

Another contemporary of Shirrefs, and, if we are not much mistaken, a contributor to the early numbers of his magazine, was a young citizen who took early to literature, and who, in subsequent years, at Dundee and Edinburgh, rose to considerable eminence as a journalist. We refer to WILLIAM BROWN, son of the Rev. William Brown, of Craigdam, and brother to Alexander Brown, who was Provost of Aberdeen for two periods of one year each—viz., in 1822-3, and again in 1826-7. He served

his apprenticeship to a merchant or shopkeeper in Aberdeen, went south to Dundee, where he edited a periodical called *The Dundee Repository*; had a bookseller's shop in the Parliament Close, Edinburgh, in 1793; was editor of the *Edinburgh Herald and Chronicle*; was latterly editor and part proprietor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, and died in 1809. The two pieces which, we suspect, came from his pen to the *Caledonian Magazine*, are signed "W. B., Dundee", and appear in the numbers for January and March, 1787. One of them—"Verses Sent to a Friend with a Bicker"—struck us, as exceedingly like his style, before we became aware of his connection with Dundee. Through the kindness of his grandson, William Miller, Esq., S.S.C., Edinburgh, we have been favoured with a perusal of some of this obscure bard's MS. pieces, for, though Mr. Brown was, throughout life, a diligent devotee at the shrine of the muses, he threw off his pieces with a carelessness as to their ultimate fate, much to be regretted now when one would fain see the collection. One of his earliest productions, written while yet an apprentice in Aberdeen, is a rhymed epistle addressed to his immediately elder brother, John, who became a medical practitioner. Some of the stanzas are good:—

Ye dinna sham folk wi' riff-raff,
 Hech! how ye skreed the Latin aff;
 That classic lear is noble scaff;
 I'd fill ye fou
 Wi' Fairntosh to hae it half
 As ready's you.

Ye ken I ne'er was weel-vers'd in't,
 But what I had is feckly tint,
 The best's awa an' left a-hint
 But jist a smatterin';
 My mither tongue is a' the print
 I read or clatter in.

Just like Nainsell's claymore sae trusty,
 Whilk sin Culloden's lien sae rusty,
 It's sae margulied now an' musty
 (I may avow it),
 His gardies were baith lang an' lusty
 Wha'd fairly pu' it.

Instead of Ovid, Virgil, Horace,
 Ledger an' Journal lie afore us ;
 The poets a' may sing in chorus,
 Tho' they're nae gash ;
 Their wark wi' maxims winna store us,
 To draw the cash.

When time allows, in some by-nook,
 I'll pore a moment on a book,
 Whiles Ramsay an' whiles Penecuik,
 Milton or Pope ;
 But nought can dull *Avarus* brook
 But hoardin' up.

He labours late an' ear for gear,
 An' cries down ilka kind o' lear,
 "Gin ye be rich, ye needna care
 For Greek or Latin ;
 To study Cocker, Hill, or Mair,
 Were some mair settin.

"What tho' ye were as wond'rous gabby
 As Ramsay or aul'-farren Rabbie,
 Gin ye be hunger'd, poor, an' shabby ;
 Tak' tint in time,
 You'll never mak' yer plack a bawbee
 By writin' 'rhyme'".

* * * * *

Sae sneers an' taunts the purse-proud scum,
 Nor is he wrang, to this it's come ;
 Your heads o' wit scarce get a crum,
 But live neglected,
 While numskulls, wha can boast their plum,
 Are aye respected.

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Frae cockin' on an English board,
 Hame *Buckram* comes wi' fashions stored,
 As pridefu' as an English lord,
 The gauked gowk ;
 Forsooth, a barb'rous auld Scotch word
 Wad gar him couk !

In a Scots-English mongrel gabble,
 Like twa-three barrowmen at Babel,
 He'll bann the Scots, an' baul an' habble,
 The silly ape !
 Wi' silly words gars a' the rabble
 Wi' wonder gape.

'Tis only senseless, sa'nless sotts
 (As void o' gumption's Hottentots),
 Wha frae their foul, unsonsy throats
 Sic venom skyte,
 An' gainst our pithy, feckfu' Scots
 Shaw siccan spite.

We've e'en some Dotards here at hame,
 Wha to their everlasting shame
 Their pithless, brittle, blunt shafts aim,
 Like brainless bully,
 Auld honest Allan's deathless fame,
 Forsooth to sully.

The above very plainly shows that William Brown had, early in life, attained a considerable mastery over the lyrical manipulation of his mother tongue. Indeed, he seems to have studied Ramsay, Fergusson, and Pennecuik to considerable advantage, for we have met with nothing in the vernacular to surpass, and few things to equal, his dialogues in "Look before ye Loup: or a Box o' Healin' Sa' for the Crackit Crowns o' Country Politicians", a couple of satires which, under the *nom-de-plume* of "Tam Thrum, an Auld Weaver", he published in 1793 and 1794. Here is another sample of his muse, a song, written between 1805 and 1809, so simply pathetic and tender, that, had he written nothing else, it alone would entitle him to rank among our minor bards:—

Air—Todlin' Hame.

Dim, dim is that e'e, as the dew drap ance clear,
 Pale, pale is that cheek, an' weet wi' the tear;
 An' heavily heaves that saft bosom of sna',
 For Willie, her true love, her Willie's awa'.
 Willie's awa', Willie's awa',
 Nae mair to return is my Willie awa'.

Sad, sad was the hour when he bade me adieu,
 While he hung on my bosom an' vow'd to be true;
 My heart it was burstin' the last time I saw
 The fast less'ning sail that bore Willie awa',
 Willie's awa', &c.

For honour my Willie brav'd danger an' toil,
 An' he fought, an' he fell, wi' the Lad o' the Nile;
 To dee for his country had terrors but sma'
 For my true-hearted sailor—my Willie awa'.
 Willie's awa', &c.

Lament him ye fair, an' lament him ye brave,
 Tho' unshrouded he lies, and the sea is his grave;
 For the kindest, the truest, the bravest of a'
 Was Willie—my Willie—an' Willie's awa'.
 Willie's awa', &c.

The outbreak of the French Revolution was hailed with loud acclamation by most lovers of liberty, especially those who looked at affairs through poetical spectacles. We need only mention Burns and Wordsworth among those who were glamourous with the vain dream of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity in France. As a rule, most of the sympathisers with the Revolution changed their views before long, but abstract Liberty was all the richer for a few good poems and songs called forth during the early days of the bloody drama. An offering at the shrine, by Brown, will be found in the following spirited verses, "The Progress of Liberty", which appeared, in 1793, in the first part of "Look before ye Loup":—

Tune—*Duncan Davison.*

From dreary dens and woodlands wild,
 A matchless maid came stepping forth;
 Frank, honest, open, Nature's child,
 The face of joy, the soul of worth.
 Her air was noble; natur' grace
 In ev'ry motion, one might trace;
 The morning brightened in her face;
 And mortals hailed her—Liberty.

Long 'mid the roving tribes she sung
 The blessings of the rural reign;
 And hill and dale and valley rung
 With gentle Freedom's joyous strain—
 Till war, with all his ruffian train,
 Invades the mansion of the swain,
 And tyrants clank the galling chain,
 And banish love and Liberty.

Greece, now before the stranger bowed;
 Her voice each hero's bosom fir'd—
 The marble breathed; the canvas glow'd:
 The poet sang as she inspir'd;
 Till civil Discord shook the land,
 And Faction reared its flaming brand,
 And leagued with Philip's hellish band
 To plot the death of Liberty.

Next Rome, by Freedom's genius led,
 Arose to empire and to fame ;
 Opposing hosts before her fled,
 And nations trembl'd at her name.
 But curs'd Ambition gave the word ;
 And brother fell by brother's sword,
 And Cæsar rose, her conquering lord,
 And parted Rome and Liberty.

And now, through many a varying clime,
 She seeks the gen'rous and the brave ;
 She spoke—and Venice rose sublime
 From out the Adriatic wave ;
 Helvetia rous'd her warlike train,
 Her mountains echo'd Freedom's strain ;
 And Belgia, scorning Philip's chain,
 Proclaimed the reign of Liberty.

But Britain! still thy sons she cheer'd,
 And call'd their native courage forth :
 She saw Rome's conq'ring standard rear'd,
 And roused to arms the hardy North ;
 The mighty Galdus rush'd to war,
 While freedom shone his leading star,
 And Grampian echoes bore afar
 The sounds of Death or Liberty !

And here, through each revolving age,
 Hath flourished Freedom's gentle reign ;
 And joyous youth, and hoary age,
 Have pour'd to her the grateful strain.
 In vain oppression raised her head,
 She frown'd the faithless monster dead,
 And British bosoms dauntless bled
 To win the wreath of Liberty.

O Gallia! long by tyrants rul'd!
 Too long thy sons in durance pin'd—
 Too long by gloomy bigots school'd,
 Who captive held the free-born mind!
 With joy we saw the lambent light
 Burst through the gloomy mental night,
 And France, united, hail the bright,
 The glorious, dawn of Liberty.

Too soon the fair illusion fled ;
 Fierce Faction call'd his ruffian bands,
 And floods of Gallic blood were shed—
 The damnéd deed of Gallic hands !

Fair Freedom heav'd a piteous sigh,
The tear suffused her beaming eye,
And as she fled, her doleful cry
Was—France! thou'st ruin'd Liberty!

List, Britain! List the warning once,
And banish far intestine strife;
And ye, her happy sons, rejoice—
Possessed of all that sweetens life.
And O! preserve the sacred trust,
For which your fathers bit the dust;
To after ages yet be just,
And watch o'er British Liberty.

While curs'd Sedition o'er the land
Shakes poison from her tainted wing,
Let ev'ry British heart expand,
And hail with joy a Patriot King!
Let France and Faction live unblest;
Attend your country's high behest—
O! clasp her to your beating breast!
And live or die with Liberty.
