of various kinds, and the misfortunes that overtook the farmer of Clochmhill were no doubt the same as those that have overtaken many another, such as bad seasons, death of stock, ruined crops, money losses through dishonest debtors, &c. &c. In the document quoted above as the settlement of his worldly concerns by James Burnace the "is an injunction to peace and unity among themselves." This would seem to point out that the brothers were not always on brotherly terms, and may account for the fact of Robert having to quit Clochmhill in poverty during the lifetime of his mother and his brothers, who, no doubt, had the means, if they had not the will, to assist him.

It is interesting to note that William Burness,
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Perhaps no part of Burns's life has excited more interest than his connection with Mary Campbell, the sometime housemaid to Gavin Hamilton's children, and, according to popular tradition, "dairy-maid or byres-woman" at Cockfield House. This interest is in no degree lessened but rather strengthened by the mystery which Burns himself has thrown round the story, a mystery all the deeper as it is quite out of keeping with his usual candour in such affairs. Her name was never connected with his till three years after her decease, when "Mary in Heaven" awakened a curiosity as to the heroine, which drew from him the vague particulars noted further on. Robert Chambers suggests that "he might have some sense of remorse about this simple girl—he might dread the world's knowing that, after the affair of Jean Armour, in the midst of such calamitous circumstances, and facing a long exile in the West Indies, he had been so madly imprudent as to engage a poor girl to join him in wealock, whether to go with him or to wait for his return." When all the facts are taken into account this suggestion seems a very natural one.

It was not till 1850 that the true date of the Highland Mary episode was made known to the public, when Mr. W. Scott Douglas of Edinburgh threw a new light upon the matter. Since then it has been fully discussed by various writers.

Mary was born of Highland parentage, at Arden- tinny in Argyllshire, it is said, her father being a tailor in a revenue cutter, whose station, at the time Mary is heard of in the Burns drama, was at Campbelltown. She is said to have spent some of her early years in the house of the Rev. David Campbell, minister of Loch Sann in Arran, a relation of her mother's. She has been described as "a sweet, sprightly, blue-eyed creature;" but it is well to remember Burns's foible of investing his fair captivators with a stock of charms out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination, and which were not apparent to the eyes of others. Dr. Hately Waddell remarks:—"Gentle, good, and true she no doubt was; blue-eyed, and yellow-haired, and comely, but never graceful; and...the probability is that she was not endowed with a tittle of the sweet indefinite attractions with which Burns alone has invested her." Mr. A. R. Adamson, in his "Rambles through the Land of Burns," states that there is a tradition that "she was neither graceful nor feminine, but was a coarse-favoured, ungracious country lass." At the instigation of a relative, who held the situation of housekeeper to a family in Ayrshire, Mary came over to that county, and we find her employed as housemaid in Gavin Hamilton's family when his son Alexander was born, in July, 1785. To Burns the year 1785 was a year of
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marvellous achievement in the way of work, yet at the same time he seems to have had abundance of time for cultivating the acquaintance of the Muncie lines. In letter or in song we are made acquainted with most of them, but there is no mention made of one whom he must have seen frequently at his friend Hamilton's; her charms, we may infer, had not yet attracted his notice. Very little appears to have been known about Mary in the household at Mossiel. Mrs. Begg, the poet's sister, recollected no sort of reference being made to her more than once, when the poet remarked to John Blane, the "bansman," that Mary had refused to meet him in the old castle—the dismantled tower of the priory at Muncie. There was also a reminiscence of Robert's receiving a letter one evening which evitably disturbed him, and which, as was afterwards settled in the family, could have been nothing else but the letter containing the news of Mary's death.

From about April, 1785, Jean Armour to all appearance regained supreme in the poet's affections, whatever other undertakings in the drama of his love were taking place. When his intimacy with Jean could no longer be hidden he was led to give her written acknowledgment of marriage, though at first, according to a letter quoted by Lockhart, he was fixed as fate against "owning her conjugally." This document, as is well known, was afterwards destroyed under the impression that thereby the marriage was annulled. Yet whoever believed that a complete and valid separation had been effected by this proceeding it would seem that Burns himself doubted if the destruction of the informal declaration in any way altered the relative position of the parties; else, why his solicitude to procure "a certificate as a bachelor" from the Kirk-session? Jean's conduct had a most irritating and disturbing effect on Burns, all the more, probably, because he considered himself rather magnanimous in giving up his determination not to own her conjugal. He says himself, writing some years after, "I would gladly have covered my inamorato from the dart of calumny with the conjugal shield—may I had actually made up some sort of welllooked—but I was at that time deep in the guilt of being unfortunate, for which good and lawful objection the lady's friends broke all our measures and drove me au déparoi." In his letter to Dr. Moore also he speaks as if he had almost lost his reason over the affair. Yet in April, 1786, writing to John Arnot of Dalphatswood, after the break between Jean and him, he treats the matter in quite a burlesque vein, and with much that is highly extravagant, says: "By degrees I have subsided into the time-settled sorrow of the sable widower, who, wiping away the decent tear, lifts to his grief-worn eye to look—for another wife."

The vacancy caused by Jean's temporary banishment from his heart had, it would thus appear, to be filled up, and Gavin Hamilton's maidservant (there is no ground for believing who ever was a dairymaid at Coldsfield) was at hand. At this time, indeed, there seems to have been room in his heart for a second or third passion, for we are to put any faith in the ardent terms to which (looking forward to his intended voyage to Jamaica) he takes leave of a certain Eliza—"the maid that I adore!" And it is questionable if he ever allowed himself to feel any vacancy, for it is permissible to suppose that it was even before Jean's so-called desertion of him that he had entangled himself with Mary Campbell, and that this was partly the cause why he at first protested that he would not on any account "own" the unfortunate girl "conjugal." However that may be, we find him now off with the old love and on with the new. Mary Campbell, who, by the way, could not have been ignorant of the Armour scandal, may have had for some time a liking for the poet, but their sweetheating could not have lasted any great length of time or it must have become a matter of public notoriety, Burns on his part, who describes himself as "an old hawk at the sport," would have no difficulty in "battering himself into a passion," to use another of his own expressions, on the shortest notice.

Burns's connection with Highland Mary—which we believe was but a mere interlude between the acts of the Armour drama—culminated with the parting of the lovers on the banks of the Ayr, which must have taken place on the second Sunday of May, 1786. This romantic event was referred to some indefinitely early period of his life; but that it was not earlier than 1781 is shown by "Mossiel" with his name being written by Burns on the Bible which he presented to Mary, and which is now preserved at Ayr, and which the true year was 1786 is proved by the fixing of Mary's early death to the month of October in that year. All that Burns thought fit to say in regard to this incident in his life is contained in a MS. note written by him in Kidell's copy of Johnson's "Museus" (along with other similar annotations) to the song "My Highland Lassie." "This," he says, "was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My Highland lassie was a war-minded charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment we met, by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot, by the banks of the Ayr, where we spent the day in taking farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of summer following she crossed the sea to meet neat Greenock,
where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness." In a similar strain also the poet writes to Thomson inclosing the song: "Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary!" "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl." Now the West India project occupied his mind only in the year 1786, so that Burns was using words that were certain to mislead when he spoke of his "very early life" and "very early years." On the other hand, what he calls the "pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment" could only have extended to at most a few months previous to the second Sunday in May, as before that time Jean occupied the first place in his affections for a comparatively long period.

The romantic details of the parting between Burns and Mary—when the lovers stood at different sides of a brook, laved their hands in the water, and exchanged Bibles—are well known. The authority for them is Croke, and whence he derived the particulars is unknown. He certainly could not have got them from the poet himself. However much truth may be in these details it is sufficiently clear that Burns's gout of passion for Mary did not last long, though perhaps her love for him was only terminated by death.

This attachment has been often described as the purest and most elevated ever formed by the poet. This may be so, but the admirable Highland Mary poems of later composition do not necessarily show that what inspired them was anything else than a posthumous and merely poetical passion, and one that served the poet excellently for literary purposes. Within a very few weeks we find him raving of Jean as one who has still the sway over his affections, and poor Mary is, for the time, forgotten. According to Burns's account she is away in the West Highlands; "arranging matters among her friends for our projected change of life;" he himself—showing, one would think, how completely any idea of a marriage with Mary was absent from his mind, if it was ever present—executes, on 22 July, a deed investing his brother Gilbert with all his "goods, gear, and moveable effects" profits from poems included, to be held by him in trust for the upbringing of his illegitimate daughter known as "Sosie, smirkin' dear-bought Bess." In particular, provision was made by the same deed for continuing his daughter's exclusive interest in the property after she had reached the age of fifteen years. With what then was he going to endow Mary in the way of worldly goods? The truth seems to be, the "Mary is out of sight out of mind." In the tumid "Farewell," written certainly before 31st September, his nearest relatives, his most intimate friends, and especially his Jean, are alluded to, but Mary, whom he had asked not long before if she would "go to the Indies," is not once mentioned, and it is for the sake of Jean that he asserts he must cross the Atlantic. The time was come, however, when the memories of his love affair with Mary was to furnish good poetical capital. To her we owe what is generally considered the "noblest of all his ballads," "To Mary in Heaven," and others equally admired. And she lived it is probable her name would hardly have been heard of in connection with that of Burns.

It is impossible to account for Burns's want of caudron in connection with this episode, unless on the ground that he felt the truth would not look well and wished to present himself in a sentimental and interesting position. Robert Chambers says of Burns in this connection: "It is to be feared he was not a man for whom his admirers can safely claim steadfastness of affection, any more than they can arrogate for him a romantic or platonic devotion. His was a heart whose pulses were synchronous with those of no other human being; he loved keenly, enthusiastically for a time, but not necessarily for a long time; and then there were 'underplots in the drum of his love.'"

It is proved by the visit to the month of July 1786 that Burns thought seriously of his departure in his life is devoted to him in his letter to Campbell when he writes: "My Highland Mary—a composition it was known at the time I wrote this letter was a warm and steady friend, as ever blessed man could have. I am a pretty long and natural attachment to this Miss Jean, and when we left Campbeltown, the usual Sunday after service by the banks of the Haly, I took the following farewell. The West Highlands, their verdant scenes for our prospect, the balm of autumn followed me at Greenock,
land. Mary was interred, her resting-place being alleged to be the lair on a line with the monument but nearer the kirk.

BRIEF NOTES BY BURNS OF A BORDER TOUR:

MAY 5—JUNE 1, 1787.

Left Edinburgh [May 5, 1787]—Lammermuir-hills miserably dreary, but at times very picturesque. Lamton-edge, a glorious view of the Moray.—Ranche Berry-well — old Mr. Ainslie an uncommon character;—his hobbies, agriculture, natural philosophy, and politics. In the first he is unexceptionably the clearest-headed, best-informed man I ever met with; in the other two, very intelligent,—as a man of business he has uncommon merit, and by fairly deserving it has made a very decent independence. Mrs. Ainslie, an excellent, sensible, cheerful, amiable old woman. Miss Ainslie — her person a little "lumpish," but handsome; her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humour—she unites three qualities rarely to be found together; keen, solid penetration; sly, witty observation and remark; and the gentlest, most unaffected female modesty. Douglas, a clever, fine, promising young fellow. The family-meeting with their brother, my acquaintance de voyage, very charming; particularly the sister. The whole family remarkably attached to their mandals—Mrs. A. full of stories of the sagacity and sense of the little girl in the kitchen. Mr. A. high in the praises of an African, his house servant—all his people old in his service—Douglas's old nurse came to Berry-well yesterday to remind them of its being his birthday.

A Mr. Dudgeon, a poet at times, a worthy remarkable character—natural penetration, a great deal of information, some genius, and extreme modesty.

SUNDAY [6th].—Went to church at Dunse.—Dr. Bowmaker, a man of strong hings and pretty jealousies ten pr, but ill skilled in propriety and altogether unconscious of his want of it.

MONDAY [7th].—Coldstream — went over to England—Cornhill—glorious river Tweed—elegant and majestic—fine bridge. Dine at Coldstream with Mr. Ainslie and Mr. Foreman—beat Mr. P. — in a dispute about Voltaire. Tea at Lennel House with Mr. Blythome.

1 The poet was travelling with a young friend Mr. Robert Ainslie, and this was the residence of his father, who acted as baillows to the estate of Lord Douglas in Berwickshire. A number of letters to Robert Ainslie will be found in the poet's correspondence.

2 See epigram presented to Miss Ainslie on this occasion.

3 This fine old royal and parliamentary burgh is situated on Jed water, a tributary of the Teviot, at the distance of ten miles from Kelso and fifty from Edinburgh. While possessing some local importance as the county town of Roxburghshire, its population scarcely reaches 2000. The abbey, of which the ruins still tower above all the existing domestic buildings, was founded early in the eleventh century; and even at that early time the town was of some note. The only part of this structure of which any remains exist is the church, which has been in the form of a cross about 250 feet in length. The nave, north transept, and central tower, are still tolerably entire, and form a beautiful specimen of early Gothic. A Norman door in the west end is much admired for its curious mouldings, and a St. Cuthbert's wheel at the top of the nave is a complicated feature. The environs of Jedburgh are extremely beautiful. The Jed rises from its native moors under steep spurs and hanging woods, the remains of the ancient forest of Jedburgh, from which the English leaders were erst kept in trouble. Here a moulding tower, there an old corn-mill; here a beautiful gable, there a green slope; scarcely any town in the south of Scotland can be said to have more delightful surroundings. The magistrates of Jedburgh gave Burns the freedom of their burgh, with its usual accompaniment of a treat at the inn. It was long remembered in the town that, while this treat was in the course of being discussed, the poet, ever jealous of his independence, left the room and endeavoured—need we add, in vain—to prevail on the landlord to accept of payment of the bill.

4 Patrick Blythom, Esq, author of the well-known tour in Sicily and Malta. His wife was a daughter of Principal Robertson.

a most excellent heart, kind, joyous, and benevolent, but a good deal of the French indiscriminate complaisance—from his situation past and present, an admirer of everything that bears a splendid title, or that possesses a laudable nature. Mrs. Blythome a most elegant woman in her person and manners; the tones of her voice remarkably sweet—my reception extremely flattering—sleep at Coldstream.

TUESDAY [8th].—Breakfast at Kelso charming situation of Kelso—fine bridge over the Tweed—enchanting views and prospects on both sides of the river, particularly the Scotch side; introduced to Mr. Scott of the Royal Bank, an excellent modest fellow—fine situation of it—ruins of Roxburgh Castle—a holly-bush growing where James II. of Scotland was accidentally killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin and a fine old garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by an English Hotentot, a statue d'hotel of the duke's, a Mr. Cole. Climate and soil of Berwickshire, and even Roxburghshire, superior to Ayrshire—bed roads. Turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements—Mr. M'Dowal, at Cawston Mill, a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, with whom I dined today; sold his sheep, ewe and lamb together, at two guineas a-piece—wash their sheep before shearing—7 or 8 lb. of washed wool in a three—low markets, consequently low rents—fine lands not above sixteen shillings a Scotch acre—magnificence of farmers and farmhouses—come up Teviot and up Jed to Jedburgh to lie, and so wish myself a good night.

WEDNESDAY [9th].—Breakfast with Mr. — in Jedburgh—a quipable between Mrs. —, a closed, talkative shutter, and a sister of hers,
Kelso charm.

Bridge over the

views on both

side; the

Scotch side;

the

Royal Bank, an

immersion of it—

a thorn-bush growing

shrub, and was accidentally

burnt down. A small old

ting planted by

modern; it is destroyed by an

expulsion of the duke's,

the county of

Berwickshire,

humbley, their

sacramental, at

Claverton

a woman whom I dined with

meat, and

together,

their

in a fleshy

meats—two hands

from a

bucket;—two

acres—mag-

houses—come up
to him, and so

with Mr. —

in Mrs. —, a

sister of hers,

church is situated on

the distance of ten

miles. While passing

through, the

north of Roxburghshire,

abash, of which the
domestic buildings,

and even at that

the only part of this

the church, which

feet in length.

banks are still

of early date.

which admired for its

wheel at the top

The curious

down

and hanging wools,

church, from which

trouble. Here a

here a beautiful

down in the south

ful surroundings.

the freedom of

treat at the inn. It

while this treat was

ever jealous of his

the name—need we add,

cept of payment of
an old man that gives Madame a revenge, up to the tangle the net of mural. Jedburgh soldier-like, had been in America, among running, running gardens, oranges, horses—fiend, and, have the people, little river.

Dine with some polite fellow showed a lady exact for him.

Return ladies to floor two fairy writer, a clergyman, the clergyman, but finding party, sister before appear still bore me ably agreed girl, found good-bye bateau—beautiful with dolls. tout ensemble of females rosy, some several of.

Miss — Miss Linzy melting pool, the Great, and nonsense, we, please, the her, and, easily make, and kind. parted by Mr. Somster.

Dr. Somster British his thirty Church of seventy, un for fifteen reference to more. A known Mr.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

an old maid, respecting a Relief minister. Miss gives Madam the lie; and Madam, by way of revenge, upbraids her that she had snares to entangle the said minister, then a widow, in the net of matrimony. Go about two miles out of Jedburgh to a roup of parks—meet a polite soldier-like gentleman, Captain Rutherford, who had been many years through the wilds of America, a prisoner among the Indians. Charm- ing, romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens, orchards, &c., intermingled among the houses—fine old ruins—a once magnificent cathedral, and strong castle. All the towns here have the appearance of old, rude grandeur, but the people extremely idle—Jed a fine romantic little river.

Dine with Captain Rutherford—the captain a polite fellow, fond of money in his farming way; showed a particular respect to my barbisher—his lady exactly a proper matrimonial second part for him. Miss Rutherford a beautiful girl, but too far gone woman to expose similar to fine swelling bosom—her face very fine.

Return to Jedburgh—walk up Jed with some ladies to be shown Love-lane and Blackburn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, a very clever fellow; and Mr. Somerville, the clergyman of the place, a man, and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning. The walking party of ladies, Mrs. and Miss,—her sister before mentioned. N.B.—These two appear still more comfortably ugly and stupid, and bore me most shockingly. Two Miss—tolerably agreeable. Miss Hope, a tolerably pretty girl, fond of laughing and fun. Miss Lindsay, a good-humoured, amiable girl, rather short and comely, but handsome, and extremely graceful—beautiful hazel eyes, full of spirit and sparkeling with delicious moisture—an engaging face—a face exquisitely that speaks her the first order of female minds—her sister, a bawdy, strappin', roguish, somnolent. Shake myself loose, after several unsuccessful efforts, of Mrs. and Miss,—and, somehow or other, get hold of Miss Lindsay's arm. My heart is thawed into melting pleasure after being so long frozen up in the Greenland bay of indifference, amidst the noise and nonsense of Edinburgh. Miss seems very well pleased with my barbisher's distinguishing her, and after some slight qualms, which I could easily mark, she sets the titter round at defiance, and kindly allows me to keep my hold; and when parted by the ceremony of my introduction to Mr. Somerville, she met me half, to resume my situation. Note Bene—The poet within a point and a half of being—in love—I am afraid my bosom is still nearly as much tender as ever.

The old, cross-grained, whiggish, ugly, slanderous Miss—Jim, with all the poisonous spleen of a disappointed, ancient maid, stops me for very unreasonably to ease her bursting breast, by falling abusively foul on the Miss Lindsay's, particularly on my Dulcinea;—I hardly refrain from cursing her to her face for daring to mouth her calamitous slander on one of the finest pieces of womanly workmanship of Almighty Excellence! Sup at Mr. —'s; vexed that the Miss Lindsay's are not of the supper party, as they only are wanting. Mrs. and Miss—still improve infernally on my hands.

Set out next morning [10th] for Wauchope, the seat of my correspondent, Mrs. Scott—breakfast by the way with Dr. Elliot, an agreeable, good-hearted, climate-beaten, old veteran, in the medical line, now retired to a romantic, but rather morose place, on the banks of the Roole—he accompanies us almost to Wauchope—we traverse the country to the top of Boocher, the scene of an old encampment, and Woolee Hill.

Wauchope—Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Panza—very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, tact of the finest pieces of bold, critical decision, which usually distinguish female authors. Sup with Mr. Potts—agreeable party. Breakfast next morning [11th] with Mr. Somerville—the beat of Miss Lindsay and my barbisher, by means of the invention and malice of Miss. Mr. Somerville sends to Dr. Lindsay, begging him and family to breakfast if convenient, but at all events to send Miss Lindsay; accordingly, Miss Lindsay only comes. I find Miss Lindsay would soon play the devil with me—I met with some little flattering attentions from her. Mrs. Somerville, an excellent, motherly, agreeable woman, and a fine family. Mr. Aimie and Mrs. S—, junr., with Mr. —, Miss Lindsay, and myself, go to see Esther, a very remarkable woman for reciting poetry of all kinds, and sometimes making Scotch doggerel herself—she can repeat by heart almost every thing she has ever read, particularly Pope's Homer from end to end—has studied English by herself, and, in short, is a woman of very extraordinary abilities.

On conversing with her I find her fully equal to the character given of her. She is very much flattered that I send for her, and that she sees a

1 Dr. Somerville was the author of two labours works on British history, and survived to be the oldest minister of the Church of Scotland in his day, dying in 1800, at the age of ninety, and when he had officiated as minister of Jedburgh for fifty-seven years. It is said, that, after seeing Burns's reference to his habit of punning, Dr. Somerville never punned more. A son of Mr. Somerville was the husband of the well-known Mary Somerville.

2 Esther Eaton was in a very humble walk of life—the wife of a common working gardener. She latterly taught a little day-school, which not being sufficient for her subsistence, she was obliged to solicit the charity of her benevolent neighbours. She died in February, 1799.
post who has put out a book, as she says. She is, among other things, a great florist, and is rather past the meridian of once celebrated beauty.

I walk in Eater's garden with Miss Lindsay, and after some little chat—chat of the tender kind, I presented her with a proof print of my book, which Miss — had retailed concerning her and me, with prolonging pleasure—God bless her! Was waited on by the magistrates and presented with the freedom of the burgh.

Took farewell of Jedburgh, with some melancholy, disagreeable sensations. Jed, pure be thy crystal streams, and bellow thy sylvan banks! Sweet Isabella Lindsay, may peace dwell in thy bosom, uninterrupted, except by the tumultuous throbings of rapturous love! That love-killing eye must beam on another, not on me—that graceful form must bless another's arms, not mine!

Kelso.—Dine with the farmers' club—all gentlemen, talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from £20 to £50 value, and attends the fox-hunting in the county—go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, to Ete. [12th] Mr. Ker, a most gentlemanly, clever, handsome fellow, a widower with some fine children—his mind and manner astonishingly like my dear old friend Robert Mair in Kilmaronock—everything in Mr. Ker's most elegant—he offers to accompany me in my English tour. Dine with Sir Alexander Don—a pretty clever fellow, but far from being a match for his divinity.

A very wet day... Sleep at Stodrig again, and set out [13th] for Melrose—visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruin and abbey—still bad weather—cross Leader, and come up Tweed to Melrose—dine there, and visit that far-famed, glorious ruin—come to Selkirk, up Etrick—the whole country hereabout, both on Tweed and Etrick, remarkably stony.

MONDAY [14th].—Come to Inverleithen, a famous spa, and in the vicinity of the palace of Truimf, where, having dined and drunk some Galloway-whey, I here remain till tomorrow—saw Elibanks and Elibraces on the other side of the Tweed.

TUESDAY [15th].—Drank tea yesternight at Pirn with Mr. Horsburgh. Breakfasted to-day with Mr. Ballantyne of Holly-lea. Proposal for a four-horse team, to consist of Mr. Scott of Wanchope, Fitchenland; Logan of Logan, Fitchiehall; Ballantyne of Holly-lea, Forewynd; Horsburgh of Horsburgh. Dine at a country inn kept by a miller in Earlston, the birthplace and residence of the celebrated Thomas the Rhymner—saw the ruins of his castle—come to Berwick.

**APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.**

**WEDNESDAY [16th].**—Dine at Dunse with the farmers' club—company, impatience to do them justice—Rev. Mr. Smith a famous partnership, and Mr. Melville a celebrated mechanic and inventor of the threshing-mill.

**THURSDAY [17th].**—Breakfast at Berwick, and walk into Dunse to see a famous knife made by a cutler there, and to be presented to an Italian prince. A pleasant ride with my friend Mr. Robert Ainslie, and his sister, to Mr. Thomson's, a man who has newly commenced farmer, and has married Miss Patty Grieve, formerly a friend of Mr. Robert Ainslie's. Company—Miss Jacky Grieve, an amiable sister of Mr. Thomson's, and Mr. Hood, an honest, worthy, fictitious farmer in the neighbourhood.

**FRIDAY [18th].**—Ride to Berwick—an idle town, rudely picturesque. Meet Lord Erol in walking round the walls—his Lordship's flattering notice of me. Dine with Mr. Chynie, merchant—nothing particular in company or conversation. Come up a bold shore, and over a wild country, to Eyemouth—sup and sleep at Mr. Grieve's.

**SATURDAY [19th].**—Spend the day at Mr. Grieve's—made a royal arch mason of St. Abbe's Lodge. Mr. William Grieve, the eldest brother, a jovious, warm-hearted, jolly, clever fellow—takes a hearty glass, and sings a good song. Mr. Robert, his brother and partner in trade, a good fellow, but says little. Take a sail after dinner. Fishing of all kinds pays tithes at Eyemouth.

**SUNDAY [20th].**—A Mr. Robinson, brewer at Ednam, sets out with me to Dunbar.

The Miss Grievses very good girls. My landlord's heart got a brush from Miss Betsy. Mr. William Grieve's attachment to the family circle; so fond, that when he is out, which by the bye is often the case, he cannot go to bed till he see if all his sisters are sleeping well. Pass the famous Abbey of Coldingham, and Pease-bridge. Call at Mr. Sheriffs', where Mr. A. and I dine. Mr. S. talkative and conceited. I talk of love to Nancy the whole evening, while her brother escort's home some companions like himself. Sir James Hall of Dunbar [father of Capt. Basil Hall] having heard of my being in the neighbourhood, comes to Mr. Sheriff's to breakfast—[21st] takes me to see his fine scenery on the

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1 Lady Harriet Don, sister of the Earl of Glescairn.

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The entry made on this occasion in the Lodge books is as follows:

"**EYemouth, 16th May, 1787.**

"At a general engagement held this day, the following brethren were made Royal Arch Masons, viz.: Robert Burns, from the Lodge of St. James's, Tarbolton, Ayrshire, and Robert Ainslie, from the Lodge of St. Luke's, Edinburgh, by James Carmichael, Wm. Grieve, Daniel Beare, John Clay, Robert Grieve, &c. &c. Robert Ainslie paid one guinea admission dues; but on account of R. Burns's remarkable poetical genius the engagement unanimously agreed to admit him gratis, and considered themselves honoured by having a man of such shining abilities for one of their companions."
stream of Dunglass—Dunglass, the most romantic sweet place I ever saw—Sir James and his lady a pleasant happy couple. He points out a walk for which he has an uncommon respect, as it was made by an aunt of his, to whom he owes much.

Miss — will accompany me to Dunbar, by way of making a mark of me as a sweethearty of hers, among her relations. She mounts an old cart-horse as huge and as lean as a house; a rusty old side-saddle without girth or stirrup, but fastened on with an old pill-box—her-selves as fine as hands could make her, in cream-coloured riding clothes, hat and feather, &c. I, ashamed of my situation, ride like the devil, and almost shake her to pieces on old Jolly—get rid of her by refusing to call at her uncle's with her.

Passed through the most glorious corn country I ever saw, till I reach Dunbar, a neat little town. Dine with Provost Fall, an eminent merchant, and most respectable character, but undescribable, as he exhibits no marked traits. Mrs. Fall, a genius in painting; fully more clever in the fine arts and sciences than my friend Lady Wanhope, without her consummate assurance of her own abilities. Call with Mr. Robinson (who, by the bye, I find to be a worthy, much respected man, very modest; warm, social heart, which with less good sense than his would be, perhaps, with the children of prim precision and pride, rather irreligious to that respect which is man's due from man)—with him I call on Miss Clarke, a maiden, in the Scotch phrase, "gaut-rough, but no breet men," a clever woman, with tolerable pretensions to remark and wit; while time had blown the blossoming bud of bashful modesty into the flower of easy confidence. She wanted to see what sort of "wire show an author was; and to let him know, that though Dunbar was but a little town, it was not destitute of people of parts.

Breakfast next morning [22nd] at Skateraw, at Mr. Lee's, a farmer of great note. Mr. Lee, an excellent, hospitable, social fellow, rather oldish—warm-hearted and chatty—most judicious, sensible farmer. Mr. Lee detains me till next morning. Company at dinner—My Rev. acquaintance Dr. Bowmaker, a reverend, rating old fellow: two sea lieutenants; a cousin of the landlord's, a fellow whose looks are of that kind which deceived me in a gentleman at Kelso, and has often deceived me: a goodly handsome figure and face, which incline one to give them credit for parts which they have not: Mr. Clarke, a much cleverer fellow, but whose looks a little cloudy, and his appearance rather ungraceful, with an every-day observer may prejudice the opinion against him: Dr. Brown, a medical young gentleman from Dunbar, a fellow whose face and manners are open and engaging. Leave Skateraw for Dunso next day [23rd] along with Collector

—, a lad of slender abilities, and bashfully diffluent to an extreme.

Found Miss Ainslie, the amiable, the sensible, the good-natured, the sweet Miss Ainslie, all alone at Berrywell. Heavenly powers, who know the weakness of human hearts, support mine! What happiness must I see, only to remind me that I cannot enjoy it!

Lammermuir hills, from East Lothian to Dunso, very wild. Dine with the farmers' club at Kelso. Sir John Hume and Mr. Lansden there, but nothing worth remembrance when the following circumstance is considered—I walk into Dunso before dinner, and out to Berrywell in the evening with Miss Ainslie—how well bold, how frank, how good she is! Charming Rachel! may thy bosom never be wrung by the evils of this life of sorrow, or by the villany of this world's sons!

THURSDAY [24th].—Mr. Ker and I set out to dinner at Mr. Hood's, on our way to England. I am taken extremely ill with strong feverish symptoms, and take a servant of Mr. Hood's to watch me all night—emitting more sears my fancy at the gloomy forebodings of death. I am determined to live for the future in such a manner as not to be scared at the approach of death—I am sure I could meet him with indifference— for "the something beyond the grave." Mr. Hood agrees to accompany us to England if we will wait till Sunday.

FRIDAY [25th].—I go with Mr. Hood to see a ram of an unfortunate farmer's stock—right country, and decent industry, do you preserve me from being the principal dramatic person in such a scene of horror!

Meet my good old friend Mr. Ainslie, who calls on Mr. Hood in the evening to take farewell of my hardship. This day I feel myself warm with sentiments of gratitude to the Great Preserver of men, who has kindly restored me to health and strength once more.

A pleasant walk with my young friend, Douglas Ainslie, a sweet, modest, clever young fellow.

SUNDAY [26th].—Cross Tweed, and traverse the moors, through a wild country, till I reach Alnwick—Alnwick Castle, a seat of the Duke of Northumberland, furnished in a most princely manner. A Mr. Wilkin, agent of his grace's, shows us the house and policies. Mr. Wilkin, a sensible, ingenious man.

MONDAY [27th].—Come, still through by-ways, to Warkworth, where we dine. Hermitage and old castle. Warkworth situated very picturesque, with Coquet Island, a small rocky spot, the seat of an old monastery, facing it a little in the sea, and the small but romantic river Coquet.

1 Miss Ainslie died not married. Robert Chambers says:—"I remember meeting her about forty years after her acquaintance with Burns—a good-looking elderly lady, very agreeable manners."
running through it. Slept at Morpeth, a pleasant enough little town, and on next day [30th] to Newcastle. Meet with a very agreeable, sensible fellow, Mr. Chattox, who shows us a great many civilities, and who dines and sups with us.

WEDNESDAY [30th].—Left Newcastle early in the morning and rode over a fine country to Hexham to breakfast—then to Hexham to Warden, the celebrated Spa, where we slept.

THURSDAY [31st].—Ran Longtown to dine, and part there with my good friends, Messrs. Hood, and Ker. A hiring day in Longtown. I am uncommonly happy to see so many young folks enjoying life. I come to Carlisle. (Meet a strange enough romantic adventure by the way, in falling in with a girl and her married sister—girl, after some overtures of gallantry on my side, sees me a little cut out with the bottle, and offers to take me in for a Greta-green affair. I, not being quite such a gallant as she imagines, make an appointment with her, by way of *vi la battaglia*, to hold a conference on it when we reach town. I meet her in town, and give her a brush of caressing, and a bottle of cider; but finding herself *en peu trompée* in her man, she leaves off.) Next day [June 1st] I meet my good friend, Mr. Mitchell, and walk with him round the town and its environs, and through his printing-works, &c.—four or five hundred people employed, many of them women and children. Dine with Mr. Mitchell, and leave Carlisle. Come by the coast to Anam, Overtaken on the way by a curious old fish of a shoemaker, and miner, from Cumberland mines.

[Brief notes by Burns of a Highland Tour:

AUG. 25—SEPT. 16, 1787.

25th August, 1787.

I set out for the north in company with my good friend Mr. Nicol. From Coastrulina, by Kirkliston and Winchburgh, fine improve, fertile country; near Linlithgow the lands worse, light and sandy. Linlithgow, the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur, charmingly rural, retired situation. The old royal palace a tolerably fine, but melancholy ruin—seemingly situated on a small elevation by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A pretty good old Gothic church; the infamous steeple of repentance standing, in the old Roman way, in a lofty situation.

What a poor, pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship; dirty, narrow, and squalid; stuck in a corner of old popish grandeur such as Linlithgow, and much more Methl; ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters.

West Lothian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Moray, Roxburgh, &c: and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of restless taste, a “Man of Feeling,” will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds of the peasantry in Ayrshire (peasantry they are all below the justice of peace) than the opulence of a club of Moray farmers, when at the same time he considers the vandalism of their plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an uninclosed half-improved country is to me actually more agreeable, and gives me more pleasure as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden.

Dine. Go to my friend Smith’s at Aven Pratsfield, find nobody but Mr. Miller, an agreeable, sensible, modest, good body, as useful but not so ornamental as Fielding’s Miss Western—not rigidly polite à la Française, but easy, hospitable, and housewife.

An old lady from Paisley, a Mrs. Lawson, whom I promise to call for in Paisley—like old lady W——, and still more like Mrs. C——, her conversation is pregnant with strong sense and just remark, but like them, a certain air of self-importance and a _d tour_ in the eye, seem to indicate, as the Ayrshire observed of her cow, that “she had a mind o’ her ain.”

Pleasant distant view of Dunfermline, and the rest of the fertile coast of Fife, as we go down to that dirty, ugly place, Borrowstones. See a horse-race, am! call on a friend of Mr. Nicol’s, a Bailie Cowan, of whom I know too little to attempt his portrait. Come through the rich case of Falkirk to Falkirk to pass the night.

[SUNDAY, 26th.].—Falkirk nothing remarkable except the tomb of Sir John the Graham, over which, in the succession of time, four stones have been laid. Camelon, the ancient metropolis of the Picts, now a small village in the neighbourhood of Falkirk. Cross the grand canal to Carron—come past Larbert, and admire a fine monument of cast-iron erected by Mr. Bruce, the African traveller, to his wife. N.B. He used her very ill, and I suppose he meant it as much out of gratitude to Heaven as anything else.

Pass Dunipace, a place laid out with fine taste—a charming amphitheatre bounded by Denny village, and pleasant seats of Hermitage, Denny, and down to Dunipace. The Carron running down the bosom of the whole, makes it one of the most charming little prospects I have seen. Dine at Auchinleck—Mr. Munro an excellent

This was William Nicol of the Edinburgh High School one of Burns’ most intimate friends.

2 Lady W—— and Mrs. C——; Mrs. Scott of Wanchaupe and Mrs. Cockburn, authors of the “Flowers o’ the Forest.”

worth noting.

Grieve’s ‘*Abbotsford*,’ a house for the education of his sons, on the banks of the Tweed; the most magnificent mansion in Scotland.

Burke’s ‘*Narrative of a Journey to the Hebrides*,’ a more accurate, but less interesting, account of his tour. He is the most impressive writer I ever read, and meet him in his travels, and I think I should like the views of the Highlands better than those of the Hebrides.

Mr. T----son to see.

Go to Sir W----d’s, to dinner.

Sir W----d’s, Bathstone, &c.

Sir W----d’s (or Bell’s)

Dine at Sir W----d’s.

Sup at Sir W----d’s.

Bell; asks me a question.

Bell asks another question.

Bell asks another question, with a smile.

Tour to Dunblane.

Captain F----d, of Dunblane.

Dine at Dunblane.

Dine at Dunblane.

Coninck, a Scotchman.

W---n, a Scotchman.

Glen A---m, a Scotchman.

Loch A---m, a Scotchman.

But the lady may not be described should be allowed.

T----k, a Scotchman.

Temple, a Scotchman.

Temple, a Scotchman.

—-the Scotchman who comes last in it—

—-the Scotchman who comes last in it.

—-the Scotchman who comes last in it.

Rale, a Scotchman.

Sup.

F---r, the Scotchman.

Beard, the Scotchman.

Craig, the Scotchman.

With a Scotchman.

Stewart, the Scotchman.

Highlands, the Scotchman.

His home, the Scotchman.

His sitting-study, the Scotchman.

With a Scotchman.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

worthy old man—Miss Munro an amiable, sensible, sweet young woman, much resembling Mrs. Grierson. Come to Bannockburn—shown to old house where James III. was murdered. The field of Bannockburn—the hole where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass unimpressed. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers; noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striving more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, bloodthirsty foe. I see them meet in gloriously-triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence! Come to Stirling.

MONDAY [27th].—Go to Harviestoun—Mrs. Hamilton and family—Mrs. Chalmers—Mrs. Shiel. Go to see Cauldron Linn, and Rumbling Brig, and Dell's Mill. Return in the evening to Stirling.

SUPPER—Messrs. Doig (the schoolmaster) and Bell; Captain Forrester of the castle—Doig a queerish figure, and something of a pedant—Bell a joyous, vacant fellow, who sings a good song—Forrester a merry swearing kind of man, with a dash of the rogue.

TUESDAY MORNING [28th].—Breakfast with Captain Forrester—leave Stirling—Ochill hills—Devon river—Forth and Teith—Allan river—Strathblane, a fine country, but little improved—Cross Earn to Crieff—Dine and go to Arbruchall—cold reception at Arbruchall—a most romantically pleasant ride up Earn, by Auchtertyre and Comrie—Sup at Crieff.


THURSDAY [30th].—Come down Tay to Dunkell—Glenlyon House—Lyons river—Druid's Temple—three circles of stones—the outermost sunk—the second has thirteen stones remaining—the innmost has eight—two large detached ones like a gate, to the south-east—pray on it—pass Tay Bridge—Aberfeldy—described in rhyme—Castle Menzies, beyond Grantully—Balleighan—Logierait—Inver—Dr. Stewart—Sup.

FRIDAY [31st].—Walk with Mrs. Stewart and Beard to Birnam top—fine prospect down Tay—Craigieburns hills—hermitage on the Braun Water with a picture of Ossian—breakfast with Dr. Stewart—Neil Gow plays—a short, stout-built Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unassuming simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow. Ride up Tummel river to Blair—Fascially a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Killiecrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dunloe's stone. Blair—Sup with the duchess—easy and happy from the manners of the family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.

SATURDAY [1st Sept.].—Visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoiled with bad taste—Tilt and Garrie rivers—Falls on the Tilt—heather seat—ride in company with Sir William Murray and Mr. Walker to Loch Tummel—meanderings of the Rannoch, which runs through quandam Stream Robertson's estate from Loch Lomond to Loch Dunoon—dine at Blair. Company—General Murray—Captain Murray, an honest tar—Sir William Murray, an honest, worthy man, but tormented with the hypochondria—Mrs. Graham, belle et amiable—Miss Cathcart—Mrs. Murray, a painter—Mr. King—Duchess and fine family, the marquises, Lords James, Edward, and Robert; Ladies Charlotte, Emilia, and children—Dance—Sup—Duke—Mr. Graham of Fintry—Mr. M'laggan—Mrs. and Mr. Stewart.

[SUNDAY, 2d].—Come up the Garrie—Falls of Bruar—Dalnaearchd—Dalwhinnie—Dine—Snow on the hills seventeen feet deep—no corn from Loch Garrie to Dalwhinnie—cross the Spey and come down the stream to Pitnain—straths rich—les environs picturesque—Craigow hill—Ruthven of Badenoch—barraek; wild and magnificent—Roothemure on the other side, and Glenmore—Grant of Roothemure's poetry—told me by the Duke of Gordon—Strathpey rich and romantic.

[MONDAY, 3d].—Breakfast at Aviemore, a wild romantic spot—Snow in patches on the hills; eighteen feet deep—Enter Strathpey—come to Sir James Grant's—dine—Company: Lady Grant, a sweet, pleasant lady; Mr. and Miss Bailie; Mrs. Bailie; Dr. and Mrs. Grant—clergyman—Mr. Hiepburn—Come through mist and darkness to Dulce to lie.

TUESDAY [4th].—Findhorn river—rocky banks—come on to Castle Cawdor, where Macbeth murdered king Duncan—saw the bed on which king Duncan was stabbed—dine at Kilravock—Mrs. Rose, a true chieftain's wife, a daughter of Clephane—Mrs. Rose, jun.—Fort George—inverness.

WEDNESDAY [5th].—Loch Ness—Bres of Ness—General's hut—Fall of Fyors—Uruport Castle and Strath—Dine at—Sup at Mr. Inglis'—Mr. Inglis and Mrs. Inglis; three young ladies.

THURSDAY [6th].—Come over Culloden Mair—reflections on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilravock—old Mrs. Rose, sterling sense, warm heart, strong passion, honest pride, all in an uncommon degree—Mrs. Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother: this, perhaps, owing to her.
being younger—Mr. Grant, minister at Cahier, resembles Mr. Scott at Inverleith—Mrs. Rose and Mr. Grant accompany us to Xilstranan—two young ladies, Miss Ross, who sang two Gaelic songs, beautiful and lovely; Miss Sophie Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them!

Dine at Nairn—fall in with a pleasant enough gentleman, Dr. Stewart, who had been long abroad with his father in the forty-five; and Mr. Falconer, a spare, rascally, warm-hearted Norland, and a nonjuror—Wastes of sand—Brodie Home to lie—Mr. Brodie truly polite, but not just the Highland cordiality.

FRIDAY [7th].—Cross the Findhorn to Forres—Mr. Brodie tells me that the moor where Shake- 
speare lays Macbeth’s witch-meeting is still so haunted that the country folks won’t pass it by night—Elgin to breakfast—meet with Mr. —Mr. Dunbar’s friend, a pleasant sort of a man; can come no nearer—Venerable ruins of Elgin Abbey—a grander effect, at first glance, than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.

Cross Spey to Fochabers—fine palace, worthy of the generous proprietor—dine. Company: duke and duchess, Ladies Charlotte and Maclaine, Col. Abercrombie and lady, Mr. Gordon, and Mr. —, a clergyman, a venerable aged figure, and Mr. Hoy, a clergyman, I suppose, a pleasant open manner. The duke makes me happier than ever great man did—noble, princely, yet mild, condescending, and amiable; gay and kind—the duchess charming, witty, and sensible—God bless them!†

Sleep at Callan. Hitherto the country is seldom poor and unimproved; the houses, crops, horses, cattle, &c., all in unison with their cart-wheels; and these are of low, coarse, unshod, clumsy work, with an axle-tree which had been made with another design than to be a resting shaft between the wheels.

SATURDAY, [8th].—Breakfasted at Banff—Improvements over this part of the country—Ports-
sey Bay—pleasant ride along the shore—country almost wild again between Banff and Newbyth; quite wild as we come through Buchan to Old Deer; but near the village both lands and crops rich—lie.

SUNDAY, [9th].—Set out for Peterhead. Near Peterhead come along the shore by the famous Bullars of Buchan, and Slains Castle. The soil rich; crops of wheat, turnips, &c.; but no inclosing; soil rather light. Come to Ellon and dine—Lord Aberdeen’s seat; entrance denied to everybody owing to the jealousy of trescore over a kept country wench. Soil and improvements as before till we come to Aberdeen to lie.

† For an incident connected with this visit see Lockhart’s Life, p. 78. Lockhart, we may remark, must have had a copy of Burns’s diary differing somewhat from the present.

[Monday, 10th].—Meet with Mr. Chalmers, printer, a fastidious fellow—Mr. Ross, a fine fellow, like Professor Tytler—Mr. Marshall, one of the poets minor—Mr. Sheriff, author of “Jamie and Rose,” a little decrepit body, with some abilities—Bishop Skinner, a nonjuror, son of the author of “Tullochtorus,” a man whose mild, venerable manner is the most marked of any in so young a man—Professor Gordon, a good-natured, jolly-looking professor—Aberdeen, a lazy town—near Stonehouse the coast a good deal romantic—meet my relations, Robert Burns, writer in Stonehouse, one of those who love fun, a gill, a punning joke, and have not a bad heart; his wife, a sweet, hospitable body, without my affection of what is called town breeding.

TUESDAY [11th].—Breakfast with Mr. Burns—lie at Laurencekirk—Almonn—library—Mrs. —, a jolly, frank, sensible, love-inspiring widow—Hew of the Means, a rich, cultivated, but still uninclosed country.

WEDNESDAY [12th].—Cross North Esk river and a rich country to CRAIGOW. Go to Montrose, that finely situated handsome town.

THURSDAY [13th].—Leave Montrose—breakfast at Auchmithie, and sail along that wild, rocky coast, and see the famous caverns, particularly the Clairpet—land and dine at Arbrough—stately ruins of Arbrough Abbey—come to Dundee, through a fertile country—Dundee, a low-lying but pleasant town—old steeples—Tayfirth—Broughty Castle, a finely situated ruin, jutting into the Tay.

FRIDAY [14th].—Breakfast with the Miss Scotts—Mr. Mitchell, an honest clergyman—Mr. Bruce, another, but pleasant, agreeable and engaging; the first from Aberdeen, the second from Forfar. Dine with Mr. Anderson, a brother-in-law of Miss Scott. Miss Scott like Mrs. Greenfield—my boriship almost in love with her. Come through the rich harvests and fine hedgerows of the Cause of Gowrie, along the romantic margin of the Grampian hills, to Perth—Castle Huntly—Sir Stewart Threipland.

SATURDAY [15th].—Perth—Scone—picture of the Chevalier and his sister; Queen Mary’s bed, the hangings wrought with her own hands—fine, fruitful, hilly, woody country round Perth. Taybridge. Mr. and Mrs. Hastings—Major Scott—Castell Gowrie. Leave Perth—come to Strathlorn to Edwarts to dine. Fine, fruitful, cultivated Strath—the scene of “Besie Bell and Mary Gray” near Perth—fine scenery on the banks of the Tay—Mrs. Delchol, gaye, frank, affable, fond of rural sports, hunting, &c. Mrs. Stirling, her sister in law—Come to Kinross to lie—reflections in a fit of the colic.

SUNDAY [Sept. 16th].—Come through a cold, barren country to Queensferry—dine, across the ferry, and come to Edinburgh.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

VISIT BY BURNS TO CLACKMANNANSHIRE, &c.

LETTER TO DR. CURRIE FROM DR. JAMES M'KINTYRE ADEIR.

"Burns and I left Edinburgh together in August, 1787. We rode by Linlithgow and Carron to Stirling. We visited the iron-works at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that place and its inhabitants to the cavo of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical reader, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling the prospect from the castle strongly interested him; in a former visit to which his national feelings had been powerfully excited by the ruined and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish part of the race had been held. His indignation had vented itself in some impudent, but not unpatriotic lines, which had been much offended, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn, on which they were written.

"At Stirling we met with a company of travellers from Edinburgh, among whom was a character in many respects congenial to that of Burns. This was Nicol, one of the teachers of the High Grammar-School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation; the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow, characteristic both. Jacobitical principles in politics were common to both of them; and these have been suspected, since the revolution of France, to have given place in each to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no memorandum of their conversation, either on this or on other occasions, when I happened to meet them together. Many songs were sung; which I mention for the sake of observing that when Burns was called on in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with a tone and emphasis, which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathetic. This he did on the present occasion.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harvieston in Clackmannanshire, then inhabited by Mrs. Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted. He introduced me to the family, and there was formed my first acquaintance with Mrs. Hamilton's eldest daughter, to whom I have been married for nine years. Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connection from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at

Harvieston, we made excursions to visit various parts of the surrounding scenery, inferior to none in Scotland in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; particularly Castl Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyle; and the famous glen that of the Devil, called the Caldron Lin; and the Rumbling Bridge, a single braid arch, thrown by the Devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at about the height of a hundred feet above its bed. An expedition that none of those scenes should have called forth an exertion of Burns's muse. But I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque. I well remember that the ladies at Harvieston, who accompanied us on this journey, expressed their disappointment at his not expressing in more glowing and fervid language, his impressions of the Caldron Lin scene, certainly highly sublime and somewhat horrid.

"A visit to Mrs. Bruce of Clackmannan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings more powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristic dignity, informed me, on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family. Though almost deprived of speech by a paralytic affection, she preserved her hospitality and urbanity. She was in possession of the race's helm and sword, which she conferred on Burns and myself the honour of knighthood, remarking that she had a better right to confer that title than some people. . . . You will, of course, conclude that the old lady's political tenets were as Jacobitical as the poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception and entertainment.—She gave us as

1 Catherine Bruce was the daughter of Alexander Bruce, Esq., of the family of Newton, and in early life became the wife of Henry Bruce, Esq., of Clackmannan, the acknowledged chief of the family in Scotland. It is a pity that her family boast to be ancestry is not supported by historical authorities. By these scrupulous genealogists the descent of her family, husband, and other landed men of the same cannot be traced further back than to a Sir Robert Bruce, who lived in the age following that of the restored of Scottish independence, and whom King David II., in a charter bestowing on him the lands of Clackmannan and others, styles as his cousin. There is little reason, however, to applaud that from Sir Robert, first of Clackmannan, were descended the families of Aber, Kinneil (of whom came the Ayreman traveler), Kinross (of whom are the Earls of Kinross), Carnock (of whom were the Earls of Kinross), and many other honourable houses. On the death of Henry Bruce, July 8, 1722, without surviving issue, his widow continued to reside in the ancient old tower of the family, situated on a hill at the west end of the town of Clackmannan, where she kept the sword and helmet told to have been worn by King Robert at the battle of Dun bocklaw. She survived to the 4th of November, 1791, when she had reached the age of ninety-five. The sword and helmet then passed, by her will, to the Earl of Kinross. The tower where the family flourished so long, and where Burns was entertained, has, since the death of Mrs. Bruce, fallen into ruin.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

her first toast after dinner, Auld Ureca, or Away with the Strangers. Who these strangers were you will readily understand. Mrs. A. corrects me by saying it should be Hooi, or Hooi Ureca, a sound used by shepherds to direct their dogs to drive away the sheep.

"We returned to Edinburgh by Kinnross (on the shore of Lochaven and Queensferry. I am inclined to think Burns knew nothing of poor Michael Bruce, who was then alive at Kinnross, or had died there a short while before. A meeting between the bardis, or a visit to the deserted cottage and early grave of poor Bruce, would have been highly interesting."

"At Dunfermline we visited the ruined abbey and the abbey church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the pulpit, or stood of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for procession; while Burns from the pulpit addressed to me a humorous reproof and exhortation, parodied from that which had been delivered to himself in Ayridiro, where he had, as he assured me, once been one of seven who mounted the seat of shame together.

"In the church-yard two broad flag-stones marked the grave of Robert Bruce, for whose memory Burns had more than common veneration. He knelt and kissed the stone with sacred fervour, and heartily (even at now erst) execrated the worse than Gothic neglect of the first of Scottish heroes."

SYME'S NARRATIVE OF A TOUR WITH BURNS IN GALLOWAY.

"I got Burns a gray Highland sheltie to ride on. We dined the first day, 27th July, 1793, at Glenkonwyne, near Parton; a beautiful situation on the Banks of the Dee. In the evening we walked out and ascended a gentle eminence, from which we had a fine view of Alpino scenery as can well be imagined. A delightful soft evening showed all its wilder as well as its grander graces. Immediately opposite, and within a mile of us, we saw Airds, a charming romantic place, where dwelt Low, the author of 'Mary, weep no more for me.' This was classical ground for Burns. He viewed 'the highest hill which rises o'er the source of Dee;' and would have staid till 'the passing spirit' had appeared, had we not resolved to reach Kenmure that night. We arrived as Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were sitting down to supper."

"Here is a genuine baron's seat. The castle, an old building, stands on a large natural moat. In front the Ken winds for several miles through the most fertile and beautiful holin, till it expands into a lake twelve miles long, the lakes of which, on the south, present a fine and soft landscape of green knolls, natural wood, and here and there a gray rock. On the north the aspect is wild, and, I may say, tremendous. In short I can scarcely conceive a scene more terribly romantic than the castle of Kenmure. Burns thinks so highly of it that he mediates a description of it in poetry. Indeed, I believe he has begun the work. We spent three days with Mr. Gordon, whose polished hospitality is of an original and enchanting kind. Mrs. Gordon's lap-dog, Echo, was dead. She would have an epitaph for him. Several had been made. Burns was asked for one. This was setting Hercules to the distaff. He disliked the subject; but, to please the lady, he would try. Here is what he produced:

In wood and wild, ye wandering throng,
Your heavy loss deplore,
Now half your powers of sound,
Sweet Echo is no more.
Ye jarring, shrieking things around,
Scream your discordant joys!
Now half your din of tuneful song
With Echo silent lies.

"We left Kenmure and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor-road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed, thundertongued, the thunderrolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene—he spoke not a word, but sceneed with meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements 'rumble their bellows' upon our defenseless heads. Oh! Oh! 'twas foul. We got utterly wet; and, to revenge ourselves, Burns insisted at Gatehouse on our getting utterly drunk.

"From Gatehouse we went next to Kirkendbright, through a fine country. But here I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of jeving boots for the journey, which had been thoroughly wet, and which had been dried in such manner that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny poet tried force, and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to Saint Mary's Isle, the seat of the of the forfeited title, Viscount Kenmure, a title which became dormant in 1797 on the death of his successor.

"The town sprang, about the middle of the eighteenth century, from a single cottage situated at the gate of the Avenue to Cally House—hence the name.
The castle, a large natural fort. The sky was of a grey natural hue. The hollow winds shook the thundershied, the thunderbolt, the thunderclap, the thunderclap. He spoke not of meditation. In a fall, it poured in our ears did the wind "foul" upon our ears; it was foul. We got ourselves, Burns got uttering the sound, the sound next to Kirk- country. But here I got a pair of jeayy's and been thoroughly expiated in such manner as to order them on again. I would and tore them to pieces. This sort is more dangerous calamity. We were, the seat of the county, a title which became successor.

County of Kirkcudbright. The expansion into Fleet boat the middle of the Firth situated at the gate of the name.
Earl of Selkirk.

comilled at
sick stomach
the man of
reason with
fume with
temper. I hit one
house of God.
Against the
offended, he
offended.
most spigron
wards fell
Morine who
blow at him.

When Morine
Tae nothing
Thy fool's hand
I grant thou.

"Well, I
comforted
light ala
the house of
of his ful
ances; and
them in h
they were.

"We rode
I had promised
the first night
Burns was
and swore
be under the
therefore,
and h
evening we
had not about
of a lord;
least in his
eight o'clock
St. Mary's
that can, in
blage of ex
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not to dw
you that we
beautiful)
among others
sung us many
instruments.
Selkirk sung
Gregory.

1 St. Mary's
a short dist
the Douglas
the title
Hamilton.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was disconsolate at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach and a headache lout their aid, and the man of verse was quite neacable. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us! how he did famo with rage! Nothing could restrain him in temper. I tried various experiments, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of Garlestown, across the bay of Wigtoun. Against the Earl of Galloway, with whom he was offended, he expected his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humour indeed. He afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one Marine whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him:

When Morian, deceased, to the devil went down,
That nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown:
Thy lord's head, quoth Satan, that crown shall wear never,
I must have it as wed to, but not quite so clever.

"Well, I am to bring my reader to Kirkendbright along with our poet without boots. I carried the torn ruins across my saddle in spite of his fulminations, and in contempt of appearances; and, what is more, Lord Selkirk carried them in his coach to Dumfries. He insisted they were worth mending."

"We reached Kirkendbright about one o'clock. I had promised that we should dine with one of the first men in our country, John Dalzell. But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humour, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint. We prevailed, therefore, and Mr. Dalzell to dine with us in the inn, and had a very agreeable party. In the evening we set out for St. Mary's Isle. Robert had not absolutely regained the mildness of good temper, and it occurred once or twice to him, as he rode along, that St. Mary's Isle was the seat of a lord; yet that lord was not an aristocrat, at least in his sense of the word. We arrived about eight o'clock, as the family were at ten and coffee. St. Mary's Isle is one of the most delightful places that can, in my opinion, be formed by the assemblage of every soft, but not tame object, which constitutes natural and cultivated beauty. But not to dwell on its external graces, let me tell you that we found all the ladies of the family (all beautiful) at home, and some strangers; and among others, who but Urbain! The Italian sung us many Scottish songs, accompanied with instrumental music. The young ladies of Selkirk sung also. We had the song of 'Lord Gregory,' which I asked for to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite it to ballad to that time. He did recite it; and such was the effect that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves when it is touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation and indulgence of the sympathy produced. Burns's 'Lord Gregory' is, in my opinion, a most beautiful and affecting ballad. The fastidious critic may perhaps say some of the sentiments and imagery are too elevated a kind for such a style of composition; for instance, 'Thou bolt of heaven that passest by; and 'Ye mustering thunder,' etc. but this is a cold-blooded objection, which I will say rather than feel.

"We enjoyed a most happy evening at Lord Selkirk's. We had, in every sense of the word, a feast, in which our minds and our senses were equally gratified. The poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning, was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination.

"I told you that in the midst of the storm, on the hills of Kencnure, Burns was wroth in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was engaging the English army, along with Bruce, at Hanoineburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride home from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell:

'Scouts who has w'll Wallace lked, &c."

LIBRARY OF BURNS.

On the decease of Burns, the books in his library were numerous and well-selected. The following list was furnished by the sons of the poet; and although it comprises a portion only of their father's library, it will be accepted by his admirers as a most interesting memorial.

BELLES LETTRES AND ELEGANT LITERATURE.

-Dundal Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. 2to.
- Blair's Lectures.
- Kainoe's Elements of Criticism.
- Kainoe's Sketches of Man.
- Smith's Moral Sentiments.
- Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful.
- Balcan's Works.
- Helman's Clever.
- Melmoth's Clever.
- Elegant Extracts in Prose and Verse. 3 Vols. 2to.
- Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets.
- Goldsmith's Works.
- Swift's Works.
- Sterne's Works.
- Letters by Pope, Gay, Swift, and other eminent Writers.

ESSAYS.

The Spectator. The Preacher.
The Rambler. The World.
The Idler. The Observer.
The Adventurer. The Mirror.
The Tatler. The Lounger.
The Guardian.
APPENDIX TO LIFE OF BURNS.

POETRY.
Homer's Iliad. Translated by
Macpherson.

Virgil. Translated by GAVIN
Douglas. With Glossary.

Terence's Jerusalem. Delivered,
Translated by Hook.

Chaucer's Works. Folio.

Chaucer's Works. 2 Folios in
Folio. Black Letter. More
than one-half of one of the
copies in Manuscript.

Ancient Poets of Scotland,
Moanwos, Perth.

Cumberland, with the Battle,
and the Twilight of the
Gods.

Ossian's Poems.

Robin Hood Ballads.

Percy's Reliques of Ancient
Poetry.

Allan Ramsay's Poems.

Hume's Gentle Shepherd.

Plates by David Allan.

Millon's Works.

DRAMA.

Shakespeare. Edited by Joun-
son. 8 Vols. 8vo.

Shakespeare. Edited by BAIL.
20 Vols. 12mo.

Molière's Works.

Ben Johnson's Dramatic
Works.

GENERAL.

Encyclopædia Britannica. 10
Vols. 1788.

Euclid's Elements of Geome-
try.

Steele's Philosophy of Natu-
ral History.

Smith's Wealth of Nations.

Land-surveying. Various
Treatises.

Arithmetic. Various Trea-
tises.

Gauging. Various Treatises.

Music. Many Books, Ancient
and Modern.

WORKS OF FICTION.

Tom Jones. Fielding.


Humphrey Clinker. Da.

Sir Laurence Sterne, Da.

Don Quixote. Translation.

HISTORY.

Gibbon's Decline and Fall of
the Roman Empire.

Hume's History of England.

Smollett's Continuation of
Hume's History of England.

Somerville's History of the
Last Years of Queen Anne.

Goldsmith's Roman History.

L'Histoire des Incas de Peru.

L'Histoire de la Revolution
Américaine.

Josephus' Works.

AND RELIGIOUS WORKS.

Hervey's Thron and Aspaia.

Elizabeth West's Meditations.

Wellwood's Glimpses of Glory.

Rutherford's Letters.

Watts' Hymns.

Solemn League and Covenant.

Confession of Faith.

The Books Worthies.

Sundry large Volumes, Folio,
4to, and 8vo, containing
many Treatises connected with
the Church of Genes, and
the Reformation in general.

SERMONS, THEOLOGY,

Bibles. Various.

Blair's Sermons.

Tillotson's Sermons.

Sherlock's Sermons.

Sermons. Many Volumes.

Works of John Knox. 4to.

Baxter's Call to the Uncon-
tverted.

Baxter's Saints' Rest.

Boston's Creek in the Lot.

Boston's Poor-Foot State.

Hervey's Meditations.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Boime's French Dictionary.

Thick 8vo.

Moore's Travels.

Baron Treesch.

D'Urso's Narrative of Wars in
India.
POEMS AND SONGS.
POEMS AND SONGS.

EARLIEST TO 1785.

SONG—HANDSOME NELL.

TUNE—"I am a man unmarried."

"The following composition," says Burns, in his first Common-place Book, referring to this lyric, "was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of my life (probably 1775), when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity, unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly, but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere. The subject of it was a young girl, who really deserved all the praises I have bestowed upon her. I not only had this opinion of her then—but I actually think so still, now that the spell is long since broken, and the enchantment at an end."

O, once I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still;
And whilst that virtue warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell.

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

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

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

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

1 Of the subject of the song, Burns speaks more at large in the autobiographical sketch of his early days which he sent to Dr. Moore, and which will be found in the Appendix to the Life. The heroine's name was Nelly Kilpatrick, the daughter of the same blacksmith to whom Burns was indebted for the loan of the History of Sir William Wallace (see the Life). The inspiration took place in the harvest-field at Mount Oliphant, "in my fifteenth autumn, he says in the letter to Dr. Moore, and one would understand that the little piece was composed at that time. But elsewhere the poet expressly says it was written when he was a few months more than his sixteenth year, that is in 1775. Burns himself, says Lockhart, "characterizes it as a very puerile and silly performance, yet it
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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


SONG—TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

TEXT—"Incroyable's Reel."

Burns, in his notes written in an interleaved copy of Johnson's Scots Musical Museum, presented to his friend Capt. Riddell, remarks in regard to this piece, "This song I composed about the age of seventeen." The year of its composition would therefore be probably 1776.

Oh, Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
Ye wad na been sae shy;
For lack o' gear ye lightly me,
But, troth, I care na by. 1

Yestreen I met ye on the moor,
Ye spak' na, but gaed by like stoure;
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fient a hair care I.
Oh, Tibbie, &c.

When comin' hame on Sunday last,
Upon the road as I cam' past,
Ye snuff an' gae your head a cast,
But, troth, I care't na by.
Oh, Tibbie, &c.

contains here and there lines of which he need hardly have been ashamed at any period of his life."

Among the poet's memoranda, is the following somewhat elaborate criticism by himself on the same song:—"The first distich of the first stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of our ordinary street ballads; and, on the other hand, the second distich is too much in the other extreme. The expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious. Stanza the second I am well pleased with; and I think it conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the sex—the agreeables; or what in our Scottish dialect we call a sweet soany lass. The third stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it, and the third line has rather too serious a cast. The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one; the first line is, indeed, all in the strain of the second stanza, but the rest is mostly an expulsive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come finely up to my favourite idea—a sweet soany lass: the last line, however, halts a little. The same sentiments are kept up with equal spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza; but the second and fourth lines, ending with short syllables, hurt the whole. The seventh stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, and my blood sallies at the remembrance."

1 The heroine is said, by Mrs. Begg, the poet's sister, to have been Isabella Steven, the daughter of a small land-owner near Lochlea, which, if true, unsettles her brother's chronology, for he was nineteen when the removal to Lochlea took place.

2 This stanza is inserted in the first Common-place Book, extending from April, 1783, to October, 1785, and which was first printed in anything like complete form in 1872. The Scotch idiom care na by means literally "care not by, or in regard to (that)."
POEMS AND SONGS.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

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.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu' dry.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or ear,
Be better than the kye.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak' my advice,
Your daddie's gear mak's you sae nice;
The deil a one wad speir your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

There lives a lass beside your park,
I'd rather hae her in her sark,
Than you wi' a' your thousand mark;
That gars you look sae high.

Oh, Tibbie, etc.

SONG—I DREAM'D I LAY.

"These two stanzas," says Burns, "I composed when I was seventeen [1776]: they are among the oldest of my printed pieces."

I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing,
Gaily in the sunny bean;
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.

"These two stanzas," says Burns, "I composed when I was seventeen [1776]: they are among the oldest of my printed pieces."

The two stanzas, says Burns, "I composed when I was seventeen [1776]: they are among the oldest of my printed pieces."
POEMS AND SONGS.

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.
The' 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.  1

TRAGIC FRAGMENT.  2

"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 further 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 as I am!''  &c.—R. R.

The piece was composed then in 1777 or 1778.

All villain as I am—a damned wretch,
A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting sinner,
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere but unavailing sighs
I view the helpless children of distress!
With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsustaining heart was all his crime.—
E'en you, ye hapless 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,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
O injured God! Thy goodness has endow'd me
W' 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 me more.

1 "On comparing these verses with those on "Handsome Nell," the advance achieved by the young bard in the course of two short years must be regarded with admiration."—J. G. LOCKHART.

2 This fragment was first published by Cromek in 1802, but without the concluding five lines; it was found by that industrious collector among the poet's papers, headed by Burns's note given above. The piece was copied into the Common-place Book in March, 1784. Notwithstanding the note given by Burns as to the origin of the Fragment, we find him heading one copy of it: "A Fragment in the Hour of Remorse, on Seeing a Fellow-Creature in Misery, whom I had once known in Better Days." Who can doubt that the lines beginning "With tears indignant," &c., refers to the tyrant factor whose insolent threatening caprices used to set the family in tears; and that the "honest man" with "unsustaining heart," was the poet's noble father.
POEMS AND SONGS.

THE TARBOLTON LASSES.

This is evidently an early production of the bard. Its exact date cannot be ascertained; its probable date may be given as 1778.

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

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

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,
    And tak a look o' Mysie;
She's dour and din, a devil within,
    But aiblins she may please ye.

If she be shy, her sister try,
    Ye'll maybe fancy Jenny;
If ye'll dispense w.¹ want o' sense—
    She kens hersel' she's bonnie.

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

There's few sae bonnie, nane sae gude,
    In a' King George's dominion;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this—
    It's Bessy's ain opinion!¹

AH, WOE IS ME, MY MOTHER DEAR.

The following verses were copied from the Glenrudie MSS. in the Athenæum Library, Liverpool, and were contained in an account of these MSS., printed for private circulation in 1874. They were first published among the poems in Paterson's edition of Burns (Edin. 1877). They were probably written in 1778.

PARAPHRASE OF JEREMIAH XV. 10.

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.

¹The above satirical verses first appeared in Chambers's edition of the poet's works in 1851, with the editor's critical remark that they are strikingly inferior to the young bard's average efforts; 'yet, as expressive of a mood of his feelings regarding his fair neighbours in these days of simplicity, they appear not unworthy of preservation.' It is to be regretted that Chambers does not inform us where he got these verses, nor on what grounds he felt satisfied as to their authorship.
POEMS AND SONGS.

I ne'er could lend on bill or bond,
That five per cent might bless me;
And borrowing, on the tither hand,
The devil a wad trust me.

Yet I, a coin-denied wight,
By Fortune quite discarded;
Ye see how I am, day and night,
By had and lass blackguarded.

SONG—MONTGOMERY'S PEGGY.\(^1\)

"The following fragment is done," writes Burns in his first Common-place Book, "something in imitation of the manner of a noble old Scotch piece called 'M'Millan's Peggy.' . . . My Montgomery's Peggy was my deity for six or eight months. She had been tried (though as the world says, without any just pretence for it) in a style of life rather elegant; but, as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, 'My damned star found me out' there too; for though I began the affair merely in a point de cœur, or, to tell the truth, which will scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a billet-doux, which I always piqued myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish galantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me one day in a flag of truce, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but, with the greatest friendship, and politeness, she offered me every alliance except actual possession. I found out afterwards that what she told me of a pre-engagement was really true; but it cost me some heart-aches to get rid of the affair. I have even tried to imitate, in this extempore thing, that irregularity in the rhyme, which, when judiciously done, has such a fine effect on the ear." The date of composition is probably 1770.

**Tune—"Gala Water."**

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaide,
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomery'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 Montgomery'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 Montgomery's Peggy.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) Peggy was housekeeper with Archibald Montgomery, Esq., of Collafirth, and Burns had met her frequently at Tarbolton Mm. Besides they sat in the same church, like the Laird of Dunblane and the lady whom, from this circumstance, that worthy learned to admire, and afterwards married.

\(^2\) Not well expressed. The meaning is, "all of joy it would give to me (would be) the sharing of it," &c.
POEMS AND SONGS.

THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.

This poem (written probably about 1780) was first published in Chambers's edition of Burns (1851); the editor does not indicate whence he derived it.

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 frae them a', man.

Their father's a laird, and weel he can spar't,
Braid money to tocher them a', man;
To proper young men he'll clink in the hand
C'owd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

There's one they ca' Jean, I'll warrant ye've seen
As bonnie a lass as or as braw, man,
But for sense and guid taste, she'll vie w' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

The charms o' the min', the longer 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' Brackhead wad been on his speed
For mair than a townsend or twa, man,
The Laird o' the Ford wad straught on a board
If he canna get her at a', man.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
The boast o' our bachelors a', man;
She's sonsy 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 fault wad be mine, if they didna shine
The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

1 The Bennals is a farm in the west part of Tarbolton parish, near Afton Lodge and a few miles from Lochin (the poet's residence at this time). The former Ronald, was considered to be a man of considerable means, and his two daughters were the belles of the district, being handsome and fairly well educated. Gilbert Burns wooed the elder sister Jean, but after a lengthened correspondence, he was rejected as being too poor. The poet himself seems to have had a liking for Anna, but was too proud to risk a refusal. But Fortune had humiliation in store for the wealthy and purse-proud Ronalds. In November, 1789 (some nine or ten years after the above verses were written), Burns writes to his brother William: —

"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."

2 Laird is a title popularly applied in Scotland to a proprietor of lands or houses.
I loe her mysel', but darena weel tell,
  My poverty keeps me in awe, man,
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
  Does little or nothing at a', man.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,
  Nor hae'it in her power to say na, man;
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
  My stomach's as proud as theirs a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel booted pride,
  And flee' o'er the hills like a craaw, man,
I can hand up my head wi' the best o' the breed
Though flattering ever sae 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 stamps,
  And ne'er a wrang steek in them a', man.

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

I never had frien's weel-stockit in means,
  To leave me a hundred or twa, man,
Nor weel tochered aunts, to wait on their drants,
  Dowered drawling talk
And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I never was canny for hoarding o' money,
  Or clauthten't together at a', man;
I've little to spend, and nothing to lend,
  But deevil a shilling I aw, man.

* * * * * * *

SONG—ON CESSNOCK BANKS.2

TUNE—"If he be a Butcher neat and trim."

On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells,
  Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lasses a' she far excels,
  An' she has twa sparkling roguish een!

1 The technical name of a coarsish kind of linen, woven with 1200 warp-threads: coarser, therefore, than the "seventeen hundred" linen mentioned in "Tam o' Shanter."

2 There are two versions of this song in existence. The one here given is that printed in Pickering's Aldine edition from the poet's own MS. The other is that published by Cessnock in 1808, and stated by him to have been "recovered from the oral communication of a lady in Glasgow, whom the hard, early in life, dearly loved." This lady (said to have been the subject of the poem) was Elibion Begbie, the daughter of a small farmer in Galston parish, and was a servant with a family on the banks of the
POEMS AND SONGS.

She's sweeter than the morning dawn,
When rising Phoebus first is seen;
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

She's stately like youthfull ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn,
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

Her lookes are like the vernal May,
When ev'n Phoebus shines serene;
While birds rejoice in every spray;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

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

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When gleaming stelleboms intervein,
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

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 roguish een.

Cessnock, about two miles from the Burnes' farm of Lochlea at the time this song was written, that is when the poet was twenty-one years of age. Ellison was, according to Mrs. Begg (Burnes' sister), the belle-jille who the poet says filled him while he was at Irvine, after having promised to marry him, and for whom he evidently had a sincere respect. She married some years after, and went to Glasgow, but nothing is known of her subsequent life. Several letters to her from Burns will be found at the beginning of his Correspondence. She could hardly be described as a beautiful woman; her charms lay in her mind, and in this respect she was so superior to the average maidens of her rank in life, that Burns, after his acquaintance with Edinburgh ladies, declared she was, of all the women he had ever seriously addressed, the one most likely to have formed an agreeable companion for life.—Cromek's version of the present piece opens thus:—

On Cessnock banks there lives a lass,
Could I describe her shape and mien;

The grace of her well-fa'nd face,
And the gleam of her sparkling een!

The concluding line in each of the following stanzas runs:—

An' she's twa glancing' sparrow' een.

The fifth stanza reads:—

Her looks are like the sportive lamb
When flow'rly May adorns the scene,
That wants its budding dam;
An' she's twa glancing' sparrow' een.

There are some other slight variations, but what is of more importance is that Cromek's version wants two entire stanzas—the eighth and ninth. Stanza nine of the original has "teeth," apparently by a mere slip, as the lady's teeth are duly described in stanza eleven. We have followed Mr. Scott Douglas in giving "bosom's" instead.—So far as we are aware no time is now known by such a name as that given under the title.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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 roguish een.

Her lips are like you cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from Boreas screen,—
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

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

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phoebus sinks behind the seas;
An' she has twa sparkling roguish een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,
An' chiefly in her roguish een.

——

SONG—HERE'S TO THY HEALTH, MY BONNIE LASS.¹

TUNE—“Laggan Burn.”

Here's to thy health, my bonnie lass;
Guid night and joy be wi' thee;
I'll come nae mair² 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 hang ye look about ye.

¹ This has been often claimed as an early production of the poet, dating about 1780; later in life he is said to have revised it, and in the fifth volume of Johnson's Museum it appears as "written for this work by Robert Burns." We think it advisable to note, however, that the poet's sister, Mrs. Rigg, states that it is one of those familiar ditties which were frequently sung at country firesides before her brother's lyrics became known, and its character is quite in accordance with this statement. The concluding four lines seem to have little connection with what goes before, and might justify the suspicion that more than one hand has been at the making of the song.

² Evidently "no more" would better suit the versification, but this is the reading of the Museum.
Thou'rt aye 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 friends try ilka means,
Fae 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;
But I'm as free as any he;
Sma' siller will relieve me.
I count my health my greatest wealth,
Sae long as I'll enjoy it:
I'll fear me scant, I'll bide nae want,
As lang's I get employment.

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

POEMS AND SONGS.

Thou'rt aye 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 friends try ilka means,
Fae wedlock to delay thee,
Depending on some higher chance—
But fortune may betray thee.

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And aye until ye try them:
Tho' they seem fair still have a care,
They may prove as bad as I am.
But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright,
My dear I'll come and see thee;
For the man that lo'es his mistress weel
Nae travel makes him weary.

SONG—BONNIE PEGGY ALISON.¹

TUNE—"The Braces o' Balquhidder,"²

Burns had even thus early in his career (about 1780 or 1781), begun to seek out the remains of the old lyrics of his country. The chorus is all that in this instance he has deemed worthy of preservation. It belongs to an old song whose indecency seems to have condemned it to the uncertain keeping of the memories of men.

I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
An' I'll kiss thee o'er again,
An' I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonnie Peggy Alison.

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them, 0:
Young kings upon their hannel throne
Are no sae blest as I am, 0!
I'll kiss thee yet, &c.

¹ The heroine of this song was Ellison, or Alison Begbie, in whose praise was also composed "On Cessnock banks" (see p. 196). It is also supposed that she inspired the charming "Mary Morison."
² This tune is now more popularly connected with "I'm o'er young to marry yet."
When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O;
I seek me mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!
I'll kiss thee yet, &c.

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

---

SONG—MARY MORISON. ¹

TUNE—"Bide ye yet.'

In a letter to Thomson, the poet styles this, "one of my juvenile works," and it is inferred from a note of his brother Gilbert's that the heroine was Ellison Beagie. See note to preceding song.

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,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

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

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

¹ "Of all the productions of Burns the pathetic and serious love songs, which he 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.'"—HAMILTON.

The tune to which Burns composed the song, as intimated above, was "bide ye yet." In Thomson's collection it is set to an air called "The Glasgow Lasses," arranged by Beethoven. Wilson, the famous Scottish vocalist, sang it to a melody called "The Miller," and this is now a more popular setting than any of the others.
A PRAYER

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

"There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters which threatened, and, indeed, effected the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria or confirmed melancholy; in this wretched 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."—BURNS'S COMMON-PLACE BOOK, March, 1784. It was probably written about the same time as the next piece.

O' Thou Great Being! what Thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Ave all Thy works below.

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

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

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

WINTER—A DIRGE.¹

"There is something," says the poet in his Common-place Book, April, 1784, "even in the Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste
Alert 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—do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which excites 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 over 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 (probably about the end of 1781), I composed the following song—tune, "MacPherson's Farewell.""

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

¹ In 1787 the poet notes this as being the oldest of his then printed pieces.
POEMS AND SONGS.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"  
The joyless winter-day,  
Let others fear, to me more dear  
Than all the pride of May:  
The tempest's howl, she 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  
Those 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.

A PRAYER
IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

"This prayer was composed," says Burns, "when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, first put nature on the alarm." It was, therefore, probably written during his short and unfortunate sojourn at Irvine in 1781.

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.

1 Dr. Young. — R. B.
STANZAS
ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.

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

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

PARAPHRASE OF THE FIRST PSALM.

This and the poetical version of the Ninetieth Psalm following were probably written about the same period as the three preceding pieces, the winter of 1781-82.

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

1 These "Stanzas" seem to have been written about the same time as the "Prayer" preceding, and the piece was apparently a favourite with the author, who gave it some polishing before inserting it in the Edinburgh edition of 1787. In a manuscript of the book it was entitled, "Misgivings in the Hour of Despondency and Prospect of Death;" in the Stair manuscript, into which he afterwards copied the poem, he altered this to "Misgivings of Despondency on the Approach of the Gloomy Monarch of the Grave."
POEMS AND SONGS.

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, torn
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.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH
PSALM PARAPHRASED.

Probably, like the above, written in winter, 1781-82.

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 pond'rous globe itself
Arose at Thy command:

That power 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!"
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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

SONG—RAGING FORTUNE.

A FRAGMENT.

This song was composed about 1781 or 1782, under the pressure of a heavy train of those misfortunes to which the youth of Burns was subject. "Twas at the same time," says he in the first Common-place Book, referring to the close of one of these "dreadful periods," as he calls them, "I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style. I am not musical scholar enough to prick down my time properly, so it can never see the light, and perhaps 'tis no great matter; but the following were the verses I composed to suit it. The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole air." See First Common-place Book in last volume of this work.

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

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

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

But luckless Fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O;

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

SONG, IN THE CHARACTER OF A RUINED FARMER.²

TUNE—"Go from my window, Love, do."

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

¹ The recurrence of this O at the end of each alternate line is a decided blemish. Readers had better consider it omitted.
² There can be little doubt that the "Ruined Farmer" was the poet's father, whose unavailing struggles against misfortune were brought to a close in February, 1784.
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,
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 babes in her arms;
No anxious fear their little hearts alarms;
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 caressed,
I once could relieve the distressed,
Now life's poor support hardly earned
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,
All friendless, forsaken, forlorn!
For in this world, rest and peace
I never more shall know!
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

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SONG—MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

TUNE—"The Weaver and his Shuttle, O."

"The following song," says Burns, in the Common-place Book already referred to, "is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over." It was written probably about 1781-82.

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

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O,
The' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O.
POEMS AND SONGS.

My talents they were not the worst; nor yet my education, O;
Resolved was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther, O;
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

EXTEMPORE VERSES—"I'LL GO AND BE A SODGER."

"Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution, 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. I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope."—BURNS TO MISS CHALMERS, Jan. 22, 1788. Dr. Currie gives April, 1782, as the date of this impromptu. It is transcribed in the book of blank paper, into which it was the poet's expressed intention of entering farm memorandums when he occupied Mossgiel farm in March, 1784.

O why the dence should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine—
I'll go and be a sodger.
I got some gear wi' meikle care,
I held it weel thegither;
But now it's gone, and something mair—
I'll go and be a sodger.

---

SONG—THE CURE FOR ALL CARE.

TUNE—"Prepare, my dear brethren, to the tavern let's fly."

These lines were probably written about 1782, some months after Burns had been passed and raised as a freemason. He apparently modelled the song (such as it is) on a Bacchanalian ditty in Yair's Charmer (1751), the concluding line of one of whose stanzas runs:

And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing.

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving to snare,—
For a big-bellied bottle's the whole of my care.

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-bellied 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 proved it fair,
That a big-bellied 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 waddled 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-bellied bottle's a heaven of care.

Added in a Mason Lodge.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May every true brother of the compass and square,
Have a big-bellied bottle when harass'd with care.

1 Young's "Night Thoughts."—R. B.
This ballad, probably produced in 1782, was copied into the first Common-place Book, under date of June, 1785, with the following incomplete note: "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 which I have interwoven here and there in the following piece. . . ." The old ballad is given in Jameson’s Popular Ballads (1806) from his own recollection as a boy.

There was three kings into the east,¹
Three kings both great and high,
An’ they ha’ sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

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

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And show’rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

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

The sober autumn enter’d mild,
When 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 ta’en a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

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

They fill’d up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,

¹Burns always gave this line with note. The note many of his editors prefer the less characteristic and has an antique ring with it which were has not; but less Scotch form.
POEMS AND SONGS.

They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.
They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him further wo,
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.
They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The narrow of his bones;
But a Miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him 'tween two stones.
And they hae ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.
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 wo;
'Twill 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!  

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFUL TALE.

"He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Hughes's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Maille was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and Dying Words,' pretty much in the way they now stand."—GILBERT BURNS.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,        together
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,        one
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,        hoof cast a loop
An' ower she wassled in the ditch:

1 The version copied into the Common-place Book proved version, published in the first Edinburgh edition of 1787, is what we have followed.
POEMS AND SONGS.

There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hugh the 1st he came doytin by.

Wi' glowerin' een, an' lifted hun's,
Poor Hugh the 1st like a statue stane'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, whose lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my master dear.

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

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

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel'.
An' teats o' hay an' rippes o' corn.

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

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An', if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!

1 A neighbour herd-callan [neighbour herd-boy] about three-fourths as wise as other folk.—R. B. Hugh the 1st is the familiar diminutive of Hugh.
POEMS AND SONGS.

An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his clots,
Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

"An' niest my yowie, silly thing,
Gude keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' any blastit, moorland toop;
But aye keep mind to moop an' mel,
Wi' sheep o' credit like thyseel!'\(^1\)

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

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

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

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

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

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

Thro' a' the town she trottet by him;
A lang half-mile she could desery him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:

1. \(\) The expiring animal's admonitions touching the education of the 'poor toop-lamb her son and heir,' and the 'yowie, silly thing,' her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of aly homely wit, imbedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the 'Twa Dogs,' and perhaps to its utmost depth in his 'Death and Dr. Hornbook.'—J. G. Lockhart.
POEMS AND SONGS.

A friend mair faithful ne'er came nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I wot she was a sheepe o' sense,
An' could behave hersel' wi' mense:
I'll say'it, she never brak a fence,
Tho' thievish greed.

Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sair' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe,
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;

An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Fae yon the Tweed:

A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie dead.¹

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wenchandie thing—a rape!
It makes guid fellows gira an' gape,
Wi' chokin' dread;

An Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bauds on bonnie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your chantars tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!

His heart will never get aboon
His Mailie dead.²

¹Original MS.
She was nac get o' rooted rams,
Wi' tawted ket, and legs like kins,
She was the flower o' Eddie lamsi
A famous breed;
Now Robin, greetin', cheers the rams
O' Mailie dead.

²"But a tenderer sportfulness dwells in him, and
comes forth there and there in exannsent and beautiful
touches, as in his 'Address to the Mouse,' or to the
'Former's Mare,' or in his 'Elegy on Poor Mailie,
which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this
kind. In these pieces there are traits of a humour
as fine as that of Sterne, yet altogether different, original,
and peculiar—the humour of Burns."—THOMAS
CARLYLE.
POEMS AND SONGS.

SONG—THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

TUNE—"Corn Rigs are bonnie."

In the copy of Johnson's 'Musees' annotated for Captain Riddell of Glenriddell Burns writes: "All the old words that ever I could meet with to this air were the following, which seems to have been an old chorus:

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonnie;
And when ye meet a bonnie lass,
Fresh up her coquetmony." 1

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

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonnie:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Among the rigs wi' Annie.2

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 her heart was a' my aye:
I loved her most sincerely:
I kisst her owre and owre again,
Among the rigs o' barley.

Corn rigs, &c.

I lockst 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 aye shall bless that happy night,
Among the rigs o' barley.

Corn rigs, &c.

1 The following lines occur in Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd:"—
He kiss'd and would ne'er be mine,
And loved me best of all:
That was the day I first saw you
O corn rigs are bonnie.

The melody is very old.

2 The "Annie" celebrated in this song has been differently identified with Annie Blair and Annie

Bennet, both daughters of farmers in Tarbolton parish. But it could hardly be the latter, whom Burns worshipped at a distance, as hinted in the "Rambles of the Bunnals." Annie Rankin of Amandell (daughter of "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankin," the poet's friend, see p. 224), bestd by her. Throughout life that she was the heroine of this more than delight of the day. The song was probably written in 1783. The last stanza used to be instanced by the bard as one of the triumphs of his art.

1 The poem written by the author on the margin of the page.
POEMS AND SONGS.

I ha' been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I ha' been merry drinkin';
I ha' been joyfu' gatherin' gear;
I ha' been happy thinkin';
But a' the pleasures o'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Among the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, &c.

SONG—PEGGY.¹

TUNE—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

This poem Burns heads as "Song, composed in August." Johnson mistakenly states that it was written for his Musical Museum; it appeared before the publication of that work, in the Kilmarnock edition of the poems.

Now westly winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autum... pleasant weather;
And the moorcock springs, on whirling wings,
Amid the blooming heather;
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night.
To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushion 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:
Avant, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the navel'ring cry,
The fluttering, gay pinion!

¹The Peggy of this lyric was undoubtedly Margaret Thomson of Kirkoswald, the "fillette" who put an end to her fascinations to the numerous young poet's trigonometrical studies. It appears to have been written, however, subsequently to the time when he was staying at Kirkoswald, and on an occasion when he had again come under the influence of the same charmer, probably in 1783. See note to next song. A draft of a portion of the song was copied into the first Common-place Book.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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

______________________________________________

SONG—MY NANNIE, O.¹

TUNE—"My Nannie, O."

"Shenstone observes finely that love verses wrt without any passion are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to Love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill in distinguishing Poppery and Game from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test I will not pretend to say, because it is MY own; only I can say it was, at the time, REAL."—BURNS, Commonplace Book, April, 1784. The song was probably written about 1785, but was subsequently revised.

Behind yon hills, where Lugar² flows,  
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,  
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,  
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blow's loud and shill;  
The night's laith mirk an' ra'ny, O;  
western shill  
both dark

¹ The heroine of this song was, according to Gilbert, the poet's brother, "a farmer's daughter in Tarbolton parish, named Fleming, to whom the poet paid some of that raving 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." [Letter to George Thomson, 5th June, 1839.] It should be added, however, that Mrs. Beag, the poet's sister, gives the honour of having inspired the song to Peggy Thomson, the Kirkoswald fillette, on whom the preceding song was composed.

² In all editions of Burns's works up to and including that of 1788, Stinchar (or Stinshair) stood in the place of Lugar. The latter name was thought more euphonious, and Thomson says the author sanctioned the alteration in 1792. The Lugar is a tributary of the Ayr, which it joins a little above old Bar-skimming bridge. Like its principal, it pursues its way for some miles through a deep chasm in the red sandstone of the district. In the engraving given, the scene selected is in the grounds connected with the mansion of Auchinleck, the seat of a family (Boswell) whose name has become familiar in our literature. The ruin near the centre of the picture is that of the ancient castle of the Auchinlecks, and afterwards of the Barstows of Auchinleck, which Johnson describes in his Journey to the Western Islands. The introduction by the artist of the aged harper will be understood if the reader will refer to the poet's "Lament for James, Earl of Clementina," and note the mention of "Lugar's winding stream."
1 In the version which its author
2 The following shows
And C. My you.
I would
Subsequently his
2 This song was...
fourth volume of
POEMS AND SONGS.

But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' owre the hills to Nannie, O.

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

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
She's spotless as she's bonnie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wet wi' daw,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

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

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

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hands his plough,
An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak' what H'nv'n will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.1

SONG. WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR?2

TUNE.—"Lass, an' I come near thee."

Wha is that at my bower door?
(Oh wha is it but Findlay.)

Then gae your gate, ye's nae be here!
(Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay.)

1 In the version of this natural and touching lyric which its author copied into his Common-place Book, the following chorus appears—:

And O my bonny Nannie O,
My young, my handsome Nannie O,
The I had the world all at my will,
I would give it all for Nannie O.

Subsequently his more matured taste suppressed it.

2 This song was communicated by Burns to the fourth volume of Johnson's Museum, Cramock says

Gilbert Burns told him that "this song was suggested
to his brother by the 'Auld Man's Address to the
Widow'! The Auld Man's Best Argument I printed
in Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, which the poet
first heard sung before he had seen that collection,
by Jean Wilson, a silly old widow woman, then living
at Tarbolton, remarkable for the simplicity and -dité
of her character, and for singing old Scots songs with
a peculiar energy and earnestness of manner." We
may add that the resemblance between the two songs
is of the very slightest character.
POEMS AND SONGS.

What mak ye, see like a thief 
(O come and see, quo' Findlay.)
Before the morn ye'll worne un-knight. 
(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—
(Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.)
I dread ye'll learn the gate again.
(Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.)
What may pass within this bower,—
(Let it pass, quo' Findlay.)
Ye maun conceal till your last hour.
(Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.)

________________________

SONG—GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

TUNE—"Green grow the rashes."

In the first Common-place Book after two paragraphs of not very profound moralizing, in which mankind generally are divided into two classes, the GRAVE and the MERRY, the poet winds up: "The foregoing was to have been an elaborate dissertation on the various species of men, but as I cannot please myself on the arrangement of my ideas on the subject, I must wait till further experience and nicer observations throw more light on the subject. In the meantime I shall set down the following fragment, which as it is the genuine language of my heart, will enable anybody to determine which of the classes I belong to." The date of its entry in the Common-place Book is Aug. 1784, but it was said to have been written before this, when Burns was at Lochlea. The last stanza was added at a later period.

Green grow the rashes, O! 
Green grow the rashes, O! 
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend, 
Are spent among the rashes, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han', 
In ev'ry hour that passes, O: 
What signifies the life o' man, 
An' twere na for the rashes, O! 

Green grow, &c.

This light-hearted effusion was modelled on a spirited old song bearing the same title and having a similar chorus. It was a great favourite of our ancestors, and the air belonging to it is, according to Robert Chambers, "one of the oldest which have been handed down to us." The old song contains here and there a freedom of touch indicating the hand of a master:

We're a' dry wi' drinking o'!
We're a' dry wi' drinking o'!
The plant kils the fiddler's wife.
An' he could na preach for thinking o'!

"I entirely
Sentiments, no
ordinary pipe
of which we
able and wro
sense of our
1783.

1 The concert
by several editors
called Cupid's P
Since we were
admirer you as the
Man was made wh
when she was a w
In all likelihoo
POEMS AND SONGS.

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 give me a canny hour at once,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' war'ly cares, and war'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!
Green grow, &c.

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

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

RE MORSE — A FRAGMENT.2

"I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher Mr. Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that Remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortune may bear up tolerably well, under those calamities in the procureament of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies or crimes have made us miserable and wretched, to bear it up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct — this is a glorious effort of self-command." — COMMON-PLACE BOOK, Sept. 1783.

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;
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 worse far, the pangs of keen Remorse,
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—

1 The conceit contained in this verse (as pointed out by several editors) is found thus expressed in a comedy called Cupid's Whirligig, published in 1607:—

Since we were made before you, should we not love and admire you as the best, and, therefore, perfect work of Nature? Man was made when Nature was but an apprentice, but woman when she was a skilful mistress of her art.

In all likelihood Burns never saw this drama, but an extract including those lines was introduced into a work entitled The British Muse, a Collection of Thoughts, by Thomas Hayward, 4 vols. Lond. 1738, which had a pretty wide circulation in his time.

2 The present piece was copied into the poet's first Common-place Book under date September, 1783. The lines are probably a lamentation over his follies and dissensions at Irvine.
POEMS AND SONGS.

Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us;
Nay more, that very love the 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 agonising 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!

EPITAPH—FOR THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

These lines are engraved on the humble headstone in Alloway Kirkyard, over the grave of William Burns, the poet's father, who died at Lochlea, 13th February, 1784. The epitaph received careful elaboration at the hands of Burns. The first line, so happily expressed, was preceded by at least two readings, found in the poet's handwriting:

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

for which the writer himself suggested the substitution of

"O ye whose hearts decreed merit pains"

each of which is conspicuously inferior to the line as we have it.

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 generous 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."!

EPITAPH—ON A FRIEND.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.2

1 Goldsmith.
2 In Burns's original Common-place Book the above is headed thus:—"Epitaph on my own friend, and my father's friend, William Muir in Tarbolton Mill." This is the "Willie" of 'Willie's Mill' in "Death and Dr. Hornbook."
POEMS AND SONGS.

EPITAPH—ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.

Here souter Hood in death does sleep;—
To h—l, if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,
He'll hand it weel thegither.

BALLAD ON THE AMERICAN WAR.

A FRAGMENT.

TUNE—"Killicrankie."

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

Then thru' the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was nae shaw, man;
Down Lowrie's burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did en', man:
But yet, what-reck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like did fa', man,
Wi' sword in hand, before his hand,
Amang his enemies a', man.

Poor Tamny Gage, within a cage
Was kept at Boston ba', man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man:
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian blood to draw, man;
But at New-York, wi' knife an' fork,
Sir-loin he hackèd sawn', man.

Burgoyne gned up, like spur an' whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ne misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.

1 Not a Mauchline elder, and persecutor of Gavin Hamilton, as has been supposed, but a Tarbolton elder, of most penurious habits, named William Hood, by trade a "souter" or shoemaker.

2 When Dr. Blair read this ballad he remarked that "Burns's politics smelt of the smithy." It was written probably early in 1784, but first published in the Edinburgh edition of 1787, and only after the Earl of Glencairn, and the Hon. Henry Erskine, then Dean of Faculty, had given their approval. The letter written by Burns to Erskine in this connection was first printed in the Age of Reason, October, 1846. The personal and historical allusions are familiar to all who have studied the history of that interesting period, with its galaxy of great statesmen and orators, and its struggles pregnant with such mighty and unforeseen issues.

3 The burn, i.e. river of Lawrence, the St. Lawrence.
POEMS AND SONGS.

Cornwallis fought as long 's he dought,
An' did the Buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive free rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then Montague, an' Guilford too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville doure, who stood the stoure
The German chief to throw, man:

For Paddy Burke, like any Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
And Charlie Fox threw by the box,
An' bow'd his tinkler jaw, man.

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

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

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 stroke, man;

The Saxon lads, wi' loud plaeds,
On Chatham's boy did ca', man:
An' Scotland drew her pipe an' blew,
"Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

Behind the throne then Grenville's gone,
A secret word or twa', man;
While alee Dundas aroond the class
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
An' Chatham's wrath, in heavenly grailth,
(Inspired bards saw, man)
Wi' kindling eyes cried, "Willie, rise!"
Would I ha'e fear'd them a', man?"

But, wood an' blow, North, Fox, and Co.,
Gow'd Willie like a la', man,
Till Southerns raise, and cooist their claise
Behind him in a raw, man;

An' caledon threw by the drone,
An' did her whistle draw, man;
An' swoor fu' rude, three diet an' blood
To make it guid in law, man.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

1 Buckskins, a term applied to the American troops during the Revolutionary war.

2 Unloosed his tinker tongue, i.e. indulged in the coarse raillery characteristic of a tinker.
POEMS AND SONGS.

SONG—THE RANTING DOG THE DADDIE OT.

TUNE—"East wind o' Fife."

We have the poet's own authority for asserting that these verses were sent to a "young girl, a particular acquaintance of his, at that time under a cloud." This is supposed to be the affair alluded to in his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore (1787) as occurring shortly after he put his hand to the plough, on his return from Irvine. If so the song was probably written some little time before the next following piece, the "young girl" being the mother of his own child.

O wha my babie clouts will buy?
O wha will tunt 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 fa't?
O wha will buy my greenin'-mant?
O wha will tell me how to ca't?
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

When I mont the creepie-chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll seek me mair,—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

Wha will erack to me my lane?
Wha can mak' me fudgin' fain?
Wha will kiss me o'er again?
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

THE POET'S WELCOME TO HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

"The first instance that entitled him to the venerable appellation of father."—R. B.

Thon's welcome, wean! mishanter fa' me, child
If ought of thee, or of thy mummy,
Shall ever danton me, or aye me.
My sweet wee lady,
Or if I bluswhen thou shalt ca' me
Tit-ta or daddy.

Wee image of my bonny Betty,
I fatherly will kiss and dant thee.
As dear and near my heart I set thee
Wi' as ga'd will,
As a' the priests had seen me get thee,
That's out o' h-H.

1 The subject of this not very decorous "Welcome" was the poet's illegitimate child Elizabeth (daughter of Elizabeth Paton), the "sonie, snirking, dear-bought Bess" of the "Inventory," who grew to womanhood in Gilbert Burn's household, was married, and had a family. Among the obituary notices in the Scots Magazine for January, 1857, is the following:—

"Dec. 8. Elizabeth Burns, wife of Mr. John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, and daughter of the celebrated Robert Burns, and the subject of some of his most beautiful lines." She was born in Nov. 1781. The most complete text of this piece is in Paterson's Edinburgh edition of Burns (edited by W. Scott Douglas), which also gives certain textual variations.
What tho' they ca' me fornicator,
And tease my name in kintra clutter;
The mair they talk I'm kent the better,
E'en let them clash;
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless matter
To gie ane fash.
*
Tho' I should be the waur bestead,
Thou's be as braw and blythe clad,
And thy young years as niecly bred
Wi' education,
As ony brat o' wedlock's bed
In a' thy station.

And if thou be what I wad hae thee,
And tak' the counsel I shall gie thee,
A lovin' father I'll be to thee,
If thou be spar'd:
Thro' a' thy childish years I'll ce thee,
And think't weel war'd.

Gude grant that thou may aye inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, and merit,
And thy poor worthless daddie's spirit,
Without his failings,
'Twill please me mair to see thee heir it,
Than stockit mailins.

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE
[of Adamhill, near Tarbolton.]

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wae o' coeks for fun and drinkin'!
Ther's mony godly folks are thinkin'
Your dreams an' tricks
Wili send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straight to auld Nick's. straight

1 John Rankine, farmer at Adamhill, two miles west of Lochlea, was a prince of bon companions and an inveterate wag; consequently he was just the man to attract Burns, and the two became great friends. He was no favourite with the "saunts," and the feeling was reciprocated. He entertained a rigid professor of religion to a feast of toodly, and as the hot-water kettle contained only boiled whisky, the more the good man took the more hopelessly drunk he got. What the poems were that Burns sent him we do not know.

2 A certain luminous dream of his was then making a noise in the country-side. - R. B. When Rankine wished to administer a rebuke to some consequential person or persons he was wont to do so under the guise of a dream in which they figured or were in some way concerned, and several of these are still current and repeated.

The Scottish nation from and with expense of ordnance return of in a little cloth, a many drapery was the gentle pursuit of in-ful it as a favor of Sir Walter Campi}-
POEMS AND SONGS.

Ye hae sae monie cracks and cants,
And in your wicked drunken rant,
Ye mak' a devil o' the saints,
An' fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen thro'.

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

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaiting,
It's just the Blue-gown badge and claiting
O' saints; tak' that, ye leae them maething
To ken them by,
Fae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

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

Tho' faith, an' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcey spread her wing!
I've play'd myself a bonnie spring,
An' danced my fill!
I'll better gane an' sair'd the king,
At Banker's Hill.

drunk 

drunken frolics

1 The blue-gown belonged to a privileged order of
Scottish mendicants, now extinct. They derived their
name from the colour of the habit which they wore,
and with which they were wont to be supplied at
the expense of royalty, in conformity, it is said, with an
ordinance of the Catholic Church. On the annual
return of the royal birth-day each beggar received
in addition to the cloak or gown of light blue coarse
cloth, a badge and a leathern purse, containing as
many shillings Scots (pennies sterling) as the scribe
was years old. The badge conferred on them
the general privilege of wandering over Scotland, in
pursuit of their calling, in despite of all laws against
mendicity. Every reader will at once recall to mind,
as a favourable specimen of the class, the Eille Odill,
free of Scott. In his introduction to the "Antiquities
Sir Walter gives an interesting account of the blue-
gowns as a whole, with anecdotes of one or two dis-
tinguished members of the tribe. Burns seems to
have looked forward, with a gloomy and almost mis-
antiquarian feeling, to closing his own career in the
class of a beggar. Thus in his "Epistle to Davie,"
after a reflection on the inequality with which the
gifts of fortune are showered, and a boast of their power
to earn by labour their daily bread, he remarks:

The last of the want or
Beaulie Iat to beg.

At a later period of his life Burns had not got
altogether quit of such darkening anticipations. In
his "Dedication to Gavin Hamilton," after boasting
of the independence which his ability to plough
conferr'd, and his consequent want of necessity for
clinging to the great for the means of subsistence, he
says:

And when I downa joke a nane,
Then I'd be thankful I can beg.

2 This gross selection in grammarr (Scotch or English),
though necessary to the rhyme, grates sadly on the
ear.

3 A song he had promised the author.—R. B.
POEMS AND SONGS.

'Twas ne night lately in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a patrick to the gun',
A bonnie hen.

And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought none wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fast me for't;
But, deil-n-a-care!

Somebody tells the poacher-court
The bale affair.

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

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my panther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!

The game shall pay o' er moor an' dale,
For this, next year.

As soon's the clockin'-time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry.
L—d, I've hue sportin' by an' by,
For my gowd guinea:
Tho' I should herd the Buckskin kye
Fort in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame
Scarce throu' the feathers;
An' beith a yellow George to claim,
An' thele their blethers!

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

1 In the war for American independence the native American troops were known by the name of "Buckkins". By "Buckskin kye" Burns perhaps means the slaves—contemplating the possibility of his having to take himself to America for his misdeeds at home, or it might mean that he had thoughts of turning soldier—"raising the king," hence his own words above. The American war was over by this time.

1 The military "bacula" of James Miller was a friend of a Mr. Field, where his health was restored at Greece. Candlish, in the address "Student,""My ever, ever, his union with his family, the result of the fond
POEMS AND SONGS.

SONG—O LEAVE NOVELS.

TUNE—"Mauchline Bellies."

The first and third stanzas of this song seem to have been improvised during one of his light-hearted moods, about the date of the occupation of Mussgill farm, March, 1754. The second and fourth stanzas were added for the sixth volume of Johnson’s *Dictionary.* Mauchline is a small town about a mile from the farm.

O leave novels, ye Mauchline belles,
Ye’re safer at your spinning-wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks,
For rakish books like Rob Mussgill.

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 Mussgill.

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 Mussgill.

The frank address, the soft caress,
Are worse than poisoned darts of steel,
The frank address, and politesse,
Are all finesse in Rob Mussgill.

SONG—THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.

TUNE—"Bonnie Dundee."

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

1 The matrimonial fate of the “six proper young belles” of Mauchline, were as follows—Miss (Helen) Miller was married to Dr. MacKenzie of Mauchline, a friend of Burns’s. Miss Markland was married to Mr. Finlay, an officer of excise first at Tarbolton, where he was appointed to teach Burns the mysteries of gauging and excise book-keeping; and afterwards at Greenock. Miss Smith was married to Mr. James Candlish, an early friend of the poet’s, and to whom he addresses a letter in March 1757, bearing the style “Student in Physic, Glasgow College,” and opening, “My ever dear, old acquaintance.” Mr. Candlish, after his union with the witty Miss Smith, received an appointment as a teacher in connection with the College of Surgeons and Physicians in Edinburgh, University, and died in 1751, leaving behind him six of a family, the youngest of whom was Dr. Candlish, one of the founders and great leaders of the Free Church of Scotland. Miss Betty (Miller), sister of the first-mentioned belle, was married to a Mr. Templeton, and died early in life. Miss Morton bestowed her beauty (of which she is said to have had considerable charms and her fortune amounting to five or six hundred pounds entirely under her own control) on a Mr. Paterson, a farmer in Edinburgh parish. Jean Armour “the jewel” became the wife of the poet. Mr. Chambers notes that as late as 1850 three of the belles, Mrs. Paterson, Mrs. Finlay, and Mrs. Candlish survived.

There are two popular Scotch airs known under this name: the bold-stirring "Air to Scotland" (Claythorne’s song to the latter air that Burns wrote the above song.)
MISS MILLER IS FINE, MISS MARKLAND'S DIVINE,
MISS SMITH SHE HAS WIT, AND MISS BETTY IS BRAW:
THERE'S BEAUTY AND FORTUNE TO GET WITH MISS MORTON,
BUT ARMOUR'S THE JEWEL FOR ME O' THEM A'.

SONG—WHEN FIRST I CAME TO STEWART KYLE.

TUNE—"I HAD A HORSE, I HAD NAE MAIR." 1

This fragment is entered in the Common-place Book under date Aug. 4. 1784. The "Mauchline lady" is doubtless Jean Armour.

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,2
My mind it was na steady;
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rode,3
A mistress still I had aye:
But when I came round by Mauchline town,
Not dreading any bode,
My heart was caught before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

EPITAPH—ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

James Humphrey, a japping mason, a village oracle in matters of doctrine, was the subject of this rather weak effusion. He survived till 1841, having reached the age of 86. In his latter days he was the recipient of many an abuse, through feasting with pride that he was Burns's "blethring bitch."

Below these stones lie Jamies bames:
Thou ne'er took such a blethring b'tch
Into thy dark dominion!

EPITAPH—ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY SQUIRE

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.

EPITAPH—ON THE SAID OCCASION.

Oh. Land, blest thou but spared his life
Whom we, this day, lament!
We freely and exchanged the wife,
And a' been weel content.

1 This is the title of an old song of which Burns's words are in some measure a parody.
2 Stewart Kyle is that part of Kyle lying between the rivers Irvine and Ayr.
POEMS AND SONGS.

Ev'n as he is, cauld in his grave,
The swap we yet will do't:
Tak' thon the carlin's curse off,
Thou'se get the saul o' boot.

ANOTHER.

This and the two immediately preceding epigrams were aimed at Campbell of Netherplace, Munchline, and his wife. They were published in the first edition of Burns's poems, but were withdrawn from subsequent ones. They can pain no one now, and are here given as curiosities, though their merit is not great.

One Queen Artemisia, as old stories tell,
When deprived of her husband she loved so well,
In respect for the love and affection he'd show'd her
She reduc'd him to dust, and she drank off the powder.

But Queen Netherplace, of a different complexion,
When call'd 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 expense.

ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

As Tam the Chapman on a day
W? Death forgather'd by the way,
Weel pleas'd, he greets a wight sau famous,
And Death was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,
Wha cheerfully lays down the pack,
And there blows up a hearty crack:
His social, friendly, honest heart
Sae tickled Death, they couldna part:
Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
Death takes him hame to gie him quarters.

EPIGRAMMATIC LINES TO J. RANKINE.

Ae day, as Death, that gruesome earl,
Was driving to the tither war'?
A mixtie-maxtie motley squad,
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,

1 These verses, singularly enough, were first given to the world by William Cobbett in his Magazine. Cobbett became acquainted with the subject of them when the latter was in his old days and resident in London. He was named Thomas Kennedy, an early friend of the poet's, and, as at the time the epitaph was written, a traveller for a mercantile house, hence the appellation of "chapman."
POEMS AND SONGS.

From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that whiskles in a halter:
Asham'd himself to see the wretches,
He matters, glow'rin' at the bitches,
"By G-d, I'll not be seen behint them,
Nor 'mang the spiritual core present them,
Without at least ae honest man,
To grace this d——d infernal clan."
By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"L——d G-d!" quoth he, "I have it now,
There's just the man I want, I' faith,"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

LINES TO JOHN RANKINE. 1
WRITTEN WITH THE SUPPOSED VIEW OF BEING FORWARDED AFTER THE POET'S DEATH.

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

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN. 2
A DIRGE.

There is an old poem, called "The Life and Age of Man" of which Burns, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, says, "I had an old grand-maude with whom my mother lived a while in her gilrish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind before he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of the 'Life and Age of Man.'" This poem was evidently running in Burns's recollection when he wrote "Man was made to Mourn."
It opens thus;—

Upon the sixteenth hunder year
Of God and fifty-three,
Fynye Christ was born, that brought us dear,
As witnings testifie:
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
A H! Man is made to Mourn.

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.

1 In reference to the subject of these and the preceding lines see "Epistle to John Rankine," p. 221.
2 The above dirge is entered into the poet's first Common-place Book (April 1783—Oct. 1785) under date of August, 1785. It is there called a "Song (Tune—Peggy Bawn)." It is almost needless to say that the poem is now never (if it ever was) sung to this or to any other tune.
POEMS AND SONGS.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
Began the reverend sage;
"Does thrist of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?"
Or haply, press'd with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast begun
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man.

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

"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending 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,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want—Oh! ill-match'd pair—
Show man was made to mourn.

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

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

1 In the poet's Common-place Book the following variations occur:
   1. "Yon sun that hangs o'er Carrick moors,"
   2. "The haughty Cassilis pride,"
   3. "Fortune's,"
   4. "To want and sorrows hewn,"
   5. "Many the ills that Nature's hand
      Has woven," &c.
IUKMS AND SONGS.

More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor outcast 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, the' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I'm design'd a lordling's slave,—
By nature's law designed,—
Why was I an independent wish
Ever planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

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

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

1 "Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not conceive a more modifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how the sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, 'Man was made to Mourn,' was composed."—GILBERT BURNS.

2 "Hand," for "law," is the reading given in the poet's Common-place Book.

3 "In 'Man was made to Mourn,' whatever might be the usual idea that set the poet to work, it is yet too evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly—and who shall say with absolute injustice—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly nor more loftily expressed than in some of these stanzas."—J. G. LOCKHART.
THE TWA HERDS, or THE HOLY TULZIE.1

"The first of my poetical offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them dramatic personae in my 'Holy Fair'. I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as bally it met with a roar of applause." — BURNS'S AUTOGRAPHICAL LETTER TO DR. MOORE. — The title, it may be as well to remark, means "The two shepherds, or the holy brawl."

O a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the weifs and crooks,
About the dykes?  

The twa best herds in a' the wast.
That ever gae gospel horn a blast
These five and twenty summers past,
O! dool to tell,
Hae had a bitter black out-cast
A twix' themse'l.

O Moolae, man, and worthy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Y'll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
And think it fine!
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twist,
SIN' I hae mair.

1 At the time at which the "Twa Herds" was composed—probably about the end of 1784—to use the words of Burns, "polemical divinity was pitting the country half mad." The parties in the controversy then carried on regarding the comparative efficacy of faith and works, were designated by the names of Old and New Light. Burns, partly from education, and from his connection with Gavin Hamilton, who took a prominent part in the controversy, and who, from certain singularities in walk and conversation, had drawn upon himself the anima of his parish minister Mr. Ard, one of the leaders of the Old Light party, and partly, it may be supposed, from still smarting under the "rubik" of the same reverend divine, attached himself with all the recklessness of a partisan to the party of New Light controversialists. A personal quarrel between Mr. Moodie, minister of Riccarton, and Mr. Russell, minister of the High Church, Kilmarrock, both enjoying the benefit of the Old Light, afforded too favourably an opportunity for the exercise of his talent for satire—in which he had already discovered the secret of his power—to be allowed to escape. The biographers of Burns, however, differ in their statements of the ground of controversy which resulted in the quarrel celebrated in the "Twa Herds." Lockhart represents it as proceeding from a misunderstanding concerning parish boundaries; and as taking place in the presbytery in open court, to which the announcement of the discussion had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest. Allan Cunningham, on the other hand, represents the quarrel as having taken place, in consequence of a controversy on "effectual calling," in which the parties engaged on their way home from the Monday sermon of a sacrament; and minutely details the particulars of the quarrel. The matter is of no great consequence. The ninth stanza of the poem seems to incline the weight of evidence in favour of the first account. Had the parties been really guilty of coming to blows, as was even hinted, all mention of such a circumstance would scarce have been omitted from the poem—presenting, as it would have done, so much broader a mark for the shafts of the poet's satire.

It may be added to all this, that the law of church patronage also formed a fruitful subject of discussion and discussion among the Old and New Light controversialists.
POEMS AND SONGS.

O, sirs! wha'er wad hae expectit
Your duty ye wad sae neglectit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves elect,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank!
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank,

He let them taste,
Fae Calvin's well, aye clear, they drank.
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'eat, brock and tod, pole-cat wild-cat badger fox
Weel kenn'd his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and read,

Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

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

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,

Or pay their skin,
Could shake them o'er the burning dub;
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't—
Sic famous twa should disagree,
An' names, like "villain, hypocrite,"
Ilk ither gien,
While New-Light herds wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither's hein'!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There's Duncan, 1 deep, and Peebles, 2 shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld, 3

We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

1 Dr. Robert Duncan, minister of Dunoon.
2 Rev. William Peebles, of Newton-upon-Ayr. He
was given to verse-making, and figures both in the
"Holy Fair" and the "Kirk's Alarm," as do other
reverend gentlemen here named. See notes there.
3 Rev. William Auld, minister of Mauchline.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

Dalrymple¹ has been lang our foe,
McGill² has wrought us meikle wae,
And that cursed rascal ca'd M'Quhae,³
And saith the Shaws,⁴
That aft hae made us black and blue,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow⁵ lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chiel wh'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 among oursel',
There's Smith⁶ for ane,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,⁷
And that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks, o'er a' the hills,
By messes, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come join your counsel and your skills,
To cow the lairds,
And get the brutes the power themselves,
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody dance,
And that fell car ca'd Common Sense,⁸
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
McGill's close nervous excellence,

¹ Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, one of the ministers of Ayr, by whom the poet was baptized.
² Rev. William McGill, colleague of Dr. Dalrymple.
³ Minister of St. Quivox.
⁴ Dr. Andrew Shaw of Craigle, and Dr. David Shaw of Galloway.
⁵ Dr. Peter Wodrow of Tarbolton. The successor alluded to in this verse was McMath of the last verse.
⁶ Rev. Mr. Smith of Galston, one of the tent-preachers in the "Holy Fair;" mentioned also in the "Kirk's Alarm."
⁷ A bad quill, the nick or split being grey and uneven.
⁸ A pamphlet with this signature, written by one of the New Light party, had recently appeared, and attracted some notice.
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POEMS AND SONGS.

M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
   And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha thro' the heart ca'n chance,
   May a' pack aff.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER!

The following argument in the poet's own handwriting is prefixed in the Glen:aidell MS., now in the Athenaeum Library, Liverpool:— *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 tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized luxury 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 name overheard him at his devotions as follows:—

O Thou, wha in the heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleasest best Thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
   They've done afore Thee!
I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore Thy sight,
   For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light,
   To a' this place.
What was I, or my generation,
   That I should get sic exaltation?
I wha deserve sic just damnation,
   For broken laws,
1 "Holy Willie's Prayer," which Sir Walter Scott characterizes as "a piece of satire, more exquisitely severe than any which Burns afterwards wrote," was composed to aid Gavin Hamilton, the poet's friend and landlord, in his controversy with the Old Light functionaries of "Doddie Auld's" session. The dispute between Mr. Hamilton and the session seems to have originated in a question about the amount of poor rates. Both parties assumed high grounds: Mr. Hamilton absented himself from church, and the session summoned him before them to account for his absence. Other charges were soon added. He was accused of setting out on a journey on Sunday—of neglecting the duty of family worship—and of writing an abusive letter to the session. When the case was brought before the synod, Mr. Aiken, a gentleman possessed of distinguished oratorical powers, appeared for Mr. Hamilton, and that court, finding the case brought forward more for the gratification of the malicious feelings of individual members of the session than from any motive of duty, stopped the proceedings, and ordered the charges to be expunged from the session records. See further on this subject note to the poetical Epistle to Gavin Hamilton, May 3, 1786. The hero of this poem, by name William Fisher, was a leading member of the Mauchline session (which at that time, indeed, consisted of but three active members—the Rev. William Auld, John Sillars, who afterwards committed suicide, and himself), and, in spite of his sanctimonious pretensions, was rather more inquisitive in the examination of female transgressors than seemed altogether decorous to his brethren. He schemed not, moreover, to "get for" when the liquor did not flow at his own cost; and to crown all, he was alleged, that he made free with the money of the poor. "His end," says Allan Cunningham, to whom we are indebted for most of these particulars, "was anything but pious; he drank more than was proper; and during one of his visits to Mauchline, was found dead in a ditch on his way to his own house." For "pilling the alms of the poor" Burns gibbets him in the "Kirk's Alarm."
POEMS AND SONGS.

Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might ha'e plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lakes,
Where damn'd devils roar and yell,
Chained to their stakes.

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in Thy temple,

Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an' example
To a' Thy flock.

O L—d, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singin' there and dancin' here,

Wi' great an' sma';
For I am keepit by Thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
And sometimes too, wi' worldly trust,

Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshy thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,

That he's sae gifted;
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—d, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race;
But G—d confound their stubborn face,

And blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace,
And public shame.

L—d, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin' arts,

Wi' grit and sma';
Frac G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin' arts,

Wi' grit and sma';
Frac G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

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Frac G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin' arts,

Wi' grit and sma';
Frac G—d's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.
And when we chasten'd him therefor,  
Thou ken'st how he bred sic a sbole,  
As set the world in a roar  
O' laughin' at us;  
Curse thou his basket and his store,  
Kail and potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and prayer  
Against that Presby'try of Ayr;  
Thy strong right hand, L—d, mak' it bare,  
Upto' their heads,  
L—d, weigh it down, and dinna spare,  
For their misdeeds.

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tonp'd Aiken,  
My very heart and saul are quakin',  
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',  
And swat wi' dread,  
While he wi' hingin' lip and snakin',  
Held up his head.

L—d, in the day of vengeance try him,  
L—d, visit them wha did employ him,  
And pass not in Thy mercy by 'em,  
Nor hear their prayer;  
But for Thy people's sake destroy 'em,  
An' dinna spare.

But, L—d, remember me and mine  
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,  
That I for gear and grace may shine,  
Excell'd by none,  
And a' the glory shall be Thine,  
Amen, Amen!

EPITAPh ON HOLY WILLIE.¹

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

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

¹ We are inclined to think that some verses of this very medioc're composition are amusing. Its author did not copy it into the Glenriddell MS. along with the "Prayer," and no copy of it in his handwriting is known to exist. It is highly probable that his maturer taste condemned it.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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

But hear me, sir, Deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coor like him would stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,
A BROTHER POET. 1

January [1785].

While winds frae aff Ben Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In homely westlin jingle.

1 Davie was David Sillar, whose father at this time occupied a farm, called Spittleside, within a mile of the village of Tarbolton. Following the recollections of Gilbert Burns, the date of the poem is generally placed in the year 1784, but it is probable that though the poem was forwarded to Sillar in January, 1785, the closing stanzas, at any rate, were not added till well on in that year, as it is doubtful if Burns had any acquaintance with "Jean" as early as January, 1785. His first interview with her seems to have taken place in April of that year. Sillar himself thus records the manner of his introduction to the poet: "Robert Burns," he says, "was some time in the parish of Tarbolton prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all other poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe he had a great deal to say for himself, and 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 tilled), he wrapped in a peculiar manner round his shoulders. These surmises and his exterior made me solicitous of his acquaintance. I was introduced by Gilbert, not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where in a short time I became a frequent, and I believe not unwelcome visitor. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the hard we frequently met upon Sundays at church, when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have often been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; and many times when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance." In order to free himself from country labour, for which he had no liking, Sillar opened a small school at Commomside, near Tarbolton, but this not succeeding, he commenced business as a grocer in Irvine, towards the close of 1783. In 1789, tempted probably by the extraordinary success of Burns, he published a volume of very mediocre poems at Kilmarnock, which proved unsuccessful, and Sillar became bankrupt. He afterwards opened a school in Irvine; and applied himself assiduously to his profession, inasmuch that he eventually became one of the principal teachers of the place. His whole character, in short, at this period underwent a change; and from being careless and jovial in his habits, he became diligent and parsimonious. In the course of his long life, he thus realized considerable property, and held the office of magistrate in Irvine for two years. In 1811 a large legacy fell to him from a brother, and he abandoned the school. He died in May, 1830, in the seventieth year of his age.
While frosty winds blow in the drift,
Ben to the chimla hag,
I grudge a wee the great folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' sung:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fireside:
But hanker and canker,
To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's power,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiefs are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to wair't:
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair speer na, nor fear na," ¹
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o', the worst o',
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content 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 aye some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:

¹ Ramsay.—R. B.
POEMS AND SONGS.

On braes when we please, then,  
We'll sit an' sowth a tune;  
Sync rhyme till't, we'll time till't,  
And sing't when we hae done!

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

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

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;  
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,  
By pining at our state;  
And, even should misfortunes come,  
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,  
An's thankful for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;  
They let us ken ourse';  
They make us see the naked truth,  
The real guid and ill.  
The' losses, and crosses,  
Be lessons right severe,

1 The epistle "breathes a noble spirit of independ- 
ence and of proud contentment dailying with the hard-
ships of its lot, and in the power of manhood regarding 
the riches that are out of its reach without a particle 
of envy, and with a haughty scorn."—Professor 
Wilson.
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tell me, Davie, aye o' hearts!
(To say icht less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatter'ry I detest.)

This life has joys for you and I:
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye haes 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 beats me,
And sets me a' on flame!

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

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

1 Robert Chambers tells us that "Meg," at this time Sillar's sweetheart, was "a lass named Margaret Stewart of Stair."
POEMS AND SONGS.

O, how that name inspires my style!  
The words come skelpin', rank and file,  
Amaist before I ken!  
The ready measure runs as fine,  
As Phoebus and the famous Nine  
Were glowrin' owre my pen.  
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,  
Till once he's fairly het;  
And then he'll hitch, and still, and jimp,  
An' rin an unco fit:  
But lest then, the beast then,  
Should me this hasty ride,  
I'll light now, and right now  
His sweaty wizen'd hide.

DEATH AND DR. HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

"Death and Dr. Hornbook," though not published in the Kilmarock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. [John Wilson] the schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that advice would be given in 'common disorders at the shop gratis.' Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the domine unfortunately made too ostentations a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparition he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind: this set him to work for the rest of his way home. These circumstances he related, when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water over the field beside me."—GILBERT BURNS.

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

But this that I am gua to tell,  
Which lately on a night befell,  
Is just as true's the De'il's in h-l  
Or Dublin city:  
That o'er he nearer comes on'sel'  
'S a muckle pity.

1 2nd edit., "Great lies and nonsense bath to vend."  
2 This reference to the presence of "the De'il" in Dublin city is generally left without any attempt at explanation. But in Alexander Smith's edition of Burns (the "Globe"), at page 311 occurs the following note, which may be taken for what it is worth:—"Mr. Robert Wright, in his Life of Major-General James Wolfe, states that "Hell" was the name given to the arched passage in Dublin which led into the area on the south side of Christ Church, and east of the law courts. A representation of the devil, carved in oak, stood above the entrance."
POEMS AND SONGS.

The clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na for, but just had plenty;
I stach'd whyles, but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, kent aye
Frae ghaists an' witches.
The rising moon began to glower
The distant Cummoek hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' n' my power,
I set mysel';
But whether she had three or four,
I coud na tell.¹

I was come round about the hill,
And toddlin' down on Willie's mill,²
Setting my staff wi' n' my skill,
To keep me sicker:
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a lickier.

I there wi' Something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;
An awfu' seythe, out-owre ac shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-tae'd leister on the iither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queueest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava!
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' suat'
As cheeks o' branks. wooden cheek-pieces of a bridle

"Guid c'en," quo' I; "Friend! hae ye been mawin'; mawing
When ither folk are busy sawin'?"³
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak:

¹ His brother can set me right, if I am mistaken,
when I express a belief, that, at the time when he wrote his story of 'Theat and Dr. Hornbook, he had very rarely been intoxicated, or, perhaps, even much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding put to test, by a deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon—
But whether she had three or four,
He coud na tell.

Behold, a sudden apparition dispenses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself! Coming upon no more important mission than

the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient and appropriate?"—Wodsworth.

² Tarbolton Mill, on the Falloch, close to Tarbolton village, and on the road to Mosshead: called "Willie's Mill," because then occupied by William Muir, a friend of the Burns family, and a neighbour while they resided at Lochian.

³ This encounter happened in seed-time, 1785. R. B.—"The humour of Burns was original and successful. He had a strong propensity to view under a ludicrous aspect subjects which he thought zeal or superstition had invested with unnecessary or questionable sanctity. When heating for gain, he delighted to push to the very confines of propriety,

and to spur and profane Lucian him, produced by solemn mum familiarity, the poet red death, wisps and corrects, being stript suggest this PROFESSOR.¹

¹ We adopt the original
At length, says I, "Friend, where ye gane? Will ye go back?"

It speak right howe,—"My name is Death, But be na fley'd."—Quoth I, "Guid faith, Ye're maybe come to stop my breath; But tent me, billie:

I red ye weel, tak care o' skaith, See, there's a gully!"

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

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

This while ye hae been mony a gate For some time back, read

At mony a house."*

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, an' shook his head, "It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed Sin' I began to nick the thread, An' choke the breath:

Folk maun do something for their bread, An' sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are nearhand fled Sin' I was to the butchering breid, An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid, To stop or sear me;

Till ane Hornbook's taken up the trade, An', faith, he'll want me."

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan, Deil mak' his king's-heel in a spleuchan! A stomach into a tobacco-pouch

which is very difficult to explain, though it might perhaps mean "would be dangerous (were I) to be mischievous," or "would be apt to be mischievous."

3 An epidemic fever was then raging in that country. —R. B.

4 This gentlemin, Dr. Hornbook, is, professionally, a brother of the Sovereign Order of the Ferula; but, by intuition and inspiration, is once an Apothecary, Surgeon, and Physician. —R. B.

5 King's-heel. The second of the four stomachs in ruminating animals; the Reticiulum, honey-comb or hoonet, from its supposed resemblance to some pucker'd head-dress formerly worn by persons of rank."—Jameson.
POEMS AND SONGS.

He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan
  An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin'
  And pouk my hips.

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

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

"Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And hae sae fortified the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
  It was sae blunt
Fient hae a't wad haec pierc'd the heart
  Of a kail-runt.

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

*    *    *    *    *    *

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

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True sal-marimum o' the seas;
The farina of beans and pease,
  He hae in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
  He can content ye.

"Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons;

1 Buchan's Domestic Medicine.—R. B.
POEMS AND SONGS.

Or mitre-horn shavings, fillings, scrapings,
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail-clippings,
And many more.

"Wae's me for Johnny Ged's 1 Hole now;"  
Quo' I, "if that thee news be true!"
His braw calf-ward 2 where gowans grew,
Sae white and bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plow;
They'll ruin Johnny!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh  
And says, "Ye need na yoke the plough,
Kirkyards will soon be till'd enough,
Tak ye nae fear:  
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a shough
In two-three year.

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

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

"A contr' Laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some earmurr'ing in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well.
The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,
Was Laird himself.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * 

"That's just a swatch o' Horbook'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 damn'd dirt.

1 The grave-digger.—R. B.
2 A small inclosure for calves; here applied to the churchyard, in which calves may have sometimes been pastured. It is of no means uncommon to see the minister's cattle feeding in country churchyards.
POEMS AND SONGS.

"But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Thou' dinna ye be speaking o';
I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead's a hervin':

Nieast time we meet, I'll wad a great,
He gets his fairin'!"

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which rais'd us faith:

I took the way that please'd my soul,
And sae did Death.1

1 This satire led to the removal of John Wilson, the prototype of Dr. Hornbook, to Glasgow, where he continued his old profession of schoolmaster. "He first taught in the High Street, having succeeded there to a school kept, we believe, by Mr. Melchion, before that gentleman obtained the professorship of natural philosophy in the University of Glasgow. He afterwards (somewhere about the year 1807) was fortunate enough to be elected session-clerk to the Gorbals, which office he held up to the period of his death in 1839. At the time when Dr. Hornbook obtained the session-clerkship, the Gorbals formed but a small suburb of Glasgow, with a population of perhaps eight or less thousand. It has since then—in a period of about thirty years (1840)—increased with a rapidity scarcely to be believed even in the New World, and now forms a large and important section of the western metropolis, with a population of some seventy or eighty thousand souls. The emoluments of a Gorbals session-clerk in Wilson's time were entirely dependent on the registration of births and marriages and, great, therefore, was his good fortune in obtaining a situation where births and marriages were so marvellously on the increase. The office, in short, which in 1807 only produced a moderate income, speedily rose to be a lucrative one, and was every year, while Wilson retained it, on the increase.

In connection with his session-clerkship, Wilson kept a school in the Gorbals, where he taught the common branches of education. The writer of this note had the—shall we say honour, or felicity, or both—of being taught to write and cast accounts by the far-famed Dr. Hornbook. He was, as we remember him, a decent, dumpy elderly gentleman, dressed in black, with just enough of corpulency to give him 'a presence,' and a pair of stout little legs, inclined to the crooked, the attractions of which were fully developed through the medium of black tights and black silk stockings. He wore a brown wig, took snuff largely, and had a look of great comphacy. He was a good teacher, and in general of easy temper, though subject to gusts of passion. He was extremely partial to the girls in the school, and often for days devoted almost exclusively his attention to them, much to the satisfaction of the boys. In arithmetic, decimals were his hobby; fractions he despised; everything should be done by decimals. In decimals he felt that his strength lay. After succeeding in solving an intricate account, he would take a large sum, and, with a soft sigh, say, 'There!—I'm thinking that would passe twa-threes on the latter side o' the water that keep up grand academy!' Self-complacency. Indeed—for it scarcely amounted to self-conceit—was his most prominent failing. Everything in his school was the best, and his way of doing everything was the best. This failing was aggravated by his parsimony, of which he was the pride. His scholars must all buy their paper and pens from him;—there were no copy-books at all to be compared to his copy-books—no quills ever to be mentioned in the same breath with his pinions! If a scholar ventured to bring quills of his own from his father's counting-house, with what gusto did he split them up and sew them down, muttering all the while, 'Trash! Trash!'

"The self-complacency of the Gorbals session-clerk we can very well believe to have been just a modification, brought about by years, of the self-conceit of the Tarletons' domine which provoked the satire of Burns. Wilson has been heard to say, 'I have often wondered what set Robert Burns upon me, for we were eye on the best of terms.' But with all its severity, the satire is levelled only at the presumption of Wilson in affecting a knowledge of medicine, and it is quite possible that the poet might laugh at that, and yet hold the domine in considerable esteem.

"The boys in the school knew that people called their master 'Dr. Hornbook,' although they did not very well understand the reason. On one occasion only did we hear the name used in his presence. He had come behind a boy who was trifling, and pulled his ear. The boy, a resolute and stubborn one, turned about, and said, 'What's that for, you—you—Doctor Hornbook!' Upon which Hornbook struck him a blow on the head with a ruler, so violent that the boy fell insensible on the floor. He speedily recovered, but from that day never returned to the school."

ALEXANDER WHITEWORTH.

"The true story of Death and Dr. Hornbook" has recently been made known on the reputed authority of Thomas Berland, a member of the Bachelor's Club, who was present on the occasion which gave it birth; it was a Mutual Improvement Society, founded by Burns—its first chairman and ruling spirit—meeting monthly for reading essays and debating therein. The
EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK,¹

AN OLD SCOTTISH HARP.

APRIL 1ST, 1785.

"The 'Epistle to Lapraik' was pronounced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, 'On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin.' I believe he has omitted the word rocking in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the countrywomen employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of going a-rocking, or with the rock. As the connection of the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talked of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these rockings at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their rocks, that Lapraik's song beginning 'When I upon thy bosom lean,' was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik, and his second in reply to Lapraik's answer."—GILBERT BURNS.

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

John Lapraik was born in 1727, at the farm of Lalah Dalfran, about three miles west of Muirkirk, in the county of Ayrshire. This property had been long in the possession of his family; and being the eldest son, he succeeded to it on the death of his father. In 1754 he married Margaret Rankine of Lochhead (sister to the 'rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine'), whom, however, he had the misfortune to lose after giving birth to her fifth child. A few years afterwards, in 1766, he married the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, Janet Anderson of Lightsaw, the subject of the song which drew forth the first epistle of Burns. At the time of his second marriage, and for some years afterwards, he was still in Dalfran, but the bursting of that 'villainous bubble,' as Burns calls it, the Ayr Bank, involved him and many families of Ayrshire in ruin. He was obliged to let his own lands of Dalfran, and retire first to Muirs-mill, a small farm in the vicinity, afterwards to Netherwood, a farm on the water of Greenock (a tributary of the Ayr), and again back to Muirs-mill. Eventually he sold off his property, but the sale of his land failed to rid him of his liabilities; and the unfortunate man was thrown into prison. It is said that the song addressed to his wife, which excited so strongly the admiration of Burns, was composed while Lapraik was imprisoned within the walls of Ayr jail. It furnishes a beautiful model of conjugal affection.

When I upon thy bosom lean,
And loudly clap thee a' my ain,
I stay in the traced lane,
That made us once, who once grew twin.
A natural flame inspires us both—
The tender look, the melting kiss;
Even shall ne'er destroy our love,
But only give us change of bliss.
How a wish? It's a' for thee;
I ken thy wish is me to please;
Oh, moments pass so smooth away.
That numbers on us look and gaze.
Weel pleased they see our happy days.
Nor envy's self finds ought to blame;
And when weary cares arise,
Thy bosom still shall be my home.
I'll lay me thre, and tak my rest;
And if that might disturb my dear,
I'll bid her houch her cares away,
And beg her not to drap a tear.
How i' joy? It's a' her ain;
United still her heart and mine.
They're like the wodbine round the tree
That's twined till death shall them divo.
On fasten-e'en we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin';
And there was nuckle fun an' jokin',
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At sang about.

There was ae sung, among the rest,
Aboon then a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had address
To some sweet wife:
It thir'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

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

It put me fudgin'-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spier't,
Then a' that kent him round declar'd
He had ingine,
That none excel'd it, few can near't,
It was sae fine.

That set him to a pint of ale,
An' either dauce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' songs he'd made himsel',
Or witty catches,

Unfortunately, according to Robert Chambers, "Lapraik must have stolen the ideas and nearly all the election of his song from a poem in Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine, October 1773." About 1778, Lapraik, then far advanced in years, removed to Muirkirk, and opened a small public-house, which served at the same time as the village post-office. Here he lived much respected till his death, which took place on the 7th May, 1807, in the eightieth year of his age. Burns addressed in all three poetical epistles to Lapraik. Two were published in his first and second editions, and the third appeared for the first time in Cromek's Reliques of Burns. The replies of Lapraik are all unfortunately lost, and if they were in rhyme, it is singular that none of them are given in his own volume, although that volume contains an epitome to the poet of a late date, consisting chiefly of an apology for his attempting to court the muse in his old age. One of Lapraik's sons, alive in 1841, recollected having been the bearer of several communications between his father and Burns, who was then at Mossgill. On the first occasion, he found the poet in a field sowing corn. "I'm no sure if I ken the haur," said Burns, as he took the letter; but no sooner had he glanced at its contents, than unconsciously letting go the sheet containing the poem, it was not till he had finished reading that he discovered the loss he had sustained. Burns and Lapraik met several times, to their mutual satisfaction. On one occasion, in the winter of 1775, according to a promise made in his third epistle, Burns visited Lapraik at Muirnismill, where he dined, spent a merry evening, and next morning took his departure for Mossgill.

Lapraik's poems were published in 1788 at Kilmarnock, forming a thin two volume entitled Poems on Several Occasions. In an address to Burns, he confesses that he never thought of troubling the world with his "dull, insipid, thoughtless rhyme,"

Till your kind muse, wi' friendly blast,
First tutor'd up my fame,
And wounded bann'tis at the mast,
My long-forgotten name.

Lapraik's own estimate of his rhymes thus given is a tolerably just one. The address to his wife quoted above is much superior to the rest. This term is explained in introductory note to poem.
"Twe'en Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gie me an' spark o' Nature's fire,
   That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
   At plough or cart,
My muse, tho' hamely in attire,
   May touch the heart.
POEMS AND SONGS.

O for a spunk o' Allan's\(^1\) glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be
If I can hit it!
That would be lear enough for me,
If I could get it.

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

I winna blaw about mysel';
As ill I like my faut to tell;
But friends, and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me,
Tho' I mann own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For mony a plack\(^2\) they wheelde f'ree me,
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race,\(^3\) or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' rhymin'-ware
Wi' ane anither.

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

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

\(^1\) Allan Ramsay's.
\(^2\) An old Scotch copper coin, in value one-third of a penny English.
\(^3\) Mauchline races were celebrated on the high road near Maussigil.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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

SECOND EPISODE TO JOHN LAPRAIK.

April 21st, 1785.

While new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
An' pounies reck in plough or braik,
This hour on o'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

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

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

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

"Shall baudh Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
POEMS AND SONGS.

Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
       In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
       An' thank him kindly!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Or is't the paaughty feudal Thane,
Wi' ruffl'd sark an' glaucin' cane,
Wha thinks himself' nae sheep-shank bone,¹
       But lordly stalks,

¹ Equivalent to our "no small beer;" i.e. is full of conceit.
POEMS AND SONGS.

While caps and bonnets all are taken,
As by he walks,

O Thou who gives us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remeal;
But, thanks to Heav'n! that's no the gate
Way 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 fulfills great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

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

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

Then may La'raik and Burns arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, an' joys
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year.
TO WILLIAM SIMSON,¹

SCHOOLMASTER, OCHILTREE.

MAY, 1785.

I got your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratin' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coax'in' billie,
Your 'atterin' strain.

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

My senses wad be in a creel,²
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan,³ or wi' Gilbertfield,⁴
The braise o' Fame;
Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

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

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

¹ William Simson was the schoolmaster of the parish school of Ochiltree at the time his correspondence with the poet began. In the year 1788, he became teacher of the parish school of Cumnock, which office he retained with great credit till the period of his death in 1815. Simson had a turn for poetry, and besides several translations, left a MS. volume of original pieces which are said to have been superior to those of Lapraik and Sillar. The poetical letter which called forth the epistle of Burns is unfortunately lost. The acquaintance of Burns and William Simson was not confined to epistolary intercourse. They had many personal meetings, and were on terms of close friendship. In another note, we shall have occasion to speak of Simson, in connection with the "Answer to the Epistle from a Tailor."² To have one's self in a creel, is explained by Burns in his own glossary—to be crazed, to be fascinated.³ Allan Ramsay.⁴ William Hamilton of Gilbertfield (1665-1755), author of "Willie was a Wanton Wag," and other Scotch poems.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

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

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

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' brases, her dens and dells,
Where glories Wallace
Aft bune the gree, as story tells,
Fyae southron 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, with shoes wet and red with blood
Or glorious died.  

O, sweet are Coila's laughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin' hares, in amorous whils,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushion croods
With wailfu' cry!

1 Coila, Kyle, the central district of Ayrshire, with Cunningham on the north and Carrick on the south.
2 "The story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest."—BURNS'S LETTER TO DR. MOORE.
POEMS AND SONGS.

Ev'n winter bleak has charms for me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray:
Or blinding drifts wild-furious lie,

Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shows 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 found her,
Till by himself he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet! to stray, an' pensive ponder

A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther,1 jundie, stretch, an' strive—
Let me fair Nature's face descree,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive

Bum owre their treasure.2

Farewell, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
[other
We've been owre lang unkenn'd toither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal:
May Envy wallop in a tetner,

Black fiend, infernal!

While highlandmen hate tolls and taxes,
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies,3
While terr' 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,4

1 *Hog-shouther, that is "hog-shoulder," means to jostle or push with the shoulders like hogs (sheep).
2 A name for a sheep that has died naturally or by accident, regarded and claimed as the shepherd's perquisite.
3 A cant term for those religious opinions, which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.
4 In regard to the New Light and Old Light controversy see note to the "Twa Herds," p. 233.
POEMS AND SONGS

'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

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

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

This past for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam' i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chieles gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' nuckle din there was 'bout it,
Faith loud and lang.

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

This was denied, it was affirn'd;
The herds an' hirsels were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards riv'd and 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 clowns an' nick's;
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' Auld-light caddies bare sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sie bludiy pranks.
POEMS AND SONGS.

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

Nae doubt the Auld-light flocks are bleatin';
Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin';
Mysel', I've even seen them greetin'
   Wi' girmin' spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lied on
   By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns!
Some Auld-light herds in neibor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
   To take a flight,
An' stay a month amang the moons
   An' see them right.

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

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

END OF VOL. I.
but such a fright
 That bump and bump
 Show how.

 to see
 the shepherds
 Running
 to call the rascals
 neighbour

 Indisposed to leave
 the school
 to chew
 to talk
 to water
 with attention
 to broil

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