

APPENDIX.

THE BATTLE OF GARSCUBE.

FROM REMINISCENCES OF A MEMBER OF THE GROG CLUB.

"Pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem."—PLAUTUS.

THE sun had not long poured its enlivening beams upon the spires and streets of Glasgow, when the loud knock of Ritchie Falconer, the barber, made me start from the blankets, and throw myself into my dressing-gown. In those halcyon days every nose in the western metropolis of Scotland, from the Lord Provost's to that of Bell Geordie, was daily or hebdomadally in the hands of the barber. Silver-tempered razors, almond shaving soap, and patent strops were in the womb of futurity; and however urgent the necessity might be of ridding oneself of what has since become so fashionable, a man would as soon have tried to amputate his own limb as have attempted to draw a razor athwart his own face. The *friseurs* of that period, although they could not boast of the elegant scratch-wigs which cover the phrenological developments of our modern *perruquiers*, had bumps upon their frontal sinuses which indicated something more than a mere acquaintanceship with bears' grease and honey-water. They were generally fellows of wit and observation, had received what was called "a grammar-school education," and mindful of their former corporation connection with the men of the scalpel and lancet, conceived it becoming to sport as much of the Latin which Rector Barr* had whipped into them, as could easily be squeezed into their morning colloquies.

A Glasgow Strap of the last century prated more about the virtues of Miltiades than Maccassar, and ingratiated himself with his customers rather by the raciness of his conversation, than by the starch of his cravat or the sabre cut of his whiskers. Besides all this, everything transacted in the City was as well known to him as to the prying and hawk-eyed editors—alas! long defunct—of the *Journal* and *Mercury*. He knew the peculiarities of every establishment, from that of the *blue-and-white-check* cork to those of the *sugar* aristocrats; and was as intimately acquainted with the past removes at a Provost's dinner, as the projected changes at the City Council Board. In short, he was little less entertaining than the Spanish Asmodeus, and often not less anxiously looked for by his morning customers in Glasgow, than was the little tell-tale devil by Don Cleophas Perez Zambullo, in Madrid.

But *tempora mutantur et nos mutantur in illis*. The use of the barber's basin seems almost a fiction. The perambulatory race of Straps is extinct—the morning tale of the suds is no more, and but one or two septuagenarians, who still retain the cut and the curl of the last century, stalk about as the sad remembrancers of that eventful period.

"Good morning, sir," said Ritchie, with a smiling countenance, as he opened my chamber-door; "had a good night's rest, I hope?"

* Mr Barr was Rector of the Grammar-School—an institution which ranks equal in antiquity with that of the University.

"Pretty well," said I, seating myself in my shaving chair. "*Gaudeo te valere*," added the barber, "as I always say to Professor Richardson, when I'm gaun to curl his *caput*. But alas, there's naething steirin' in the College at the present time—they're a' awa, frae the wee't to the biggest o' them, taking their *otium cum dignitate*; even John M'Lachlan, *Bedellus*, honest man, is awa to Gourrock. He gaed aff yesterday in the fly-boat, and his wife, on account o' the high wind, is between the deil and the deep sea o' anxiety to hear o' his arrival."

"You must have then quite a sinecure, Falconer," muttered I, through the thick lather that encompassed my mouth.

"Sinecure!" exclaimed Dick, "and the Deacon's-choosing sae sune! I hae just been up wi' Deacon Lawbroad, the tailor, wha threeps he maun be shaved sax times a-week at this time, instead o' twice; and, my certie, it is nae sinecure to raise his beard. Od! his face taks mair time to clear than half-a-dozen—but nae wonner, suner o' later the Corporation *galravages* tell on a man's chin and mak it tender."

"But I thought the deacon had turned over a new leaf in the prospect of obtaining a magisterial chain."

"A chain! *O tempora! O mores!*" cried the barber, sneeringly, while he followed it up with a *whew-w-w*—like that of my Uncle Toby. "Set him up, indeed! my sang, they'll be ill aff when they tak the tailor to the Council Chaumer. It does na do for would-be bailies to be drinking *pop-in* at the *Black Boy* till twa in the morning, and clashing and clavering wi' Peggy Bauldy. Na, na, we maun hae doucer pows than the deacon's to bow in the Wynd Kirk frae the front o' the laft! Doctor Porteous, honest man, could na thole to see so mony marks o' the speerit staring him in the face ilka Sunday! But weel-a-wat there's nae saying wh'all be bailies now-a-days. *Audaces fortuna juvat, timidusque repellit*."

"Why, Ritchie," said I, "it would not at all astonish me, ere many years, to see you yourself following the town officers, and wondered at as one of the wise men of the west."

"Why, sir, *at pulchrum est digito monstrari et*

dicier hic est," said the barber, evidently delighted with the idea; "after that thouless, feckless, senseless coof, Macsapless, ane need na lose a' heart. Well, but he's a fine han' for the Provost. I'm sure he'll vote through thick and thin wi' him, and boo like ony *white-bannet* at an auction. Od! the folk say he coft his cock'd hat frae Miller & Ewing twa years since syne, and what is mair likely, he slept wi' his chain the first night after he got it. But what do you think the twa-faced body moved in the Council the ither day? Why, naething less than what was proposed in Provost Cheeks's time—him, ye kin, wha lived in the lan' just aboon the Fleshmarket—naething less than that the City barbers should na be allowed to shave their customers on Sunday. Foul fa' the silly loon! Had he as muckle brains in his pow as powther on his shoulders, he micht hae seen the folly o' his hypocrisy. I really wonner the Provost, wha is a sensible man, would listen to sic a yammering hypocritical body. But it's only another proof to me, that when the unco guid get into power, they're aye scadding their tongues in ither folks' kale. The Bailie has long sat under Mr Balfour, honest man, and the Outer Kirk folk, ye ken, a' think themselfs far greater saunts than their neebours."

"And what are we to do on Sundays, Falconer? The Council cannot lay an embargo on one's beard growing."

"*Verbum sapient!*" replied Ritchie, taking me by the nose for the finishing touch of his razing operation. "The trade have agreed to cause their apprentices to parade the streets on that morning in white hose, and you have only to raise the window, haud up your wee finger, and, my sang! your chin will sune be as smooth as it is noo, Sunday tho' it be. Are decent Christian folks, do you think, to gang like heathenish Jews at the nod o' a Glasgow Trades' Bailie? Od! I ken a black-a-vised chield that maun be shaved twice a-day when he wants to be particular. Do you think it is affording 'a praise and protection to those who'd do well' to keep men frae hearing the word on account o' a lang beard? But let the deacon sleep—*Anoto quarcamus seria ludo*. I've something mair extraordinary to tell you; but in the meantime I must get

the curling tongs heated before throwing a little moost (powder) into your hair."

On the barber's return with the heated tongs, I immediately begged him to say what he had to communicate.

"Od! sir, the news is nane o' the best. Do you ken there's an unco sough about rioting and rebellion?" said Dick, in a canting and *fishing* tone of voice.

"Rioting and rebellion! Pooh, pooh! That must be all fudge. Meal is abundant and cheap at present, wages are high, and trade is brisk; the Scottish Convention has been dissolved, the secret societies have given up their sittings, and the real friends of the people are determined to resist French revolutionary principles. But who are they that are to occasion the dread riot or revolution as you call it?"

"I dinna ken," said Ritchie, sarcastically, "whether it will be by the freens o' the people, or the foes o' the king; but if it happens, it will be by a set o' folk that are no over weel pleased wi' the government, and really I'm no muckle astonished at their displeasure. Od! there's no mony decent weel-doing men that would like to be shot at against their will for a pair shilling a day."

"Oh, I understand you," said I; "you have heard it hinted that there may be some further disturbances consequent on the extension of the Militia Act to Scotland?"

"You have hit it," said the barber. "Do you ken, as I was coming here this morning, I heard a clashing and clavering almaist as noisy as what goes on at the Washing-house in the Green; something serious o' the kind is expected to happen in the neighbourhood."

"Why, Falconer, I am exceedingly sorry to hear any rumour of that kind, for, to tell you the truth, this militia measure is not at all popular, and what is worse, it has been deemed by many altogether contrary to the strict letter of the articles of Union. On this account it has been made a handle of by demagogues; and I am really alarmed lest the people, goaded on by such individuals, may commit some outrage by which they will

ultimately become the unfortunate sufferers."

"*Recte Domine!*" cried Ritchie, covering my head and face over with powder. "They hae been egged on to do sae already, and what was the upshot?—broken heads and cauld wames! Oh, it was a sad affair that at Tranent. What a black burning shame that sae mony innocent folk should be slain and slaughtered—God forbid we should ever hae sic like doins here! I hope the folk will tak tent; and if decent lads maun leave their wives and bairns, against their will, in defence o' their kintra, let the kintra pay them better, and look kindlier after their sma' families. Had the folks hereabouts mair to say in the makin' o' their laws than they hae, I jalouse they would na get sic scrimp justice. But *vir sapit qui pauco loquitur*, I'm maybe speaking treason, and ye ken I would na like to gang o'er the great *dib* (sea) like Tam Muir and the like o' them. We maun keep out o' the clutches of auld Braxy* as lang as we can. My sang! he's a kittle freen to foregather wi' anywhere; but I can tell you, I would rather meet wi' him in the heart o' a change house than at the *bar*. But I maun be gone. Forget what I hae been clyping about politics, but dinna forget to hand up your wee finger on Sunday at the window to the first pair o' white hose you see, when you want a shave."

So saying, while gathering up his various implements of trade, and offering me, as usual, a *vale Domine*, off flew Ritchie Falconer to Adonise and amuse some other customer.

Arraying myself in my morning suit, I sallied forth to take my usual walk to the *Pointhouse*. The banks of the Clyde at that period were not, as they are now, studded with cotton-mills, weaving-factories, print-fields, and dye-works. The verdant turf was only trodden by a few idle stragglers; while the water was unruffled for hours, save by the salmon fishing-boats, which paddled from Finnieston to Govan. No steam-boat, crowded with fashionables, and pouring out its volumes of heavy smoke, had yet disturbed the river's general placidity. No ship

* The Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield, remarkable for the violence of his politics.

was seen looming in the distance; a ponderous gabert, a herring wherry, and a Gourock fly-boat, were all the Clyde then bore on her bosom, and these were "like angels' visits, few and far between."

While enjoying the beauties of the scenery, my thoughts involuntarily turned on the riots apprehended by Ritchie Falconer, and on the probability that the Volunteers, to which I had a pride in belonging, would be called out to quell them. The melancholy affair at Tranent constantly obtruded itself on my recollection, and I could not help beseeching Heaven to forbend what might force me, in my military capacity, to fire on, perhaps, the most thoughtless and guiltless of my countrymen. On returning to the City, I inquired anxiously about the rumour communicated by the barber, and found that it had already got general wind. In the Coffee-room, too, after breakfast, I discovered it to be the only topic which occupied the various knots of gossips that encircled the tables. Hearing nothing, however, but conjecture, the matter was immediately forgotten amid the bustle of business, until I was stopped in the street, a little after one o'clock, by a friend, who, with a face as long as a yard-stick, communicated the fact that a serious disturbance had that day taken place in the parish of New Kilpatrick; and that the rioters, when the messenger had left the place, were threatening to set fire to the house of Lord President Campbell at Garscube, his lordship having incurred the displeasure of the populace for carrying the Militia Act into operation, in his capacity of Deputy-Lieutenant of the County. While busily conversing upon the subject, and discussing the means that would be resorted to for preventing such outrages, the sound of distant drums and fifes was heard advancing from the west to the east end of the City; and, on listening, I immediately recognised the well-known *assembly* rattle of the Royal Glasgow Volunteers. I took instant leave of my friend, and hurried home to don my regimentals and to attend the summons.

On entering the house I found my worthy

old servant in a fearful quandary. She had heard the news of the riot, coloured with a thousand fancied terrors, and the result in her eyes appeared to assume a magnitude little short of a rebellion, as frightful as the one she had some faint recollection of in her girlhood. "Hech sirs! hech sirs!" sighed Girzy, wringing her hands, as she saw me buckling on my bayonet and cartouch-box, and examining the flint of my musket—"That I should levee to see anither bluidy tuilzie amang freens and brithers, and that these een should again look on folk fechtng wi' their ain kith an' kin, and murdering ane anither for the sake o' mere *ne'er-do-weels*. Pedin's prophecy, I'm thinking, will come to pass sooner than sinners' jalouse, when a man will travel a simmer's day up the strath o' Clyde, and neither see a lum reeking nor hear a cock crow! O maister, ye had better stay at hame, and say ye're no that weel. Heaven will forgie ye for sic a sma' lee. There will nae doubt be plenty there without you. Wha wad like to hae innocent bluid on their head? Wash your hands, oh wash your hands o't! Think o' the thoughtless souls at Tranent that were sent without a moment's warning to their lang hame and their dreed account.* How many cheerless cots and mourning hearts that woefu' day occasioned! Were it a when o' thae cruel-hearted French claujamphry, that had landed to destroy us, I would na care to see you sae buskit; but to gang out that way to kill your ain kintymen—oh it's a black burning shame! Dinna gang, sir—tak' my advice, sir, and dinna gang the length o' your tae!"

Seeing Girzy's anxiety, and knowing the deep interest she took in my welfare, I thought it my duty to calm her, by saying that the rebellion she believed to have broken out at Garscube was nothing but a squabble between a few farm-servants and the legal authorities, and that the mere appearance of the Volunteers on the ground would restore all things to their wonted quiet. "Weel, weel," replied Girzy, in a sceptical tone, "I wish it may be sae. He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar. But oh, sir, tak' care o'

* There were twelve persons killed and thirty-five wounded at Tranent.

yourself; and if the habble should turn out to be mair than you jaloused, just do as I would do—e'en leave it to be settled by them that are paid for being shot at. Tak' tent to yourself; and oh be shure no to turn the point o' your gun against wives and bairns!" Talking in this anxious strain, and following me to the door, she pulled an auld shoe off her foot, and threw it down the stair after me, as she said, "for guid luck!"

On arriving at George-square, which was the place of rendezvous, I found an unusually large assembly of the corps, all of whom were in high spirits and eager for the fray. On falling in and counting the files there appeared to be the full complement. Three hundred bayonets were in fact present, and it is perhaps not too much to say that there was no member of the corps who would have hesitated to heard the tasteless wight who denied this regiment to be the handsomest in His Majesty's service. Whether this opinion was founded in justice, or was the result of mere self-complacency, it is not for me to determine; but it is certain that this corps of gentlemen at least proved a constant theme of admiration to all the sighing spinsters around the city tea-tables, and, what was far better for its deathless fame, it attracted the notice of the Glasgow Homer, better known under the every-day cognomen of *Blin' Alick*, who, in his peripatetic wanderings, blazoned far and wide the gallant character of the corps in the following graphic lines:—

"We are gentlemen of honour,
And we do receive no pay;
Colonel Corbet's our commander,
And with him we'll fight our way!"

And so they seemed determined to do on this memorable occasion; for no sooner had the gallant Colonel told us that we were that day assembled to support the King and the glorious Constitution, and that every man was expected to do so with his life, than the whole regiment simultaneously doffed their caps, and gave a loud huzza of approbation.

The Colonel was a man in whose military tactics every member of the corps placed implicit confidence. He was none of your pot-bellied, sunshiny, feather-bed soldiers. He was a tall, slender, wiry figure, with an eye that would not have winked in front of a battery, and a heart that would bounded to have led on a forlorn hope. On observing the peculiar manner which he had of turning out his toes, one might have supposed this officer a complete military martinet; but the idea was immediately dispelled when he proceeded to mount his Bucephalus. Unlike many Volunteer commanders, he had smelt gunpowder when it was seasoned with a goodly peppering of bullets, and in his youth had crossed blades with the determined foes of his country. He was present in the bloody conflict that took place in the marketplace of St Helier's, on the 6th of January, 1781, and had, on that occasion, gazed upon the dying features of the gallant Major Pierson.* The Colonel could also boast, in the highest degree, of what was esteemed absolutely necessary to one's *gentility* in those days of Spencean principles,—the character of being a thorough-paced Tory, and a sworn foe to demagogues and democrats. With many useful and amiable qualities of head and heart, which it is here unnecessary to enumerate, this gallant officer had one foible, and it was one which, whenever military movements were occupying his thoughts, or were the topic of conversation, he displayed. Proud, as well as he might be, of his share in the achievement in Jersey, he had acquired the habit of prefacing every opinion on military tactics, and every project of military operation, with a full and particular account of the whole transactions of the eventful day at St Helier's, and which at length became to his friends and the corps about as well known and as tiresome as the story of the royal *dé-jenné* at the castle of Tillietudlem. Upon the present occasion, this *Lady Margaret Bellenden* peculiarity displayed itself strongly, for no sooner were the cartouch-boxes observed to

* In the beautiful engraving of *Heath*, from a picture by Copley, the Colonel of the Glasgow Volunteers occupies a conspicuous situation. He is there represented with a drawn sword in his hand, gazing on the face of the dying soldier.

be filled with ammunition, than the Colonel, after telling us that we were about to march to Garscube, and warning us when there to be steady and cool, involuntarily stumbled upon Jersey.

"Gentlemen," said lie, "well do I recollect when, on the morning of the 6th of January, 1781, the drum summoned us to arms, and when ——" The Major, well knowing the Colonel's foible—aware also that there was no time for the accustomed *yarn* of half an hour—no sooner heard the famous 6th of January uttered than, in open defiance of all military rule, he instantly rode up and intimated that all was in readiness for the regiment to proceed. The thread of the Colonel's discourse being broken, the battle of St Helier's was forgotten, and instant preparations were made for the battle of Garscube. The volunteers being then successively ordered to "prime and load"—"fix bayonets"—"shoulder arms"—and "by sections on the left backwards wheel,"—the word "march" was given; and off we paced boldly to beard the foe, followed by a crowd of idle urchins, whose reiterated shouts rendered the field-officers' steeds more restive than their horsemanship warranted to be either safe for themselves, or seemly for the character of the corps.

The day was one of those more in unison with the climate of Italy than of Scotland. There was not a single cloud in the visible horizon, nor a breath of wind to temper the rays of a scorching sun. The soldiers, unaccustomed to the tight-lacing of their scarlet jackets, and laden with heavy muskets and well-filled cartouch-boxes, had not proceeded far on their march before every individual felt himself in an unusually "melting mood;" and when at length the corps approached the spot which was to prove the field of its fame, every mouth was as parched as though it had been subjected to the sirocco of the Arabian desert, while every eye looked more eagerly for an engagement with a tavern or a rivulet

than with a rebel or a rioter. On approaching the bridge of Garscube, the Colonel halted the regiment, and sent forward a detachment to reconnoitre. The light company, to which I belonged, having been selected for this important duty, we immediately hurried on at double quick; and, in due conformity with the established rules of military tactics, took possession, though without opposition, of the bridge, as the key to a position on the right bank of the Kelvin. When the regiment had reached the *tête du pont*, the colonel looked on every hand for the enemy, but lo! not even a ghost of a rioter came within the range of his visual organs. A few idle women chattered in knots, and criticised with apparent delight our dusty and broiling condition; while a band of boys, seemingly just relieved from the ferula of the schoolmaster, hailed us with the reiterated and elegant salutation of "*the brosey weavers*."*

If what was to be done appeared an enigma to the Corporal as well as the Colonel, what *ought* to be done was to all abundantly evident. The hour, the walk, and the heat of the day, all conspired in making a powerful appeal to the mind and the materialism of every volunteer. Exhausted nature loudly implored the assistance of the commissariat, while the incipient idea of laying the country under a general contribution fitted simultaneously athwart every brain, and demanded immediate realization. Whether the conception of this foraging foray was or was not strictly in accordance with the Colonel's conduct at St Helier's, it is not necessary to inquire; but no sooner had we grounded arms at the bridge of Garscube, than a council of war was summoned to consider of ulterior proceedings, and particularly of the best means of defeating the annoying attacks of General *Hunger*, and combating the no less terrific onsets of his fearful auxiliary *Thirst*. The result of the conference was a resolution, carried *nem. con.* that while a small party should be left to keep the rallying position of

* Brosey weavers, in derision, they might be called; but most of them had both in their pockets and on their bones the wherewithals that showed significantly how well they were enabled at all times to march gallantly to the tune of *Brose and Butter*.

the bridge, the remainder of the corps should be permitted to ferret out for themselves what was individually requisite. Three hundred soldiers, with stomachs like those of the cormorant, and throats as dry as a potsherd, would have required a land more celebrated for milk and honey than that around Garscube. As it was, however, each individual seemed determined to cater for himself; and no sooner was the order given for a general forage, than off flew the whole Volunteers like locusts over the face of the country. To sack a dairy and ransack a hen-roost became immediately the general occupation. At least a dozen of red coats were seen *billeting* themselves on every farm-house, draining their churns, and *stowing away* their cheese and *bannocks*; while the few public-houses scattered along the roadside were relieved on that memorable day of all their stale beer, sour porter, and *humped* ham. Never had there been seen in the parish so urgent a demand for everything in the shape of meat or drink, nor more handsome payment known for what could be obtained; for though the Volunteers bore bayonets, they likewise carried purses; and to their honour be it recorded, they testified a universal desire to make the people feel that they owed their entertainment to their silver, and not to their steel.

The foraging party to which I belonged consisted of two besides myself. One of these was an individual whose round rosy cheeks bore indubitable tokens of having taken regular toll of everything that had passed through his mouth; while the other had jaws so lank and skinny, that they might have served for a lantern. The former, bating an unconquerable propensity for breaking the third commandment, was an honest hearted Christian, and a universal favourite; while the latter was a French *émigré*, with all the *politesse* and prejudices of the ancient *régime*. Besides being a Frenchman, my foraging companion also played the French horn—on account of which accomplishment he had been admitted into the *band*. Having remarked some blue smoke curling through a thicket of trees, and judging wisely that a snug cottage would be there embosomed,

we made a steeple-chase for the spot, and soon found ourselves in the audience-chamber of a bustling marron, actually engaged in freeing a large churn of its butter.

"Gude save us, gudewife!" exclaimed my punchy friend, as we entered the apartment; "I fin' we're jist come in the nick o' time! Lord, woman, gie us a waught o' that sour milk as fast as ye like, for we're a' on the point of choking. What a deevil of a het day this has been for marching!"

"What brocht ye sae far frae hame on sic a day?" said the matron jestingly; "and whan ye left it wha obleeged ye to bear sic a burden? We kintra folk are no sae taen up wi' sodgering—we would rather bide at hame and mind our wark. You're no come, I hope, to countenance thae fules that would tak our gudemen awa frae their lames, against their ain will and the will o' the Almighty—that would mak our bairns fatherless and ourselves widows. It's a bonny like story, indeed; tak my word for it, nae gude can come o' this militia trade. It's quite contrair baith to the law and the gospel. If you're cum to talk to the gudeman about that matter, I maun tell ye he's not at hame, nor wiuna be: so ye'll jist tak your drap drink and gang your ways."

"*Pardonnez moi, madame,*" whispered my companion, Monsieur Collon, advancing towards the alarmed matron, kneeling down and kissing her hand; "*vous vous trompez assurément; you mak von gran mistake, madame. By gar, we come to dis house not like dec voleurs to rob you of any ting, far less of Monsieur votre mari. Oh mon Dieu! de tout, de tout. We do not vant your husband at all. Ah, comme vous êtes jolie, aimable!—quels beaux yeux! By gar—*"

"Tuts man, get up and dinna be fashious," interrupted the matron. "Are ye daft or glaikit? What is't ye're haverin about? I dinna understan' thae bletchers at a'. See and lay your lugs in that bicker. You look as tho' you were na that ower often at hame at meal-time; and since ye tell me that ye hae naething to say to the gudeman, I maun e'en try to bring you something better, as I

jalouse your walk will hae gien ye a drouth like the packman's."*

Having offered our best thanks for the dame's kindness, she placed before us a large *kébbock*, a basketful of oaten cakes, and a bottle of mountain dew, to which my jolly companion and I paid our instant obeisance. The "gudewife," seeing the Frenchman rather bashful and backward in partaking of the feast, turned towards him, and said, "Come, come, Maister Scantoeereesh, just fa' tae, like your friend there, and dinna let your modesty wrang ye."

"*Ah, madame, vous me flattez trop,*" said the musician. "By gar you do me infinite honor. This bottermilk (taking a draught) is beautiful—*superb, magnifique*—pretty well! Dis is your *vin du pays, n'est-ce pas?* Permit that I drink your got-o-hel!"

"Tuts man, what are you gab-gabbing at?" said the matron. "Tak your pick and your drap, and keep your palavers for them that understan' them."

Monsieur Collon immediately drew in a chair and commenced operations; and, in the true spirit of Dugald Dalgetty, tacked in what might at least serve him for the next twenty-four hours. Thinking that the repast on the musician's part merited a digester, I pointed to the bottle, and suggested to him the propriety of taking some of the stomach-soothing elixir.

"*Pardonnez moi, monsieur,*" said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders. "Dat *blue ruin*, as de Englishman call it, do always put my whole head *toujours* into one flame. I vill rader take von oder drop of de Scottish *vin du pays.*" So saying, he approached the churn, which at that moment was standing at about an angle of seventy-five degrees, for the more effectually freeing it of its contents.

"What!" said my rosy-checked companion; "more of that stuff yet? Lord safe us! That's awfu'!"

"*Ne derangez vous pas*—I love dis ver moch, and vill now tak von oder gran drink of it," putting his head into the churn. The gudewife, seeing the Frenchman's powdered wig

and jaundiced visage within the precincts of what she, of all things, considered as sacred to cleanliness, and hearing him lapping the buttermilk, ran towards him, exclaiming, "Deil's in the worrie-cow! Is he gann to pollute my hail kirn o' milk wi' his ill-faured greasy gab and moosty pash!" while she accompanied the exclamation with a smart blow on the musician's back. Monsieur Collon, eager at the draught, and about precisely poised on the churn, no sooner received the blow, than it threw him off his balance, and, to the utter dismay of all present, he was instantly seen to pop head-foremost into the gaping vessel. The Frenchman's heels were, of course, the next moment kicking in the air, while a loud gurgling noise issued from the churn that demanded instant attention. In the twinkling of an eye I dashed forward, and seized the struggling musician by the limbs, and with one effort extricated the poor fellow from his wooden surtout. But what words can describe, or what pencil delineate, the absurd and ridiculous appearance of the half-drowned horn-blower! Gasping for breath, and struggling for vision, he stood before us in all the insignia of this new *Order of the Bath*, with a countenance whose yellow wrinkles poured down streams of buttermilk, while adown his long queue a torrent rushed from the well-soaked fountain of his wig. The matron was in the deepest distress for having been the innocent cause of such a mishap to the poor Frenchman; and to an infinity of apologies added every exertion in her power to restore his garb and his temper to their former propriety.

While Monsieur Collon was busily making up matters with the matron and her mirror, the roll of a distant drum awakened our attention, and warned us of the necessity of an immediate retreat. Having each pulled a piece from our purse, we pressed it on the gudewife; but it was not till we qualified the gift by telling her to lay it out on something for her daughter, that she would consent to touch our silver.

* More given to eat than to drink.

On regaining the bridge, we learned that the troop of Glasgow Volunteer Cavalry had, previous to our arrival, dispersed the whole pitchfork belligerent band of malcontents, who, after burning the parish records of Kilpatrick, had taken up a position on a neighbouring hill. There being no further danger apprehended, the idea—a fearful one to those accustomed to feather-beds—of our corps bivouacking that night on the lawn of Garscube was abandoned. The Colonel, after a lengthy harangue, in which he declared that the regiment under his command had that day done immortal honour to itself, and, as usual, mixed up the sermon with what he had himself accomplished on the 6th January, 1781, at last gave the welcome word of “right about, face,” and off marched the Volunteers at a smart pace for the City.

As we trudged along the road, more occupied with the freaks of the foray than the feats of our prowess, a furious-looking dog was seen to rush down from a farm-steading a little off the road, whose appearance gave strong and determined symptoms of combativeness. On observing it approaching, I instantly halted, and called out to my paunchy companion, “Huzza, Gilchrist, there’s an enemy at last for you—will you meet him?” “By *gom!* that’s an awfu’ ill-faured neebour,” said my friend; “shall it be blood?” And, without waiting a reply, up went the musket to his shoulder; off went the shot; but, alas, on came the mastiff! The danger was imminent; the dog looked as bold as a lion. “Charge bayonets!” cried I;—“*à la victoire!*” blew M. Collon; and in a moment the supposed disseminator of hydrophobia received such a tickling of the steel as sent him to the right-about in a twinkling. My portly friend, however, was not to be satisfied with merely *flanking* the enemy. He had determined that no quarter should be given, and bent on signalling himself, he made another fearful thrust at the retreating foe. Happily for the dog, but most unfortunately for the Volunteer, the lunge missed its object, the steel pierced the earth, and over went my friend head-foremost into the ditch, at the expense, too, of his bayonet, which

snapped asunder under the force and pressure of seventeen stone!

After this *tuilzie* with the mastiff, nothing remarkable happened till we arrived within a mile of Glasgow. Here, however, a scene occurred that is yet fresh in my recollection, while it still occasions considerable merriment among the small knot of septuagenarians that gazed upon it then. The rear-guard having telegraphed the approach of cavalry, the Colonel instantly threw the battalion into a position to receive them, and sent out a few skirmishers to reconnoitre. On these falling back, with the intelligence that the commander of the advancing corps (which was the Glasgow Light Horse) had given the countersign and parole, the Colonel wheeled us into line, and when the dragons were in the act of passing, ordered a general salute. The glittering of the firelocks, and the noise of the music created, as might be supposed, a very considerable confusion among individuals who were almost as ignorant of a *cover* as a campaign—a confusion which the Captain, from having his charger burthened with a prisoner, who most *unmilitarily* occupied the front of the saddle, felt some difficulty to calm. But if the majority of this troop of chasseurs felt rather uneasy in their saddles on this saluting occasion, there was one in particular in the rear whose position and countenance betokened anything but security and self-possession. The *Galloway* which this awkward wight bestrode being as fiery as the proboscis of her rider, no sooner fixed her eye on so many new faces, than she showed an evident disposition to dissolve immediately her present copartnery. The perilous prancings and curious curvettings that succeeded having attracted attention, what was the astonishment of all to find that the light dragoon was no other than the would-be *Bailie Lawbroad*, whose picture the barber had drawn so graphically in the morning! It was now evident that the poor Deacon’s desire for notoriety had led him a rather dangerous dance; since it was plain to all that his seat would not long remain either secure or a sincere. Guiltless alike of all the rules of Gambado and of Pembroke, the tailor soon lost command of his steed;

while the *persuaders*, from the early habit which the wearer had acquired of drawing up his legs when in danger, having been brought to bear rather unceremoniously on the flanks of the mare, made her as unceremoniously throw up her heels, and eject the dragoon from his saddle. The animal, finding the rider embracing her rather too kindly round the neck, and feeling the usual *restrainers* dangling about her ears, set off at full gallop; and it was now a hundred guineas to a goose that the chasseur would, ere a few minutes, be gazetted a *field officer*! To the *footpads*, as the Volunteers were opprobriously designated by their brethren on horseback, the appearance of a trooper charging in the manner of the Deacon was anything but gall and wormwood; and no sooner did the corps recognise the coppernose of the Snip in a John Gilpin attitude, than they, in defiance of all order, simultaneously roared out, "There goes the tailor riding to Brentford!" The loud shout, followed by a louder bang of the bass drum, having put more mettle into the *Galloway's* heels, she soon shot ahead of the troop; and having shied and flung up her heels at an abrupt turn of the road, off went the tailor over the hedge into a corn-field, and on went the mare over the toll-bar to the corn-chest, which she soon reached, to the utter consternation of the snip's anxious consort, who awaited his arrival.

The Deacon, though a little alarmed, was far more comfortable than he had been for many minutes before, on finding himself, like Commodore Trunnion, thus safely riding at anchor. The Colonel, fearing, however, that some medical assistance might be requisite, and recollecting that the troop boasted only a farrier, instantly despatched his orderly for the Volunteer surgeon, who rode in the rear of the corps. This son of Esculapius, though at the head of his profession, was a gentleman of a most somnolent disposition, and what is more singular, his steed partook of the poppy-juice qualities of its master. Yet, there was this happy peculiarity about the horse and the rider, that both were never found in the arms of Morpheus together. On this occasion, the surgeon, having no

gun-shot wounds to attend to, had given way to his usual propensity on leaving Garscube, while his horse continued so sharply awake, as to have carried his master through the whole manœuvres which the regiment had performed on the march. The surgeon, being roused from his snooze by the orderly, instantly galloped off to the assistance of the trooper, who had, however, previous to his reaching the ground, got fairly on his legs, and was taking considerable credit for throwing himself off so neatly. After putting a finger to the tailor's pulse, and passing his hand over his limbs, the doctor declared him free from blemish, and that there was no necessity for prescribing any other medicine than a walk to the City. Both having then taken their position in the rear of the regiment, it proceeded onward, and soon found itself within the precincts of Glasgow.

On entering the City the band immediately struck up "Caller herring," the sound of which made every window fly open, and suggested to many a cook the necessity of making instant preparation for the approach of her hungry master. Fearing, however, that the instructive melody might not altogether tell on the deaf ears of my old handmaid, Girzy, my fat friend, who had agreed to take a steak with me, no sooner saw the housekeeper at the window, than he bawled out at the top of his voice, "Girzy, my lass, you may put on the *tuties noo*!" Scarcely had the pleasing sound reached the ear of old Girzy, than I was accosted by the well-known "*Gaudeo te valere*" of Ritchie Falconer, who, after sarcastically exclaiming "*Fortuna favet fortibus*," breathlessly inquired what had befallen his customer the Deacon, and told us of the consternation of his wife. The story of the tailor's mishap satisfied the barber, while the appearance of Lavbroad himself quieted the fearful prognostications of his anxious helpmate.

The corps, on reaching its usual place of rendezvous, was immediately dispersed, while the soldiers hurried home to calm the fears of their wives, mothers, and sisters. In the evening the Club-rooms of the City rang with unusual mirth and jollity. Each roof echoed back the scenes of the day and of the

foray, but among them all none occasioned more fun and laughter than the tale of the churn, and the *promotion* of the tailor.

Thus began and thus ended the ever-memorable day of the Battle of Garscube—a day unstained with blood, unsurpassed by heat, alike famous for its foray and for the capture of one prisoner—a day, in short, which proved the brightest gem in the garland of Glasgow Volunteer glory, and has afforded as noble a theme of conversation to the pig-tailed soldiers of the Scottish Western Metropolis as that of St Helier's did to their gallant commander.

The Glasgow corps of Volunteers, which so eminently distinguished itself on that eventful occasion, scarcely survived the century that gave it birth; while the generality of happy faces that grinned with delight at the ludicrous plight of Deacon Lawbroad, have now, as Hamlet says, "few left to mock their grinning;" and had I not, perhaps, been reminded the other day of the immortal action of this gallant corps, by perusing the equally deathless deed of its bounty, on the wall of the Royal Infirmary hall,* I might possibly have never dreamed of becoming the humble analyst of its military glory.

* The regiment of Royal Glasgow Volunteers was disbanded on the 8th May, 1802, and they gave the whole of the regimental stock-purse, amounting to £1200, to that valuable institution.

THE GLASGOW HOMER, YCLEPT BLIND ALICK.

BY A MEMBER OF THE CAMPERDOWN CLUB.

AMONG the eccentric characters who have from time to time buzzed their little hour in the eye of Glasgow, mayhap there is not one who stands a fairer chance for immortality, than the well known peripatetic minstrel and patriotic improvisatore, Alexander Macdonald, better known under the graphic designation of *Blind Alick*. It is upwards of forty years since this indefatigable *troubadour* first screwed up the catgut of his Cremona in our good City; and now that *that* Cremona hangs dusty and unstrung against the wall of his lonely cell, and the hand which waked its *discords* lies cold and lifeless, it may perhaps be neither unprofitable nor uninteresting to the thousands who have listened to his muse or his music, to be presented with a few authentic particulars of his life, and a few specimens of his verses.

The subject of this memoir, though bearing a Celtic cognomen, was born in England. His father in early life emigrated from Borrowstounness, and having set himself down as gardener to a gentleman of considerable property in the county of Cumberland, got married, and in due time found numerous sprouts of the Macdonald tree rising around him. Our improvisatore, it appeared, drew his first breath and poured forth his first squall in the year 1771, in a neat cottage in the parish of Kirkoswald, near Penrith. Of his early history, like that of many greater men, nothing is known, and if it were, we suspect it would differ but little from the infancy and boyhood of other human beings. There is one peculiarity, however, connected with his infancy, which we doubt not had an

influence on his after life—we mean a serious defect in his vision—a defect which led him to study music, and it may be, roused that spirit of song within him, which, under more favourable *optic* circumstances, might have lain dormant for ever. It is not known whether it was an incapacity for active employment—a desire to flee the fascinations of some cruel *Mary Duff*—a large development of the bump of wandering—a love towards his fatherland—or a desire to push his fortune, that roused him from the comparative inactivity in which he lived for the first nineteen years of his life; certain it is, however, that at that age one or other of those impulses urged him to eschew the comforts of his parents' cot, and determined him to trust for future support to his fiddle and his fancy. From the Homeric state of his visual organs, it cannot be supposed that he endured any of those parting pangs which it is said Salvator Rosa experienced, when casting a last lingering look at his father's cottage, embowered in foliage, and smiling in sunshine. If Alick felt regret at all on running away from his birthplace, it sprung not from the thought of bidding adieu to a spot of earth beautified by all his father's floral art, but from the certain conviction that he was at that moment exchanging kindness and comfort for coldness and poverty. He felt the world was all before him. He had determined on no peculiar path whereby to thread its difficulties and its dangers. Half blind though he was, he chose blind Fate to guide him; and in this instance, as in all attended by similar circumstances, the connection

only showed that the blind were leading the blind. On quitting his father's house, his face turned, in despite of the connection of wealth with the south,

"To pooitith cauld, and the north countrie;"

and fortunately for him, he had not wandered many miles towards the land of his ancestors, ere the melting tones of his Cremona softened the heart—not of lady fair, but—of a quack doctor, who engaged him as a powerful auxiliary in the disposal of his pills, potions, and electuaries. The name of this peripatetic Faustus, strange to tell, turned out to be *Hope*—a master to whom the young and inexperienced are never loth to pay an apprentice fee. With old Hope, therefore, as his master, and young hope in his breast, the minstrel crossed the border, and in a few days reached Glasgow.

In 1790, the period when Alick first trod the Trongate, the field on which he was afterwards destined to win so many laurels, Glasgow was confined within comparatively narrow limits. Two-thirds of the ground now occupied by streets and buildings were then gardens and green fields, and the splendid palaces in the west, since reared by the hand of industry, were not even dreamed of by a parsimonious population. Union-place being then a piece of vacant ground, it was made choice of as the most eligible for the quack doctor's operations. At the head of Jamaica-street the stage was erected; and upon that stage, Alick, amid the grimaces of the clown, and the jests of the charlatan, first greeted a Glasgow audience with "God save the King," and "Rule Britannia," two airs which thenceforward were chosen to open and to close all his musical and lyrical exhibitions. Finding the wages of the stage doctor, Hope, like his synonyme, not overly substantial, he exchanged the stage for the street, and the promises of Hope for the *penne* of the Trongate. Accordingly, from that time forward, he seriously commenced business on his own account as a wandering minstrel. From the peculiar *ad captandum vulgus* knack which he had of pulling his bow across the catgut, he soon discovered himself to be a favourite with the public;

and although his father employed a respectable individual to woo him back to the comforts of a settled home, and the protection of Squire Fetherstone, his father's benevolent master, the wayward wight remained deaf to the urgent and kind offer. The fact was, before the friend of his father and the agent of Dr Solomon had ferreted out the prodigal son, a circumstance had occurred in the minstrel's history which put it out of his power to part very easily with his new residence. The very first night he passed in Glasgow, his heart had been pierced with one of Cupid's sharpest arrows. At the foot of the quack doctor Hope's stage, he encountered a female form, whom his imagination, doubtless, at once elevated into a Laura or a Beatrice; and although his *adorable*, in the eyes of a cold and un sentimental world, could be accounted nothing more than a commonplace girl, yet, seen as she was through the opacity of a *crystalline lens* and the medium of a poetic temperament, she appeared to Alick little short of a sylph or a Hebe, and as such he bestowed upon her all a minstrel's adoration. He followed her home, and then wiled her to a well-known *lowner*, yeleft a changehouse. There, inspired with several *timothies* of ardent spirits, he screwed his fiddle to the right pitch, and drawing his *ecstatic bow*, its effects instantly vibrated to the heart of his lady-love. He vowed his affection—she blushed a return—he clasped her to his bosom, and implored her to marry. Enraptured, the maid consented; and ere twenty-four short hours had fled—doubtless four-and-twenty years in love's kalendar—the youthful Alick and his love-sick Laura had handled the connubial ring, and had been made one flesh by the late Rev. Mr Falconer, at the altar of an establishment which was then commonly designated by stern Presbyterians, "the whistling kirk."

Thus bound by the ties of matrimony, consummated under the joint influence of music, love, and liquor, Alick determined on making Glasgow his future home; and from that day forth, with the exception of certain excursions he made to visit his friends in England, he may be said to have continued a regular

denizen of this City.* During the first year of his perambulating the Trongate, the minstrel depended entirely for support as well as fame on the notes of his fiddle; but when the threatening attitude of France awakened a military ardour in every British bosom, and summoned her sons to combat and conquer on the ocean, the spirit of the Glasgow Homer, like that of every other patriot on shore, was roused from its latent and slumbering lethargy. To his music were then added the effusions of his muse. He at once became the poetic advocate of loyalty and patriotism—the laureate of national victories and individual glory, the rhymster of philippics against Gaul and Bonaparte; in fine, the improvisatore of volunteer valour, and the elegiast of departed worth when the ranks were thinned either by hard drinking or by hard drills. Unskilled as the poet was in the use of those drops of ink which “give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name,” it is to be regretted that so very few of his lyrics have been preserved from oblivion. Had they been caught and recorded, they would assuredly have presented not only a chronological epitome of the affairs of the State, and the circumstances of the City, but would have become a curious remembrancer of the transactions and feelings of that eventful age. As an instance of the value of his lyrical labours, it will perhaps suffice to give a few verses of the descriptive poem emitted on the grand review of the Glasgow Volunteer force by the Earl of Moira. Of the various commanders whom the poet then eulogised, and on whom he has conferred the meed of immortality, the following still happily remain (1830) to attract the gaze and the admiration of their fellow-men:—

“Like the fiery god of war,
Colonel Geddes does advance,
On a black horse that belong’d
To the murder’d king of France!

* Alick’s love of Glasgow was ever and anon shown in his *Alexandrines*. What better proof of this feeling can be given than the following stanza of the minstrel:—

“I’ve travell’d all the world over,
And many a place beside;
But I never saw a more beautiful City,
Than that on the navigable river the Clyde.”

Major Hunter cometh next;
In a kilt see he goes;
Every inch he’s a man,
From the head to the toes!

Now appears Major Paterson;
You will say he’s rather slim;
But ’twill be a clever ball
For to hit the like of him!”

If this graphic description of a few of the principal figurantes of that well-remembered day served to add to Alick’s rhythmic celebrity, it was undoubtedly his unwearied eulogiums of the old Volunteers and the first Glasgow Sharpshooters, which established his claim to be the Glasgow laureate. One verse relative to the former of those corps paints its character, and so well illustrates the poet’s powers, that we shall give it here:—

“We are gentlemen of honour,
And we do receive no pay;
Colonel Corbet’s our commander,
And with him we’ll fight our way!”

Whether it was from the daily compliments bestowed on the bravery of the Glasgow Volunteers, of whose exploits little is known except the bloodless victory of Garscube, certain it is that their gallant Colonel was so taken with Alick’s descriptive lyrics, that he offered to transplant the now maternised Laura of the minstrel from her secluded attic in the Old-wynd to a public-house in some conspicuous part of the City, and to christen it “The Volunteer Tavern.” The matron, however, aware of her total unacquaintance with the mysteries of Cocker, and knowing the love which her husband nightly exemplified of getting into the clouds by the magic *bowl* of a pint stoup, honourably refused the Colonel’s generous offer, and preferred continuing to answer the cry of *girling bairns* rather than the call of thirsty Volunteers! The glory which Alick poured on the first Sharpshooters—a corps composed as-

surely of the *élite* of Glasgow gentlemen—procured the poet money enough to enable him to try an operation on his eyes; but although the knife was applied five times to the right and once to the left eye, by the most skilful oculist of the City, the opacity of his visual organs rather increased than diminished. If Alick was not, however, so clear-sighted as many of his brother-citizens, he was fully more alive to public news; and, from his ready talent at *improvisation*, was not unfrequently the first to circulate any important piece of intelligence. When, for example, the first indistinct rumour of the battle of Camperdown—a battle which proved the foundation of our naval power, and in Glasgow the union-bond of a first-rate Club—was merely whispered about, the minstrel made his appearance on the Trongate, and announced it publicly to the lieges in the following lines:—

“Great news I have got, my lads,
For country and for town;
We have gain'd a mighty fight,
On the sea, at Camperdown!

Our cannon they did rattle, lads,
And we knock'd their top-masts down—
But the particulars you will hear
By the post, in the afternoon!”

The Peninsular war afforded fruitful materials for the muse of our minstrel. Not a battle, from Vimiera to Toulouse, but afforded him the theme of a *poetical aspiration*; not even an affair of outposts but was converted into a *fitful fancy*. His peculiar fondness for such subjects may, perhaps, be accounted for, when it is stated, that of the five sons and two daughters presented to him by his *cara sposa*—the original Laura of his early love—only one boy survived the diseases incident to childhood, and that boy had joined

the 71st Regiment, and accompanied it to Portugal. There the youth fought, and bled, and died. In the moment of the victorious charge at Fuentes d'Onora, when Colonel Cadogan, recollecting its resemblance to Glasgow, happily cried out, “Chase them down the Gallowgate,” the son of Alick fell, and the poet was left childless. Is it to be wondered at, therefore, that the land on which the hope of his house was fighting, and in which afterwards his ashes lay mouldering, should have proved one of the most inspiring subjects of the minstrel's lyre? * As a fair specimen of his verses relative to the Peninsular war, we may give the following:—

“True-hearted loyal citizens,
Great news I've got to tell,
Of the wars of Spain and Portugal,
And how the town of Badajoz fell!

There was one Alick Pattison.
A man of great renown,
He was the first who mounted the breach,
And the first that did tumble down!

He was a handsome tall young gentleman,
As ever my eyes did see;
A captain, colonel, or major,
He very soon will be!”

Although the minstrel seemingly loved the Peninsular war, he was not blind to the glorious exploits of the Russian campaign. With all the facility which he had of running a train of syllables, chanting-like, into a short line, he occasionally showed, however, that a succession of the break-neck names of Alexander's generals could not keep pace even with the well-known rapidity of his *bowing*. The admiral, whose unlucky and unseamanlike *tack* allowed Bonaparte to escape after the passage of the Beresina, proved always a choking rhyme to Alick. The following stanza is the only one remem-

* There was no regiment that received so much adulation from the Glasgow Homer as the 42d. From the first day it defeated the French Invincibles in Egypt, till its deathless deeds performed at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo, the minstrel proved its laureate. Among the thousand and one stanzas he composed on this subject, the following is the only one remembered:—

“The gallant first battalion
It never was beat;
And the second battalion
Was like unto it!”

bered of the many he emitted on the disastrous retreat of the French army :—

“ But the tyrant Bonyparte,
He now must cease to rail,
Since the brave Kutusoff
Has tied a pan to his tail !

With a pan at his tail,
He flies through Germany,
And the Cossacks, like bull dogs,
Bark after him lustily !
Bow ! wow ! wow ! ”

The songs which the poet composed on Waterloo were numerous ; it was for years his constant and pleasurable theme, as it was that of French regret. The fact is, his poetry on this subject extracted perhaps more pence from the pockets of the benevolent than all the other Waterloo poets, who printed their lucubrations, received pounds from their booksellers. The following apostrophe to the Scots Greys is well worthy of recollection :—

“ Then the tyrant Napoleon Bonyparte,
And some of the French Imperial Guards,
They thought they had no more to do
Than to take those gallant Scotch lads !

But very soon, on the contrary,
The Royal Greys they let them ken
They might go and tell Bonyparte
They cared not a — for either him or his men ! ”

As the state of Europe became more calm, the effusions of the wandering bard attracted less attention. Topics of a stirring nature were now more rare, and, besides, the minstrel had become “ infirm and old.” The fact is, Alick might have hung up his harp on the willows, for all the interest it excited, had not the spirit of Radicalism burst forth, and inspired the hand of the minstrel with renewed vigour. The military ardour exhibited by the youth of Glasgow to defend our glorious Constitution, was indeed a glorious theme for the rival of Sgricci.* From the first hour which witnessed the Sharpshooters marching to the barracks, in the garb of Falstaff’s recruits, even till that memorable day when, with all the pomp and

pageantry of war, they assisted at the *investment* of Anderston, the *siege* of Calton, and the *sack* of Mile-end, Alick proved their unwearied laureate. One stanza will suffice to show the estimation in which, in common with his brother citizens, the bard held this highly distinguished and never-to-be-forgotten Volunteer regiment :—

“ Now, then, some observations more,
I think proper here to make,
On the loyal and gallant Glasgow Sharpshooters,
Who swords and rifles up did take !

Those loyal subjects who fought for the Throne,
And beat every Radical I’ve ever seen !
Here’s long life to their Colonel and Major Alston,
In their trousers of white and jackets of green ! ”

In the improvisation of similar verses, commemorative of martial deeds and patriotic individuals, Alick continued to indulge till the commencement of the year 1830. About that period he was seized with a serious illness, and on Tuesday, the ninth of February, he bade adieu to a world which but few poets have had reason to eulogise. Like many others, Alick found Pegasus a hard roadster, and one who in the race of life rarely gained the plate. The effusions of our bard, while they brought him fame, never produced him, even in the war-exciting period, the pay of a common soldier. If the minstrel, however, was doomed to poverty—the too common concomitant of those who unadvisedly climb Parnassus—he was, also, like many of his rhyming brethren, not wholly content with the waters of Helicon. For the greater part of his life he had qualified the poetic draught with a goodly doze of that stomach elixir and soother of humanity, *agua vite* ; a habit which stuck to him even till within a few moments of his dissolution. The truth of Shakspere’s idea of the ruling passion being strong in death, as shown in Mercutio’s dying with a pun on his lip, was never better exemplified than in the Glasgow Homer. The last words which poor Alick articulated were a request for whisky, and he actually offered up his spirit with the spirit in

* The famous Italian improvisatore.

his throat!* In the course of a few days his mortal remains were carried to the High Church burying-ground, where they now rest, unmarked by aught but the mound of mould which covers the grave of the poor and destitute!

Thus lived and thus died Alexander Macdonald, the poet-laureate of Glasgow. From the effusions of his muse which we have already given, it will appear that his claim to be the parent of the *Hudibrastic-bathos* school of poetry will hardly be disputed—a total composition which too many of his contemporaries have of late shown themselves eager to imitate, but certainly have not equalled. The peculiarities of this school are—a total contempt for all the rules of prosody and grammar, an utter distaste for the obscurity produced by the mistiness of metaphor, and a most facile accommodation of an octosyllable with an Alexandrine rhyme. Although born in Cumberland, Alick had none of the faults of the Lake school. He imitated the simplicity, no doubt, which Wordsworth shows in *Peter Bell*; he perhaps occasionally also resembled Coleridge in the pathos of the “three little short howls, not very loud,” of the mastiff bitch in *Christabel*; while he not unfrequently showed a love of attempting, like Southey in his *Carmen Triumphale*, the power of English hexameter; but with all these points of similarity, he never can be called a laker or a plagiarist. His conception of a subject was truly his own, while the versification was decidedly original. What, in fact, can surpass the *Hudibrastic-bathos* of the following couplet, and the delicious Alexandrine flow of the concluding line:—

“But although I’m the author, I can’t tell with my tongue

The honour and the glory of the laying of Lord Nelson’s foundation-stone!”

* The minstrel’s heartfelt affection for *John Barleycorn* may perhaps be best illustrated from a verse of a song which he improvised on returning from a peregrination to Inverness. On arriving in the City, Alick repaired to Ingram-street, to announce his re-appearance in Glasgow, and having there met with a warm welcome from Mr Hemming, of the Star Hotel, the poet in gratitude attempted to immortalise him and his household:—

“At first they gave me brandy,
And then they gave me gin;
Here’s long life to the worthy waiters
Of Mr Hemming’s Hotel and Inn!”

Like his brethren of the *genus irritabile*, Alick was in temper somewhat irascible—a disposition of mind which was often increased from the fondness he bore for nervous stimulants. His anger, however, was neither powerful nor permanent, and rarely went farther than an attempt to punish a fleece of juvenile hornets, who, in the latter days of his blind peregrinations, hung on his rear, and cruelly poured stones, instead of pence, into his gaping pockets. He stooped not, like many modern minstrels, *secretly* to puff his own works; Alick openly and boldly declared himself the “the author of every word he sung,” and we apprehend that no one who listened to his muse ever refused him the honour which he claimed. The outward appearance of the wandering bard was so well known as to preclude description. In spite of the griping hand of poverty, his countenance wore an expression of contentment far beyond that commonly seen on the faces of many of the more fortunate of his species; and when the hand of charity dropped a penny into his pocket, the incipient idea of a noggin of whisky, which its tinkle suggested to the recipient’s mind, lighted up such a smile of gratitude as well might have induced a more frequent display of benevolence. The minstrel is now, however, beyond the charity of mankind. He has immortalised himself, and has certainly trumpeted the fame of many of his brother citizens! May we hope, therefore, that those who feel the truth of Peter Pindar’s lines,

“What had Achilles been without his Homer?
A tailor, woollen-draper, or a comber,”

will drop a tear over their own Homer’s grave, and not refuse to throw a mite into the exhausted exchequer of his destitute widow!

EARLY HONORARY BURGESSES.

WHEN alluding to the gratitude which the City of Glasgow at an early period had shown to those who had done her service, I ought to have mentioned several even more distinguished individuals than those named in page 59. Connected with the Rebellion of 1745, I find that a gold box and the freedom of the City were presented to the Duke of Cumberland, and that a silver box and the freedom were presented to his Secretary, Sir Everard Falconer. I find also that two boxes of the value of £158 16s. were given, one to

the Right Honourable Henry Pelham, Chancellor of the Exchequer,* and the other to James West, Esq., one of the Secretaries to the Treasury, with two Burgess Tickets, for services rendered connected with the grant of £10,000 to reimburse the town for sums extorted by the Rebels; and connected with the same matter, two silver boxes were also voted to Messrs Campbell and Bruce, bankers, likewise admitted Burgesses, for managing the cash matters in London, in relation to the treasury payment of £10,000.

* This gentleman was the lineal ancestor of the present Duke of Newcastle, late Secretary for War.