

Freeman sculp.

Hector Macneill Esq.

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M. 1712. 10

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
HECTOR MACNEILL, Esq.

A NEW EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

Veritatis simplex oratio est.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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EDINBURGH:

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1806.

Wm. Gardner

TO
THE MEMORY
OF
HIS MUCH-BELOVED AND LAMENTED FRIEND,

JAMES CURRIE, M. D.

THE
FOLLOWING POEMS,

AS
A LAST TRIBUTE TO HIS VIRTUES,

ARE INSCRIBED

BY
THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THIS EDITION.

IN this edition there will be found some pieces which are not in the author's former collection; together with some alterations and amendments, which, in justice to himself, and as a mark of attention to an indulgent public, he considered necessary in the final correction of his poetical works.

It may perhaps be proper to notice, that the pieces now added, are, Verses on Dr Doig; the Pleasures of Ambition; Jack and Nancy; the Rose o' Kirtle, and some additional Scots Songs, marked with an asterisk *. The Poems are likewise now arranged nearly in the order in which they were originally written; which not only forms a separate collection of all the Scotch and English compositions, but enables the reader to turn readily to the volumes in which all the pieces written in these respective languages are inserted.

EDIN. 20th DEC. 1805.

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TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

SOME of the poems in the following collection, the public have already seen, and received with flattering attention; others have occasionally appeared in different periodical publications in a very incorrect state, while many of the songs, set to music, have, for a number of years back, been exposed to sale in the music shops. As a few of the most popular and important pieces have for some time past been out of print, and are, it seems, still in request, I have at length yielded to the repeated solicitations of the Edinburgh booksellers, and selected all the poetical productions I mean to acknowledge, with the view of their being printed in two volumes, which, I am told, are shortly to be presented to the public.

A considerable part of the English pieces inserted in the present collection, were written at a time

of life when imagination too often triumphs over judgment, and passion rejects the sober aid of criticism. Apology for insignificant productions, written at an early period, has nothing to do with this observation, since to present fruits that are insipid or ill-flavoured, merely on account of their immaturity, is surely a sorry compliment to the taste of a discerning public. On the present occasion, I am apprehensive I have been influenced more by a gratification of my own taste, than an anxiety to gratify that of others. There are certain events in the early stages of life, which, on a retrospect, interest and charm perhaps beyond any other.— Among these, scenes and circumstances annexed to youth and passion, cannot fail to be remembered with peculiar pleasure, while the occasional and unpremeditated effusions which commemorate the joys that are past, and the friends that are no more, become, even with their faults, the children of our affection. These, however, have been examined with some care, and, I would fain hope, with *some* impartiality. Many, with a sigh, have been consigned to oblivion; but, on a general review of my poetical offspring, I cannot deny, that, while I fancied some puny and unpromising, I was incapable

of excluding them from the *last and only* protection I had to offer. If, in this parental weakness, I have been in fault, it is hoped that the error will be attributed to no other cause. The *cacoethes carpendi* cannot surely attach to one who has so long resisted solicitations to collect, far less the silly vanity of exhibiting to the world what diffidence has so long taught him to conceal.

EDIN. June 1801.

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The following Verses possess such merit, and are so fine a tribute to the memory of a deceased and favourite Scottish Poet, that, rather than withhold them from the lovers of genuine poetry, the Author thus subjects himself to the imputation of vanity in publishing the elegant, though unmerited, compliment they contain.

V E R S E S

ADDRESSED TO

HECTOR MACNEILL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF WILL AN' JEAN.

'THE daisy flower may blaw unseen

On mountain tap—in valley green!

The rose alane, in native sheen,

Its head may raise!

Nae musing bardie now, I ween,

To sing their praise!

' Nae pensive minstrel wight we see

Gang saunt'ring o'er the claver lee !

The fireflaughts dartin' frae his ee

The wilds amang !

Wha native freaks wi' native glee

Sae sweetly sang !

' His was the gift, wi' magic power,

To catch the thought in happy hour ;

To busk his verse wi' ilka flower

O' fancy sweet !

An' paint the birk or brushwood bower,

Whar lovers meet !

' But now he fills his silent ha' !

My sweetest minstrel's fled awa !—

Yet shall his weel-worn laurels blaw

Through future days,

Till weary time in flenders a'

The world lays !'

Such *was* the dowie plaint o' wae

Which Scotia made by bank an' brae,

Whan Burns—(puir Burns !) was ta'en away,

And laid at rest !—

(Green grow the grass !—light lie the clay

Upon his breast !)

But *now* she draps the waefu' tale,
 And notes o' transport fill the gale ;
 Nae langer down the silent vale

 She lanely mourns,
 And to her cheek, ance lily pale,

 The rose returns !

The streaks o' joy glint in her face,
 Thy steps, Macneill, sweet bard ! to trace ;
 To mark wi' nature's peerless grace

 Thy blossoms blaw !
 Happy to see thee fill the place

 O' him awa !

xvii

How sairly does her bosom beat

At pair misfortune's wretched state!

While tracing WILL through poortith great

And prospects drear!

And at thy JEANIE's hapless fate

She draps a tear!

Then mark, sweet minstrel o' the day!

Thy Scotia's sons an' maidens gay;

Her deep wild glens; her mountains grey,

Wi' misty head;

And eke her ilka sunny brae

Wi' flow'rs o'erspread!

What time alane thou may'st retire,
 May these thy fairy thoughts inspire,
 And set thy manly saul on fire
 In Scotia's praise ;
 And mak thee strike thy native lyre
 To saftest lays !

To wake the pangs Despair maun dree,
 Whan driven houseless o'er the lee ;
 To strike the strings o' Sympathie
 Whan griefs combine ;
 To start the tear in Pity's ee—
 The task be thine.

Edinburgh,
 October 11, 1799.

RICHARD GALL.

THE HARP,
A LEGENDARY TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.

Smeirg a loisgeadh a thiompan ria.



TO THE READER.

THE writer of the present poem thinks it necessary to acquaint the public, that it is founded on a short traditionary story, which reached him by the following accidental circumstance. A gentleman in Perthshire, well known for his researches into antiquity and national character*, chancing, while on a tour to the Hebrides, to hear some person say, "I'll never burn my harp for a woman †," took occasion to ask the meaning of the proverb.—He received for answer, a simple unadorned tale, somewhat similar to the groundwork of the present poem; the singularity of which struck him so forcibly, that he committed it to writing. On a visit, some years ago, to a

* Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre.

† "Smeirg a loisgeadh a thiompan ria."

friend * who had accidentally seen the manuscript, he related this little artless story to the author, and, with his usual glow of colouring, diffused such an air of novelty and passion over it, as to suggest an idea, that something interesting might be made of it in verse. The first part was written shortly after, but the author's sudden departure from Europe, put a stop for some time to any further attempt; although he must confess, inclination repeatedly disposed him to finish what he had begun. A tedious passage home, furnished him with ample opportunities to gratify this propensity—his residence in Britain since his arrival, has enabled him to receive the opinion of his friends, and to avail himself of their strictures.

Having thus given a short account of his Harp, the author now presents it to the world, with that

* The late Mr Graham of Gartmore.

mixture of hope and diffidence which the partiality of friends, and the uncertainty of public approbation, naturally excite. Of its merits he shall say nothing. In an age, and in a country, however, so highly cultivated as the present, one observation may not be improper. Should the poem in some instances appear too irregular and abrupt in its construction, the author begs it may not be imputed to inadvertency, but design. His aim was to render his tale rather interesting than regular, and animated rather than correct. Nature and passion indeed, were his chief objects; and as these can never derive such energy from descriptive as from dramatic composition, it is almost unnecessary for him to observe, that the Ancient Ballad has been his model.

Edinburgh,
April 15. 1789



THE HARP.

PART I.

STILL'D is the tempest's blust'ring roar ;

Hoarse dash the billows of the sea ;—

But who on Kilda's dismal shore

Cries—" Have I burnt my Harp for thee !"

'Tis COL, wild raving to the gale,

That howls o'er heath, and blasted lea ;

Still as he eyes the lessening sail,

Cries—" Have I burnt my Harp for thee !"—

—Bright was thy fame in Bara's isle,
 Sweet bard ! where many a rival sung ;
 Oft hadst thou waked the tear and smile,
 As soft thy Harp melodious rung :

Oft hadst thou touched the female heart,
 (To love, I ween ! and pity true)
 Till MORA came to hear thy art ;—
 MORA, with eye of softening blue.

The maid he prized above the throng,
 That pressed to hear his raptured strain ;—
 The maid, who melted at the song,
 But trifled with a lover's pain :

Long had he borne the treach'rous smile,

That cherished hope, and left despair ;

The promised bliss, which female guile

As oft dispersed in empty air ;

Till shunned by every constant maid ;

Condemned by friends ; by kindred prest ;

Deceitful thus, in smiles arrayed,

MORA the sorrowing youth address :

“ Too long, O COL ! in plaintive moan

Thou'st strung thy Harp to strains divine ;—

Add but two strings of varied tone,

This heart, this yielding heart, is thine.”

Two strings the youth, with anxious care,
 Half doubtful, to his Harp applies ;
 And oft, in vain, he turns each air,
 And oft each varying note he tries ;

At length (unrivalled in his art!)
 With new-born sounds the valley rings ;—
 COL claims his MORA's promised heart,
 As deep he strikes the varied strings !

Three moons, three honied moons, are past
 Since COL, enraptured, laughed at care ;
 And oft the tuneful Harp he blest,
 That won a nymph so good and fair :

Till mindful of those tender ties,
That fashion's sons would blush to name ;
With softened voice, and melting sighs,
He thus accosts his peerless dame :

“ Three months, dear partner of my bliss !
Three fleeting months have shed their charms,
Since first I snatched the bridal kiss,
And clasped perfection to my arms :

“ Yet happiness, however true,
Must fade, if selfish and confined ;—
Your friends now claim affections due ;
The kindred transports of the mind !

“ Each parent mourns our cold delay ;
 They think of MORA with a tear :
 The gale invites—at early day
 To Cana’s sea-beat shore we steer.”

The morn blushed fair ; mild blew the gale ;
 The lark to heaven light warbling springs ;
 COL smiles with love, spreads quick the sail,
 And sweeps with ravished heart the strings !

But ah ! how short the transient gleams,
 That light with joy the human breast !—
 The tempest raves, and wildly screams
 Each frightened sea-fowl to her nest.

High rage the billows of the deep,
That lately rolled serenely mild,
And dashed near Kilda's awful steep ;
 COL clasps his love with horror wild.

For cold's the form, o'er which he hung
 With raptured eye the morn before ;
And mute and tuneless is the tongue,
 That charmed so late on Bara's shore ;

And pale and lifeless is the cheek,
 That glowed so late with rosy hue ;
The eye, that melting joys could speak,
 Is closed !—the eye of soft'ning blue.

Hard with the furious surge he strove,
His love and fav'rite Harp to save ;
Till deep in Crona's sea-worn cove,
He bears them safe from storm and wave.

But cove, nor love's assiduous care
Could ebbing life's warm tide restore !—
Pale, wet, and speechless lay the fair
On Kilda's bleak and stormy shore.

Oft, oft her breathless lips of clay
With frantic cries he fondly prest ;
And while a senseless corse she lay,
He strained her madly to his breast.—

But who can paint with pencil true

The scene, when sighs first struggling stole
(Which thus by magic love he drew)

Deep lab'ring from her fluttering soul!

“ She breathes!—she lives!” the minstrel cried,

“ Life has not fled this beauteous form!—

Protecting heaven, some aid provide!—

Shield—shield my trembler from the storm!

“ No roof its friendly smoke displays!—

No storm-scaped faggot, turf, nor tree—

No shrub to yield one kindly blaze,

And warm my love to life and me!

“ Dark grows the night!—and cold and sharp
 Beat wind, and hail, and drenching rain!
 Nought else remains—I’ll burn my Harp!”
 He cries, and breaks his Harp in twain.

“ For thee, O MORA! oft it rung,
 To guard thee from each rival’s art;
 And now, though broken and unstrung,
 It guards from death thy constant heart.”

Bright flamed the fragments as he spoke;
 One parting sigh his Harp he gave:
 The storm-drenched faggots blaze through smoke,
 And snatch his MORA from the grave.





Stothard del.

Anker Smith sculp.

Bright flam'd the fragments as he spoke:
 One parting sigh his Harp he gave,
 The storm drench'd faggots blaze through smoke,
 And snatch his Mora from the grave.

PART II.

Now heedless raved the stormy night,
For instant terror frowned no more,
And cheerful blazed the spreading light
Round Kilda's dark and dismal shore ;

And cheerful smiled the grateful pair,
And talked of death and dangers past,—
When loud the voice of wild despair
Came rushing on the midnight blast.

Chill horror seized each lover's heart.—

“ Ah me ! what dismal sounds draw near !—
 Defend us, heaven ! ” with sudden start
 Cried *MORA*, thrilled with frantic fear.

One hand supports his trembling wife,
 The other grasps his trusty glave ;
 “ My Harp,” he cries, “ has given thee life,
 And *this*, that precious life shall save ! ”

“ No danger comes,” deep sighed a form,
 As near the cave it shiv'ring stood ;
 “ A stranger, shipwrecked by the storm,
 Implores the gen'rous and the good ;

“ No danger comes—ah me! forlorn!

A wretch by woes and tempests tost!—

From love, from friends, and kindred torn,

And dashed on Kilda's frightful coast!

“ Restless with grief, at op'ning day

For Lewis' isle I spread the sail;

Sweet rose the lark with cheerful lay,

And sweetly blew the flatt'ring gale!

“ Ah fate relentless! thus to cheat

With baneful lure and treach'rous smile!—

Were human suff'rings not complete

Till wrecked on Kilda's desert isle!

“ Lured by the light that gleams afar,
 With fainting steps these cliffs I prest:—
 O! may it prove a polar star,
 And guide to pity’s shelt’ring breast!”

Quick from his grasp the falchion flies,
 As COL each opening arm extends;
 “ Approach, ill fated youth!” he cries,
 “ Here—here are none but suff’ring friends!

“ Like thee, we hailed the matin song,
 The flatt’ring gale, and faithless tide!—
 How sweet! by zephyrs borne along,
 My Harp and MORA by my side!

“ Why starts the youth ?—approach—draw near.

Behold the wreck of storm and wave.—

’Tis all that’s left—my Harp so dear

I burned, that fair one’s life to save !”

First pale, then crimson grew his cheek,

And sorely shook his manly frame !

His fault’ring tongue refused to speak,

Save to repeat his MORA’S name—

A name, which oft had charmed his ear,

And e’en from childhood grew more sweet ;

A name, which love had rendered dear,

And sorrow taught him to repeat !

Long had he nursed the kindling flame,
 Long, long possessed her virgin heart ;
 But party feuds and discord came,
 And forced the tend'rest pair to part.

Torn hapless thus from all he loved,
 The wretched wand'rer left his home ;
 From isle to isle incessant roved ;—
 His only wish—to idly roam !

Oft had he braved the tempest's war,
 Unaided in his slender bark ;
 Oft lonely steered by some faint star,
 That glimmered through th' involving dark ;

Oft, oft uncertain whither driven,
Or near some rock, or breaker borne ;
He'd quit his helm to guiding heaven,
And sigh his cheerless lot till morn !

Oft had the wild heath been his bed,
On some lone hill, or craggy steep ;
While light'nings flashed around his head,
And eagles screamed his woes asleep.

Thus passed his wand'ring life away,
“ A wretch by woes and tempests tost,”
Till fortune, in her changeful play,
Wrecked him on Kilda's fatal coast.

Ah! little thought he, while he strove
 'Gainst whelming wave and rocky shore,
 Yon light would guide him to his love,
 For whom these ceaseless ills he bore!

“ Why starts the youth!—approach—draw near;
 Behold the wreck of storm and wave!—
 'Tis all that's left!—my Harp so dear
 I burned, that fair one's life to save!”

A glance from MORA's speaking eye
 Half calmed the fond youth's labouring breast.
 The tale goes round—the bleak winds sigh,
 And COL mistrustless sinks to rest.

Ah! how could cold distrust possess

A breast so gen'rous, kind, and true!

A heart still melting to distress,

To love—false fair one! and to—you.

The morn arose with aspect drear,

The waves still dash with sullen roar.—

COL starts from rest—no MORA's near,

The treach'rous pair are far from shore!

From Kilda's cliff that towers on high,

He spies the white sail far at sea;

And, while the big tear fills each eye,

Cries, "Have I burned my Harp for thee!"

DONALD AND FLORA,

A BALLAD,

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND KILLED AT THE
BATTLE OF SARATOGA. 1778.

WHEN many hearts were gay,

Careless of aught but play,

Poor Flora slipt away

Sadd'ning to Mora*.

Loose flowed her golden hair,

Quick heaved her bosom bare,

As thus to the troubled air

She vented her sorrow :

* A retreat so named by the lovers.

Loud howls the stormy west,
 Cold, cold is winter's blast:—
 Haste then, O Donald, haste!

Haste to thy Flora!

Twice twelve long months are o'er
 Since on a foreign shore
 You promised to fight no more,
 But meet me in Mora.

“Where now is Donald dear?”

Maids cry with taunting sneer;

“Say, is he still sincere

To his loved Flora?”

Parents upbraid my moan;

Each heart is turned to stone;—

Ah Flora! thou'rt now alone,

Friendless in Mora!

Come then, O come away !
 Donald, no longer stay !—
 Where can my rover stray
 From his loved Flora ?
 Ah, sure he ne'er could be
 False to his vows and me !—
 Oh heav'ns ! is not yonder he
 Bounding o'er Mora !

“ Never, O wretched fair,”
 Sighed the sad messenger,
 “ Never shall Donald mair
 Meet his loved Flora !
 Cold as yon mountain snow
 Donald thy love lies low !
 He sent me to sooth thy woe,
 Weeping in Mora.

“ Well fought our valiant slain

On Saratoga’s plain ;

Thrice fled the hostile train

From British glory.

But ah ! though our foes did flee,

Sad was each victory.

Youth, love, and loyalty,

Fell far from Mora !

“ Here take this love-wrought plaid,”

Donald expiring said,

“ Give it to yon dear maid

Drooping in Mora.

Tell her, O Allan, tell !

Donald thus bravely fell,

And that in his last farewell

He thought on his Flora.”

Mute stood the trembling fair,
Speechless with wild despair,
Then striking her bosom bare,
Sighed out "poor Flora!
Ah Donald!—ah well-a-day!"
Was all the fond heart could say.
At length the sound died away
Feebly on Mora.

TO

MRS PLEYDELL.

WITH A POT OF HONEY,

*During the ferment occasioned by the Popish Bill of
Toleration, 1779*.*

REMOVED, thank God! from fierce contentions;
Unknown to parties or CONVENTIONS;
Alike averse to rage and folly,
And foe to gloomy melancholy;
Amid confusion, war, and zeal,
Accept these lines from bard Macneill.

* This bill, so harmless, and indeed so laudable in its principles, occasioned, however, through fanaticism and intolerance, the burning of the Popish chapel in Edinburgh, and the dreadful conflagration in London.

When morning comes, my breakfast down,
 Composed and wrapped in flannel gown,
 Till Andrew * comes my brains to muddy,
 I dedicate some hours to study.—
 Behold me then, in elbow chair,
 Turn o'er a leaf with serious air ;
 Or seized with strong poetic fit,
 Compose some precious scrap of wit :—
 Fired by the muse's melting strain,
 I rise—sit down—get up again ;
 When 'midst my raptures, frisks, and capers,
 Bounce ! in comes Christy † with—the papers.

With some regret I drop the quill.—
 Well !—what's the news ?—the POPISH BILL.

* The hair-dresser.

† The maid-servant.

Is Keppel tried?—a dull essay
 From fierce I. A. * to sly John Hay * ;
 Has d'Estaing sailed?—“ To show the better
 What *papists* are, this day a letter,
 Just from the press, which well explains
 What hellish laws that sect maintains !”
 Where's Byron?—“ Murders !—popish tricks ;
 No faith !—no faith with heretics !”
 Ashamed ;—provoked in every page,
 I curse the papers in a rage ;
 Start up and ring with all my might ;
 —Here !—take this nonsense from my sight !

* A nonjuring clergyman and a Roman priest. These two gentlemen kept up for some months a daily warfare in the public prints, which, together with advertisements of *protestant associations*, and pamphlets for and against popery, generally occupied nearly two-thirds of the newspapers.

Scarce have I banished raving faction,
 Till in bolts J———y * in distraction.
 “ All—all is lost !—d’Estaing’s gone forth !
 God curse that headstrong blockhead North !
 No scheme succeeds—we’ve no invention !—
 This nation’s ruined past redemption !
 Our *fleets* are beat !—our *trade* is gone—
 We’ll be invaded ten to one—
 Ecod ! the French may come to-morrow—
 It won’t cause universal sorrow.—
 They’ve many friends in this wise nation—
 The POPISH BILL OF TOLERATION.”—
 Stop, Doctor !—stop !—“ Why should I stop, pray !”
 I’m really sick of bill of popery—

* A keen politician.

“ The deuce you are !—your reasons ?—eh ! ”—
Some other time—some other day.

Thus, doubly teased 'twixt saint and sinner,
An invitation comes to dinner :
To dress I run—thank heaven ! I cry,
Some pious hearts are often dry ;
A cheerful glass may work a wonder ;
May still, perhaps, this papal thunder.—
O ! grant us, Bacchus, wine that's strong !
Raise ! Orpheus, raise the blithesome song !
Let PLEYDELL come, serenely gay !
And social mirth shall crown the day.
Flushed with fond hope, away I haste—
(Alas ! why must I tell the rest !)

In spite of dishes, nice and rare,
 In spite of wit—for you were there ;
 In spite of ale, punch, port, and sherry ;
 Though S—n sang, we ne'er were merry.
 Ask you the cause ? 'twas *indigestion*,
 From one cursed sauce each dish was drest in ;
 For while we ate and drank our fill,
 Still in our stomachs stuck the—BILL.
 Ere since this feast, or popish revel,
 I've been a poor tormented devil !
 Where'er I popt my list'ning head ;
 Whate'er I heard ; whate'er I read ;
 From morn to night, from day to day,
 The constant theme was—POPERY.

'Tis now, methinks, five weeks at least,
 Since first I sought some tranquil feast ;

Where wholesome food and converse kind
 Might please the stomach, cheer the mind ;
 Make folks good-humoured, frank, and civil,
 And banish popery to—the devil !

I sought, I say ; nay racked my brain,
 To find this feast, but all in vain ;

When t'other morn, in elbow chair,

Untied my shoes, uncombed my hair,

Two hours from bed, and breakfast o'er,

Rap ! went the knocker at the door.

Upstarted Christy from the wheel—

“ Is this the house o' Squire Macneill ?”

“ Yes—what is that ?”—“ A can, my queen,

Just come to Leith frae Aberdeen ;

The freight's a shilling—carriage twa—

The weight I'm sure is far frae sma'—

I wonder what the sorrow's in't?
 It maun be *leed*, or stane o' flint!
 The deil be on't! its hurt my heed,
 It's surely filled wi' stanes or leed!"
 The chattering rogue received his money,
 The stones and lead turned out good—HONEY;
 Pure, rich, and sparkling as you see;
 The product of th' industrious bee:
 A balmy gift from shrub and flower!
 The fruits of many a toilsome hour.

Struck with the prospect of my treasure,
 I felt, methought, unusual pleasure:
 A sudden charm; a joy refined
 Shed peace and comfort o'er the mind
 Each sound of **POPERY** died away,
 And thus I said—or meant to say—

In past'ral days, when wants were few,
When love beat strong and friendship true,
Our fathers, nurtured in content,
A calm unruffled lifetime spent
Mid herds and flocks (their only care),
A feast like this was oft their fare.
Here, by the streamlet's bubbling side,
Unknown to controversial pride,
The oaten pipe and rural lay
Chaced spleen and ranc'rous hate away.—
Unskilled in schoolmen's mystic dance,
Untrained in dark INTOLERANCE,
No zealous phrensy fired the breast;
No fears fantastic broke their rest;
By *nature* taught, they still pursued
What whispering conscience said was good;

Nor could their social minds approve
Of aught that severed peace and love !

Harassed with zeal, and frantic passion,
And for the *times*—quite out of fashion ;
I can't help sighing for repose,
Envyng the life our fathers chose.
At morn and eve whene'er I spy
My *warning can* with placid eye,
In midst of fierce religious splutter,
I spread, with smiles, my bread and butter ;
Draw near my feast of sparkling brown,
Lay thick the charm, then—gulp it down ;
Experience joys serenely still,
Nor pass one thought on—POPISH BILL.

Take then, dear Pleydell ! take this treasure,
 The source of soothing peace and pleasure ;
 When dark and dismal qualms attack you,
 Or fears of popish priests distract you,
 Observe the rule I herewith give you,
 And take my word it will relieve you.

When Sol through curtains darts his head,
 And wakes sweet AGGY * still in bed,
 Or Vesper mild through whispering groves
 Lures MARY * to the haunts she loves ;
 When cups are ranged, and muffins hot,
 And green or congo in the pot ;

* Two young ladies, who at the time resided with Mrs Pleydell.

Instead of *popery's* dismal gloom,

Pour out a dish of rich perfume :

Dismiss your fears—be frank—be funny—

Produce with smiles your—CAN OF HONEY.

Glance o'er these lines ('twill be an honour

Conferred upon the happy donor) ;

Excuse whate'er you thing is said ill ;—

In short, be—just blithe MRS PLEYDELL.

TO

ELIZA

ON HER MARRIAGE.

YOU'RE NOW, ELIZA, fixed for life ;
In other words, you're now—a wife ;
And let me whisper in your ear,
A wife, though fixed, has cause to fear ;
For much she risks, and much she loses,
If an improper road she chooses.
Yet think not that I mean to fright you,
My plan, *au contraire's* to delight you ;
To draw the lines where comfort reaches ;
Where folly flies ; where prudence teaches.

In short, Eliza, to prevent you
From nameless ills that may torment you :
And ere bright Hymen's torch burns faintly,
From nuptial glare conduct you gently,
Where (cured of wounds from Cupid's quiver)
A milder lustre beams for ever !

First, then, Eliza, change your carriage,
Courtship's a different thing from marriage ;
And much I fear (by passion blinded)
This change at first is seldom minded.
The miss who feasts on rich romances,
And love-sick sonnets, wisely fancies
That all the end of ardent wooing
Is constant billing, constant cooing.

The nymph again, whom caution teaches
 To doubt the truth of rapturous speeches,
 She whom experience oft has schooled,
 And shewn how husbands may be—ruled,
 Laughs at the whims of fond sixteen,
 And thinks that wedlock stamps—a queen.
 Now I (though ne'er, alas! contracted)
 Consider both as half distracted ;
 And will predict that endless strife
 Must be the lot of either wife.
 Not that I would infer from hence
 That men of feeling, worth, or sense,
 Could ever try to wound or pain
 A tender breast with cold disdain ;
 Or e'er descend to storm and battle
 At fondly-foolish female prattle.

Yet if fond madam, without reason,
Will fret and fume, and utter treason,
Plaguing her plain, unpuffing spouse,
About his former oaths and vows,
And tender sighs, and soft expressions,
With various comments and digressions,
I will not swear that mere connexion
Will guard the husband's warm affection ;
And when affection cools, they say
The husband's apt to—go astray.

Maids, praised and flattered all their lives,
Expect as much when they are wives ;
And think, when husbands cease palavering,
That love (sweet souls !) is surely wavering :

Then hey ! for pets, and cold distrust,
 Doubt's sullen brow, and dreams accurst.—
 The game goes on, ma'am's in the dumps,
 And jealousy at last is trumps.
 For thee, fair flower ! of softest dye,
 That caught so late each vagrant eye,
 Still breathing sweets, still blooming gay,
 Beauteous in winter as in May :
 For thee this truth the muse has penned,
 The muse—but more thy anxious friend :
 ' Woman's bright charms were given to lure us,
 They catch, 'tis true ; but can't secure us.'

Sage Solomon, who paints with beauty
 A virtuous woman's worth and duty,

Compares her to a ship of trade,
That brings from far her daily bread*.
This may be true; but as for me,
I'll draw a plainer simile,
And call a virtuous wife a gem,
Which for its worth we ne'er contemn,
Though soon its water, size, and hue,
Grow quite familiar to the view.
What then ensues? Why, faith, I'll tell ye;
We think of nothing but—the value.
Yet take this gem and lay it by
From the possessor's careless eye,
Conceal its lustre, dazzling bright,
From beaming hourly on his sight,

* She is like the merchant ships, she bringeth her food from afar. Prov. xxxi. v. 14.

I'll take you any bet, at pleasure,
Whene'er he views this tempting treasure,
With eager bliss and sparkling eyes
He'll mark each new-born charm arise,
And with the joy of first possession,
Admire and rave, sans intermission !

If women, therefore, would be wise,
Instead of murmurs, tears, and sighs,
And sullen moods, and scolding frays,
When lovie's absent for some days,
Let every female art conspire
To drive him from the parlour fire.
Of all the plagues in wedded life,
To tease or to torment a wife,

There's none more likely to increase
The bane of matrimonial peace,
Than the tame husband always by
With prying and suspicious eye.
Mark, then, when **** goes to town,
Smile thou, when other wives would frown ;
He only goes (nay, don't be angry)
To take a walk to make him hungry ;
To taste awhile, unknown to care,
A change of exercise and air ;
Observe the pert, the bold, the witty—
How diff'rent from his own sweet Betty !
Return impatient to his home,
No husband, but a fond bridegroom,

Lastly, ELIZA, let me say,
 That wives should rather yield than sway;
 To thwart a husband's fixed opinion
 Is not the way to gain dominion,
 For kisses order, tears reprove *,
 And teach us reverence, fear, and love!--
 O! born to sooth and guide the heart
 With native softness, void of art!
 Thou, whom nor pride nor fashion sways,
 Unchanged by flattery's giddy praise;
 And thou, to whom a trem'lous youth
 First spoke the tale of love and truth,
 Blending with passion's fond alarms
 The bright'ning beam of virtue's charms—

* Leurs ordres sont des caresses, leurs menaces sont des pleurs. ROUSSEAU.

Ah ! lend not now a careless ear !—

Yet, yet attend to truth sincere !

These lines at least with smiles receive,

The last, perhaps, thy bard shall give.

While pleasure spreads her gawdy train,

To lure the trifling and the vain ;

While fashion kills the tedious day

With shopping, concert, cards, and play ;

While female love and youth's fair charms

Shrink from pure passion's ardent arms,

And cling to splendour's fancied bliss,

With withering age and wretchedness,

Be thine, ELIZA, more refined,

The pleasures of the virtuous mind !

Be thine the transports of the heart,
Which love and goodness still impart;
The tender glance, the tranquil smile,
A husband's sorrows to beguile ;
The blush of joy, divinely meek,
That paints a mother's glowing cheek ;
The balm that friendship still bestows ;
The tear that drops for human woes !—
These, these, ELIZA ! light the way,
And cheer when other charms decay ;
Conduct through care and worldly gloom,
And whisper joys—beyond the tomb.

TO

M I R A,

WITH A BOTTLE OF IRISH USQUEBAUGH.

Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.

IN spite of all that poets tell us,
(For poets are but lying fellows)
Of Cupid's flames, and Cupid's darts,
And all his soft bewitching arts,
That teach the stubborn heart to move,
And tune the rudest speech to love,
I cannot say (with all respect
For powerful Love) I recollect

One single instance—on my honour !
 Where prudence, with love's pangs upon her,
 Or sprightly humour, wit, or sense,
 Far less the flow of eloquence,
 Adorned the swain, whose heart and liver
 Throbb'd with the darts from Cupid's quiver.
 For me (should love-sick qualms attack us),
 I've much more faith in honest Bacchus,
 And can't help thinking master Cupid
 Oft makes us mad ; but oftner stupid :
 At least, if one may judge from action,
 And looks that border on distraction,
 The man who *really* feels love's passion,
 Acts, speaks, and reasons—out of fashion.

'This may be true,' I hear you cry,

'Yet bards, you say, can sometimes lie ;

And since you choose the present time
To vent 'gainst love your spleen, in rhyme,
Produce some proofs, or cease to rail.'—
With all my heart!—I'll tell a tale.

When sprightly Daphne went a maying,
And all the loves and graces playing
Around her beauteous face were seen
To deck the bloom of fair nineteen,
Young STREPHON met her on the green.
Struck with her charms—to speak afraid,
By love enthralled, by love dismayed—
'The senseless Strephon (keep from laughter!)
Had not the power to follow after;
But gazed, and gaped, with transports swelling,
Nor asked her name, nor marked her dwelling.

Six months, six torturing months and more,
 Did Strephon loud his loss deplore ;
 And often rang'd the fields, in vain,
 To find the lovely maid again ;
 And often cursed his fluttering folly,
 And often groaned with melancholy ;
 When Love and Fun one night agree,
 The youthful pair should meet at—tea.

Soon as our love-struck swain had entered
 The dazzling spot where beauties centred,
 And caught his Daphne's well known charms,
 He lost the power of legs and arms.
 That foot, which Downie † taught with pride,
 Graceful to bow, smoothly to slide,

† A dancing master.

Now aukward strikes his falling cane,
Which, trying to obtain again,
His luckless skull salutes a chair ;—
The ladies scream—the ladies stare !
Abashed—confused, he drops his hat,
Then broiling on his chair he sat.
Behold now Strephon in his place,
With ' blushing honours ' on his face ;
The tea's to hand ;—he cannot fail
To tread on harmless Tabby's tail :
To ease her pain, puss squalls and kicks,
And in his leg her talons sticks ;
And tears the hose, and eke the skin,
Till streams run down poor Strephon's shin :
Stung with his smart, I do assure ye,
He roared and capered like a fury ;

And in his gambols (dire mishap !)
 Dropt cup and tea in Daphne's lap.

You loath the sot with liquor muddy,
 Eyes all inflamed, and face all ruddy ;
 Yet never once conclude with me
 That Strephon was as drunk as he ;
 The man who speaks things out of season,
 Or acts as if bereft of reason,
 I must consider just as bad
 As he who's drunk, or he who's mad.
 ' Pray, sir, a truce with moralizing,
 And answer this without disguising :
 Did Strephon e'er his flame discover ?'
 No—never while a true-true lover.

In vain each night he frames with art
 Some speech to melt his Daphne's heart ;
 Whene'er he tries to ope his lips,
 Away ! each soft idea skips,
 And leaves him nought but hems and haws,
 And stammerings to fill up each pause ;
 And blushes, groans, and palpitation—
 (A pretty kind of conversation !)
 ' Was nothing then devised to win her ?'
 Nothing, till one blest day at dinner.—
 ' At dinner, say you—how—when—where ?'—
 How keenly curious women are !
 I would be brief—I hate great talkers—
 You're so particular !—well !—at Walker's †.

† A noted tavern in Edinburgh.

One morning, Strephon's asked to dine,
To meet at four, to part at nine :
The party choice !—for reasons shown him
He went, and drank his magnum bonum †.

Behold him now, a jovial boy !
No fluttering fears !—no trembling joy !
And, all his groans and blushes over,
He tries once more to play the lover.

Struck with amaze, sweet Daphne hears
New accents reach her ravished ears :
' And, fairest of thy sex !' he cries,
(While passion sparkles in his eyes)

† A bottle of claret, containing two English quarts.

‘ O source of every chaste delight !

My thought by day ; my dream by night ;

My every hope ; my every care ;

My joy ; my comfort ; my—despair :

Ah ! wherefore should I still conceal

‘ What all can feign, but few can feel † !’

Since first these heavenly charms were seen

By luckless Strephon on the green ;

Since first with smiles and spirits gay

You hailed the merry morn of May,

What fluttering hopes have fired my brain !

What fears of torture, doubts of pain !

What pangs, what sorrows, ne’er to find

By speech, or look, my Daphne kind,

† Cartwright.

But cold and senseless to my anguish,
 Still left a wretch to droop and languish !'

' My God !' the wondering fair replies
 (While tears of rapture fill her eyes),
 ' How, how could Daphne ever know
 Her Strephon's love ; her Strephon's woe !
 Till this soft tale, so sweetly sung !
 I never heard your tuneful tongue ;
 Till this fond hour, I never found
 These eyes but downcast on the ground ;—
 You still were silent, absent, cool :—
 I took you, Strephon, for—a fool.'

Now, Mira, that my tale is ended,
 I hope I've proved what I intended,

Namely, that, without generous wine,
A youth may sigh, and groan, and whine,
But never talk in strains divine.
For what is love, or what is beauty,
If lovers' tongues can't do their duty?
Or what are flames, or inclination,
Without the fire of inspiration?—
All, all must end in strange confusion,
Without the gift of elocution.
For me, who never had much brass,
I find vast courage in a glass;
And now that blushing's out of fashion,
Or drink I must, or breathe no passion.
And sure, if strains like mine have charmed one
When half-seas o'er, there's no great harm done.

And yet last night, when first we met,
 You frowned and fretted in a pet,
 Withdrew your hand, with face averted,
 And thrice for me your chair deserted;
 But, warmed by wine, I well remember,
 Unchilled by looks, cold as December,
 I prattled wit from jovial quaffing,
 Till quite o'ercome, at length, with laughing,
 You pardon sealed; and, generous-hearted,
 Gave me your hand before we parted;
 Nay, once delighted, almost swore
 I ne'er talked half so well before.

Charmed with the good effects of wine,
 I next day hurried to Gavine †,

† A famous distiller of liqueurs, near Edinburgh.

And straightway bought (*ne merveille pas !*)
 A bottle of his Usquebaugh,
 Which now I send you, with this rule,
 That when I'm silent, like a fool,
 Or stupid grow, or lose my temper,
 For God's sake ! fill me up a bumper !
 Till head, and heart, and tongue improve,
 And make me say whate'er you love !

O could its virtues but inspire
 This breast with true poetic fire,
 To sing, in numbers strong and clear,
 Thy friendship, ardent, and sincere ;
 Thy humour, sprightly, social, free,
 Thy temper's blest serenity !

O! could its virtues but impart
The language of thy feeling heart,
To paint in accents sweetly mild
The duties of a tender child!
And every art and virtue rare
That sooths an aged father's care;
In faith! dear Mira, to be plain,
(Though much I dread your cold disdain)
In spite of all you'd think or say,
I'd drink till tipsy every day.

THE WEE THING;

OR,

MARY OF CASTLE-CARY.

A BALLAD.

'SAW ye my wee thing? Saw ye mine ain thing?

Saw ye my true love down on yon lea?

Crossed she the meadow yestreen at the gloaming?

Sought she the burnie whar flowers the haw tree?

Her hair it is lint-white; her skin it is milk-white;

Dark is the blue o' her saft rolling ee;

Red, red her ripe lips! And sweeter than roses:

Whar could my wee thing wander frae me?'

‘ I saw nae your wee thing, I saw nae your ain thing,

Nor saw I your true love down by yon lea ;

But I met my bonny thing late in the gloaming,

Down by the burnie whar flowers the haw tree.

‘ Her hair it was lint-white ; her skin it was milk-white ;

Dark was the blue o’ her saft rolling ee ;

Red ware her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses :—

Sweet ware the kisses that she gae to me !’

‘ It was nae my wee thing, it was nae my ain thing,

It was nae my true love ye met by the tree :

Proud is her leel heart ! modest her nature !

She never looed ony, till ance she looed me.

‘ Her name it is Mary ; she’s frae Castle-Cary :

Aft has she sat, when a bairn, on my knee :—

Fair as your face is, war’t fifty times fairer,

Young bragger, she ne’er would gie kisses to thee !’

‘ It was then your Mary ; she’s frae Castle-Cary ;

It was then your true love I met by the tree ;

Proud as her heart is, and modest her nature,

Sweet ware the kisses that she gae to me.’

Sair gloomed his dark brow, blood-red his cheek grew,

Wild flashed the fire frae his red rolling ee !—

‘ Ye’s rue sair this morning, your boasts and your

scorning :

Defend ye, fause traitor ! fu’ loudly ye lie.’





Stothard del.

Parker sculp.

*Aff went the bonnet, the lint white locks flee;
 The belted plaid saing, her white bosom shawing,
 Fair stood the lovd' maid wi' the dark rolling ee!*

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'Awa wi' beguiling,' cried the youth, smiling.—

Aff went the bonnet; the lint-white locks flee;
The belted plaid fa'ing, her white bosom shawing,
Fair stood the loved maid wi' the dark rolling ee!

'Is it my wee thing! is it mine ain thing!

Is it my true love here that I see!

'O Jamie, forgie me; your heart's constant to me;

I'll never mair wander, dear laddie, frae thee!

THE WHIP,

OR,

A TOUCH AT THE TIMES.

SENT TO MISS D. OF LINSTED, WITH A WHIP MADE OF
A RHINOCEROS'S SKIN. 1784.

Quæ fuerant vitia mores sunt. SENECA.

ERE modest virtue lost her way
Among the dissolute and gay,
Few modes were used for travel;
Unknown to whip, or spur, or boot,
Each hardy Briton trudged on foot,
Through mud, bog, dust, and gravel.

'Twas then the fair, as story tells,
 (Ah ! how unlike our modern belles !)

 Knew neither coach nor saddle ;
 No female Phaetonians then
 Surpassed the boldest of our men
 In gesture, look, and straddle.

But formed by nature's artless hand,
 Blushes, 'tis said, at her command,
 Oft stole o'er beauty's features ;
 No wife then scorned domestic sweets ;
 No daughter Jehu ! scoured the streets ;
 Good lord ! what simple creatures !

Emerged at length from gothic rules,
Our fair ones, trained in happier schools,

For blushes, now give fashion ;

Each modest virtue thrown aside,

Behold ! like men, erect, astride !

They drive !—they whip !—they dash on !

O ! may the glorious day arrive,

When each bold lass her nag shall drive

O'er hedges, gates, and ditches !

Despise the housewife's hateful lot,

And change the useless petticoat

For boots and buckskin breeches !

Yet heterogeneous as they are,
Half man—half woman—half centaur,
Some grave folks dread infection :
See ! virtue, trembling, flies the land !
Alas ! 'gainst furious four in hand,
No *common* whip's protection !

Struck with the thought, I reasoned long,—
' Eliza, poor thing's, far from strong,
And yet she loves a canter ;
Some fierce virago, high in blood,
May lay her sprawling in the mud,
Or in a hedge-row plant her !

‘What then remains the weak to shield?
Must freedom thus her charter yield?—

Has beauty no defender?

—Alas! no bosom swells with rage!—

There’s nought in this bold dashing age,

But flogging to befriend her!

‘Since lashing’s then the ton, the tip,

And victory now turns on the Whip,

The toughest whip should win;

And as we know in each hard bout,

The ‘toughest hide holds longest out,’

I’ll find—a whip of *skin*.’

Pleased with the fancy, swift I sped,

Mad with the project in my head,

I ranged half India o'er ;

But hides well beat, are seldom tough :

At last a bit of precious stuff

I found on Afric's shore.

There, by his streams and tangling groves,

The huge Rhinoceros careless roves,

Though growls each savage nigh :

Undaunted, armed with horn and hide,

To ball and dart he turns his side,

Unheeded as they fly.

But what's the armed, the bold, the strong !

(Again we moralize our song,)

If treachery aims the blow !

Ev'n Samson fell by female wit,

And see ! in subtle treachery's pit

The mighty beast lies low.

Thus fall'n by cunning's sneaking plot,

With joy they strip his horny coat ;

('Twas wond'rous to behold !)

'By heavens !' I cried, 'at length I've found

A skin that's proof 'gainst mortal wound !

'Tis worth its weight in gold !'

Torn from the side it lately graced,

A slice I cut with eager haste ;

A tough, tenacious slip !

And, hurrying home to British land,

Gave it to Kelly, in the Strand †,

Who formed it to a WHIP.

Thus armed, with virtue on your side,

Unconquered reign, undaunted ride,

Nor fear e'en Lade ‡ or Archer ‡.

Some dame indeed may whoop and crack,

But let Rhinoceros touch her back,

It will both blue and starch her.

† Whip-maker to the Prince of Wales.

‡ Sir John Lade and Lady Archer, two of the most celebrated phaeton drivers in England.

O, could its virtues but repair
The lungs of thy half-winded mare,
 How great would be thy glory !
From Linsted town thy fame would trot,
E'en to the house of Johnny Grot,
 In many a marv'lous story.

Then should we hear in clam'rous boast,
How one young fair one ruled the roast,
 As Pitt now rules the nation ;
Made female jockies bounce and skip,
And by the power of one famed Whip,
 Flogged vice from freedom's station !

But since, alas ! no cure we know,
 Since Phill † must puff, or you move slow,

Mark well a friend's direction :
 Hold fast the reins of female pride,
 Whip ev'ry coxcomb from your side,
 To listen is—infection.

Yet should the man of worth possess,
 Fair candour glowing at his breast,
 Confess thy pow'r of charms ;
 List to his tale, be frank, be kind,
 Unfashioned blush to love refined,
 And whip—into his arms !

† Eliza's mare.

82

TO

MISS JEAN

AND

MISS ISABELLA MONRO,

WITH TWO BOTTLES OF THE OTTA
OF ROSES.

Tost rudely round this whirling sphere,
Estranged from all he valued dear ;
Shut out from beauty's bright'ning ray ;
The social night, the tranquil day ;
Involved in tumult's wild uproar,
And dropt on India's burning shore ;
Behold a woe-worn wand'rer roam,
Far from his friends and native home !

‘Thus ’scaped from storm and battle’s rage †,
 Shall I,’ he cried, ‘ new ills engage !
 Shall I, by wayward fortune crossed,
 Droop sorrowing on a foreign coast ;
 And whelmed at last in hopeless gloom,
 Sink unlamented to the tomb !’

‘ Perish the thought !’ a seraph cries,
 (A seraph wafted from the skies ‡.)
 ‘ Perish the thought ! a softer ray
 Yet comes to guide thy wildered way.

† Alluding to the last naval engagement between Sir Edward Hughes and M. Suffrein in the East Indies, during which the Author was on board his Majesty’s ship the Gibraltar.

‡ See the Author’s Address to the Scottish Muse.

What though rude mirth and tempest's roar,
And fortune frowning locks her store ;
What though no converse reigns refined,
And loved Miranda's left behind ;
A brighter morn will yet appear
To chace the gloom and gild the year ;
A milder dawn o'erspread the grove,
A warmer theme attune to love ;
When freedom's sun bright o'er the main
Illumes fair ALBION's cliffs again ;
And glittering high on mountain hoar,
Proclaims afar loved SCOTIA's shore ;
Where friendship waits in smiles arrayed,
To bind the wounds that fate has made ;
And sympathy, with melting eye,
To catch the tale, and heave the sigh ;

And mild oblivion, kind to cast
Her dark'ning shade o'er suff'rings past.

‘ Meanwhile, ’ she said, ‘ this gift receive,
And henceforth, wand'rer, cease to grieve ;
For know, in this a virtue rare,
(A passport likewise to the fair.)
Can cheer dejection's languid gloom,
And rich, to beauty yield perfume !
Guard then this treasure, and when fate
Conducts thee safe, or soon, or late,
Where Forth's meanderings gently glide
Through fields that wave their cultured pride,
There, while again thou wander'st o'er
Each dear loved spot, oft trod before ;

Or from Strevlina's height serene
 Survey'st around the pictured scene ;
 Or view'st sublime her castled towers
 From A———'s sheltering bowers ;
 Where social mirth wan care beguiles,
 'Midst female virtues, female smiles ;
 While hope's fond joys past sorrows heal,
 Let breasts like thine fresh ardour feel,
 To mark each virtue as it springs,
 And as the muse impassioned sings,
 On maids of worth this gift bestow,
 A ***** ; a ***** ; a Monro.²

Charmed with this tale, with sighs I prest
 The welcome treasure to my breast ;

' Here dwell,' I cried, ' till fate once more
 Conducts me safe to Scotia's shore !
 Till free from tumult's madd'ning strife,
 Once more I taste a poet's life ;
 And female smiles to soothe and cheer,
 And love to cheat the lingering year :
 Here rest,' I cried, ' till heaven bestows
 Your *****s, your *****s, your Monro's !'

The seraph smiled, and instant flew !
 The canvas spread, Eolus blew !
 From India's shores and burning skies,
 O'er waves the Gibraltar flies.
 Blow, blow, ye breezes ! oft I said,
 While seas the ling'ring voyage delayed ;

Blow, blow, ye breezes ! oft I cried,
 While sleep her balmy rest denied :
 Yet, midst my watchings, cares, and rest,
 Still clasped the treasure to my breast !

Relieved from cares that lately spread
 A tempest round a wand'rer's head,
 Arrived at length, where tumults cease,
 And all within is hope and peace,
 The warning seraph whispers low,
 'Remember Worth, and each Monro !'

Go ! partner of my throbbing heart !
 To gentler breasts thy balm impart !
 Go !—to yon social bowers repair,
 Far softer forms thy sweets shall share !

Go ! and while odours from thee break
 Round Jane or Bella's snowy neck,
 Tell them from me, no sweets refined
 Can match the tender female mind ;
 Nor Persia's rose †, that blooms so fair,
 With virtue's charms can e'er compare ;
 No ! nor rich Ceylon's spicy gales,
 Nor famed Arabia's scented vales,
 A balm so grateful can diffuse,
 To wake and animate the muse,
 As that which shook from friendship's wing,
 Attunes the lyre's according string,
 And prompts e'en bards like me to sing !

† The otta is made from the roses of Persia.

GRANDEUR :

AN ODE.

*Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens
Pinus; et celsæ graviore casu
Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos
Fulmina montes.* HOR.

How varied lies the chequered scene !—

DUNMAIT capt with snow;

While humbler smiles, in vernal green,

The sun-clad vale below :

Gay spring her cheering task performs,

Regardless of the wintry storms

That sweep proud Ochil's lofty side ;
 And, sheltered from the mountain gale,
 Secure, smooth glides the winding sail
 Down Forth's meandering tide.

Alas ! how like the chequered state
 Of man's contrasted lot !
 The storms that whirl round Grandeur's gate ;
 The peasant's sheltered cot ;
 Disdainful pride, with wintry brow ;
 Rough labour, jocund at his plough,
 Still cheered by health's unclouded beam ;
 While, safe from luxury's whelming tide,
 Peace, hope, and resignation, glide
 Down life's untroubled stream.

To meditation's musing mind

Still moral pictures rise :

Ambition, dashed by fortune's wind,

When tow'ring to the skies ;

Exalted beauty, doomed to move

In climes unwarmed by genial love,

'Tost by the storms of sordid strife !—

While nurtured in some vale obscure,

The humbler fair one blooms secure

The mistress and the wife !

But late, in strength and beauty's prime,

The tow'ring Plane arose ;

Proud, o'er Strevlina's height sublime

It waved its mantling boughs !

What time mild evening gilds her star,

The trav'ler spied it from afar,

And, raptured, wondered where it grew ;—

Fond fancy placed its magic height

Mid regions streaked with golden light

Through Heaven's ethereal blue !—

Embosomed in the bank below,

That courts the southern breeze,

The humbler Hawthorn's doomed to blow

Mid kindred shrubs and trees !

Obscure, its balmy sweets diffuse,

Unmarked, save by the moral muse,

That nightly breathes the rich perfume!—
Ah! what is Grandeur's splendid show!—
Ambition, mark!—the *Plane* laid low †!
· The *Hawthorn* left to bloom.

† The cutting down of this beautiful tree (a circumstance that gave general dissatisfaction) occasioned the present ode.

MAY-DAY;

OR,

THE DISCOVERY.

A PASTORAL.

IN THE MANNER OF CUNNINGHAM.

SEE! rob'd in new beauties, young May cheers the lawn!

Ye virgins! how charming her air!

Haste! cull her fresh flow'rets dew-dropping at dawn,

And chaplets entwine for your hair!

Yes! weave the gay garland! each moment improve!

Youth's pleasures, like Spring, fleet away!

Life has its soft season—that season is LOVE.

—Ah! taste its fond joys while 'tis May.

But lately I winded yon mountain's green side ;—

How blessed ! for a fair one was by ;

I marked, as she welcomed the Spring's opening pride,

The rapture that beamed in her eye :

Her fav'rite young lambkins ran bleating around,

(Their fleeces were whiter than snow !)

The cliffs, crowned with oakwood, returned the soft
sound ;

The still lake gleamed placid below,

' How happy,' she cried, ' in some sheltered retreat,

With lambkins and flocks bleating nigh ;

In my straw-covered cottage, though humble, yet neat,

I could live—and contented would die !

This oak-waving mountain would ward winter's blast ;
 Yon lake teach complaint to be still ;
 Health, mirth, peace, and temperance, crown the repast,
 And freedom—bound light o'er the hill !

A glance that escaped the dear maid at the time,
 Half whispered a wish was untold ;—

‘ And would my fair shepherdess deem it a crime
 If EDWIN were guard to the fold ?’

‘ I told my soft wishes †,’ she sweetly replied,
 (Ye virgins ! her voice was divine !)

‘ I've rich ones rejected, and great ones denied,
 But take me, fond shepherd !—I'm thine.’

† Cunningham's Content.

Her look was so artless ! her accent so mild !

Her candour so sweetly expressed !

I gazed on her beauties as blushing she smiled,

And clasped the loved maid to my breast !

The primrose in clusters breathed fragrance around,

And witnessed the vows that were given ;

The lark, that sat listening, soar'd swift from the ground,

And warbled the contract in—heaven !

Yon cottage, where woodbines so fondly entwine,

We've chose for our humble retreat,

Where TEATH's soften'd murmurs raise musings divine,

'Tis there my love's lambkins shall bleat !

There friendship shall lure modest worth to our door,
 And shelter from care's wintry blast ;
 Content, decked in smiles, spread her pastoral store,
 And my fairest prepare the repast!—

Thus fixed, what imports it, ye great ones and vain,
 Though splendour withholds her false gleam,
 If pleased with our little, and strangers to pain,
 Life glides placid by like yon stream ?

While *Health*, heavenly goddess! smiles buxom and
 gay,

Shall we murmur that wealth comes not nigh ?
 When thy charms, INDEPENDENCE! thus prompt
 the free lay,
 And the muse, lark-like, soars to the sky !

AN ELEGY

On the sudden death of a beautiful young boy, in Jamaica, attended by the singular occurrence of a nightingale perching on the tree under which he was interred, and singing sweetly during the funeral service.

WRITTEN IN JAMAICA IN 1788.

RELENTLESS Death!—ah! why so soon

Cut down the flow'ret fair to view!

Pale gleamed the light of yonder moon,

When pest'lence shed her deadly dew †!

† He died of a putrid sore throat, occasioned by unwholesome night damps.

The morn arose serene and clear,

The sun refulgent glowed at noon;

But nought the drooping flower could cheer.—

Ah! wherefore drooped the flower so soon!

By yonder tree (his fav'rite shade,

Where late he joyed with sports and play)

They dig his grave; there, lowly laid,

Sleep's CAMPBELL's silent senseless clay!

Ah! what avails the tear and sigh

That close, loved boy! thy funeral gloom!

The doleful dirge, and frantic cry

Of Afric's mourners round thy tomb †!

† In Jamaica it is customary, on the death of a white person, for all the domestic negroes to attend the funeral. If

Ah! what avails!—But cease the strain;

Ye weeping parents, dry the tear.

See! Philomela joins the train,

And chants a requiem o'er his bier.

Sweetly she warbles, perched on high,

Far from her mate, and haunts of even;

She comes, an herald from the sky,

To greet the cherub soul to heaven!

the deceased has been a particular favourite, it is usual for the female slaves to raise, after the interment, a funeral song or dirge, over the grave. This consists of loud and dismal lamentations, chiefly expressive of the good qualities of the deceased; such as, 'O my good massa!' 'O my dear massa!' accompanied with clapping of hands, and violent gesticulations of sorrow.

Yet here, should pensive pilgrim stray

At soft'ning eve, or fervent noon,

Here may he heave the sigh, and say,

' Ah, wherefore droop'd the flower so soon !'

EPITAPH.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

JAMES GRAHAM, ESQ.

LATE OF THE PARISH OF WESTMORELAND,
JAMAICA.

IN TESTIMONY OF AFFECTION,
AND AS A TRIBUTE TO THE VIRTUES OF
THE BEST OF MEN, AND THE KINDEST OF BROTHERS,

THIS MAUSOLEUM

IS ERECTED BY

JOHN GRAHAM,

OF THREE-MILE RIVER, JAMAICA.

ANNO 1798.

ACCEPT, loved shade ! of him whose breathless clay
No sigh returns to aught that grief can say ;
Accept, loved shade ! this monument of woe ;
The last sad gift thy friend can now bestow !—

For him, alas ! 'tis left to raise the tomb ;
Steal from the crowd, and court sepulchral gloom ;
Clasp to his heart thy cold untimely urn †,
And weep thy virtues—never to return !
Nor can the muse (that muse thou lov'dst to hear)
Repress the sigh, or check the starting tear ;
From Britain's shore ;—across the Atlantic wave,
She comes, to vent her sorrows at thy grave ;
With trembling hand inscribe thy funeral stone,
And with a brother's woes record her own.

† This amiable, honourable, and accomplished man, was unfortunately killed in the mistaken defence of a character which no calumny could have injured ; and by a ruffian whose slander no man of worth ought to have regarded.

ON THE DEATH OF
LIEUT. GEN. SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY,

Killed at the Battle of Alexandria, in Egypt,
21st March, 1801.

FROM carnaged fields bedrenched with gore,
How long must Pity shrink with pain;
Turn, shuddering pale, from shore to shore,
And weep her patriot heroes slain!

Touched at her tears that streaming flow,
(Just tribute to the good and brave)
Britannia, wrapt in sable woe,
Bends o'er her ABERCROMBY'S grave.

‘ And could not age,’ she sorrowing cries,
‘ From blood protect thy final doom !
Gild thy last eve with milder skies,
And lay thee gently in the tomb ?’

Rocked in the cradle of alarms,
Nursed in the school where glory’s won,
Rejoicing in the din of arms,
Soon Valour hailed her darling son :

Foresaw the bright, the guiding beam
That led to honour’s splendid goal ;
Saw, flashed round POMPEY’S PILLAR, gleam
The parting light’nings of his soul !

Yet, in the warrior's dauntless breast,
Fond hope with mellowing pencil drew ;
Pourtrayed the scene, when laurel'd rest,
In peace, enjoys the fav'rite few !—

Vain dream !—with war's indignant frown
Fame twined the cypress with the bay ;—
' Be *this*,' she cried, ' the laurel crown
To deck my hero's parting day !

Sunk in the shade of still repose,
Unhonoured drop the valiant dead ;—
Bright as his day shall beam the close—
He dies in glory's patriot bed !'

‘ *He lives !*’ Britannia warm replies,

As high the trophied urn she rears ;

‘ He lives in VIRTUE’S bursting sighs,

His COUNTRY’S PRAISE!--his COUNTRY’S TEARS!’

ON
THE DEATH
OF
DR DAVID DOIG,

MASTER OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
STIRLING.

In furnishing materials for the last edition, the Author incautiously gave some lines, hastily composed for insertion in the Edinburgh Newspapers, on the death of his venerable friend Dr Doig. A wish to rectify this mistake, and at the same time to leave some memorial of so good a man, and so eminent a scholar, induced him to substitute, what he flatters himself will be found, at least, less exceptionable in composition, and more characteristic of the person commemorated.

THE shades of dim twilight descend on the plain ;

The pale moon gleams faint on the grave ;

The voice of affliction tunes friendship's sad strain,

Re-echoed thus back from the cave.—

‘ Vain mortals! whom LEARNING and GENIUS elate;

Enthusiasts! who pant for a name!

Yon village bell, tolled by the mandate of fate,

Proclaims—what avails *lettered fame!*

He’s gone! to whom learning (though humble his lot)

Fond, smiling, unlocked all her store;

Called genius to brighten the ardour of thought,

And light paths untrodden before*.

* This ingenious and profound scholar, during a long and laborious life, dedicated the spare hours of professional duties to the study of ancient philology, history, and metaphysics, which, from the uncommon extent of his talents and erudition, have derived considerable elucidation. For the sake of the learned world, it were much to be wished, that these curious and valuable MSS. now in the possession of his relatives, were secured from accident, and presented to the public.—The London booksellers would find their account in it.

He's gone! round whose temples the muses of Rome
 Entwined their loved garlands of old;
 He's gone! to whose mem'ry, inscribed on his tomb,
 They warbled the truths which he told*.

Alas! ye fond muses! where now dwell your strain!
 To these haunts will ye never return?—
 Mute! save when Remembrance, with all her dark train,
 And Friendship thus wail o'er the urn!

Yet, yet shall the strain (if such strains shall survive
 The sunshine of life's fleeting ray)
 Record what, if drooping, perchance may revive
 The minstrel of some future day;

* Alluding to the elegant Latin Epitaph, hereto subjoined.

Yet, yet shall the strain, if such strains can afford

A solace to soothe virtue's moan ;

Transmit, what indignant, the muse shall record

For meek, modest Virtue alone !

Shall tell lowly fortune, and bards yet unborn,

How Genius bloomed rich in the shade ;

Unsun'd, flower'd neglected, through thicket and thorn,

And wafted her sweets round the glade :

Uncheered, unrewarded, by fortune or fame,

Fourscore smiling springs hailed the bloom ;—

Nipt at length, cold neglect felt remorse, tinged with

shame,

And sculptured the *cause* on the tomb*.

* As a testimony of Dr Doig's literary talents, and as a mark of attention to the dead, the Magistrates of Stirling di-

rected that his own Epitaph, written in Latin verse, should be inscribed on his tombstone. The Epitaph, as originally composed by Dr Doig, comprehends the eight *last* lines that follow.

MORTALES HIC POSITÆ SUNT EXUVIÆ
 DAVIDIS DOIG, LL.D. SS.R. et A.S. EDIN.
 SCHOLÆ LATINÆ APUD STERLINENSES
 PER XL. ANNOS PREPOSITÆ
 OBIIT 17 KALEND. APRIL. A. D. 1800.
 ET ANNO ÆTATIS LXXXII.

*Edidici quædam, perlegi plura, notavi
 Paucula; cum Domino mox peritura suo.
 Lubrica Pieriæ tentaram præmia palmæ,
 Credulus, ingenio heu nimis alta meo,
 Defuncto, famam ruituro crescere saxo,
 Posse putem, vivo, quæ mihi nulla fuit?
 Scire velis qualis fuërim, lux ultima prodet
 Lux eadem prodet tu quoque qualis eras.*

PROLOGUE:

Written at the request of the Managers of the Public Kitchen
at Edinburgh, for the Benefit of the Poor, 1801.

WHEN discord first, with hate infuriate, hurled
Their baneful influence o'er a suff'ring world ;
Broke the firm bands of kindred joys asunder,
And left in want the wretch to weep, and—wonder ;
Thrilled with despair ;—unfriended, and oppressed,
With haggard eye, pale Poverty, distressed,
Roamed the lone wild, a wretched life to save,
And, shivering, sunk in famine's darkening cave !—
There, sad, she pined, and wailed her hopeless moan,
Earth her damp pillow ! and her bed—cold stone !

Till CHARITY (from Heaven's fair lineage sprung,
 Nymph of the melting heart and soothing tongue)
 Swift from yon starry vault's ethereal blue,
 To want's dark cell with pitying ardour flew!

Cheered with celestial rays that chased the gloom,
 The fainting mourner waked—as from the tomb;
 Saw the sweet harbinger of joy again
 Steal on soft tip-toe to the bed of pain;
 O'er the cold breast her mantling vestments spread;
 Wipe the damp brow, and raise the drooping head;
 Pour the rich cordial, trickling to the heart;
 Brace the lax fibre, and new strength impart;
 Kindle fond hope; and, beck'ning with a smile,
 Lure, while she flew to BRITAIN'S fostering isle!

To Britain's isle ! where, cherished by her care,
 The poor, if virtuous, never know despair :
 Warmed by her beams, each bosom learns to glow,
 And thro'b, and feel—the sympathy of woe !
 From ocean's gen'rous sons (in fame enrolled)
 To Scotia's mountains, and her patriots bold ;—
 Alike her magic power o'er land and wave :
 —The flame of pity ever warms the brave !
 Oh ! could its light but harmonize the breast,
 And guide again the jarring world to rest !
 Spread with mild radiance far from shore to shore,
 Till friendship binds, and discord's heard no more !
 Till candour starts at reason's temperate call,
 And mercy wafts humanity—to all !
 This night, where Charity's celestial flame
 Gilds with mild lustre Scotia's annalled fame ;

Beams in each conscious eye, and, heavenly meek,
Glow in soft blushes on each fair one's cheek ;
This night ! indeed, would mock the flowers of rhyme,
And stamp an era for recording time !

Enough for us, who claim no higher care
Than aid the wretched, and repel despair ;
To light the lamp in Poverty's dark cell,
And lend new strength to those who—struggle well ;
—Enough for us ! expiring worth to save,
And cheer the path of virtue to the grave !

JACK AND NANCY,

A SEA SONG.

AIR—*Bonny Lass, will you lie in a Barrack.*

O! SAY, lovely Nan! can you lie in a hammock?
 When the mountain-waves rage, can you swing in a
 hammock?

As the winds roar aloft, and rude billows dash o'er us,
 Can my Nancy sleep soundly amid the wild chorus?

O yes! my dear Jack! I can lie in a hammock,
 When the mountain-waves rage, can sleep sound in a
 hammock:

Rude billows will rock me, when love smiles to cheer me,
 If *thy* slumber's sweet, Jack, no dangers can fear me!

But say, if, at night, the sad cry comes for *wearing* ;
 The breakers a-head, and the boatswain loud swearing ;
 When the main-yard dips deep, and white billows
 break o'er us ;

Will my Nancy not shrink then amid the dread chorus ?
 O no ! my loved lad ! when such dangers are near me,
 My Jack's kindly whispers will sooth me—will cheer me,
 A kiss snatched in secret, amid the dread horror,
 Will hush the rude chorus, and still every terror.

But say, my sweet Nan ! when the tempest's all smash-
 ing !

The top-sails all split, and the top-masts down crashing !
 When all hands spring aloft, and no lover to cheer her,
 Will my Nancy not shrink when such dangers are near
 her ?

Ah no! my loved Jack! while the tempest's loud
bawling,

The top-sails all split, and the top-masts down falling,
In watching *your* dangers, my own will pass over!—
In prayers for your safety no fears I'll discover!

But O! my loved Nan! when the ship is done *clearing*,
The matches all lighted; the French foe fast nearing,
Can you stand to your gun, while pale death drops
around you?

—'Tis *then!* my sweet Nancy! new fears will con-
found you!

No! No! my dear Jack! to these fears love's a stran-
ger!

When you fight by my side, I'll defy every danger;

On your *fate* my fond eye will be fixed while you're
near me ;

If you fall ! Nancy dies !—if you live, love will cheer me !

Come ! come then, sweet lass ! let us swing in a ham-
mock !

While the mountain-seas dash round, sleep sound in
a hammock !

With love such as thine, who would dread war or
weather ?—

While we live, we shall love ; when we fall—fall to-
gether !

* * * This verse (in singing) to be repeated by both
at the same time, with the slight alteration
of substituting *lad* for *lass* by the female
singer.

THE

PLEASURES OF AMBITION :

OR,

UNE RÉVERIE A LA CORSE, 1804.

ON AN IMPERIAL CORONATION.

Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.

VIRG.

THE four winds roar round Europe's shore,
 Deep growled the threat'ning thunder!
 As from the mud, besmeared with blood,
 Up towered a thing of wonder!—
 Its head was black, its face was chalk,
 Each eye, though sunk, was gleaming;
 Its sleepless brain, with racking pain,
 Knew neither rest nor dreaming!

In its right hand it waved a brand
 Of scorching brimstone blazing !
 The dismal glare made myriads stare,
 But all were sad, while gazing !
 Its left hand prest (by way of rest)
 On scattered crowns and sceptres ;
 Close at its back, in horrid clack,
 Grinned fiends, or guilt's inspectors.

'Avaunt !' it cried, 'ye sons of pride !
 Ye grumblers ! dread displeasure !
 My *height*, ye see—crouch !—bend the knee !
 Nor dare that height to measure !
 Kings,—kiss the rod !—I move a god !
 A god of self-creation :
 Should one rebel, by heaven and hell !
 I'll send him to damnation :

If one but speaks, in death he squeaks !

'Tis meet you *all* were civil !

If one complains, bound fast in chains,

I'll send him to the devil.—

What!—doubt my *power*!—behold the tower

Of human height and splendour !

Popes, late our foe, now kiss *my* toe,

And tremble at my grandeur.—

Shall then my sway not clear the way

For unprescribed possession ?

Shall not my nod secure the road

To plunder and oppression ?

Shall reptiles dare, enleagued, to war

And meditate correction ;

Or dream to curb what may disturb

Their safety or protection ?

A pigmy state, with gold elate,
 Pretends to check dominion!

A Russian bear attempts in air
 To soar on eagle pinion!

A Swedish owl presumes to growl,
 And form a northern faction!

A Turkish mute dares to dispute
 My *title* and subjection!—

But soon I'll crush Turk, Swede, and Rush,
 With all their schemes nefarious!

As for JOHN BULL—when reason's cool,
 I think each plan precarious.

Yet John loves beef; his dread and grief
 Is want of constant stuffing;

Should famine come, *Defection's* hum
 Would soon drown naval puffing!—

Oh ! for the day, when want's dismay
 Would damp this purse-proud nation !
 Then should kind gales, with flowing sails,
 Waft us to rich sensations !—

My sallad boys would taste new joys !
 Each raptured sound would tell us,
 That what half-feasts these grumbling beasts,
 Would stuff my poor starved fellows !—

Curse on the spot, where hardy Scot
 Through perils scorns defection !
 Each home-loved rill, and heath-crowned hill,
 Bind fast his warm affection :—
 Nor famine's gloom, nor war's death-doom,
 Can damp his dauntless valour :
 A vet'ran Scot * spoiled EGYPT's plot !
 Ah ! pangs !—that was a nailer !

* Abercromby.

What's at my back!—ye hell-hound pack,

Avaunt! and cease tormenting!—

I know it all!—ye can't appal!

I *see* black storms fermenting;

And though I fear yon Russian bear

May yet breed some disaster,

And oft times think this northern link

Will prove a blistering plaster,—

Yet, while I eye deep Prussia sly,

And cautious watch Batavi,

Prepared for blows, I'll make these foes

Ere long, cry out—peccavi.—

Expences flow!—my treasury's low!

(No plunder makes me richer!)

I dread a drain!—no longer *Spain*!

Ah! morbleu!—there's a twitcher!—

But up ! proud heart—why do I start ?—

Hence, phantoms, and chimeras !

Brains racked like mine should ne'er divine

When plagues and storms are near us.

Since *crimes* have shed, on this crowned head,

Such undreamt power and splendour,

To crimes I turn !—let kingdoms burn,

And scorch up to a cinder !

Through *blood* I wade ! (my thriving trade)

By this I've gained dominion.

Should Fate rebel, secured in hell,

I've one firm bond of union !

Old Nick and I have learnt to vie,

Which should excel the other ;

Old Nick and me can't disagree,

He owns me for his brother.

By him I rose, and crushed my foes ;

From him I learnt each lesson ;

When all hope's flown, firm on his throne,

I'm sure of *joint possession*.—

Up then, proud heart !—no more I start :

To valour pride is given !

Better in hell (as poets tell)

To reign, than serve in heaven !

Down sunk the sprite to dismal night !

Deep roared each blast and billow !

He sunk opprest, to find some rest,

But sleep still fled his pillow !—

Learn hence, ye great ! mid pomp and state,

What *lawless power* embitters,

Not all that's high can peace supply ;

Not all is gold that glitters !

THE
LINKS O' FORTH:

OR,
A PARTING PEEP

AT
THE CARSE O' STIRLING.

He woo'd the muse, and sung the pensive strain ;
He loved meek solitude, and softened gloom ;—

STERLING'S CAMBUSCAN, V. 304.



THE succeeding Poem was printed during the Author's absence abroad. The following Preface, explanatory of his motives for writing it, having been accidentally omitted, he now thinks it proper to subjoin it, for the information of the Reader.

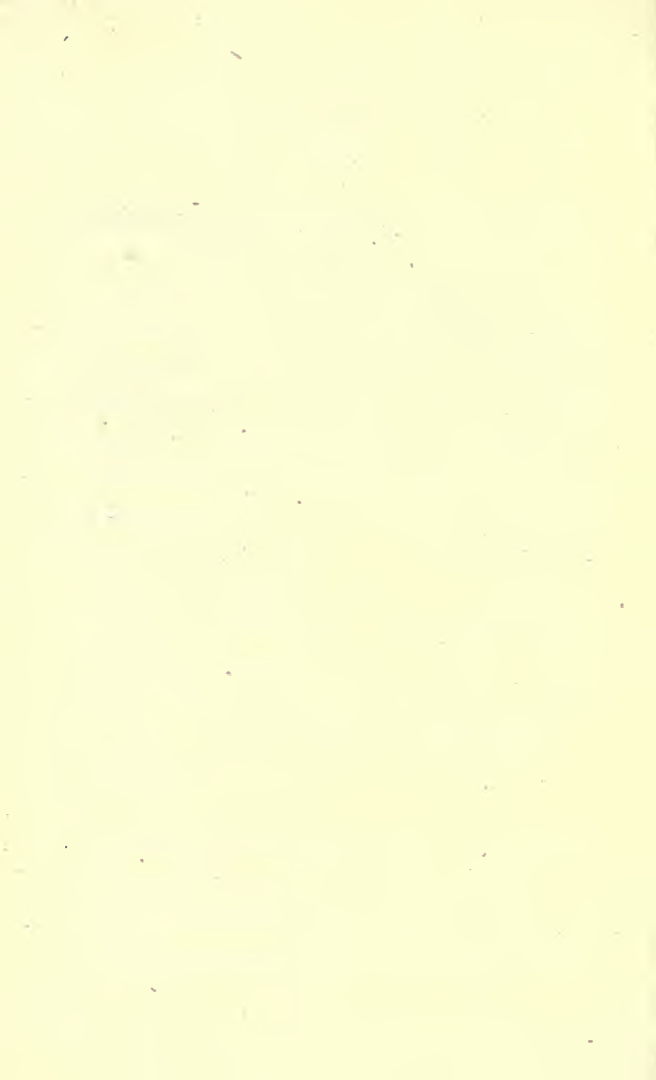
‘ The following production, the Author, previously to his departure from Britain, leaves in the possession of a friend, careless of its future fate, although not insensible of its imperfections. Lest, however, it may hereafter chance to meet the public eye, it may not be improper to observe, that having, at an early period of life, written, and injudiciously published, a poetical performance on the same subject, which a more mature judgment taught him to condemn, he was desirous of substituting something in its stead, less exceptionable to

good taste, and more characteristic of the scenes he has attempted to delineate. Should this be considered as an awkward apology for defects, let it be remembered, that the 'Parting Peep at the Carse of Stirling,' was executed under various disadvantages;—that, while it was composed amidst the gloom of sickness and solitude, to mitigate distress, it received no fostering sunshine to cherish or to cheer; that it never met the eye of criticism, nor the kindly strictures of a friend; and that while it may, without a violation of metaphor, be called the offspring of pain and of pensiveness, it was, amidst other trials, produced under the additional depression of leaving a country, to which the author has every reason to predict he never will return!

'With regard to the language in which the present poem is written (and for which, perhaps, an apology is likewise necessary), the author can only say, that he made choice of the Scottish dialect,

not only on account of its superior poetical pathos and simplicity to any other with which he is acquainted¹, but, in his opinion, as the most appropriate to the scenes described, and particularly to the historical events he has ventured to introduce. Farther he has nothing to say. Praise, should it ever come, will, in all likelihood, never reach his ear: and censure, after what has already been advanced in extenuation, must recoil on the unfeeling and fastidious.'

EDIN. *October, 1796.*



The following elegant Lines were sent to the Author by the ingenious Writer of the Hindoo Rajah, Modern Philosophers, &c. on reading the Links o' Forth, in Manuscript.

YES! I've perused, with new, increased delight
 Have reperused, each simply flowing line :
 Traced the known landscape bursting on the sight,
 With all its varied hues and haunts divine !

Still (by the muse's faithful hand pourtrayed)
 Each long-lost beauty meets my raptured eye ;
 Youth's former visions rise in every glade,
 While tears delicious mix with memory's sigh.

Say then, my friend, can feelings warm as these
Perform the critic's cold fastidious part ;
Mark what perchance the pedant might displease,
When nature's nameless charms attack the heart !

For me, I boast nor critic lore nor skill,
Nor classic laws for measured numbers know ;
Enough, to feel the bosom's raptured thrill,
The tear that starts—the heart's spontaneous glow !

These ! these the muse's magic power attest !
These ! these the poet's excellence proclaim ;
And these, while truth and nature warm the breast,
Shall deck FORTH's artless bard with wreaths of
fame.

ELIZA HAMILTON.

THE

LINKS O' FORTH.

AH! winding FORTH!—smooth wandering tide!

O' Strevlin's peerless plain the pride;

How pleased along thy verdant side,

Whar floweries spring,

The muse her untaught numbers tried,

And learnt to sing!

Whan ardent youth, wi' boiling blood,

Ilk trace o' glowing passion loo'd,

How aft aside thy silver flood,

Unseen, alane,

The bard, enrapt in pensive mood,

Has poured the strain!

To beauteous Laura, aft and lang,
 His artless lyre he trembling strang ;
 Close to his beating heart it hang,

While glen, and grove,
 And craig, and echoing valley, rang

Wi' fervent love.—

Poor, fond enthusiast ! whither stray ?
 By wimpling burn, or broomy brae ?
 Wasting, I ween, the live-lang day

In am'rous rhyme ;

The hour will come, thou'lt sigh, and say,

What loss o' time !

Yet, wherefore shou'd nae youth engage

In pleasures suited to its age ?

To catch the tids o' life is sage,

Some joys to save :

Wha kens the fights he's doomed to wage

This side the grave !

To sport on fancy's flowery brink,

And beek a wee in love's warm blink,

Is wiser far, I'm sure, than think

O' distant harm,

Whan eild and cauld indiff'rence shrink

Frae pleasure's charm.

Attune the lay that should adorn

Ilk verse descriptive o' the morn ;

Whan round Forth's Links o' waving corn,

At peep o' dawn,

Frae broomy know to whitening thorn

He raptured ran :

Or fragrant where, at opening day,

The whins bloom sweet on *Achil* brae ;

There, when inspired by lofty ray,

He'd tak his flight ;

And towering climb, wi' spirits gay,

Demyit's † height.

† One of the highest of the Ochil hills, that bound the Carse of Stirling to the east.

O! grander far than Windsor's brow!

And sweeter too the vale below!

Whar Forth's unrivall'd windings flow

Through varied grain,

Brightening, I ween, wi' glittering glow

Strevlina's plain!

There, raptured trace (enthroned on hie)

The landscape stretching on the ee

Frae Grampian heights down to the sea,

A dazzling view!

Corn, meadow, mansion, water, tree,

In varying hue.—

Owre lofty here, ilk charm to trace,
 That decks, sweet plain ! thy cultured face ;
 Aft down the steep he'd tak a race,

Nor, rinnin, flag,

Till up he'd climb, wi' rapid pace,

Yon '*Abbey craig*.'

There seated, mark, wi' ardour keen,
 The skelloch † bright 'mang corn sae green,
 The purpled pea, and speckled bean ;

A fragrant store !

And vessels sailing, morn and e'en,

To '*Stirling's shore*.'

† The wild mustard.

Yet feckless as his numbers fell,
 Nae tongue his peacefu' joys can tell,
 Whan, crooning quietly by himsel,

He framed the lay

On *Gowland's* whin-beflowered hill

And rocky brae.

How richly then the landscape glowed
 As fast the welcome numbers flowed !

How smooth the plying barge † then rowed

Frae shore to shore !

How saft the kye in King's Park lowed

At milking hour !

† The Abbey ferry-boat.

And ah! hów sweet the murmur rang
 Frae busy labour's rural thrang!
 That stal the upland heights amang,

And, echoing, spread
 Owre Castle, Butts, and *Knott* ², alang
 The Backwalk shade.—

Dear, peacefu' scenes! how sweet to sing!
 Whan youth and love are on the wing;
 Whan morn's fresh gales their fragrance bring,
 Wi' balmy sough,
 And e'ening paints (how green in spring!)

The 'braes o' Tough!

And *Shaw-park*, gilt wi' e'ening's ray ;

And Embro' castle, distant grey † ;

Wi' *Alva*, screened near Aichil brae,

'Mang grove and bower !

And rich *Clackmannan*, rising gay,

Wi' woods and tower ;

—These, aft he traced, fond nature's child !

But maist at e'ening blushing mild,

As owre the western cliffs sae wild

O' Lomond's ‡ height,

The sun, in setting glory, smiled

Wi' purple light !

† Edinburgh castle, though distant 35 miles from Stirling, is seen from the Castle-hill in a favourable day.

‡ Ben Lomond, the highest of the Grampian mountains, that bound the Carse of Stirling to the north-west.





Noyemich del.

*Or, round Cam's kenneths ancient tower, whar winds Forth's stream,
Hed wander, meditate, and pour this moral theme.*

Angus sculp.

'Twas then, by gloaming's sober hour,
 He'd court some solitude obscure ;
 Or round Cam'skenneth's † ancient tower,
 Whar winds Forth's stream,
 He'd wander, meditate, and pour
 This moral theme :—

' How still and solemn steals the gloom
 Mild owre the garden's fading bloom !
 Dim flits the bat athwart the tomb,
 On leathern wing ;
 —Hark ! what bemoaned the slaughtered doom
 O' Scotia's king ?—

† The Abbey of Cambuskenneth, founded by David I. king of Scotland, anno 1147.

'Twas but the dove that woos his mate,

Unmindfu' o' the monarch's fate :

Whar, Grandeur, now thy regal state ?—

Unmarkt !—and gone !

Nor sculptured verse records thy date,

Nor moss-grown stone !'

Yet regal pomp, and courtly show,

Aft graced yon castle's³ princely brow,

Whan Scotland's kings, wi' patriot glow,

Delighted, woo'd

STREVLINA's fertile fields below,

And winding flood !

Sublime retreat ! beloved ! admired !

Whase rural charms sae aft conspired

To calm the raging breast, whan fired

'Gainst lawless power,

And yield, mid social sweets retired,

Life's happier hour !

To sheathe in peace War's slaughtering sword ;

To drap the King at friendship's board ;

To draw frae Love's delicious hoard

Her honeyed sweet !

And chain fierce Valour's lofty lord

At beauty's feet.

Or join the chace, at purple morn,
 Owre lawns, and heath-bloomed mountains borne ;
 Wi' hound, and hawk, and bugle horn,

And shouting thrang ;

While *Sauchie's* glens, beflowered wi' thorn,

The notes prolang ;

Or break the lance, and couch the spear

At tilts and tournaments o' weir,

Whar mony a valiant knight and peer

Displayed their skill,

To courtly beauty, blushing near,

On '*Lady's hill* 4.'

Thus, tuned to pastime's peacefu' string,

Strevlina's craigs and valley⁴ ring ;

Blithe roamed the courtier and the king

By Fortha's flood,

Till faction soared on raven wing,

Bedrapt wi' blood !

'Twas then ilk sport and rural charm

Fled court, and plain, and cheerless farm !—

Rebellion loud, wi' dread alarm,

Skreighed wild her cry,

And murder dark, wi' dagger'd arm,

Stood watching by !

—Insatiate fiend ! could nought allay
 'Thy rebel rage 'gainst regal sway !—
 Not Flodden-Field, whase fatal day

Brought dool and care,

Whan Scotland's Flowers were wed away †,

To bloom nae mair ;

Nor Solway's heart-break, and disgrace ‡,

Nor Mary's tears, nor beauteous face *,

Could stop, fell fae ! thy furious pace

Bestained wi' crime,

Till STUART's royal, luckless race !

Fled Scotia's clime.

† Alluding to the beautiful and pathetic ballad of the
 ' Flowers of the Forest.'

‡ James V. was so affected with the unfortunate and dis-
 graceful affair at Solway Frith, near the river Esk, that he
 died a few days afterwards, literally of a broken heart.

§ Mary, Queen of Scotland.

Round 'Carun's stream,' o' classic name,

Whar FINGAL fought, and ay ow'rcame †;

Whar OSSIAN wak'd, wi' kindling flame,

His heaven-taught lays,

And sang his OSCAR's deathless fame

At Dunipáce †!

—Names, gratefu' to the patriot's ear!

Which Scotia's sons delight to hear!—

Names, that the brave will lang revere

Wi' valour's sigh!

—Dear to the Muse!—but doubly dear

TO LIBERTY!—

† Vide the war of Caros, and the beautiful poem Comala.

Thus, (blind to prudence' warning light)
 Aft sighed and sang the pensive wight!—
 Reckless, alas! o' fortune's blight,

Or warldly blame,
 He'd muse, and dream, till dark midnight,

Then daunder hame!—

Ye flowering plains and winding stream!
 Ye stately towers! whar morn's first beam
 Mild glittering glints wi' gowden gleam!

Yours was the crime:
 Ye first enticed his youth to dream
 In thriftless rhyme!

Ye first unlocked the secret door
 That led to Nature's varied store;
 And taught him early to adore.

Her tempting smile,
 Whether on India's pictured shore
 Or Britain's isle.—

Ye classic fields, whar valour bled!
 Whar patriots fell, but never fled!
 Ye plains, wi' smiling plenty clad,

A lang adieu!
 A dark'ning cloud, wi' ills ow'rspread,
 Obscures the view!

A warning voice, sad owre the main

Cries, 'haste ye!—haste!—break aff the strain:—

STREVLINA's towers and peerless plain

Ye'll ne'er review!—

Dear haunts o' youth, and love's saft pain,

A last adieu!



NOTES.

NOTE ¹, p. 135, l. 3.

‘ Any other with which he is acquainted.’

IN support of this assertion some proof perhaps may be expected ; but as any dissertation on this subject might lead to an unwarrantable length, we shall extract the following very judicious remarks of an anonymous, though good critic, on some of the peculiar advantages of the Scottish language for subjects of poetry.

‘ It contains a number of vocables peculiarly expressed, and purely its own. Many of them are monosyllables, and yet they convey an extent and an energy of meaning, which most of the modern languages can but imperfectly collect, even by circumlocution. Its powers of termination, especially in diminutives and expressions of endearment,

are far from being inconsiderable, and in many instances it appears to be little inferior to that of the Italian. It possesses a considerable portion of that rustic simplicity so much admired in the Dóric dialect of the Greeks, and not a little also of the smoothness of the Ionic. Like the former, it drops final consonants, one for another, and converts many of the vowels and diphthongs of English words into A and I; and, like the latter, it delights to throw out the consonants, to produce a concourse of vowels to soften the sound, and promote the flow of those harsher terms which less easily combine in versification. It abounds in terms and phrases connected with domestic and social life; with rural scenery, sentiments and occupations, and hence is peculiarly fitted for pastoral poetry, the lighter ode, and the description of external nature. It surpasses in humourous representation, and is far from being unsuitable to the plaintive and the tender.'

After all, the author has good reason to think, that nothing advanced on this subject will impress the mere English reader with favourable opinions of Scottish poetry, nor can it be expected. The peculiar beauties of a language can be discover-

ed only by a perfect knowledge of the particular phrases and metaphorical turns of expression in which it abounds, and by an association of ideas accompanying the phraseology used, or the imagery thereby conveyed. Without these, it is next to an impossibility that its chief excellencies can be appreciated, and, consequently, cannot be relished. Many indeed pretend to understand and admire what all praise, and what celebrity has rendered it fashionable to extol, while the principal beauties are completely concealed from view.—As a proof of this, nine English readers out of ten, while they pretend to understand what they read, pronounce not only Burns's poetry, but all Scottish poetry whatever, vulgar; not attending to this mortifying fact in the mutability of living language, that what is considered vulgar now, was once a court language, and esteemed elegant, and that nearly one half of Shakespeare's language is *pure Scotch*. The author, however, freely admits, that by adopting, without careful discrimination, coarse local phrases and provincialisms, much vulgarity, as well as much obscurity, in Scottish poetry may be, and certainly *has* been introduced. But this applies no more to Scottish than to English

poetry; since the one, unquestionably, has its elegancies as well as the other. The chief distinguishing difference of the two *poetical* languages at present seems to be, *great simplicity*, without childish imbecility, or insipidity of expression, in the first; qualities which, owing to modern art and established practice, cannot now be combined in the latter.

NOTE ², p. 147, l. 11; and p. 148, l. 5.

‘How safe the kye in King’s Park lowed.’

‘Owre Castle, Butts, and Knott.’

‘Upon the south-west of the castle lies a large park, inclosed with a stone wall, called the King’s Park, where the court used to divert themselves with hunting of the deer, which were kept in it. At the east end of the park lie the royal gardens: vestiges of the walks and parterres, with a few stumps of fruit trees, are still visible.—In the gardens is a mound of earth, in form of a table, called the *king’s knott*, with benches of earth round it, where, according to tradition, the court sometimes held *fêtes champetres*. Around the gar-

dens, too, are vestiges of a canal, upon which the royal family and court used to divert themselves in pleasure boats.'—*Nimmo's Hist. of Stirlingshire*, p. 250, 151.

NOTE 3, p. 152, l. 8.

'Aft graced yon castle's princely brow.'

The castle of Stirling, on account of its beautiful situation and delightful prospect, was the favourite residence of our Scottish kings, particularly of the James's.—James III. was so attached to it, that he built a palace, with an elegant chapel in it.—To procure funds for the support of a dean, prebends, a numerous band of singers, musicians, and other officers, he suppressed the Priory of Coldingham, and endowed his chapel with the revenues: a circumstance which produced the rebellion that shortly after occasioned the tragical death of that mild and unfortunate monarch.—See *Henry's Hist. of Great Britain*.

NOTE 4, p. 154, l. 12, and p. 155, l. 2.

‘ On Lady’s hill.’

‘ Strevlina’s craigs and valley ring.’

In the Castle-hill is a hollow called *the Valley*, comprehending about an acre of ground, and having all the appearance of an artificial work, which was used for tilts and tournaments, with other feats of chivalry; and closely adjoining to this valley, upon the south, is a small rocky mount, rising in form of a pyramid, called *the Ladies Hill*, ‘ upon which the ladies of the court took their station to behold those exercises.’ *Nimmo’s Hist.* p. 252.

NOTE 5, p. 156, l. 7.

‘ Alas! nor he, whase youthfu’ bloom.’

‘ James I. of Scotland was one of the most accomplished and amiable princes that ever filled a throne. He was likewise one of the most unfortunate. After upwards of eighteen years captivity in England, and encountering many difficulties on

his return to his native kingdom, he was, in the prime of life, murdered by barbarous assassins in the Carthusian monastery of Perth. In the monument of genius, James has been almost equally unfortunate. No vestiges are now remaining of his skill in architecture, gardening, and painting, though we are well assured, by one who was well acquainted with him †, that in all these arts he excelled. Many of the productions of his pen have also perished; for he tells us himself ‡, that he wrote much; and we know of only three of his poems that are now extant, viz. Christ's Kirk on the Green, Peebles to the Play, and the King's Quair, which was lately discovered by Mr Wharton, and since published by William Tytler of Woodhouselee, Esq.—*Henry's Hist.*—‘ He was,’ continues Henry, ‘ not only the most learned king, but one of the most learned men of the age in which he flourished; and seems to have been born to excel in every art to which he applied his mind.’ Independently of his other singular ac-

† Scotichron. lib. 16. cap. 30.

‡ King's Quair, cant. 1. stanza 13.

complishments, James particularly excelled in music, not only as a performer, but as a composer: and it is to his admirable genius that the musical world is so much indebted for the invention (amidst the gloom of solitude and confinement) of that sweet and plaintive Scotch and Italian* melody, which, as the above mentioned author justly remarks, ‘has given pleasure to millions in every succeeding age.’

* *Alexandro Tassoni* mentions James King of Scotland, having, of himself, invented a new kind of music, plaintive and melancholy, different from all others, in which he was imitated by Carlo Gesualdo, prince of Venosa, who, in our age (says Parsoni) has improved music with new and admirable inventions. As the Prince of Venosa imitated king James, the other musicians of Italy imitated the Prince of Venosa. ‘The most noble Carlo Gesualdo, the prince of musicians in our age (says Sir John Hawkins, vol. iii. p. 212) introduced such a style of modulation, that other musicians yield the preference to him; and all singers and players on stringed instruments, laying aside that of others, every where embraced his.’