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# HISTORY OF JAMES ALLAN, THE CELEBRATED Northumberland Piper:

Giving an Account of his Parentage, Education, extraordinary Adventures and Exploits; his numerous Enlistings, and wonderful escapes:—with a brief Narrative of his last Confinement and Death in Durham Gaol, which happened in 1810.

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“ .... ALLAN, thou shalt screw thy drone,  
And play up *Maggie Lauder* sweetly,  
Or *Money-musk*, or *Dorrington*,  
And we shall frisk and foot it neatly:  
CROWD gain'd applause for monie a tune.  
Few peer'd him in the High or Lawlan',  
But neither he nor Sandy Brown  
Could trill a note like JEMMY ALLAN.”

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# LIFE OF JAMES ALLAN

**W**ILLIAM ALLAN, commonly called OLD WILL, the father of Jemmy Allan, was born in the parish of Simonburn, in the west of Northumberland. At an early period he settled in the romantic wilds of Rothbury, where Will and his pipes were engaged in many a midnight revel.

JAMES ALLAN, better known by the name of Jemmy Allan, was the youngest but one of old Will's six children: he was born near Rothbury in March, 1734. In infancy James was accustomed to the most hardy treatment: by constant practice he became so unrivalled in athletic feats, that few durst encounter him in leaping, running, or wrestling. In early youth he was deemed handsome, while he displayed the most acute and inventive genius, which was soon prostituted to acts of low cunning and dissimulation. Allan early began to thieve in a small way: at first, his depredations did not extend beyond the robbery of the neighbouring gardens; but he soon became such an adept, that whenever a Gypsy camp was in want, young Jemmy was sent out to forage, when all the hens, ducks, and geese within his reach became his prey.

When about 14 years of age, Jemmy evinced a strong desire to excel on the pipes. Old Will was delighted with his son's taste and zeal, and was therefore indefatigable in assisting his pupil in his exertions. Young Allan possessed an accurate ear and a refined taste, and, by his progress, gave certain indications of future excellence. In due time, with much feasting, Allan was regularly installed among the privileged class of minstrels, and shortly afterwards, as an independent man, joined the "faa gang" over which old *Will Faa* held the sovereignty for many years, and Allan had the honour of being frequently and kindly noticed by his majesty.

Allan's superior skill in pipe-music was soon known

throughout Northumberland. At length his fame reached the ears of the Countess (afterwards Duchess) of Northumberland, who sent a message to James, requesting his attendance at the castle. This gratified Allan's ambition; but his clothes being coarse and much worn, and very unfit to make his appearance before a lady of such distinction, he had recourse to an expedient, which soon raised him above this difficulty. He had noticed a farmer's only daughter, who had often cast a wistful eye towards him. He contrived to obtain a private interview with the fond girl: he told her of the sincerity of his love, the honour of his intentions, and the golden prospects that would flow from the patronage of the Countess, and at length delicately hinted at his present embarrassment. She rejoiced to find his difficulty so easily removed, and soon put him in possession of a sum sufficient to equip him genteelly. Having thus secured the ways and means, Allan set off for Alnwick with a light heart. The day after his arrival at the castle, he was ushered into the presence of the Countess: and, after he had mustered some degree of courage, he began to play, and acquitted himself in so masterly a style, that he was instantly ranked as one of her musicians, and shortly after appointed her own piper. Allan continued at the castle upwards of two years, during which his conduct was irreproachable. He then returned to his native village, and during his visit, was precipitated into an unfortunate marriage with a young woman, who, by her violent temper, thriftless housewifery, and unfaithful conduct, rendered him miserable. Allan in consequence left her, and returned to Alnwick castle, resolving to forget his faithless wife;—but a sense of his wrongs haunted his mind—he drank deeply, neglected his duty at the castle, and became so regardless of his character that his company was shunned, and finding himself thus insulted, he determined to change his scene of action, and enlisted as a substitute into the

Northumberland militia. The restraints of a military life not suiting his wayward habits, in a short time he deserted, and secreted himself in Newcastle.

One evening, when strolling down the Quayside, he saw his wife Fanny stepping ashore from a ship, accompanied by a sailor : Allan made her a low bow, and being certain she, his only enemy, had quitted Rothbury, he immediately bent his course home. Allan's father and mother received him with the greatest affection, and for a time he was very cautious of going out. However, there having to be an otter-hunt in the neighbourhood, he could not resist the temptation of enjoying the sport ; and, during the hunt, the son of the high constable having said something to vex him, he tumbled the youth into the Coquet. The son, in revenge, persuaded his father to arrest him as a deserter, and a posse of constables was sent to secure him. As they were approaching the house, Jemmy's stepmother saw them, and instantly bolted the door. One of the constables begged the old people to give up the offender, as his escape was impossible, when she replied, " Jemmy's off to Shields to take shipping for Lunnon." " I am glad of that," said the wily constable, " but we will just look in to satisfy all parties." In the mean time Jemmy made a noise at the back window, as if he meant to get out there, which the party hearing, they all ran backward to catch him, when old Will threw open the door, and ran off at his utmost speed, his wife standing in the door-stead, shaking her apron, and screaming, " Run, Jemmy, run !" The constables immediately joined in the pursuit ; the stratagem succeeded : after old Will had run about a mile, he leisurely drew up, and said, with a sarcastic grin, " I dare say Jemmy will be far enough off now,"—and so he was ; for, in the mean time, he had stole quietly off in a very different direction.

Allan shortly after made his appearance at Stagshaw-bank fair, where, on entering a tent, he met



the sergeant of the company to which he was attached. The sergeant laid hold of his arm, and said, "Is not your name Allan?" Without replying, Allan laid him sprawling at his feet, and ran for it; but the cry being set up, "Stop thief," he was taken and put into confinement, until an escort was provided to convey him to his regiment. At length three hearty fellows arrived, and they set off to head quarters. On the second day they put up at a public-house, and as none of them were tired, they went into a yard to amuse themselves, when Allan bet a gallon he could beat them at quoits; and, as the yard-wall was high, his hand-cuffs were readily taken off. During the game the soldiers drank freely, and, after play, they began to dispute which was the best shot. A mark was set up, and Allan was chosen umpire. After firing a number of shots, they laid down their firelocks, when Allan asked the reason of it? "Because our shot is all done," was the reply. "But, surely, you have one charge left for me, to try my skill." "Not one," said they. "Then," replied Allan, briskly, "it is time to be off," and, springing upon the wall, he disappeared in a moment.—The soldiers, amazed at his boldness and their own folly, did not attempt to follow.

Allan again enlisted, and, in an attempt to desert, sprained his foot, and was carried prisoner in a cart to Alnwick. The disgrace of being thus dragged into a place where he had been so respected, was most humiliating to his feelings. By the influence of the Countess he was liberated, and again restored to favour: but falling again into his old vicious habits of gambling and drinking, he received a peremptory order to quit the castle within one hour. Allan immediately took leave of the domestics, who generously presented him with six guineas, which was very acceptable, as he had only a few shillings.

Allan now travelled northward, and stopping at a small inn, in Jedburgh, he contrived at cards to

swindle a farmer's son out of 30 guineas, and knowing that the transaction would not bear investigation, he thought it prudent to move forward. Arriving at Moffat, he met a gipsy girl, who had been mending china, and telling fortunes. Allan accompanied her home, when, after a few hours' acquaintance, they agreed to be united, and were immediately pledged in the presence of a gang of muggers, who were encamped near the place. His new spouse gave him to understand that she was no mean personage, being allied in blood to Will Marshall, the celebrated gipsy chief, and proposed to visit him. The chief received them with a hearty welcome; and, on being told that Allan could play fu' weel on the sma' pipes, he asked for a swatch o' his skill. Allan knowing he was in the presence of royalty, exerted himself in playing *Felton Loaning*; but before the tune was half done, Will rose from his seat, and taking Allan by the hand, said, "You're weel worth your room—there's nae music pleases me like the pipes." Allan having continued some time with the gang, from considerations of personal safety, was obliged to decamp. Allan had been previously presented with 16 guineas by a dying gipsy friend, and having preserved most of the plunder gained at Jedburgh, was well stocked with cash—yet such was his mean and covetous disposition, that he walked ten miles in a dark night in order to steal his wife's pockets, by which he obtained several guineas, the savings of her industry. At length Allan reached Edinburgh, and, being in possession of a considerable sum of money, commenced gentleman, frequented gaming tables, &c. and at the end of 6 weeks possessed £160. He frequently played with an Irish nobleman, who, being a novice in gambling, lost several small sums. One evening the nobleman entered the billiard room intoxicated, and offered in mad bravado to play for £200. Allan having only £160, agreed to deposit that sum, and if he lost, to pay the remainder in the morning. The game was soon des-

patched, for the youth who appeared such an indifferent player won the game with ease. The pretended nobleman was no other than an Irish gamester, and one of the first billiard players in the kingdom. Allan, deeply chagrined at his loss, repaired to his lodgings and ordered supper; having collected himself, he packed up his clothes, and among them, *by accident*, a silver tankard belonging to his landlord, and dropping himself from a back window, made off towards Dumfries. While amusing a party of gentlemen there, a stranger, after listening to a few tunes, retired, and in a short time returned with two constables, ordering them to take Allan into custody. Being taken before the town bailiff, he was charged with stealing a silver tankard from his brother's house in Edinburgh. Allan denied the charge; but, on his lodgings being searched, the tankard was found amongst his clothes, and he was committed to prison. The gaoler being indisposed, the prisoners were under the direction of the gailor's daughter. Allan now perceived his advantageous position, and by his artful flattery, satisfied her of his innocence, and of his strong attachment to her; and, after three weeks of pretended courtship, the scheme was agreed to that he was to be set at liberty on the condition of making her his wife at the first town they reached. At length the night of elopement arrived: the clothes and the silver tankard, which had been given to her father, in order to produce it at the trial, were tied up in a bundle, which, having been delivered to him, he desired her to remain within the door until he reconnoitered; but when out of her sight, he slipped off, and fled with all possible speed: having taken several cross roads, and changed his clothes, he made towards Carlisle.

From Carlisle, he took the road to Whitehaven, where he was joined by no less a personage than the Gipsy Queen, MADGE GORDON, mounted upon a strong galloway; and had the satisfaction of being introduced by her to a party of Gipsies, who were jour-

neying on to a general encampment. Amongst them was a lively interesting girl, an adroit thief, and a most lucky fortune-teller, who agreed to trust her fate with Allan, and soon convinced him that he was a mere bungler in the art of thieving; she also taught him many ledgerdmain tricks which he afterwards practised with great advantage. Having agreed to accompany his new mistress into Westmoreland, on reaching Appleby, they took lodgings at a small public house. Allan's female partner went off for a few days into the country, while Allan continued to exercise his profession, and was liberally rewarded. On returning home one night, he discovered his wife *Jean* in the house. He concealed his surprise, ordered his supper, and taking a candle, proceeded leisurely up to his room, packed up his pipes and his clothes, and descended gently from the window. Knowing that both the landlord and hostler were drunk, he borrowed a horse of a London traveller, and rode off. Before reaching Penrith, he contrived so to alter the appearance of the horse, that even his owner could not have sworn to him. Having exchanged the horse for a galloway and ten guineas, he set across the country resolving to visit Ireland. At Whitehaven he sold his galloway, and sailed for Dublin.

Amongst the passengers was a gentleman fond of music, who was quite enchanted with Allan's execution on the pipes and hautboy, and greatly exerted himself in establishing his reputation as a musician in Dublin. His talents were valued very highly, and his income averaged ten pounds per week.—Allan, puffed up by success, became ambitious of becoming a man of fashion; and having reached this climax of folly, furnished a genteel house, in which he placed an extravagant and abandoned mistress, but was soon apprehended as a swindler.

Allan accompanied the officers with a cheerful air, till they reached a well acquainted spot, when making a sudden spring, he disappeared through a narrow



passage, and took refuge in the house of a *courtezan*, who though a reward was offered for his apprehension, lodged him in a place of safety, and paid him every possible attention. She procured him an old suit of clothes, and found a vessel which was to sail that night. Allan, secure in his disguise, reached the ship without interruption. On his arrival in Liverpool he pushed on to Skipton. Finding it needful to have his finances recruited, he determined to enlist; he accordingly accosted a sergeant, told him a well feigned story of his being robbed of his watch and 12 guineas, with which he was hastening home to relieve his parents who were in great distress. The sergeant seemed to sympathise with him, and offered to advance his bounty when he was sworn in. Allan agreed, and accompanied the sergeant to a Justice, when the business was finally concluded. In the evening he pretended he had found a friend to take his money to his father, except a guinea, with which he treated the party. Having procured a billet, he left the company, but instead of proceeding to his quarters, he left the town, and walking briskly onward for two days, reached Darlington. Here he fell in with a gang of west-country tinkers and coopers, among whom he spent all but two shillings, and left Darlington, condemning his folly in squandering away his money so foolishly. On arriving at Durham he entered a public house to refresh himself. The first person he met was a recruiting sergeant, and encouraged by his successful escapes, he again resolved to enlist. The sergeant, seeing him a likely man, plied him with liquor until he gained his consent; having first made the bargain that his bounty money should be immediately paid him. The sergeant did so, but not being quite satisfied with his reasons for such conduct, ordered a corporal to keep strict watch over him. Then wily Allan soon observed that his guard was partial to drink, with which he so liberally supplied him, that he had to be carried to bed, on which

Jemmy pocketed one of the corporal's shirts, and deliberately left the house. He made the best of his way to the house of an old associate, living at Felton Ferry. Here he met a hearty welcome; and after three days' jovial carousal, he proceeded towards Newcastle; but whilst walking down the Bottle Bank, in Gateshead, he was taken prisoner by two stout grenadiers. Considering resistance vain, Allan assumed a cheerful appearance, and accompanied them to the guard house in Newcastle: here he was informed that a party had been from Durham in search of a deserter, and that they suspected him to be the man. Allan protested his innocence, declaring he had not been there, and offered to accompany them thither, expecting to escape on the road: but the officers determined to send for some of the recruiting party to come over and identify their man. - During the day Allan appeared cheerful and unconcerned; but night approaching, and the soldiers from Durham being expected, he determined on attempting his escape. Requesting to be shown backwards, one of the privates was ordered to accompany him; after waiting outside of the door until his patience was exhausted, he called to Allan, but receiving no answer, he opened the door, and was filled with astonishment on finding the prisoner had vanished; he never having been one moment from the door. Trembling with fear, he returned to the guard-house, saying, "the prisoner surely was the devil, and no man." The officer suspecting he had connived at the prisoner's escape, ordered him instantly to be confined. A serjeant, however, snatched up a candle, and having examined the place, discovered that the deserter had lowered himself down, and escaped by a channel connected with the place. A party was immediately despatched to guard the outlet. In the mean time Allan explored his way through a narrow nasty dark passage; and, after much struggling, and being nearly suffocated, he emerged from the disgusting chan-

nel, near to the Town Moor, where he hid himself among the furze. The bustle about the guardhouse, and the search of the soldiers, attracted the attention of several people, who joined in the pursuit; and Jemmy was much alarmed by the near approach of his pursuers. At this critical moment, the corporal seized a townsman much like Allan in size and dress, and called for assistance. In an instant Jemmy sprung upon his legs, shouting louder than the rest, "Where is the rascal?" The mistake was soon discovered, and Allan continued to appear anxious in the search; yet gradually moving away in a wider range, at length slipped off; and aided by the darkness of the night, made good his escape.

Arriving at Rothbury and surrounded by his old friends, he had the satisfaction of again tuning his elegant small pipes, the gift of the Countess of Northumberland, which he valued so highly, that for fear of accident, he had left them with a gentleman; but having got possession of them once more, he determined never again to part with them. While thus happy among his old cronies, a secret message was forwarded to Newcastle: the colonel of the regiment immediately despatched a trusty sergeant, and five men of courage, to apprehend this daring deserter. The party reached Rothbury in the afternoon; Allan was playing at cards, when a boy standing at the window cried out, "What fine soldiers are coming to our house!" Jemmy suspecting their business, snatched up a large poker, and rushed past them, as mad with fury. His manner of leaving the house raised suspicions, and they immediately gave chase: but Allan outran his pursuers with ease, and made towards a steep crag, a short distance from the town, the top of which he gained before the soldiers had reached the foot of it. Observing a pile of stones on the top of the crag, he could not resist the temptation of giving them a salute as they came up the hill. He, therefore, waited till he thought them sufficiently

near, when he pelted them so heartily, that they were glad to return without their errand. The soldiers re-entered the town; and being convinced there was no hope of securing him among his friends, returned to head quarters, representing Jemmy as one of the most daring and desperate characters they had ever met with.

After their retreat, Allan commenced practising as an itinerant musician, and received great encouragement, and having purchased a suit of genteel clothes, he set off for Anlwick Castle. Being introduced to the Countess, he assured her of his improved conduct, on which she consented to his remaining at the Castle; observing that his reformation was more likely to become permanent than by following the profession of a wandering minstrel: but Allan's taste for revelry and drinking was too firmly rooted to be so easily overcome; and during his short stay at the Castle, he behaved in the most thoughtless and irregular manner, and was dismissed with a charge never to enter the castle again. Allan mortified, slunk away without taking leave of the domestics.

Thus disgraced, he went to Boswell Fair; about 8 o'clock he took a walk through the fair in hopes of meeting some of the faa fraternity; when he was accosted in a rude manner with the appalling words, "You are my prisoner." On turning round he saw sergeant Armstrong, of the 25th regiment, with his sword drawn. Allan's first impulse was to run off; but, on second thoughts, he shook Armstrong very cordially by the hand, and told him, if he would give him his liberty, he would engage to find him half a dozen as fine looking young men as any in the 25th. The sergeant agreed to the bargain, and accordingly, Allan joined the party with his pipes; and by a variety of whimsical capers, which so attracted the young men, that before night they had enlisted eight of them. The sergeant, so well pleased with their success, invited Allan to supper, after which



they drank and danced until morning. In the mean time Armstrong sent word to a sergeant recruiting at Kelso, to come and take him as a deserter ; the scheme succeeded, and just when Allan was taking leave, in marched the other sergeant. Allan suspected the plot, and bestowed the blackest epithets upon Armstrong, who calmly insisted on the meeting being quite accidental. Allan was immediately marched to Kelso, resolving to escape before they reached head quarters. He tried the effects of whiskey upon his guards without avail ; at night they agreed that he should sleep between them. To this Allan made no objection, but that he would sleep with his clothes on, and they agreed to do the same. Allan having provided himself with two needles and some strong twine, with which he cautiously sewed their clothes to the bed clothes, as soon as he was sure they were asleep. Having accomplished this, he sprung out of bed with so little care that he awoke both his bed-fellows ; but being entangled together they rolled on the floor : Allan threw up the window, and sliding down the sign-post, effected his escape. He now determined to be revenged on Armstrong for his treachery ; and proceeding direct, reached Wooler at an early hour, and demanded immediate admittance to the chamber of the sergeant ; when Allan in a stern voice addressed him, " Sergeant, you see a man before you whom you have scandalously abused. I had the good fortune to see your colonel yesterday, to whom I related your base conduct, and he generously presented me with my discharge, (drawing from his pocket a paper carefully folded) at the same time he insisted upon me demanding of you two guineas by way of recompence." The sergeant being so abruptly awoke, and confounded by this peremptory message, gave the sum demanded, and Allan withdrew, hoping he would come to no further harm on the business, further than a reprimand, which he justly deserved.

Allan was highly elated at this successful piece of roguery, and borrowing a galloway of a brother Gipsy, he struck through the wilds of the north-west parts of Northumberland. Near Hawick he fell in with a party of Gipsies, and among them his wife Sally: they were proceeding to Kirk-Yetholm, to attend a marriage between a distinguished scotch Gipsy and one of old Will Faa's daughters. On entering the village, Allan repaired to the royal residence, to pay his respects to old Will, by whom he was received with great kindness. After celebrating the marriage with much noisy feasting, the company dispersed, after their various occupations. Allan was ordered to stay at home, as it was not safe for him to venture abroad. He spent his time in fishing, which was at once his occupation and amusement. During one of his rambles, he heard that a gentleman farmer was to be married to a lady of fortune the following day. He offered his services which were graciously accepted, and he was invited to remain all night. While meditating on the profits of the engagement, he saw two fiddlers enter, and being afraid that the music of the violin would be preferred to pipe music, he determined to "spoil their fiddling." The two fiddlers made so free with the refreshments of the evening, that they had to be carried to bed. Allan, on the contrary, kept himself sober; and observing that the musicians had laid their fiddles beside his pipes, as soon as he discovered that all was quiet, he got out of bed, and put both the fiddles and his pipes into a water-tub. Allan allowed the fiddlers to rise before him in the morning, when diligent search was made for their instruments. Allan entered the kitchen, crying out, "O, the rogues, they have got my pipes!" Every one believed they were stolen, till one of the servants discovered the fiddles in the water, quite spoiled. Allan hastened to the spot, and said, "Ah, the loons, they have thrown my pipes in also; whoever has done this deserves to be hanged."

The poor fiddlers being disconcerted, slunk away, while Allan, who had taken the reeds from his pipes, gained the whole profit.

Allan having been concerned in a sheep-stealing affair with a foreign gipsy, who had lately joined the gang, was obliged to fly for fear of consequences, and he arrived at Berwick without a penny. In this state of destitution he had recourse to his old mode of replenishing his finances, by enlisting with a spruce young sergeant. The sergeant, when told he had a slippery eel to hold, replied with contempt, "If he be the devil himself, initead of a wandering piper, he shall not escape me." After Allan had received his bounty, he ordered him to be strictly watched; but Allan appeared so cheerful and happy as threw them quite off their guard. The sergeant and corporal readily consented to enjoy themselves over a pot from his bounty money. Allan having called in a fiddler, proposed a threesome reel, and whilst setting to the sergeant, discharged a handful of scotch snuff in his face, which blinded and nearly suffocated him, —and turning quickly round to the corporal, served him in the same manner, and instantly darting out of the room, accomplished his escape. Allan bent his course towards Rothbury, and dispatching a gipsy lad for his pipes, he continued at Holystone until his return, and then travelled to Hexham, where, being short of cash, with his usual audacity, he enlisted, and slipped off after receiving half of his bounty. Another recruiting sergeant, named Hays, followed in pursuit, and succeeded in securing him: they watched him strictly, and next day lodged him in the guard-house at Newcastle. Allan finding himself among strangers, lulled their suspicions by his good-humoured jokes, and spending his money freely. At length, finding a favourable opportunity, he darted out of the guard-house and away. The first use he made of his liberty was to recover his pipes, and then he determined to leave the country. But, hearing that his

brother Bob was confined in Edinburgh Castle for desertion, and would probably be shot, he resolved to attempt his liberation. Having succeeded in obtaining the loan of a miller's clothes, he readily got admission into the castle, and, by a little duplicity, into the prison where his brother was, and furnishing him with instruments for escape, and appointing a place of meeting he left the soldiers enjoying his bountiful generosity. Allan had the pleasure of being soon joined by his brother, and they pressed forward to Dunse. Entering a public-house, they, by a well-told tale about seeking for their master's horses, duped a sergeant, who thought them two raw country lads, enlisted them, and paid them their bounty. At night, having intoxicated the party, they proceeded on their journey:—Rob being apprehensive of being pursued, prudently withdrew, and joined a gang of old friends, while Allan pressed forward to Rothbury. The sergeant whom he had defrauded at Dunse, discovering his retreat, manœuvred so well as to get entrance into the room where Jemmy was playing. Two soldiers stepped up to him, and said, "We want a tune," and immediately commenced dancing, while others secured the door. At the end of the dance the sergeant came forward to speak to the soldiers, when Allan flung up the window and jumped out. Instant chase was given, but without success, for Jemmy again got clear off. Allan made the best of his way to Carlisle, and having performed successfully to a festive party held there, he was congratulating himself on fortune favouring him once more; but while standing at the window of the inn, he heard the sound of drum and fife, and discovering that it was the party he had enlisted with at Durham, and seeing them entering the house, not a moment for escape was to be lost. He seized his bundle, and slipping out at the back-door, was soon on the road to Penrith. On the road, after other similar adventures, he joined a company of strolling players,



“living in clover to-day, and to-morrow counting the chimney-tops for a dinner,” and robbing the manager, took the road to London.

Having arrived at London, through the medium of an acquaintance, he was soon brought into notice, and engaged to many respectable parties. Committing a robbery one night, he set off for Southampton. Walking through the streets, under a heavy rain, he discovered a recruiting party dancing in a public house. Allan soon caught the eye of the sergeant, and he suffered himself to be prevailed upon to enlist, having a good part of his bounty-money paid him, so that he might for once live like a prince. In the morning he wandered to another part of the town, and again enlisted. In a short time he returned to his lodgings to secure a few articles he had stolen from on board ship, when he heard his two sergeants salute each other below, and conversing about their recruits, he heard one of them exclaim, after describing his person and dress, “O the Scotch villain, he enlisted with me last night, and I will have him if he be on earth.” A drummer-boy playing at marbles near the door, told them the recruit had gone up stairs. Allan in a moment locked the door, and knotting the bed-clothes together, threw them out of the window, having fixed the other end to the bed-post. Jemmy had just time to slip under the bed, when the soldiers broke open the door, and seeing the state of the bed-clothes, and his hat lying in the yard, immediately set off in pursuit. The landlord’s daughter coming up stairs to examine the state of the room, Allan discovered himself to her, and by a little flattery she was won over to manœuvre his escape.

On reaching Andover, he entered a public-house, and ordered breakfast, during which a man eyed him so minutely as to render him very uneasy. The man stepped out, but before Allan got one step from the door, he was seized by a party of soldiers, and immediately taken a prisoner to the guard-house, and from

thence was removed to prison, the officer observing, that "a desperate man deserved desperate treatment." Allan, on viewing his dreary cell, saw there was no way of escape but by sawing asunder the iron window-bars, which during the night he accomplished. Allan fled with great speed for several miles, when he was obliged to sell his shirt to procure something to eat. On reaching Salisbury, he again enlisted, and, notwithstanding the precautions of the party, he deserted on the third day. On entering a public-house at Devizes, he was accosted by the unpleasant salutation, "Sir, you are my prisoner." With his usual presence of mind he signed that he was begging, and acted the dumb man to such perfection, that the company in the house took his part. Many plans of detection were tried, which Allan continued to defeat; but after having drank his ale, was proceeding to the door, when a bucket of water was dashed in his face. This unexpected salute caused him to roar out, "What's that for;" when the constable instantly seized, and, after a desperate struggle, conveyed him to the black hole. On examining the prison, he found there was no hope of escape but by the chimney, which he determined to attempt at night. While sitting musing, the prison-door was opened gently, and a female entered and said, "Quick—fly!—no thanks:—my husband may suffer for this negligence; but, remember Dumfries;" and as Allan left the place, he recollected that the gaoler's daughter, the sergeant's wife, and his deliverer, were the same person.

Allan, according to his custom, struck across the country:—on reaching Darlington, he met with the celebrated Bet Whiston, who would treat him. Allan discovering that she had both silver and gold, succeeded in intoxicating her, when he emptied her pockets, and pursued his journey. On arriving at Chester-le-street, he found a number of pitmen raffling for a gun, after which they began to throw for

small sums, when Allan offered to stake ten guineas five on a single throw. The pitmen agreed, and sent for lucky Geordy Dunn to cast for them; but Allan dexterously changing the dice, threw two above him, and instantly swept the table. He reached Newcastle quite big about the dash he would cut at Rothbury; but on passing the head of the Side, he met an old female acquaintance, who invited him to her residence in the Castle Garth. The next day she absconded, taking with her the whole of his ill-gotten gains, and he was obliged to tramp forward to Morpeth without a shilling in his pocket. At Morpeth he had recourse to his old expedient, and enlisted. The sergeant suspecting whom he had to deal with, had him sworn in, and directly marched off to his officer at Newcastle. The officer being in company, offered to bet fifty pounds to thirty that he should not escape before they reached head-quarters at York. He was told not to be too confident, for Allan could double like a fox, and run like a hare. A gentleman accepted the bet, and allowed him to inform his men of the circumstance, and keep it a secret from Allan. The officer promised to divide his winnings between two corporals and two sergeants, to whom Allan was especially entrusted. One corporal walked before, and the other followed after, with their muskets loaded; while a sergeant walked on each side of him with their swords drawn. Allan being only a recruit, felt indignant at such treatment, and resolved to escape at the risk of his life. They reached Boroughbridge before an opportunity presented itself. As they were passing by the side of a wood, Allan observed that he would be under the necessity of troubling them for a minute; his guards accordingly drew up a few paces before him. Pretending to unbutton, he stooped down, and, watching his opportunity, he seized a stone, threw it over their heads, and, in the same moment, dashed into the wood. One of the corporals fired, and, with the other soldiers and re-

cruits, immediately gave chase; but Allan accustomed to ranging through the woods, easily eluded his pursuers, and, gaining the open country, made the best of his way to Whitby, where he took shipping, and in twenty hours he landed at Leith. Falling in with an old acquaintance, a shoemaker, from Alnwick, through whom he was engaged to play for their procession, and, next day, instead of parading at York, he was playing before his majesty King Crispin, through the principal streets of Edinburgh.

Allan now returned to Rothbury, and while he was playing one night, he was told that four strange men, not soldiers, were enquiring of a boy, in a low voice, where Jemmy Allan was. Allan suspecting who the strangers were, flew out of the house, and escaped without difficulty. Allan bent his course towards Hexham. The strangers proved to be a sergeant and three of his men, with whom he had enlisted at Morpeth, and discovering the route he had taken, travelled so expeditiously, that they overtook him before he reached Hexham. Allan, in an instant, darted forward, pursued by the whole party; but losing time in leaping a hedge, he was obliged to defend himself with his stick;—he again ran off, but when passing over a stile, the drummer struck him with his sword upon the wrist. Allan viewed the wound with deep emotion, and then looking at the drummer, he exclaimed with a minstrel's pride, "Ye ha'e spoiled the best pipe-hand in England."—Allan was now completely conquered, the sergeant conducted him to Hexham, and lodged him in the house of correction. But many respectable persons, sorry for his misfortune, interested themselves in procuring his discharge, which was the more readily obtained, as his wound disabled him in future from imposing on the military.

Allan retired to Rothbury, and shortly after married, and lived with his wife about three years, with wonderful sobriety; but he became acquainted with



one Mary Rawlins, a loose, dissolute woman. To support Moll's extravagance, he had recourse to all the thievish tricks of his youth. About this time he stole the iron gear from a number of ploughs; and having loaded a stout ass, he dispatched Moll to sell the plunder to an old acquaintance in Gateshead. The dealer, however, gave her only a trifle for the whole lot, which so exasperated Allan, that he vowed to be revenged. Borrowing three galloways, and accompanied by his honest partner, he reached Pipewellgate between 12 and 1 o'clock at night, and entered the dealer's warehouse by means of false keys. Striking a light, he and Moll soon filled the empty panniers with old iron. He then slipped off, and she knocked at the house door. When admitted, she told the dealer she had had good luck, and would sell the whole by lump, if he would be generous. The bargain was soon made, and Allan returned exulting in having justly recompensed this honest man. At length Allan grew weary of Moll, and having secured his pipes and some clean linen, he took up with a gipsy girl, named Nell Clark, thoroughly skilled in the art of deception.

Having a plot laid to dupe a ship captain's wife, whose vessel was lying at the Quay, Allan imparted his scheme to Nell, who became interestedly active in its execution. Discovering the captain on shore, Allan paid his wife a visit on board.—Being previously acquainted, Allan soon persuaded her to elope with him. She was true to her appointment, carrying two large bundles of clothes and other valuables. Nell acting as a servant, took the bundles, and Allan, after walking a little way up the Quay, bid the captain's wife wait till he entered a public-house for his pipes; and going in at one door, and out at the other which led into the entry, where Nell was waiting, they proceeded to their lodgings, and spent the night in drinking. Having sold the clothes, they fled to Sunderland, where they spent their ill-gotten

gains. One night Nell came home greatly hurried, and raising Allan out of bed, insisted on moving off. When on the road to Newcastle, Allan enquired the reason for such haste. Nell answered, "A purse of gold and a watch are worth preserving." On reaching Newcastle, Nell bought him a suit of new clothes, and then determined to enjoy herself. One evening Nell entered their lodgings, and said, 'Now, my man, Jemmy, I'm ready to go.' He suspected all was not right, and packing up his pipes and clothes, they proceeded to Morpeth. Stopping at a spring to drink, Allan was preparing the rim of his hat for that purpose, when Nell thrust a massive silver tankard into his hand, saying, "Fill it half full of water, and I'll add as much brandy to hansom our new jug." Apprehensive of pursuit, Allan pushed on to Rothbury, where he shortly after *borrowed* a mare of Mr. James Brown, and being apprehended, was tried in the Moot-hall, found guilty, and condemned to be marked in the hand, which, by the influence of the Duke of Northumberland, was performed at the bar with a cold iron.

After this Allan resided in North Shields, for several years, playing at assemblies, and at night as a *wait*—during which time he extensively carried on the practice of horse-stealing: whenever he was in want, he paid a visit to the south of Scotland, and *borrowed* one. An opportunity offering of *borrowing* one nearer home, he could not resist the temptation. One evening, after playing at the sign of the Dun Cow, Quayside, Newcastle, he stole a bay horse from Mr. Robinson, of Gateshead. Two days after he was apprehended at Jedburgh, and committed to Durham gaol. At the following assizes, held August, 1803, he was found guilty, and received sentence of *death*, but it was commuted to transportation for life, which was mitigated for perpetual imprisonment. He was confined about seven years, and then removed to the house of correction, where he died on the 13th Nov. 1810, aged 77. At the in-

fluence of some gentlemen a pardon was obtained, but it did not arrive till after his death. This document, which is curious as being one of the first official papers signed by Geo. IV. is possessed by Mr. John Bell, Gateshead.

“ All ye whom Music’s charms inspire,  
 Who skilful Minstrels do admire,—  
 All ye whom bagpipe lilt can fire,  
     ’Tween Wear and Tweed,  
 Come strike with me the mournful lyre,  
     For ALLAN’s dead !

“ No more, where Coquet’s stream doth glide,  
 Shall we view JEMMY in his pride,  
 With bagpipe buckled to his side,  
     And nymphs and swains  
 In groups collect, at even-tide,  
     To hear his strains.

“ When elbow mov’d, and bellows blew,  
 On green or floor the dancers flew,  
 In mazy turns ran through and through,  
     With cap’ring canter,  
 And aye their nimble feet beat true  
     To his sweet chanter.

“ Attentive aye, and aye admiring,  
 I’ve listen’d to his pipe inspiring,  
 At feast and fair—at race and hiring,  
     And then gat in’  
 And never thought of home retiring  
     While drone he blew.”

