

CHAPTER IV.

Bring May flowers
And July showers,
Strew them o'er December snow ;
Joy will weep,
Grief will sleep,
Heigh ho ! how the wind will blow.

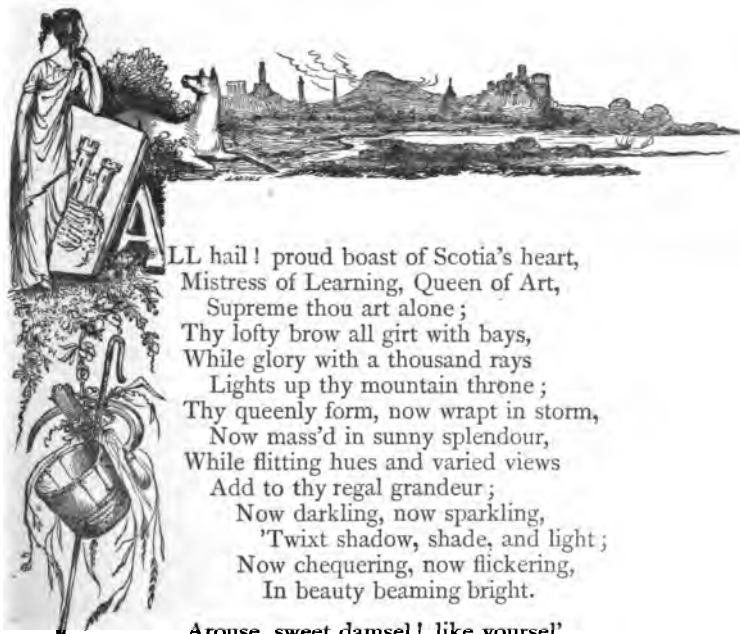
Old Chant.

MANY of the readers of this homely story must long ago have been weary of Kelpie Cleugh ; and it must be confessed there is little inducement to remain longer there at present. Very few love to linger in the house of mourning ; and being, like most others, more partial to the sweet than the bitter in the cup of life, I shall not attempt to moralize on what every day's experience teaches, namely, the uncertainty of life, and the universal mortality of man. One such scene as had just been witnessed makes a more lasting impression than many homilies ; and to pain the mind by useless comment is neither salutary nor wise. The voice of wisdom is seldom heard attempting to comfort the mourner while his wounds are fresh and green, and the noisy tongue of the fool falls like the blazing thorn crackling to the ground. The silent tear, the sympathetic pressure of the hand, the kind look, does more to soothe sorrow than the sound of the most mellifluous voice ; and the oppressed heart finds relief only in solitude and silence. Accordingly, following the course most in unison with the general feelings and experience of human nature, I leave Kelpie Cleugh with a sigh and a tear, and have now to introduce on the scene of action several other characters, who are destined to figure in the pages of this faithful and veracious narrative.

Novelty and variety perhaps constitute the chief charms of existence. Nothing tends so much to detract from the value of anything intrinsically good as frequent repetition. Every picturesque view, when first looked on, produces a sensation felt at no future visit ; every new discovery in science or art produces a similar effect on the mind of the discoverer. The

freshness of the country is relished most by the inhabitants of cities; and what can exceed the unsophisticated pleasure expressed in those honest country faces we see staring at the shop windows in large towns? It is well therefore that, in accordance with such sentiments, the course of this story renders it necessary to leave for a time the remote district of Carnwath Muir, for the Queen of the North, the old and romantic capital of Scotland, which I take leave to introduce to my readers with the Gaberlunzie's

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.



ALL hail! proud boast of Scotia's heart,
 Mistress of Learning, Queen of Art,
 Supreme thou art alone;
 Thy lofty brow all girt with bays,
 While glory with a thousand rays
 Lights up thy mountain throne;
 Thy queenly form, now wrapt in storm,
 Now mass'd in sunny splendour,
 While flitting hues and varied views
 Add to thy regal grandeur;
 Now darkling, now sparkling,
 'Twixt shadow, shade, and light;
 Now chequering, now flickering,
 In beauty beaming bright.

Arouse, sweet damsel! like yourself,
 E'en blooming like a bonny belle,
 On each cheek show a dimple;
 Open your mou, lift up your brow,
 An' let your glances glamour through,
 Wi' sunny twinkling wimple;

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

To kindle up the loving hearts
 O' a' thy buirdly bairns,
 Wha are as proud o' thy deserts
 As Highlanders o' cairns ;
 Thus beaming, and streaming,
 Strike thou thyself the lyre,
 Enlightening and brightening
 Our souls with kindred fire.

Bold, towering high aboon the lave,
 Facing the storm erect and brave,
 Heaves high thy Castle Rock ;
 Wee wild flowers clustering, blossom fair,
 Among the ridges bleak an' bare,
 Hew'd at ae thunder stroke ;
 While tiny fissures flickering through,
 Break up the rock's bold lines,
 And the strong wall around its brow
 A coronet entwines ;
 Embedded and braided
 With many a gurly gun ;
 While lowering and towering
 High turrets kiss the sun.

Yet up within that stalwart wall
 Rises the grated arsenal,
 Death's dark and deadly store ;
 With guns and cannon, swords and balls,
 Enough to send a million sauls
 To Pluto's dreary shore ;
 And ranging round the summit high,
 In buildings stern and strong,
 A thousand gallant heroes lie
 Piping the peaceful song ;
 While far past their war blast
 Is heard in distant tones,
 Still lengthened and strengthen'd
 By foeman's dying groans.

Two hills stretch forth from east to west,
 Each raising high his lofty crest,

Each rivalling the other ;
One boasts a town all young and gay,
One bears a city old and gray,
The daughter and the mother ;
Here antique Art's gigantic form
Her lofty grandeur rears ;
There modern Art all uniform
Like one day's work appears ;
While joining them, and twining them,
Sweet Nature reigns as queen,
Embowering and flowering
The lovely vale between.

Look on that strath of beauty bright,
Now sparkling in the sunny light
Of Day's emblazoned King ;
With giant rock and grassy hill
In one broad mass reposing still,
In shadow slumbering ;
And in the vale, all glistening green,
Fair flowers and leafy trees
Are dancing in the sunny sheen,
Or waving in the breeze ;
Enraptured and captured
Beams every ravish'd eye,
While welling and swelling
Each breast is heaving high.

Along the southern ridge survey
These stern old buildings, gaunt and gray,
Huge piles that mount on high ;
And 'mid the hoary ancient town
See old Saint Giles' imperial crown
Majestic top the sky ;
While tufted turret, leaf, and flower
Gleam in the sunbeams bright,
And sombre aisle and buttress'd tower
Throw shadows dark as night ;
The mind here may find here
Food for instructive lore,
While wandering and pondering
O'er busy scenes of yore.

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

Strong pile ! thou hast a witness been
 To many a dark and bloody scene
 Of blind sectarian rage ;
 Still steadfast as th' Eternal Truth,
 Thou standst erect as in thy youth,
 Though silver'd o'er with age ;
 So shall the glorious Lamp of Life,
 Fann'd by the breath of peace,
 Blaze bright, when all sectarian strife
 And bigot war shall cease ;
 The Truth then, in youth then,
 Unchoked by party spleen,
 With light showers and bright flowers
 Shall blossom evergreen.

Amid the noisy floods of strife
 That swell the tide of human life
 Around on every side,
 Old gloomy mansions meet the eye,
 Stern monuments of times gone by,
 Of ancient pomp and pride ;
 Each shelving stair, each slanting close,
 Each low-brow'd dusky wynd,
 Recalls old tales that kindle throes
 In every patriot mind ;
 We grieve them, we leave them,
 In sad and silent mood,
 To gaze on and muse on
 The sacred Holyrood.

Is there a Scot but feels his heart
 Pierced to the core by sorrow's dart,
 While gazing sadly on
 These ancient mouldering Abbey walls,
 Those lone deserted Palace halls,
 That vacant kingless throne !
 The seat of Scotia's doughty Kings,
 And hapless lovely Queen,
 Where Pleasure spread her fairy wings
 O'er many a festal scene ;

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.

And there then, all fair then,
Were Dame and Lady bright;
All warded and guarded
By burly Lord and Knight.

Those were the ever-hallow'd days
When manhood's might and beauty's blaze
Bedeck'd old Holyrood;
When Genius, Learning, Wit, and Worth,
Enrich'd our Palace of the North
With all the great and good;
Alack! no native sovereign now
Will feed our native fire;
Our very thistle 'gins to dow,
Our auld tongue to expire;
Our sports a', our courts a',
Are now but scant an' sma';
Our lealty, our fealty,
The Southernns hae awa.

Our Palace in its gloaming gray,
Like age at close o' life's long day,
A stranger stands alone;
These ancient massy mansions round,
Where nobles joy'd, now echoing sound
With poortith's hollow moan;
God help the poor, and help their cause,
Or else they're sair deserted;
And we but gaze on mouldering wa's,
To dream o' days departed;
Our Town now will soon now,
Its life and vigour gane,
Be runnin to Lunnin,
A' but the lime an' stane.

Say, is it just, or wise, or fair,
To strip Auld Scotland's back sae bare?
Why should we stand it langer?
Edina's Sons, but back ye me,
An' in a trice we'll let them see
We hae just cause for anger

THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLEY.

Is there nae Scot to take our part
 Amang Saint Stephen's thrang,
 Wha'll gie tongue to his country's heart,
 An' gaur them right her wrang?
 All aimless, and flameless,
 Will none of ye arouse?
 For shame, men! the theme, men,
 Even dumbies' tongues might lowse!

Proclaim aloud in brow-knit mood,
 How it were for all the nation's good,
 And for her Gentry's pleasure,
 That in each capital were spent
 By Queen, and Court, and Parliament,
 Part o' their time and treasure;
 But swelling up an o'ergrown wen,
 Feeding an o'erfed maw,
 I'm heart-sick dreaming o' the den,
 Let's off Muse and awa;
 Arising, rejoicing,
 Among our native hills;
 Ascending, expanding,
 Each eye and bosom fills.

Up to the Lion, Arthur's Seat;
 Up with the sun, ere yet his heat
 Hath parch'd up hill and vale;
 Ascend, Muse, with these clouds of dew,
 That rise from every mountain's brow,
 Dissolving thin and pale;
 Gaze forth upon the glorious scene,
 Wood, water, dale, and down,
 The landscape lit with gold and green,
 The dun and dusky town;
 Surrounded and bounded
 This airy region seems;
 All teeming and streaming
 With heaven's ethereal beams.

The morning sun now glances bright
 In one broad sparkling stream of light

Athwart the sleeping sea ;
Tipping with flame each mast and sail
Reposing on Forth's liquid vale
In slumber drowsily ;
As morning breaks all Nature wakes,
Earth, ocean lives anew ;
And infant Day, rosy and gay,
Laughs in the concave blue ;
While liralling and carolling,
The Lark and Linnet sweet,
All tingling and mingling,
In warbling concert meet.

Now all around those distant hills,
South, east, and west the vision fills
With one great mountain chain ;
While tufted woods are waving green,
And rivers, lakes, and streams are seen
Meandering to the main ;
And many a dark and lonely glade
That mocks the lowland gaze,
Is seen emerging from the shade,
Or chequering through the haze ;
And nooks sweet, where brooks meet,
Now hail the eye of day ;
Where roaming at gloaming
Fond lovers unseen stray.

Behold that hill which towers sublime,
Gay, green as Youth, and dark as Time,
Bank, slope, and ridge appear ;
While Temple, Tower, and Monument,
In one bold rugged outline blent,
Their lofty heads appear ;
One new-born Temple caps its top,
To Scotland's bosom dear,
Yet, while her breast swells high with hope,
She sheds a silent tear ;
Lest all her tried valour
No other meed should gain,
To story her glory
Than this unfinish'd fane.

Awake my country, why delay?
 Ye slumber in the blaze of day,
 All shameless in your shame;
 To let this noble fragment stand
 A wreck, unfinish'd, and a brand
 Upon the Scottish name;
 While strangers as they pass it by
 Thus sneeringly deride—
 "There stands old Scotland's Poverty,
 And poor old Scotland's Pride."
 Come, start men, show heart, men,
 Be soul and sinew strain'd,
 Till ample, this temple,
 Shall tell the conquest gain'd.

Come forth with throbbing breasts and hearts,
 Come forth like men and play your parts,
 Come forth in patriot bands;
 Let Highland heart and Lowland breast
 Swell proudly as the mountain crest
 On which that temple stands;
 Resume your noble work of love,
 Stint not your country's fame,
 Until her glory gleams above
 In characters of flame;
 Then flourishing, and nourishing
 Art, science, love, and peace,
 Our north home shall forth come,
 And rival ancient Greece!



LITTLE more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the Old Town of Edinburgh presented an interesting picture of the peculiar habits of our ancestors. Their modes of living and thinking—their political and domestic economy—their public and private character—were all more or less distinctly shadowed forth by the over-

crowded and incongruous, though unique and picturesque, buildings to be met with in every quarter of the ancient city. An anxiety on the part of the citizens in old times to locate under protection of the Castle, as well as a desire to afford each other mutual assistance, seems to have been the chief reason why they wedged their dwellings so closely together, raising pile on pile, till they had reached the dizzy heights still retained by many an airy attic, whose substructure rivals in ruggedness and boldness the rocks on which they are founded. Their descendants, our more immediate ancestors, had no idea of extending the boundaries of the City to meet the demands of the increasing population; and there can be little doubt that, for a time, they were sorely put to their shifts for lack of room. They had lost a considerable portion of the daring spirit of their progenitors, and seem to have been afraid that if they attempted to add any thing to the height of those very old houses they might tumble down about their ears like the Tower of Babel, burying the unfortunate builders in the ruins. They were rapidly exchanging the sword for the shuttle, becoming men of business instead of men of war. They were beginning to accumulate wealth, and to appreciate its true value in procuring the comforts of life; and the clink of coin began to sound more agreeably in their ears than the voice of the brazen-throated trumpet. Accordingly, when at their wits' end for want of accommodation, the propriety of cutting down a forest in the vicinity of the city was suggested, and allowing the inhabitants to use it in adding wooden projecting fronts to the fine old stone structures. The rage for building, even with wood, once set a-going, is not

easily stopped; and in many instances six and eight storeys of wooden tenements were attached to the hewn-stone edifices which had originally fronted the High Street. Besides these projecting balconies and cased fronts,* other structures of strange form were raised in the centre of the most public thoroughfares; and the consequence was, that the High Street, which had been at one time unmatched in Europe, was disfigured, and its uniformity completely destroyed, by these uncouth erections.

Those unacquainted with the social and domestic statistics of ancient Edinburgh would, when looking at the buildings which are still crowded together in many parts of the Old Town, be apt to conclude that their inhabitants could have enjoyed but little of either health or comfort in such dark and dingy domiciles. One, however, who knew a little better, and who looked more closely, would see much to induce him to form a very different opinion. He would find that those old houses were constructed in every particular with a strict regard to comfort—he would find in many portions of them specimens of art not excelled in the present age—he would stumble often in some of the darkest and closest alleys on door-lintels surmounted with ducal coronets and crests, finely carved in stone, indicating that the buildings which they adorned had once been the residence of nobility—he would observe, after ascending the flight of shelved and broken steps, remnants of fine old mahogany balustrades and handrails—he would find in apartments, now perhaps the abodes of extreme poverty, richly carved mantel-pieces, and beautifully ornamented hand-modelled plaster ceilings,—and when he began to contrast the character of the present inmates of these houses with that of their ancient occupants, and to reflect on the changes which must have attended their transition from the one to the other extreme, he would have no difficulty in believing that those ruinous dens, now the squalid abodes of want and wretchedness, might, under the magic influence of wealth, have been at once elegant, and, in the language of the Gaberlunzie, “couthie dwellings.”

Although by no means blind to the improvements which

* These additions, and the original buildings, may be still seen in many parts of the High Street. Where the wooden fronts have been removed, the old walls and several curious old inscriptions have recently come to light.

have been effected in the condition of man by the progress of civilisation, and though not overlooking the many additions which modern inventions have made to the luxuries and elegancies of life, still I have so much of the old leaven about me, that, in common with the majority of my countrymen, I deeply venerate all the antique characteristics of such a town as Edinburgh, and look with jealousy on every levelling project which threatens the destruction of any of these ancient landmarks. One old house is generally found supporting or leaning on another; and thus, when one is taken down, the adjoining tenements are almost sure to follow. Hence, I always look on the removal of the first old house in a street with a similar feeling to

The wife wha sits on her ain man's knee,
An' keeks in his face wi' her slee black ee;
Losh how the body will wauken an' stare,
Gin she see in his pow the first gray hair!

Ere the leaves o' the forest hae wither'd or dow'd,
When the fields are a' wimpling an' waving in gowd;
Losh how the farmer will shiver an' shake
Gin he see at his feet the first snaw-flake!

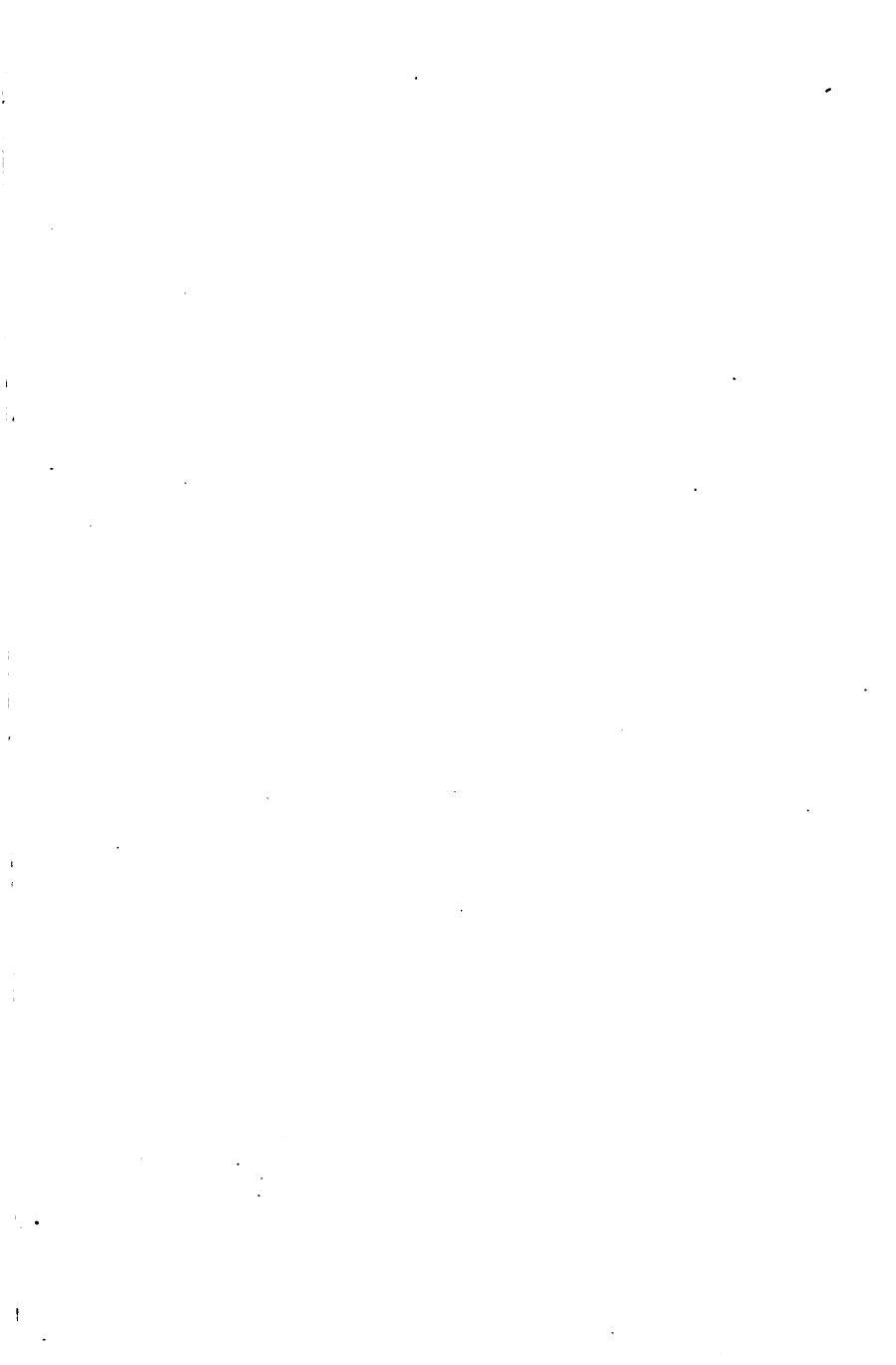
When the Winter hath past, an' the bonnie young buds
Wad fain deck in green a' the auld black wuds;
Losh how the wee things will wither an' dee,
Gin the bark fa' awa frae their parent tree!

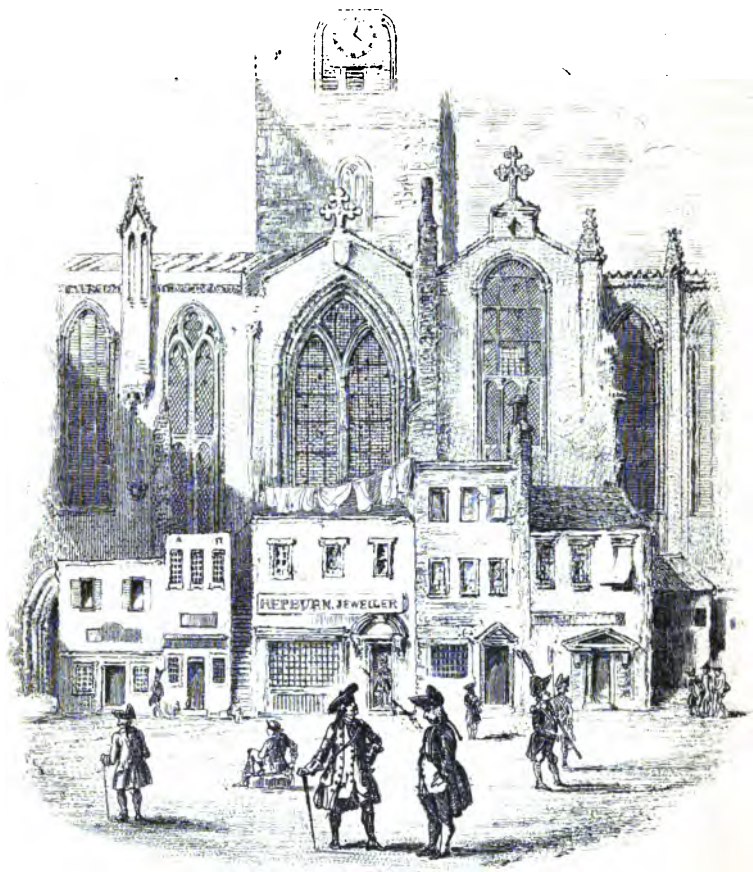
When fortune is smiling, and friendship is kind,
An' your wife an' your weanies are just to your mind;
Ah! how you feel gin death mak his first ca',
An' taks e'en your youngest bit tottum awa!

When we keep close thegither, even auld age grows strang,
Auld folks an' auld houses will stand twice as lang;
But ah! gin ane totter, or ane slip awa,
How the lave o' their cronies will totter an' fa'!

Yet we canna weel grieve though they a' fade away,
Though aye now an' then we see marks o' decay;
On the earth we can only but stay for a wee,
But in heaven there's naething can wither or dee.

The buildings in old Parliament Square, or Close as it was more generally called, presented the strongest possible contrast to the elegant and classic architecture of the edifices which now form that locality. The dead wall of the old Parliament House was partially broken up, with sundry motley patches of ornament, and surmounted with a barbarous embrasured balcony, terminated at the corners with turrets of a similar character. The statue of King Charles graced the centre of the square. On the south was to be seen, towering to the clouds, a certain lofty tenement, in its day one of the lions of Edinburgh, containing above a dozen storeys, all densely peopled by a respectable class of inhabitants. On the east side was the fine old house or land, which was burned down in 1824, with its piazza walk, under which was situated John's Coffee-house, once the resort of Dr Pitcairn and other wits of the day; and farther on were situated the shops of the principal jewellers, goldsmiths, and booksellers, wherein were wont to congregate daily the great and learned of the land. To the spectator, who should turn his back to the south, and look towards the grand central point, the magnificent structure of St Giles, with its lofty imperial crown, of a dull gray colour, the whole scene was singularly romantic and impressive. The sunlight falling on the venerable and rich old Gothic windows, or playing among the upper portions of the projecting buttresses, seemed as if desirous of showing off to advantage the finer features of the ancient edifice. The under part of the structure was surrounded with little shops and houses of two and three storeys, erected against, and clinging to its walls, their plaster fronts, daubed over with party-coloured paint, and glittering with gold-lettered sign-boards; their windows all sparkling with rich jewellery and other showy articles. Long red chimneys were seen creeping up the recesses, to the very top of the old Cathedral, while above the flat roofs of these nest-like tenements, were occasionally to be seen ropes swung across, with their loads of bright coloured kerchiefs, frills, and caps, shading or throwing reflected light on the windows of the church. So great at that time was the thoroughfare here, and so urgent the demand for places of business, that every little corner was converted into one of these booths or shops, some of which were so small, that one customer had to wait until the other came out, the place not being large enough to accommodate two





CATHEDRAL OF ST GILES

from the Parliament Square

All this part of the scene exhibited a combination of two ages, both of which, alas! are now gone for ever. The close packed little shops, with their spruce, slapper cocked-hatted occupants, typifying, as it were, the local peculiarities and self-importance of the times. The venerable old pile, towering proudly over all the adjoining buildings, looking like some gigantic remnant of past ages, carried the mind back to the earliest records of Edinbu' glory.

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Those little shops, and their busy owners, have all been removed. The architecture of the Cathedral has been restored to its primitive purity. The square is now surrounded with beautiful buildings, and the most perfect uniformity prevails, where formerly all was irregularity and confusion; but the scene is dull, lifeless, and entirely wanting in the cheerful excitement of the stirring, gossiping times of old; and we miss the busy bustling personages who were wont to crowd and throng the Parliament Square in the sunny days "O' auld lang syne."

Hoary Saint Giles, as he towers in height,
Shines like a monarch enthroned in light;
His bright crown blends with the sunny sky,
He gazeth aloft with gleaming eye;

He rings his bells with a merry chime,
Nodding and laughing at Father Time.

Proudly he towers, exulting and gay,
But his old companions, where are they?
Old men and dwellings have come and gone,
The place which held them is void and lone;
Still the old Saint, as in youthful prime,
Noddeth and laugheth to Father Time.

The old Saint looks and smiles at decay,
While those he propped have all pass'd away;
Jails once built for the lawless and bold,
Lie with clutchers and venders of gold;

"Go to," cries the Saint, "treasure and crime
Are not fitting mates for Father Time!

"I'm the Preacher and Teacher of Peace,
I stand till stormy passion shall cease;
Till men see God in the sky above,
And seek no screen from His eye of love;
Then shall I sink in the vast sublime—
I bow to Eternity, not to Time."

The tradesmen and merchants who occupied the little booths surrounding the Square and Cathedral were all of the class called "bien bodies," men who lived within their incomes, and maintained perfect integrity in all their business transactions. Their shops and houses were low rented, speculation was unheard of, and ostentatious parade not deemed necessary. They seemed to act upon the principle recommended by Nicol Jarvie, senior, "of never putting out their hand farther than they could draw it easily back again ;" and followed the advice contained in the following old nursery rhyme :—



Creep awa, my bairnie, creep afore ye gang,
Cock ye baith your lugs to your auld grannie's sang ;
Gin ye gang as far ye will think the road lang—
Creep awa, my bairnie, creep afore ye gang.

Creep awa, my bairnie, ye're ower young to learn
To tot up and down yet, my bonnie wee bairn ;
Better creepin' cannie than fa'in wi' a bang,
Duntin' a' your wee brow—creep afore ye gang.

Ye'll creep, an' ye'll hotch, an' ye'll nod to your mither,
Watchin' ilka step o' your wee donsy brither ;
Rest ye on the floor till your wee limbs grow strang,
An' ye'll be a braw chiel yet—creep afore ye gang.

The wee birdie fa's when it tries ower soon to flee,
Folks are sure to tumble when they climb ower hie ;
They wha canna walk right, are sure to come to wrang ;
Creep awa, my bairnie, creep afore ye gang !

While the worthy citizens in those days, however, lived in the most economical manner, they did not by any means deny themselves the necessary recreation which a town life requires to secure health. All early risers, they got early through with their work, and generally devoted a considerable portion of the day to amusement. Many of them, indeed, very frequently shut their shops after three o'clock in the afternoon, leaving a laconic notice on their doors, announcing that they were "gone to the Links to play at gowff," and would be back at six o'clock. Notwithstanding this apparently easy way of conducting business, some of them realized fortunes ; and several of our most respectable Edinburgh firms had their origin in the Parliament Close.

Some of the occupants of these booths were, or had been, civic functionaries, and were on terms of intimacy with the dignitaries of the Courts, with whom they were in the habit of conversing in the most familiar manner. Indeed, it was no uncommon sight at midday to see the gentlemen of the long robe, in company with the cock-hatted burghers, stepping over to Metcalf's or Johnnie Dowie's, to get their "twal hours ;"—even the Magistrates of the City, and the Lords on the Bench, thinking it no derogation of their dignity to step down from their high places to associate with their more humble brethren in their forenoon potations. These habits are now much changed, and the idea of tasting strong liquors in a forenoon is happily never thought of in respectable society. Then, however, not only "meridians," but "mornings," were common, even among

the higher classes ; and the learned members of the Bench and Bar, on their way to the Parliament House, deemed it no sacrifice of character to go into a tavern and swallow their glass of cold brandy, to dissipate, as they said, the fumes of the previous evening's debauch. Tastes are as much changed as habits, and the refined palates of our modern merchants would not relish the glass of usquebaugh and small beer, which was wont to be the favourite beverage of the Edinburgh shopkeepers of the last century,

We hear much of liberty and equality in our day, but in so far as the practical application of the liberal principle is concerned, our forefathers were certainly before us. The different classes, although as well-defined then as now, associated more with each other, a better feeling was kept up between the higher and lower orders ; and even the junior members of the community profited by the friendly and familiar intercourse which existed among all ranks and grades of society.

In this way was it that the boys were allowed to play their favourite games, even among the feet of the great men, in the Parliament Square ; and although they were frequently menaced, and sometimes chased by the City Guardsman, who stood sentinel over the statue of "King Charles," they were to be seen in the summer mornings driving away at ball against the dead wall of the Parliament House, or breaking shins with *shinty* knocks in the centre of the square. The Old Post-office Stairs, and Back Stairs, which led down to the Cowgate, and the President Stairs, which led down to the Royal Bank Close and Old Fishmarket, were the chief places of rendezvous for apprentice boys at their breakfast and dinner hours, and during the whole day stragglers were to be seen playing at their favourite games. Many a barber's wig-box, shoemaker's bag, or tailor's bundle, lay here for hours, while the thoughtless young rogue, to whose care it had been committed, was busily engaged in some pitch-and-toss speculation. Fathers, mothers, schoolmasters, and employers were to be seen stealing down the broad steps on tiptoes, each seizing his or her victim by the ears, wresting from him the implements of the game with which he had been playing ; and, amid his half-terrified, half-amused companions, emptying the little gambler's pockets of his equivocal gains—a punishment to which was generally superadded a sound thrashing.

The Goldsmith's Hall, Council Chamber, and Parliament House, contained the most of the great men in town, and on all occasions of public festivity the square was the general resort of the inhabitants. On the King's birthdays, when there were bonfires and rejoicings in every part of the city, the Lords of Council and Session, the Barons of Exchequer, and Commissaries, together with the Lord Provost, Magistrates, Deacons, and others of the more respectable citizens, arrayed in their robes of office, preceded by their trumpeters, macers, and city officers, decked in their curious antique dresses, and protected by their faithful servants the City Guard, marched from the Council Chamber to the Hall of the Parliament House. The procession moved through the square with slow and stately steps, and marched round the statue of Charles, which was decorated with flowers by the apprentice boys in the square. After being all arranged in the great hall, the Lord Provost proposed the King's health, which was immediately pledged by the company in a bumper of wine; the trumpets sounded, and mingling with the cheering of the assemblage, reverberated through the lofty hall; the Town Guard stationed outside fired a volley; the Castle guns answered in voices of thunder; and loud and hearty were the cheers of the loyal and delighted populace. Many a merry scene was witnessed in the Parliament Square on that day, and in the evening it was kept in one continued blaze with rockets, squibs, and crackers.

One of the reasons, and perhaps the chief one, why I have been thus particular in describing this once favourite resort of the citizens of Edinburgh, is, that within its precincts a much loved and much respected uncle, one of the personages destined to figure in our pages, spent the greater part of his life. Those of the inhabitants of Auld Reekie who are old enough to remember the period to which I refer, will recollect a certain little shop, which was a favourite lounge of some of the most influential citizens of the day, and which was occupied by Walter Hepburn, jeweller, my worthy relative. Mr Hepburn was the very soul of local greatness, a fine specimen of a worthy and wealthy Edinburgh tradesman; he had retired from business while I was a mere child, but the good which some men do is not soon forgotten; and some of his quondam friends—to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude—have, from time to time, communicated to me slight

touches of his life and character, which coincide with my own experience, and have enabled me to lay before my readers a tolerably faithful portrait of my good and kind uncle.

The old man had begun and ended his business career in the same shop, and only left it in consequence of its being about to be taken down to make way for some process of renovating the cathedral. He could not find heart to lock his shop for the last time, and said, "That he was thankful he had as muckle as wad keep him, as he couldna think of moving to ane o' the new high-roofed an' gousty toom-looking shops, that were fitter for singing sangs in than selling jewellery." What a picture the spruce lively old man must have been in his knee-buckled breeches and cocked hat, as he closed his half-door behind him, and strutted over to the Council Chamber to discuss with its officials some important local question, perchance the splicing of the Tron Church bell-rope, or the patching of the worn-out clothing of the City Guard! In the eyes of my aunt, his beloved sister, my uncle was the greatest statesman of his age; and when an account was read to her from the *Caledonian Mercury*, of an angry discussion which had taken place at the first meeting of the Town Council after his retirement from office, "Ah!" said my worthy aunt, shrugging her shoulders, "it's easily seen our Watty wasna there!"

Perfection is not to be expected in this sublunary sphere, and there was one point in my uncle's character which used to excite the suspicion and dislike of some of his neighbours. He was, and had always been, a most inveterate *black-neb* (*Anglicè*, democrat); and I have heard it rumoured that he narrowly escaped being apprehended as one of the ringleaders of the conspiracy, as it was called, of the "Friends of the People." During the French war, when some of our victories were celebrated by public rejoicings and illuminations, instead of sympathizing with the general feeling, and being neighbour-like, he, by way of expressing his contempt, had stuck one very small candle in each of his upper windows, heroically braving the fury of the mob, who signified their disapprobation of his republican principles by breaking every pane of glass in his house to shivers.

Notwithstanding, however, the unpopularity of my uncle's political creed, he was much esteemed and respected by all his immediate friends, and the circle of his acquaintance, which was

very large. He was a great favourite with the poor of the neighbourhood, and on Saturday mornings the pensioners who surrounded his shop-door were almost as numerous as those seen besetting the Excise Office on quarter days. He acted as treasurer and adviser to many young men, who afterwards had cause to remember the service he had done them with gratitude; and in those days when there were no savings banks, he formed the nucleus of many a heavy purse, afterwards deposited, and still remaining, in "Sir Willie's," his favourite bank. He also most religiously attended all funerals, more especially those of the poor; and it was his common remark, that if it were not for himself and "Jamie Duff" (a well-known *idiot* who used to attend all funerals), "mony a pair bodie wadna hae ane to lay their heads aneath the yird." This kindly disposition on the part of my uncle, added to his numerous other good qualities, overbalanced in the estimation of his fellow-citizens the obloquy at that time attached to persons holding such political opinions as he owned, and induced his fellow-craftsmen to elect him their deacon, presenting an unprecedented exception to the general rule in all Edinburgh electioneering matters, he being unanimously elected deacon convener of the good town, at a time when the party whose political principles he had espoused so warmly was very limited in numbers, and low in public estimation.

With the exception of his peculiar views anent government, then reckoned singular, but now much more prevalent, he was well entitled to this mark of distinction. He had evinced much energy and public spirit on every occasion wherein the welfare of the city of Edinburgh was concerned, and it was but becoming that his fellow-citizens should, in the language of the country bailie, elevate him "to the highest pinnacle of human glory." My uncle had been one of the original members of the Edinburgh Defensive Band, or Fusileers, as they were frequently called, a volunteer corps formed by the heroic citizens at the time of the threatened invasion. He had girded on his sword, shouldered his musket, and marched down with his corps to the rendezvous at the Citadel of Leith, to oppose the landing of the celebrated Paul Jones. He complained loudly of Paul's escape, and hinted pretty plainly that the rapid flight of the sea-rover down the Frith was not so much caused by the wind said to have been raised by the intervention of the Reverend

Mr Shirriff of Kirkcaldy, as by the determined and valorous spirit displayed on the occasion by the citizens of Edinburgh and the immortal Fusileer corps to which he belonged. Mr Shirriff did not coincide altogether with this opinion, although he modestly declined to accept all the honours showered on him by his kind friends. "True," he said, "the blast had come in gude stead, but he only had prayed; the Lord had sent the wind." Several of my uncle's old companions alleged that he had been more active than zealous at that great and ever-memorable muster; but as the matter had turned out, his prowess had not been put to the test, and he could talk as loudly as his contemporaries, of what they would have done, had not Paul so unceremoniously given them the slip. On their anniversary meetings, too, which a number of old associates kept up, my uncle, who sung well, was always called on to sing the following song, which had been composed for them by some rhyming member of the corps:—

THE AULD FUSILEERS.

The auld Fusileers, the auld Fusileers,
 What corps ere could match wi' the auld Fusileers?
 Nae Yankie sharpshooters, nor French Halberteers,
 Could stand the dead shot o' the auld Fusileers.

What tho' their brave deeds are but kenn'd here at hame,
 The greatest and best oft are joukit by fame;
 But the burly Paul Jones soon gae way till his fears,
 An' ran when he heard o' the auld Fusileers.

Wi' their stieve doughty pith they keep up the Gude Toon,
 They heezed Freedom up and dang Tyranny doun;
 An' the ophans wi' smiles and the widows wi' tears
 Aye blessed the kind hearts o' the auld Fusileers.

But alack Time has nibbled their manhood awa,
 An' the louns ance sae strappin' are feekless and sma';
 Yet the last o' the corps, tho' now far gane in years,
 Meet here to tell tales o' the auld Fusileers.

Auld Reekie's been lang on the tyne and the wane,
Yet we'll pray that her auld pith may come back again ;
For her hoary auld trunk still some green blossoms bears,
That may ripen to men like the auld Fusileers.

The auld Fusileers, the auld Fusileers,
We hae still a' the pluck o' the auld Fusileers ;
Gin war's trumpet touts we'll gang a' volunteers,
An' our callants shall learn frae the auld Fusileers.

To hear this song sung as I have heard it in a company of white-headed old men, some of whom had lived in the world nearly a century ; to listen to them talking of their youthful feats, with the enthusiasm which early recollections always awaken ; to hear them casually mention some circumstance which you are aware took place at least three-quarters of a century ago, while all the intervening period between the present and past, pregnant with such great events to man, appears to them little else than a dreary void, excites strange feelings in the mind, and makes you begin to doubt how far a long protracted life is desirable. You wonder if man learns nothing after his boyish days have past ; and this feeling is heightened, when, with a clear though tremulous voice, one of the oldest members of the company sings a song which was a favourite in his early days. You see at once that the vigour of mind developed in the works of Burns, Scott, and we may add Hogg, has been lost to him, and that he still, as in his youth ; considers Allan Ramsay Scotland's chief, if not only poet. It may be told us that man, as he advances in life, betakes himself to graver pursuits than learning songs. Alas ! alas ! I fear that most of our other attainments of any value or utility will be found to have been also acquired in our youthful years.

Yet with these convictions vividly impressed on your mind, you feel that old age must always have claims on your respect. Every white head is a holy book, whereon is written in impressive characters man's universal mortality ; every old house is a touching memorial of times long gone by. Yet these are the connecting links which bind us to the past, and even through such wrecks of time we hold converse with the great spirits of other ages, who being dead yet speak. Is there not here a convincing proof of the soul's immortality, when in one instant,

with one glance, the mind can travel back for centuries, and feel that thought generated in a far distant age has withstood the ravages of time, and still blooms as bright and fair as ever? Is it not good, then, to look on old age with reverence and respect? There surely is little to be admired in the man who calls his father a fool; and he who looks with indifference on the abodes of his ancestors, however dreary, desolate, or humble they may be, is dead to the finest feelings of human nature.

I have formerly stated, that my uncle had retired from business when I was a mere boy. Previous to that period, I had neither seen much of him nor of his sister, my beloved aunt. But when my affectionate widowed mother died, leaving me an orphan totally unprovided for, they took me home to live with them; and, with the exception of the name, they were the same to me as if they had been my own parents. They themselves had also been left orphans at an early age, and had been brought up, the one in George Heriot's, the other in the Merchants' Maiden Hospital. After serving his apprenticeship as a goldsmith in the shop once occupied by George Heriot, my uncle took up house, opened a shop, and brought his sister home to live with him. They were both industrious in their habits, frugal in their living, and amiable in their dispositions. Then, as now, industry was rewarded, and they realised a sufficient competency to allow them to retire in good time to enjoy the fruits of their industry and frugality. I have been told by some of their old friends, that my aunt, who must at one time have been very good looking, if not absolutely pretty, had many tempting offers, and that my uncle had many opportunities of marrying to advantage, but, from the affection which they entertained for each other, they could not a moment endure the idea of separation; and accordingly they had continued to live together. No love could have been more pure than theirs, no affection more exalted; and the delightful import, the full meaning of the terms "brother" and "sister," was never more thoroughly appreciated than by my kind old maiden aunt and her bachelor brother.

As might have been expected from such a correct business man, my uncle had all the most notable public events which had taken place during his life chronicled in his memory with the most accurate fidelity, and his authority was quoted anent

dates as confidently as an almanac. He was a great favourite in the clubs with which he was connected, and all disputes were uniformly referred to his decision. His chief enjoyments were all of the old school. He regularly spent his afternoons at the bracing and manly game of golf on Burntsfield Links, and frequently the early part of his evenings in some favourite High Street tavern, although he was always home betimes, as he took much pleasure in sitting by our own delightful kitchen fireside, chatting away with his sister about old stories, which he did with an unction that never failed to awaken corresponding feelings in those privileged to listen to him. My worthy uncle was also the very pink of politeness; and when, arrayed in his cocked hat, tight single-breasted coat, long vest, large frilled breast, ruffled wrists, knee-breeches, silk hose, with silver knee and shoe buckles, he strutted forth, lightly leaning on his gold-headed cane, he was the *beau ideal* of a bachelor of the old school. His devotion and attention to the fair sex was also most exemplary, and few young gallants could lead off a dance, or hand a lady to a chair, with such ease and grace as my octogenarian relative. My aunt was considerably more precise in her manner than her brother. She was, moreover, sarcastic, shrewd, and clever, had a thorough contempt for modern innovations, and, in spite of the changes of fashion, adhered to the old style of dressing—wore long-waisted gowns with short sleeves, and white satin shoes with high heels. Her head-dress was the envy of many a dame, whose head was plumed with an array of colours as various and brilliant as those of a peacock's tail, but whose gaudy array failed to attract the attention or admiration of any portion of the company when seen beside the beautifully smooth brushed hair, and the small, elegant, and towering cap, which rested like a coronet on the intelligent forehead of my maiden aunt. She was, moreover, too sensible a woman to believe herself a young maiden, and not foolish enough to be ashamed of being called an old one.

Our residence, situated in one of the closes on the north side of the High Street, was an old-fashioned, snug, little self-contained house, surrounded by a small piece of garden-ground, containing a few fruit-trees, and a plot of green grass, which looked all the brighter for the contrast with the tall, dark, and dingy houses by which it was surrounded. There was also a prettily laid out pebbled walk, and a sweet little summer-house

in the south-east corner, in which my aunt was wont to knit stockings, and my uncle to read the newspapers in the summer afternoons, when the bright sun, as if anxious to gaze on such a benevolent, worthy, and loving couple, came sweeping round the corner of the adjoining tall houses, and lit up the grass-plot, or chequered the summer-house with his beams, until called away to some other quarter of the earth, to light up perhaps a fairer, but certainly not a happier scene.

Under the peculiar management of such a woman as my aunt, it will be readily believed that the interior of the house exhibited a corresponding degree of neatness, and that everything was always kept in the highest order—my aunt having a strong antipathy to footmarks on her well-brushed carpets, and to stains on her brightly polished mahogany furniture. The apartments were, with one exception, small, yet, as everything was kept in its proper place, we never felt any inconvenience for lack of room. I was the only disturber of the harmony of this well-regulated household; for, as my aunt expressed it, “The thoughtless callant wadna learn to put his ain things by, but dang a’thing tapsalteerie, and keepit his duds lying hither and thither thro’ a’ parts o’ the house; but,” continued she, in a low voice, “he’ll learn mair mense by-and-by; we canna pit an auld head on young shouthers.”

The visitors who from time to time dropped in upon us were of a kind not often met with now-a-days,—old, warm-hearted, loquacious, busy, bustling, self-important personages. Many a merry bout and pleasant party have I seen in that old-fashioned parlour, consisting of deacons, bailies, provosts, captains of fifties, and corporals of tens, in the glorious and immortal corps in which my uncle also had distinguished himself. Then were old jokes cracked, old songs sung, old stories told, old times revived,—and old men became young again.

Among all these old associates of my worthy uncle, his chief crony, indeed his inseparable companion, was a personage considerably his senior, who generally went under the cognomen of “Laird Nairn.” The development of this worthy character was altogether broader than that of my uncle. His features were more strongly marked, and his hair rivalled in whiteness the powder with which the collar of his coat was so plentifully bedaubed. His whole figure, dress, and appearance were of an antique cast, and his character was strictly in keeping with

these external indications. He was an enthusiastic local antiquarian ; knew every old house, stair, wynd, and close, which in former times had been the scenes of remarkable events, or wherein had resided any of the Scottish nobility. He was well read in Scottish history ; and what my uncle was with regard to the dates of great local events, he was in respect to the aristocratic genealogy of Scotland. He could trace the descent and connections of every noble family in the kingdom, and was deeply versed in all their private histories. He had a good deal of the Jacobite spirit about him, and might often have been seen wandering alone through the desolate court of Holyrood in the dusk, or sauntering in the summer afternoons about the romantic heights of Salisbury Crag. Nothing he so much delighted in as in hearing chanted "The auld Stuarts back again ;" and although his voice was not quite so firm as it had once been, he sung with great vigour and energy, "The wee, wee German Lairdie." Often have I thought that my uncle, whose principles were so opposite to the Laird's in many points, would have fallen out with him, but they were both possessed of too much practical philosophy to allow politics to gain an ascendancy over their better natures ; and Nairn, who was past that age when he could be fired with political fuel, always avoided discussion, although he freely stated his opinions, leaving to my uncle all the glory of confuting them to his own entire satisfaction. Nairn's mind was of the most benevolent kind, his disposition open and generous to a fault : he never would listen to an evil report of his neighbour's fame ; and he checked all attempts at slander with a shrug of the shoulders, a fidgety look of impatience, and his favourite expression, "We cam nae here to speak ill, o' our neighbours." Hallowed be his blessed spirit, glory to the memory of his name, which, like the dew falling on the young herb, or the sun upon the flower, even yet refreshes, and sheds a halo over the old scenes of his existence, calling forth from many eyes and hearts the tears of gratitude and love for the memory of



THE LAST LAIRD O' THE MINT!

AULD Willie Nairn, the last Laird o' the Mint,
 Had an auld-farrant pow, an' auld-farrant thoughts in't ;
 There ne'er was before sic a body in print,
 As auld Willie Nairn, the last Laird o' the Mint.

So list and ye'll find ye hae muckle to learn,
 An' ye'll still be but childer to auld Willie Nairn.

Auld Nanse, an auld maid, kept his house clean an' happy,
 For the body was tidy, though fond o' a drappy ;

An' aye when the Laird charged the siller-taed cappy,
 That on great occasions made ca'ers aye nappy,
 When the bicker gaed round, Nanny aye got a sharin'—
 There are few siclike masters as auld Willie Nairn.

He'd twa muckle tabbies, ane black an' ane white,
 That purr'd at his side by the fire ilka night,
 And gazed in the embers wi' sagelike delight,
 While he ne'er took a meal, but they baith gat a bite ;
 For baith beast an' bodie aye gat their full sairin—
 He could ne'er feed alane, couthie auld Willie Nairn !

He had mony auld queer things, frae queer places brought—
 He had rusty auld swords, whilk Ferrara had wrought—
 He had axes, wi' whilk Bruce an' Wallace had fought—
 An' auld Roman bauchles, wi' auld bawbees bought ;
 For aye in the Cowgate, for auld nick-nacks starin',
 Day after day daunder'd auld sage Willie Nairn.

There are gross gadding gluttons, and pimping wine-bibbers,
 That are fed for their scandal, and call'd pleasant fibbers ;
 But the only thanks Willie gae them for their labours,
 Were " We cam nae here to speak ill o' our neighbours."
 O ! truth wad be bolder, an' falsehood less darin',
 Gin ilk ane wad treat them like auld Willie Nairn.

His snaw-flaiket locks, and his lang pouter'd cue,
 Commanded assent to ilk word frae his mou ;
 Though a leer in his ee, an' a lirk in his brow,
 Made ye ferlie gin he thought his ain stories true ;
 But he minded o' Charlie when he'd been a bairn,
 An' wha but Bob Chalmers could thraw Willie Nairn !

Gin ye speer'd him anent ony auld hoary house,
 He cock'd his head heigh, an' he set his staff crouse,
 Syne gazed through his specks, till his heart-springs brak loose,
 Then 'mid tears in saft whispers wad scarce wake a mouse,
 He told you some tale o't, wad mak your heart yearn
 To hear mair auld stories frae auld Willie Nairn.

E'en wee snarling dogs gae a kind yowffin bark,
 As he daunder'd doun closes baith ourie an' dark ;

For he kend ilka doorstane and auld-warld mark,
 An' even amid darkness his love lit a spark ;
 For mony sad scene that wad melted cauld airn,
 Was relieved by the kind heart o' auld Willie Nairn.

The laddies ran to him to redd ilka quarrel,
 An' he souther'd a' up wi' a snap or a farl :
 While Vice that had daur'd to stain Virtue's pure laurel,
 Shrunk cow'd frae the glance o' the stalwart auld carl ;
 Wi' the weak he was wae, wi' the strong he was stern—
 For dear, dear was virtue to auld Willie Nairn.

O ! we'll ne'er see his like again, -now he's awa !
 There are hunders mair rich, there are thousands mair braw,
 But he gae a' his gifts, an' they whiles werena sma',
 Wi' a grace made them lightly on puir shouthers fa' ;
 An' he gae in the dark, when nae rude ee was glarin'—
 There was deep-hidden pathos in auld Willie Nairn !

Among those who occasionally made my uncle's house their home was our friend the Gaberlunzie. They had been acquainted for some time before I came to reside with the former, or was of an age to pay attention to anything else than play. About the time, however, when I began to take an interest in graver matters, and when to listen to, or read of, adventures by flood and field became a delight, the Gaberlunzie was a frequent visitor, and to me was worth all the rest ; he was so kind too, so communicative, had so much to entertain and awaken the young fancy, that every word he spoke was religiously believed, every story he told carefully treasured up in the memory. At the time alluded to, he was a fine, fresh, old carl, with a clear brown healthy complexion ; had an eye like a falcon, and a brow like a tower, full, broad, and ample, without a single wrinkle to denote either the presence of care or the advances of old age ; his person was tall and erect ; he wore a broad blue bonnet, and a heavy square-skirted, old fashioned coat, with broad flaps over the pockets, and adorned with huge metal buttons ; he wielded a sturdy rung, and generally came home from his travels carrying a huge wallet slung over his shoulders. Notwithstanding this never-failing accompaniment, the sign of his profession, there was nothing else about him that

would lead any one to suppose him a beggar. He did not wear the badge with which the bluegowns were wont to be ticketed; neither was he, nor could he be, treated or looked on but with respect. His whole appearance was so commanding, and his information on every topic so various and extensive, that many of my uncle's friends, who were seldom in the habit of visiting us, came frequently when notice was given them that the Gaberlunzie was with us. He was intimately and familiarly acquainted with the most remarkable events connected with the general history of the country; and had all the knowledge of localities and dates possessed by Nairn and my uncle, with an intellect of far greater grasp than either; hence he had the knack of blending amusing anecdote with minute and faithful description. He had a knowledge of men and manners, to which neither my relative nor the Laird could make any pretensions; while scintillations of humour and pathos gleaming through his conversation made him a most fascinating companion. He had, moreover, travelled over all Scotland; had visited all the scenes of her ancient glory; her castles, cathedrals, and palaces; had scaled her highest mountains, explored her wildest glens, and traced the source of her most majestic rivers; had made pilgrimages to all the more celebrated portions of her classic ground; had collected many ancient and curious legends; was deeply versed in all the mysteries of the supernatural world, and knew all the peculiarities of its inhabitants from a giant to a fairy. What rendered the Gaberlunzie more endearing and interesting to me than all his other acquirements, was his warm poetic temperament, and his intense admiration of the earlier Scottish poets. He had all Blind Harry at his tongue's end, and was familiar with Lindsay, Dunbar, and other fathers of Scottish song. His own rhyming propensities, and the genial fire of poesy in which all his feelings were wrapped, imparted their influence to all around him, and made him especially dear to me, whom he had inspired with a share, however humble, of his poetic temperament; and when in a walk over Braid Hills one day, he knelt down, and thus apostrophized a beautiful Scotch thistle, which grew on the face of the hill, I bent my young knees beside him, and joined him, sympathetically at least, in this outpouring of a fervent and patriotic spirit.

ODE TO A THISTLE.



OUGH, sturdy, beardy, fire-crown'd king,
 Thou jaggy, kittly, gleg wee thing,
 Wha dares to brave the piercing sting
 O' Scotia's thistle,
 Soon scamper aff, hap, stap, an' fling,
 Wi' couring fustle.

'Midst scenes o' war, in days o' yore,
 When the grund swat wi' life's red gore,
 And Scotia's land, frae shore to shore
 Groan'd sair wi' waes,
 Thyform dim seen, 'midst battle's roa.
 Aft scared her faes.

When Wallace, sturdy patriot wight,
 His trusty broadsword glancing bright,
 Gar'd Southron reivers scour like fright
 Frae Scotland's braes,
 Thou snelly shot thy horns o' might,
 An' brogg'd their taes.

When Bruce at Bannockburn's red field
 Made Edward's doughty army yield,
 An' Southrons down in thousands reel'd,
 Stark, stiff, an' dour,
 The vera weans did thistles wield,
 An' fought like stour.

Since then no foe hath dared to tread
 Upon thy guarded, crimson head,
 But proudly from thy mountain bed
 Thy head thou rear'st,
 By flowing springs of freedom fed,
 No blast thou fear'st.

Thy native land is free as air,
Her sons are bold, her daughters fair,
Bright soul'd, warm-hearted, fond to share
 The social smile ;
Pure love, true friendship, glorious pair,
 Adorn the soil.

Rear high thy head, thou symbol dear,
Sae meek in peace, sae bauld in weir,
Mine ee dimm'd wi' a full proud tear,
 I bow before thee,
An' while life's pulse beats warm, I swear
 Still to adore thee !

It may readily be conceived how, under such tutorage, and in such company, I was early imbued with a deep veneration for everything connected or associated with the olden times, and should have become, in my anxiety to preserve old buildings, old habits, old customs, and old feelings, a sort of sentimental conservative. Nairn, the Gaberlunzie, and my uncle walked together daily; talked of their old feats, fought over their old battles, told their old stories, and lived half a century back in a world conjured up by their old associations. There could not, in truth, have been a finer group of characters, all contrasting, yet finely harmonizing, with each other, than the dapper figure of my uncle, the older and heavier Nairn, and the Gaberlunzie with his firm step, his healthy countenance; and stately bearing. When they had reached and taken possession of one of the seats in the green and sequestered Meadow Walk, and when in earnest conversation their heads were all inclined toward each other, they presented as fine a group of octogenarian characters as could well be conceived. Busybodies were wont to shrug up their shoulders, and express their astonishment at seeing Nairn and my uncle, both of whom were known to be a little pompous in their way, associating so intimately with one in the Gaberlunzie's station in life, but were always put to silence and shame by these two worthy old gentlemen, who very significantly and quaintly stated, that it was not the coat nor the wallet, but the man, who was their companion.

Although my honoured uncle, and his worthy friend Nairn,

did not choose to give their reasons for entertaining a man in the Gaberlunzie's condition of life with so much respect, yet I feel it as an obligation on me to let my readers into the secret cause of that intimacy; and as one good turn deserves another, I trust they will pardon the irregularity of the narrative, and extend their indulgence to the narrator, while I carry them back to the time when my uncle had his shop in the Parliament Square, and attempt to give a description of the first interview of the Gaberlunzie with his friends William Nairn and Walter Hepburn. But as this is an event which may help my novel-loving friends to solve some of the apparent mystery which hangs over a considerable portion of the preceding story, and is pregnant with some importance to more than one of the parties therewith connected, I reserve it for another chapter.