

P O E M S :

FROM AUTHOR'S LAST EDITIONS.

Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage,

ON NITH-SIDE.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost ;
Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair ;
Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale ?
Life's proud summits would'st thou scale ?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait :

Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
Soar around each clifty hold ;
While chearful Peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose ;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease.
There ruminatè with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought ;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, art thou high or low ?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow ?
Did many talents gild thy span ?
Or frugal Nature grudge thee one ?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To Virtue or to Vice is giv'n.
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise—
There solid self-enjoyment lies ;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break;
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman of Nith-side.

— — — — —
Ode,

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. [OSWALD] OF
[AUCHENCRAIG].

DWELLER in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation, mark!
Who in widow weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse?

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of Humanity's sweet melting grace?
Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows;
Pity's flood there never rose.
See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save;
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest:
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of Armies, lift thine eyes
(A while forbear, ye tort'ring fiends),
Seest thou whose step, unwilling, hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies:
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate;
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a-year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n!
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

Elegy on Capt. M[atthew] H[enderson],

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS
IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD!

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless Heav'nly Light!

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haur! thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,
Where Echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!



Copied from Old Engraving 1790.

Engraved by J. Bower.

FRIARS - CARSE.

The Epitaph.

STOP, passenger! my story's brief,
And truth I shall relate, man:
I tell nae common tale o' grief,
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at Fortune's door, man;
A look of pity hither cast,
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passeth by this grave, man;
There moulders here a gallant heart,
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at Friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man;
Thy sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
May dool and sorrow be his lot,
For Matthew was a rare man.



Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phoebus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now laverocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis wild wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae:

The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

O! soon; to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

—
To R[obert] G[raham], of F[intra], Esq.
—

LATE cripp'd of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest);
Will generous G[raham] list to his Poet's wail?
(It soothes poor Misery, hark'ning to her tale)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature! partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain:
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground;
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell;
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
Thy minions, kings defend, controul, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power;

Foxes and statesmen, subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug;
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts.

But Oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still:
No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur;
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side:
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart:—

Critics—appall'd, I venture on the name;
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose:—

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear;
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd in th' unequal strife,
The hapless Poet flounders on thro' life:
Till fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspir'd,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead even resentment for his injur'd page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage!

So, by some hedge, the gen'rous steed deceas'd,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O Dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!

Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
 Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
 If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
 With sober selfish ease they sip it up;
 Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
 They only wonder "some folks" do not starve.
 The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
 And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
 When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
 And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
 With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
 And just conclude "that fools are fortune's care."
 So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
 Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
 Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
 In equanimity they never dwell,
 By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
 With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
 Already one strong hold of hope is lost—
 Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust
 (Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
 And left us darkling in a world of tears):
 O! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
 F[intra], my other stay, long bless and spare!
 Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
 And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
 May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
 Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
 With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn.

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
 By fits the sun's departing beam
 Look'd on the fading yellow woods,
 That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:

Beneath a craigy steep, a bard,
 Laden with years and meikle pain,
 In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
 Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
 Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years
 His locks were bleached white with time,
 His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
 And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
 And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
 The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
 To echo bore the notes along.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
 The reliques of the vernal quire!
 Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
 The honours of the aged year!
 A few short months, and glad and gay,
 Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
 But nocht in all revolving time
 Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending aged tree,
 That long has stood the wind and rain;
 But now has come a cruel blast,
 And my last hold of earth is gane:
 Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
 Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
 But I maun lie before the storm,
 And ithers plant them in my room.

"I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
 On earth I am a stranger grown;
 I wander in the ways of men,
 Alike unknowing, and unknown:
 Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
 I bear alane my lade o' care,
 For silent, low, on beds of dust,
 Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last, (the sum of a' my griefs!)
 My noble master lies in clay;
 The flow'r amang our barons bold,
 His country's pride, his country's stay:



G. Richardson.

F. Mellish.

G. Cook.

TAM O' SHANTER.

In weary being now I pine,
 For a' the life of life is dead,
 And hope has left my aged ken,
 On forward wing for ever fled.

“Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
 The voice of woe and wild despair!
 Awake, resound thy latest lay,
 Then sleep in silence evermair!
 And thou, my last, best, only friend,
 That fillest an untimely tomb,
 Accept this tribute from the bard
 Thou brought from fortune's mirkest gloom.

“In poverty's low barren vale,
 Thick mists, obscure, invol'd me round;
 Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
 Nae ray of fame was to be found:
 Thou found'st me, like the morning sun
 That melts the fogs in limpid air,
 The friendless bard and rustic song
 Became, alike, thy fostering care.

“O! why has worth so short a date?
 While villains ripen grey with time!
 Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
 Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!
 Why did I live to see that day?
 A day to me so full of woe!
 O! had I met the mortal shaft
 Which laid my benefactor low!

“The bridegroom may forget the bride
 Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
 The monarch may forget the crown
 That on his head an hour has been;
 The mother may forget the child
 That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
 But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
 And a' that thou hast done for me!”



Lines sent to Sir John Whiteford,

OF WHITEFORD, BART.,

WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

THOU, who thy honour as thy God rever'st,
 Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly
 fear'st,
 To thee this votive off'ring I impart,
 The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
 The Friend thou valued'st, I the Patron lov'd;
 His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
 We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
 And tread the [shadowy] path to that dark world
 unknown.

Tam o' Shanter :

A TALE.

Of Brownie's and of Bogillie's full is this Buke.
 GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate;
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' getting fou and unco happy,
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame;
 Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter—

(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;

The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil!—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion brent-new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light:—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cuttet frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the left;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awefu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping, in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping an' flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kent what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
That night enlisted in the core
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kent thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;

Even Satan glow'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
 And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
 Till first ae caper, syne anither,
 Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
 And in an instant all was dark:
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
 When plundering herds assail their byke;
 As open pussie's mortal foes,
 When, pop! she starts before their nose;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' mony an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane of the brig;
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they dare na cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient a tail she had to shake!
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain grey tail:
 The carlin clautht her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man and mother's son, take heed:
 Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think ye may buy the joys o'er dear!
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

On Seeing a Wounded Hare limp by me,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
 And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
 May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
 Nor never pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
 The bitter little that of life remains:
 No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
 To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest;
 No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
 The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
 The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
 The sober eve, or hail the chearful dawn,
 I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
 And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless
 fate.

Address to the Shade of Thomson,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST, AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE,
 WITH BAYS.

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
 Unfolds her tender mantle green,
 Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
 Or tunes Æolian strains between:

While Summer with a matron grace
 Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
 Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
 The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed :

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows :

So long, sweet Poet of the Year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.



ON THE

Late Captain Grose's

PEREGRINATION THRO' SCOTLAND, COLLECTING THE
ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's;—
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it :
A chield's amang you, takin notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgeg wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, L—d safe's! colleaguin
At some black art.

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chamer,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamor,
And you deep-read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;

Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight b——es.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle-blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And taen the—Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets :
Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont gude ;
And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder ;
Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender ;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass ;
A broom-stick o' the witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff fu' gleg
The cut of Adam's philibeg ;
The knife that nicket Abel's craig
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie.—

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Gude fellows wi' him :
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the Pow'rs o' Verse and Prose!
Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose!—
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee ;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee.



To Miss C[ruickshanks],

A VERY YOUNG LADY.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED
TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming on thy early May,
Never may'st thou, lovely Flow'r,
Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem;
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to Parent Earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.



Song.

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,
And waste my soul with care;
But ah! how bootless to admire,
When fated to despair.

Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,
To hope may be forgiv'n;
For sure 'twere impious to despair
So much in sight of Heav'n.



ON READING, IN A NEWSPAPER,

The Death of [John] M[Lod], Esq.,

BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF
THE AUTHOR'S.

SAD thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That Nature finest strung:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrung.

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
Can heal the wound He gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blóssoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.



The Humble Petition of Bruar Water

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

My Lord, I know, your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phoebus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumping, glowrin trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet B[urns] came by,
That, to a Bard, I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was, he shor'd me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the skelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well
As Nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say't myself,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes.

Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive Autumn chear,
In all her locks of yellow.

This too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a shelt'ring, safe retreat,
From prone-descending show'rs.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care:
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed:

Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
 My craggy cliffs adorn ;
 And, for the little songster's nest,
 The close embow'ring thorn.

So may, Old Scotia's darling hope,
 Your little angel band
 Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
 Their honour'd native land !
 So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
 To social-flowing glasses,
 The grace be—" Athole's honest men,
 And Athole's bonnie lasses !"

— — —

On Scaring some Water-fowl

IN LOCH-TURIT,

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OUGHTERTYRE.

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
 For me your wat'ry haunt forsake ?
 Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
 At my presence thus you fly ?
 Why disturb your social joys,
 Parent, filial, kindred ties ?—
 Common friend to you and me,
 Nature's gifts to all are free :
 Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
 Busy feed, or wanton lave ;
 Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
 Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
 Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
 Man, your proud usurping foe,
 Would be lord of all below :
 Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
 Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
 Marking you his prey below,
 In his breast no pity dwells,
 Strong Necessity compels :

But Man, to whom alone is giv'n
 A ray direct from pitying Heav'n,
 Glories in his heart humane—
 And creatures for his pleasure slain !

In these savage, liquid plains,
 Only known to wand'ring swains,
 Where the mossy riv'let strays,
 Far from human haunts and ways ;
 All on Nature you depend,
 And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might
 Dare invade your native right,
 On the lofty ether borne,
 Man with all his pow'rs you scorn ;
 Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
 Other lakes and other springs ;
 And the foe you cannot brave,
 Scorn at least to be his slave.

— — —

Written with a Pencil

OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE
 INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
 These northern scenes with weary feet I trace ;
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
 Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
 My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
 Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view.—
 The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
 The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides ;
 Th' outstretching lake, imbosomed 'mong the hills,
 The eye with wonder and amazement fills ;
 The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
 The palace rising on his verdant side ;
 The lawns wood-fring'd in Nature's native taste ;
 The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste ;
 The arches striding o'er the new-born stream ;
 The village glittering in the noontide beam—

* * * * *

Poetic ardors in my bosom swell,
 Lone wand'ring by the hermit's mossy cell:
 The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
 Th' incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—
 * * * * *

Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre
 And look through Nature with creative fire;
 Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil'd,
 Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
 And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds:
 Here heart-struck Grief might heav'nward stretch
 her scan,
 And injur'd Worth forget and pardon man.
 * * * * *

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

Standing by the Fall of Fyers,

NEAR LOCH-NESS.

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods
 The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
 Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
 Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
 As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
 As deep recoiling surges foam below,
 Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
 And viewless Echo's ear, astonished, rends.
 Dim-seen, through rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
 The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, low'rs.
 Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
 And still, below, the horrid caldron boils—
 * * * * *



ON THE

Birth of a Posthumous Child,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY-DISTRESS.

SWEET flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
 And ward o' mony a prayer,
 What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
 Sae helpless, sweet, and fair.

November hirples o'er the lea,
 Chill, on thy lovely form;
 And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
 Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
 And wings the blast to blow,
 Protect thee frae the driving show'r,
 The bitter frost and snaw.

May He, the friend of woe and want,
 Who heals life's various stounds,
 Protect and guard the mother plant,
 And heal her cruel wounds.

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
 Fair on the summer morn:
 Now, feebly bends she, in the blast,
 Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
 Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
 And from thee many a parent stem
 Arise to deck our land!

The Whistle:

A BALLAD.

I SING of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
 I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
 Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
 And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda, still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—
“This Whistle’s your challenge, to Scotland get o’er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne’er see me more!”

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur’d, what champions fell;
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle their requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,
Unmatch’d at the bottle, unconquer’d in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea;
No tide of the Baltic e’er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain’d;
Which now in his house has for ages remain’d;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew’d.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill’d in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

“By the gods of the ancients!” Glenriddel replies,
“Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I’ll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o’er.”

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne’er turn’d his back on his foe or his friend;
Said, Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,
And, knee-deep in claret, he’d die or he’d yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to
fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

A Bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A Bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish’d that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And ev’ry new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were
wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o’er;
Bright Phœbus ne’er witness’d so joyous a core,
And vow’d that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he’d see them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn’d o’er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore ’twas the way that their ancestor did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high ruling-elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with fate and quart bumpers contend?
Though fate said—a hero should perish in light;
So uprose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next uprose our Bard, like a prophet in drink:—
“Craigdarroch, thou’lt soar when creation shall sink!
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!

“Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with
Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce:
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day!”

