

DONALD COUPER.

We get a very decisive example of the homely simplicity and rustic baldness of the early popular music of Scotland, in an undoubted favourite lively air of at least the age of the Commonwealth—namely, *Donald Couper*—which has been preserved in Playford's *Dancing Master*, published in 1657. That it was a dancing tune in general esteem then and in the reign of Charles II. is proved, first, by its being thus admitted into a contemporary English collection; and, secondly, by an allusion to it in Cleland's poem on the Highland Host, circa 1679:

‘ Trumpets sounded, skenes were glancing,
Some were *Donald Couper* dancing.’

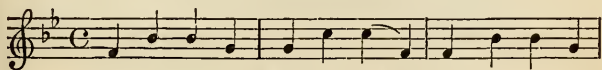
Nor did this wide popularity soon cease, for in Durfey's *Pills to*

¹ See Wood's *Songs of Scotland*, ii. 120.

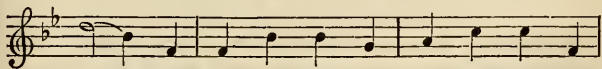
Purge Melancholy, volume v., published in 1719, there is an indecorous song by himself 'to the tune of *Daniel Cooper*.'

If the original verses, as published by Herd, and here placed in connection with Playford's version of the air, had been presented by Playford also, we should have had an equally expressive example of what nearly all our evidence tends to shew, the extreme rusticity, as well as puerility, of the great bulk of our national song poetry before the time when a few men of cultivated talents—Sir William Scott (?), Lieutenant Hamilton (?), Ramsay, Crawford, Mallet, and others—took it up, purified, and elevated it.

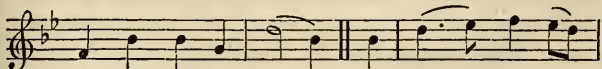
The history of our national airs and songs may be said to exhibit a constant process of change upon certain original elements. One air becomes the mother of a fairer daughter, or of a family of fairer daughters. Thus we can readily trace, in the rude *staccato* strains of *Donald Couper*, the basis of the much superior *For a' that, and a' that*. The elements of several of our best existing airs are seen in the variously named melodies of the Skene Manuscript, as some of the roots of our language are visible in Sanscrit.



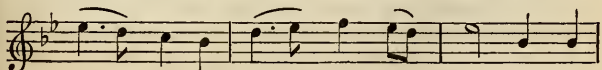
Don - ald Cou - per and his man, They've gane to the



fair; They've gane to court a bon - nie lass; But



fient a ane was there. Sing hey Don - ald,



how Don - ald, Hey Don - ald Cou - per! He's

gane a - wa' to court a wife, And he's come hame with-

out her!

Donald Couper and his man,
 They've gane to the fair ;
 They've gane to court a bonnie lass ;
 But fient a ane was there.
 Sing hey Donald, how Donald,
 Hey Donald Couper !
 He's gane awa' to court a wife,
 And he's come hame without her !

But he has gotten an auld wife,
 And she's come hirplin' hame ;
 And she's faun o'er the buffet stool,
 And brak her rumple bane !