

A N S T E R F A I R.

AND

O T H E R P O E M S.

BY

WILLIAM TENNANT.

WITH A

PRELIMINARY MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS;
W. S. ORR AND COMPANY, LONDON; W. CURRY JUNIOR AND COMPANY,
AND G. YOUNG, DUBLIN; G. PILLIP, LIVERPOOL; W. MCDONNELL,
BELFAST; JOHN MACLEOD, GLASGOW;
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1838.



PEOPLE'S EDITION.

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PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION—MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

THE author of *Anster Fair* is a native of Anstruther, the town which he has endeavoured to celebrate in his poem—a royal burgh on the south-eastern shore of the county of Fife, noted also as the birth-place of the most celebrated pulpit orator of our times, Dr Chalmers. These two alumni of the same parish school, possessing, as it appears, the same enthusiasm for mental achievement, shot out in very different directions, the one as a playful and romantic poet, the other as a serious and romantic preacher—each original in his peculiar department, and each endowed with a dash of powerful, yet at times puerile, though richly diversified invention. After receiving, from the town schools, all the instruction, vernacular and classical, which was there supplied, Mr Tennant, for further advancement, was sent in 1799 to the University of St Andrews, where he had the happiness of attending the prelections of Dr Hunter and Dr Hill, by both of whom his taste for classical learning was encouraged and confirmed. Circumstances prevented the prosecution of his studies at that university longer than two years. He left it in May 1801, and not long thereafter became clerk to his brother, then corn-factor, first at Glasgow (in 1803-4), and latterly at Anstruther (1805-6, &c.), in which distracted and precarious situation, he, by a studious disposition of time, found opportunities of cultivating the muses in secret, and of reading in their own languages the productions of the most celebrated poets of ancient and modern Europe. Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Wieland, Camoëns, were all perused during the intervals of counting-house employment. Nor did he less gratify his literary curiosity in the severer and more dignified studies: history and archæology—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy—were studied with equal avidity. Above all descriptions of literature, he delighted in the books of the Hebrew writers, which, apart from all considerations of another kind of importance, he regarded, and still regards, as containing the finest and sublimest poetry to be found in the world. As a literary anecdote, and at the same time as an excitement to the juvenile student, it may be mentioned, that Mr Tennant's first reading of the Hebrew Bible was accomplished in half a year and three days, with no assistance but the grammar and dictionary. It may be instructive also to consider how this passion for Hebrew literature, cultivated at an early period of life and in secret, unencouraged and unpatronised, brought, thirty years thereafter, its own reward.

In the year 1811, being in his 27th year, and living in his father's house at Anstruther, much perplexed by commercial embarrassments into which he had been innocently drawn, he conceived and wrote his poem of *Anster Fair*, which, in the course of the ensuing year, was produced anonymously, in a small volume of plain appearance, by the bookseller of his native town.

Its provincial origin, limited sale, and perhaps, in some degree, the startling novelty of manner which characterised the poem, contributed to keep it in obscurity for more than a twelvemonth. The late Lord Woodhouselee, so distinguished as a polished scholar and critic, appears to have been the first member of the metropolitan learned world to become aware of the merits of the poem. In August 1812, he addressed the following letter to Mr Cockburn, the Anstruther publisher:—

"SIR—I have lately read, with a very high degree of pleasure, a small poetical performance, which I observe bears your name as publisher on the title-page. The author of *Anster Fair* cannot long remain concealed. It contains, in my opinion, unequivocal marks of strong original genius; a vein of humour of an uncommon cast, united with a talent for natural description of the most vivid and characteristic species, and, above all, a true feeling of the sublime—forming altogether one of the most pleasing and singular combinations of the

different powers of poetry that I have ever met with. Unless the author has very strong reasons for concealing his name, I must own that I should be much gratified by being informed of it. ALEX. FRASER TYTLER."

The notice of a few other such critics soon brought the name of the author before the public; and in the latter part of 1814, the merits of the poem were blazoned to the world at large by a generous notice from the pen of Mr Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review.

"We consider this volume," says the writer, "not only as eminently original, but as belonging to a class of composition hitherto but little known in the literature of this country—to that species, we mean, of gay or fantastic poetry which plays through the works of Pulci and Ariosto, and animates the compositions of many inferior writers both in Spain and in Italy—which is equally removed from the vulgarity of mere burlesque or mock-heroic, and from the sarcasm and point and finesse of satirical pleasantry—which is extravagant rather than ridiculous, and displays only the vague and unbounded licence of a sportive and raised imagination, without the cold pungency of wit, or the practised sagacity of derision. It frequently relaxes into childishness, and is sometimes concentrated to humour; but its leading character is a kind of enthusiastic gaiety—a certain intoxication and nimbleness of fancy, which pours out a profusion of images without much congruity or selection, and covers all the objects to which it is directed, with colours that are rather brilliant than harmonious, and combines them into groups that are more lively than graceful. This effervescence of the spirits has been hitherto supposed almost peculiar to the warmer regions of the south; and the poetry in which it naturally exhales itself, seems as if it could only find a suitable vehicle in their plastic and flexible idioms, or a fitting audience among the susceptible races by whom they were framed.

We are by no means certain that the present attempt will unsettle that opinion; and are very far from thinking, either that its success has been perfect, or that the author has been fortunate in the choice of a subject, or in all of the details of his execution. The attempt, however, is bold and vigorous; and indicates both talent and enterprise that may hereafter be more worthily employed. Hitherto, it is proper to mention, they have been exerted under circumstances the most unpropitious; for Mr Tennant is a kind of prodigy as well as Mr Hogg—and his book would be entitled to notice as a curiosity, even if its pretensions were much smaller than they are on the score of its literary merit." * *

"The subject, which we do not think very fortunately chosen, is borrowed from some ancient legends, respecting the marriage choice of a fair lady, whose beauty is still celebrated in the ballads and traditions of Mr Tennant's native district, and whose hand, it seems, was held out as the reward of the victor in an ass race, and a match of running in sacks—a competition of bagpiping, and of story-telling. Upon this homely foundation Mr Tennant has erected a vast superstructure of description, and expended a great treasure of poetry. He has also engrafted upon it the airy and ticklish machinery of Shakspeare's, or rather of Wieland's Oberon—though he has given the less adventurous name of Puck to his ministering spirit, who, with the female fairy to whom he is wedded, patronises the victor in these successive contentions, and secures not only his success, but his acceptance with the devoted fair." * *

"The great charm of this singular composition consists, no doubt, in the profusion of images and groups which it thrusts upon the fancy, and the crowd and hurry and animation with which they are all jostled and driven along; but this, though a very rare merit in any modern production, is entitled perhaps to less

distinction than the perpetual sallies and outbreaks of a rich and poetical imagination, by which the homely themes on which the author is professedly employed are constantly ennobled or contrasted, and in which the ardour of a mind evidently fitted for higher tasks is somewhat capriciously expended. It is this frequent kindling of the diviner spirit—this tendency to rise above the trivial subjects among which he has chosen to disport himself, and this power of connecting grand or beautiful conceptions with the representation of vulgar objects or ludicrous occurrences, that first recommended this poem to our notice, and still seem to us to entitle it to more general notoriety. The author is occupied, no doubt, in general, with low matters, and bent upon homely mirth, but his genius soars up every now and then in spite of him; and ‘his delights’—to use a quaint expression of Shakspeare—

‘his delights
Are dolphin-like, and show their backs above
The element they move in.’

With reference to the allusion to Mr Hogg, whose *Queen's Wake* was the subject of the antecedent article, it may be mentioned, that the latter individual always protested against the propriety of putting Mr Tennant and him into one category, as authors who had cultivated poetry in lowly and difficult circumstances, seeing that the Anstruther poet was, even at this early period of his life, a man of extensive and varied learning, while he of Ettrick was a totally uneducated shepherd. There was some justice in this remark; but it must be allowed that the reviewer was quite right in applauding Mr Tennant for the zeal and success with which he had unassistedly prosecuted those studies which gave him the advantage pointed out by Mr Hogg. The *Anster Fair*, when fully known, experienced considerable popularity, and was several times printed. It is worthy of observation, that it proved the means of reviving a form of stanza—the *ottava rima*—which the English poets of the sixteenth century derived from the Italian, but which had since then fallen into complete disuse. Some years after, this stanza was also used by Lord Byron in his *Beppo*, without any acknowledgment of its having been suggested to him by the *Anster Fair*. He afterwards employed it in *Don Juan*; and it became a favourite mode with other poets, particularly Mr Hookham Frere, though without the two additional syllables to the concluding lines, which Mr Tennant had thought desirable for the sake of impressiveness.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1813, the author of *Anster Fair* was preferred to the situation of schoolmaster in the parish of Denino, an upland district at the eastern angle of Fife, between Anstruther and St Andrews. The office brought him an income of about forty pounds a year, and was to be rejoiced in by the poet chiefly for its giving him rural quiet, and access to the library of the neighbouring university. He here continued his studies with all his former assiduity, and by means of books, without a master, acquainted himself with the Arabic, Syriac, and Persian languages. In respect of society, he would have been in a truly deso-

late condition, but for the friendship of a very accomplished country gentleman of his neighbourhood, Hugh Cleghorn, Esq. of Stravithie. He continued to officiate at Denino till 1816, when, chiefly through the kind intervention of Mr George Thomson, of Edinburgh, well known as the friend and correspondent of Burns, he was transferred to the more lucrative situation of parish schoolmaster at Lasswade, a village delightfully situated on the Esk, about six miles to the south of Edinburgh. The appointment was valuable, from its bringing Mr Tennant into contact with the literary men of the capital. He performed the duties of his laborious function at Lasswade till January 1819, when he was elected by the trustees of Dollar Institution to be the teacher of classical and oriental languages in that new and rising seminary. He there officiated till the beginning of 1835, when he attained a fit summit to the ambition of a modest scholar of his peculiar tastes, in being appointed by the crown to the vacant chair of Oriental Languages in St Mary's College at St Andrews. Since that time Mr Tennant has spent his winters at St Andrews, in the exercise of the duties of his professorship, though he still (1838) resides, during the summer months, at his beautifully situated villa of Devongrove, near Dollar.

Since the publication of *Anster Fair*, Mr Tennant has given to the world *The Thane of Fife*, a poem, *Cardinal Beaton*, a tragedy, and a spirited descriptive poem in the manner of Sir David Lindsay, under the title of *The Dinging Down of the Cathedral*—meaning the metropolitan church of Scotland at St Andrews, which was destroyed by the followers of Knox in one day.

It should perhaps have been mentioned, at an earlier part of this brief memoir, that Mr Tennant, though born without any personal malformation, lost, at an early period of his childhood, the use of his feet, so that all his motions through life have been performed on crutches. We have heard him state, that this, instead of diminishing his enjoyment of life, has rather added to it, and instead of retarding, has rather promoted his advance in the world, having not only tended to concentrate his mind upon his studies, but also to procure for him a sympathising friendship in many quarters where he had no other claim. We are to recollect, however, that lameness was, in his case, connected with none of that proud impatience which made it a source of unmingled misery to Byron, but with a temper of the serenest and blandest elements, which no friend, to our knowledge, has ever seen ruffled.

The present edition of *Anster Fair* comes before the world by virtue of an arrangement between Mr Tennant and the publishers, who were anxious that their series of cheap Standard Works, and more particularly their series of the Scottish Poets, should be graced by a work combining the humour of James the First and Dunbar, with that of Ariosto and Tassoni, and which, they are persuaded, nothing but *price* could have so long kept out of the hands of the humblest as well as the highest of the people. In addition to the main poem, they have been enabled to present a selection of Mr Tennant's shorter pieces, chiefly in the department of the familiar and the humorous.

ORIGINAL (AUTHOR'S) PREFACE.

THE following poem is presented to the public with that diffidence and anxiety which every young author feels when the good or bad fate of his first production must check his rashness and vanity, or enliven his future efforts with the confidence arising from popular approbation.

The poem is written in stanzas of octave rhyme, or the *ottava rima* of the Italians, a measure said to be invented by Boccaccio, and after him employed by Tasso and Ariosto. From these writers it was transferred into English poetry by Fairfax, in his translation of “*Jerusalem Delivered*,” but since his days, has been by our poets, perhaps, too little cultivated. The stanza of Fairfax is here shut with the Alexandrine of Spenser, that its close may be more full and sounding.

In a humorous poem, partly descriptive of Scottish

manners, it was impossible to avoid using Scottish words. These, however, will, it is hoped, be found not too many. Some old English words are likewise admitted.

The transactions of ANSTER FAIR may be supposed to have taken place during the reign of James V.—a monarch whom tradition reports to have had many gamesome rambles in Fife, and with whose liveliness and jollity of temper the merriment of the FAIR did not ill accord. Yet a scrupulous congruity with the modes of his times was not intended, and must not be expected. Ancient and modern manners are mixed and jumbled together, to heighten the humour, or variegate the description.

Edinburgh, 23d June 1614.

ANSTER FAIR.

CANTO I.

I.

WHILE some of Troy and pettish heroes sing,
And some of Rome and chiefs of pious fame,
And some of men that thought it harmless thing
To smite off heads in Mars's bloody game,
And some of Eden's garden gay with spring,
And Hell's dominions terrible to name—
I sing a theme far livelier, happier, gladder,
I sing of ANSTER FAIR, and bonny MAGGIE LAUDER.

II.

What time from east, from west, from south, from north,
From every hamlet, town, and smoky city,
Laird, clown, and bean, to Anster Fair came forth,
The young, the gay, the handsome, and the witty,
To try in various sport and game their worth,
Whilst prize before them MAGGIE sat, the pretty,
And after many a feat, and joke, and banter,
Fair MAGGIE'S hand was won by mighty ROB THE RANter.

III.

Muse, that from top of thine old Greekish hill,
Didst the harp-fing'ring Theban younker view,
And on his lips bid bees their sweets distil,
And gav'st the chariot that the white swans drew,
Oh lend me scoop, from thine ethereal rill,
Some little palmfuls of the blessed dew,
And lend the swan-drawn car, that safely I,
Like him, may scorn the earth, and burst into the sky.

IV.

Our themes are like; for he the games extoll'd
Held in the chariot-shaken Grecian plains,
Where the vain victor, arrogant and bold,
A pickle parsley got for all his pains;
I sing of sports more worthy to be told,
Where better prize the Scottish victor gains:
What were the crowns of Greece but wind and bladder,
Compared with marriage-bed of bonny MAGGIE LAUDER!

V.

And oh that King Apollo would but grant
A little spark of that transcendent flame,
That fir'd the Chian rhapsodist to chant
How vied the bowmen for Ulysses' dame,
And him of Rome to sing how Atalant
Plied, dart in hand, the suitor-slaught'ring game,
Till the bright gold, bow'd forth along the grass,
Betray'd her to a spouse, and stopp'd the bounding lass!

VI.

But lo! from bosom of yon southern cloud,
I see the chariot come which Pindar bore;
I see the swans, whose white necks, arching proud,
Glitter with golden yoke, approach my shore:
For me they come; Oh Phoebus, potent god!
Spare, spare me now—enough, good king—no more—
A little spark I ask'd in moderation,
Why scorch me ev'n to death with fiery inspiration?

VII.

My pulse beats fire—my pericranium glows,
Like baker's oven, with poetic heat;
A thousand bright ideas, spurning prose,
Are in a twinkling hatch'd in Fancy's seat;
Zounds! they will fly out at my ears and nose,
If through my mouth they find not passage fleet;
I hear them buzzing deep within my noddle,
Like bees that in their hives confus'dly hum and huddle.

VIII.

How now?—what's this?—my very eyes, I trow,
Drop on my hands their base prosaic scales;
My visual orbs are purg'd from film, and lo!
Instead of ANSTER'S turnip-bearing vales,
I see old Fairyland's mirac'ous show,
Her trees of tinsel kiss'd by freakish gales,
Her ouphes, that cloak'd in leaf-gold skim the breeze,
And fairies swarming thick as mites in rotten cheese.

IX.

I see the puny fair-chinn'd goblin rise
Suddenly glorious from his mustard pot;
I see him wave his hand in seemly wise,
And button round him tight his fulgent coat;
While MAGGIE LAUDER, in a great surprise,
Sits startled on her chair, yet fearing not;
I see him open his dewy lips; I hear
The strange and strict command address'd to MAGGIE'S
ear.

X.

I see the RANter with bagpipe on back,
As to the Fair he rides jocundly on;
I see the crowds that press with speed not slack
Along each road that leads to ANSTER LOAN;
I see the suitors, that, deep-sheath'd in sack,
Hobble and tumble, bawl and swear, and groan;
I see—but fie, thou brainish Muse! what mean
These vapourings, and brags of what by thee is seen?

XI.

Go to—be cooler, and in order tell
To all my good co-townsmen list'ning round,
How every merry incident befell,
Whereby our Loan shall ever be renown'd;
Say first, what elf or fairy could impel
Fair MAG, with wit, and wealth, and beauty crown'd,
To put her suitors to such waggish test,
And give her happy bed to him that jumped best.

XII.

'Twas on a keen December night, John Frost
Drove thro' mid air his chariot, icy-wheel'd,
And from the sky's crisp ceiling star-embost,
Whiff'd off the clouds that the pure blue conceal'd;
The hornless moon amid her brilliant host
Shone, and with silver-sheeted lake and field;
'Twas cutting cold; I'm sure, each trav'ler's nose
Was pinch'd right red that night, and numb'd were all
his toes.

XIII.

Not so were MAGGIE LAUDER'S toes, as she
In her warm chamber at her supper sate
(For 'twas that hour when burgeses agree
To eat their suppers ere the night grows late).
Alone she sat, and pensive as may be
A young fair lady, wishful of a mate;
Yet with her teeth held now and then a-picking,
Her stomach to refresh, the breast-bone of a chicken.

XIV.

She thought upon her suitors, that with love
Besiege her chamber all the livelong day,
Aspiring each her virgin heart to move
With courtship's every troublesome essay—
Calling her angel, sweetening, fondling, dove,
And other nicknames in love's frivolous way;
While she, though their addresses still she heard,
Held back from all her heart, and still no bean preferr'd.

XV.

"What, what!" quo' MAG, "must thus it be my doom
To spend my prime in maidhood's joyless state,
And waste away my sprightly body's bloom
In spouseless solitude without a mate—
Still toying with my suitors, as they come
Cringing in lowly courtship to my gate!
Fool that I am, to live unwed so long!
More fool, since I am woo'd by such a clam'rous throng!"

XVI.

For was e'er heiress with much gold in chest,
And dowr'd with acres of wheat-bearing land,
By such a pack of men, in am'rous quest,
Fawningly spaniel'd to bestow her hand?
Where'er I walk, the air that feeds my breast
Is by the gusty sighs of lovers fann'd;
Each wind that blows waits love-cards to my lap;
Whilst I—ah stupid MAG!—avoid each am'rous trap!

XVII.

Then come, let me my suitors' merits weigh,
And in the worthiest lad my spouse select:—
First, there's our ANSTER merchant, Norman Ray,
A powder'd wight with golden buttons deck'd,
That stinks with scent, and chats like popinjay,
And struts with phiz tremendously erect:
Four brigs has he that on the broad sea swim;—
He is a pompous fool—I cannot think of him.

XVIII.

Next is the maltster Andrew Strang, that takes
His seat i'the baillie's loft on Sabbath-day,
With paltry visage white as oaten cakes,
As if no blood runs gurgling in his clay;
Heav'ns! what an awkward hunch the fellow makes,
As to the priest he does the bow repay!
Yet he is rich—a very wealthy man, true—
But, by the holy rood, I will have none of Andrew.

XIX.

Then for the lairds—there's Melvil of Carnbee,
A handsome gallant, and a beau of spirit;
Who can go down the dance so well as he?
And who can fiddle with such manly merit?
Ay, but he is too much the debauchee—
His cheeks seem sponges oozing port and claret;
In marrying him I should bestow myself ill—
And so, I'll not have you, thou fuddler, Harry Melvil!

XX.

There's Cunningham of Barns, that still assails
With verse and billet-doux my gentle heart—
A bookish squire, and good at telling tales,
That rhymes and whines of Cupid, flame, and dart;
But, oh! his mouth a sorry smell exhales,
And on his nose sprouts horribly the wart;
What though there be a fund of lore and fun in him?
He has a rotten breath—I cannot think of Cunningham!

XXI.

Why then, there's Allardyce, that plies his snit
And battery of courtship more and more;
Spruce Lochmalonie, that with booted foot
Each morning wears the threshold of my door;
Auchmoutie too and Bruce, that persecute
My tender heart with am'rous buffets sore:—
Whom to my hand and bed should I promote!—
Eh-lah! what sight is this!—what ails my mustard-pot?"

XXII.

Here broke the lady her soliloquy;
For in a twink her pot of mustard, lo!
Self-moved, like Jove's wheel'd stool that rolls on high,
'Gan caper on her table to and fro,
And hopp'd and fidgeted before her eye,
Spontaneous, here and there, a wondrous show:
As leaps, instinct with mercury, a bladder,
So leaps the mustard-pot of bonny MAGGIE LAUDER.

XXIII.

Soon stopp'd its dance th' ignoble utensil,
When from its round and small recess there came
Thin curling wreaths of paly smoke, that still,
Fed by some magic unapparent flame,

Mount to the chamber's stucco'd roof, and fill
Each nook with fragrance, and refresh the dame:
Ne'er smelt a Phoenix-nest so sweet, I wot,
As smelt the luscious fumes of MAGGIE'S mustard-pot.

XXIV.

It reeked censer-like; then, strange to tell!
Forth from the smoke, that thick and thicker grows,
A fairy of the height of half an ell,
In dwarfish pomp, majestically rose:
His feet, upon the table 'stablish'd well,
Stood trim and splendid in their snake-skin hose;
Gleam'd topaz-like the breeches he had on,
Whose waistband like the bend of summer rainbow
shone.

XXV.

His coat seem'd fashion'd of the threads of gold,
That intertwine the clouds at sun-set hour,
And, certes, Iris with her shuttle bold
Wove the rich garment in her lofty bower;
To form its buttons were the Pleiads old
Pluck'd from their sockets, sure by genie-power,
And sew'd upon the coat's resplendant hem;
Its neck was lovely green, each cuff a sapphire gem.

XXVI.

As when the churlish spirit of the Cape
To Gama, voyaging to Mozambique,
Up-popp'd from sea, a tangle-tassel'd* shape,
With mussels sticking inch-thick on his cheek,
And 'gan with tortoise-shell his limbs to scrape,
And yawn'd his monstrous blobbenlips to speak;
Brave Gama's hairs stood bristled at the sight,
And on the tarry deck sunk down his men with fright.

XXVII.

So sudden (not so huge and grimly dire)
Uprose to MAGGIE'S stounded eyne the sprite,
As fair a fairy as you could desire,
With ruddy cheek, and chin and temples white;
His eyes seem'd little points of sparkling fire,
That, as he look'd, charm'd with inviting light;
He was, indeed, as bonny a fay and brisk,
As e'er on long moon-beam was seen to ride and frisk.

XXVIII.

Around his bosom, by a silken zone,
A little bagpipe gracefully was bound,
Whose pipes like hollow stalks of silver shone,
The glist'ring tiny avenues of sound;
Beneath his arm the windy bag, full blown,
Heav'd up its purple like an orange round,
And only waited orders to discharge
Its blasts with charming groan into the sky at large.

XXIX.

He wav'd his hand to MAGGIE, as she sat
Amaz'd and startl'd on her carved chair;
Then took his petty feather-garnish'd hat
In honour to the lady, from his hair,
And made a bow so dignifiedly flat,
That MAG was witched with his beauish air:
At last he spoke, with voice so soft, so kind,
So sweet, as if his throat with fiddle-strings was lin'd.

XXX.

"Lady! be not offended that I dare,
Thus forward and impertinently rude,
Emerge, uncall'd, into the upper air,
Intruding on a maiden's solitude;
Nay, do not be alarm'd, thou lady fair!
Why startle so!—I am a fairy good;
Not one of those that, envying beauteous maids,
Speckle their skins with moles, and fill with spleens
their heads.

XXXI.

For, as conceal'd in this clay-house of mine,
I overheard thee in a lowly voice,
Weighing thy lovers' merits, with design
Now on the worthiest lad to fix thy choice,

* *Tangle-tassel'd*, hung round with tangle (sea-weed) as with tassels. I observe tangle in Bailey's Dictionary, though not in Johnson's.

I have up-bolted from my paltry shrine,
To give thee, sweet-eye'd lass, my best advice;
For, by the life of Oberon my king!
To pick good husband out is, sure, a ticklish thing.

XXXII.

And never shall good Tommy Puck permit
Such an assemblage of unwonted charms
To cool some lecher's lewd licentious fit,
And sleep imbouded by his boisterous arms:
What though his fields by twenty ploughs be split,
And golden wheat wave riches on his farms!
His house is shame—it cannot, shall not be;
A greater, happier doom, O MAG, awaiteth thee.

XXXIII.

Strange are indeed the steps by which thou must
Thy glory's happy eminence attain;
But fate hath fix'd them, and 'tis fate's 'tadjust
The mighty links that ends to means enchain;
Nor may poor Puck his little fingers thrust
Into the links to break Jove's steel in twain;
Then, MAGGIE, hear, and let my words descend
Into thy soul, for much it boots thee to attend.

XXXIV.

To-morrow, when o'er th' Isle of May the sun
Lifts up his forehead bright with golden crown,
Call to thine house the light-heel'd men, that run
Afar on messages for ANSTER TOWN,
Fellows of sp'rit, by none in speed out-done,
Of lofty voice, enough a drum to drown,
And bid them hie, post-haste, through all the nation,
And publish, far and near, this famous proclamation:

XXXV.

Let them proclaim, with voice's loudest tone,
That on your next approaching market-day,
Shall merry sports be held in ANSTER LOAN,
With celebration notable and gay;
And that a prize, than gold or costly stone
More precious, shall the victor's toils repay,
Ev'n thy own form with beauties so replete—
Nay, MAGGIE, start not thus!—thy marriage-bed, my
sweet.

XXXVI.

First, on the Loan shall ride full many an ass,
With stout whip-wielding rider on his back,
Intent with twinkling hoof to pelt the grass,
And pricking up his long ears at the crack;
Next o'er the ground the daring men shall pass,
Half-coffin'd in their cumbances of sack,
With heads just peeping from their shrines of bag,
Horribly hobbling round, and straining hard for MAG.

XXXVII.

Then shall the pipers groaningly begin
In squeaking rivalry their merry strain,
Till Bilyness shall echo back the din,
And Innergelly woods shall ring again;
Last, let each man that hopes thy hand to win
By witty product of prolific brain,
Approach, and, confident of Pallas' aid,
Claim by an hum'rous tale possession of thy bed.

XXXVIII.

Such are the wondrous tests by which, my love!
The merits of thy husband must be tried,
And he that shall in these superior prove
(One proper husband shall the Fates provide),
Shall from the Loan with thee triumphant move
Homeward, the jolly bridegroom and the bride,
And at thy house shall eat the marriage-feast,
When I'll pop up again." Here Tommy Puck surceast.

XXXIX.

He ceas'd, and to his wee mouth, dewy-wet,
His bagpipe's tube of silver up he held,
And underneath his down-press'd arm he set
His purple bag, that with a tempest swell'd;
He play'd and pip'd so sweet, that never yet
Mac had a piper heard that Puck excell'd;
Had Midas heard a tune so exquisite,
By Heav'n! his long base ears had quiver'd with delight.

XL.

Tingle the fire-ir'ns, poker, tongs, and grate,
Responsive to the blythesome melody!
The tables and the chairs inanimate
Wish they had muscles now to trip it high!
Wave back and forwards at a wondrous rate,
The window-curtains, touch'd with sympathy!
Fork, knife, and trencher, almost break their sloth,
And caper on their ends upon the table-cloth!

XLI.

How then could MAGGIE, sprightly, smart, and young,
Withstand that bagpipe's blythe awak'ning air?
She, as her ear-drum caught the sounds, up-sprung
Like lightning, and despid' her idle chair,
And into all the dance's graces flung
The bounding members of her body fair;
From nook to nook through all her room she tript,
And whirl'd like whirligig, and reel'd, and bobbd', and
skipt.

XLII.

At last the little piper ceas'd to play,
And deftly bow'd, and said, "My dear, good night;"
Then in a smoke vanish'd clean away,
With all his gaudy apparatus bright;
As breaks soap-bubble, which a boy in play
Blows from his short tobacco-pipe aright,
So broke poor Puck from view, and on the spot
Y-smoking aloes-reek he left his mustard-pot.

XLIII.

Whereat the furious lady's wriggling feet
Forgot to patter in such pelting wise,
And down she gladly sunk upon her seat,
Fatigu'd and panting from her exercise;
She sat, and mus'd a while, as it was meet,
On what so late had occupied her eyes;
Then to her bed-room went, and doff'd her gown,
And laid upon her couch her charming person down.

XLIV.

Some say that MAGGIE slept so sound that night,
As never she had slept since she was born;
But sure am I, that, thoughtful of the sprite,
She twenty times upon her bed did turn;
For still appear'd to stand before her sight
The gaudy goblin, glorious from his urn,
And still within the cavern of her ear,
Th' injunction echoing rung, so strict and strange to hear.

XLV.

But when the silver-harness'd steeds, that draw
The car of morning up th' empyreal height,
Had snorted day upon North-Berwick Law,
And from their glist'ring loose manes toss'd the light,
Immediately from bed she rose (such awe
Of Tommy press'd her soul with anxious weight),
And donn'd her tissued fragrant morning vest,
And to fulfil his charge her earliest care address.

XLVI.

Straight to her house she carried not to call
Her messengers and heralds swift of foot,
Men skill'd to hop o'er dykes and ditches; all
Gifted with sturdy brazen lungs to boot;
She bade them halt at every town, and bawl
Her proclamation out with mighty bruit,
Inviting loud, to ANSTER LOAN and FAIR,
The Scottish bean to jump for her sweet person there.

XLVII.

They took each man his staff into his hand;
They button'd round their bellies close their coats;
They flew divided through the frozen land;
Were never seen such swiftly-trav'ling Scots!
Nor ford, slough, mountain, could their speed withstand;
Such fleetness have the men that feed on oats!
They skirr'd, they flounder'd thro' the sleet and snows,
And puff'd against the winds, that bit in spite each nose.

XLVIII.

They halted at each wall-fenc'd town renown'd,
And ev'ry lesser borough of the nation;
And with the trumpet's welkin-rifing sound,
And tuck of drum of loud reverberation,

Tow'rds the four wings of heav'n, they, round and round,
Proclaim'd in Stentor-like vociferation,
That, on th' approaching day of ANSTER market,
Should merry sports be held :—Hush ! listen now and
hark it !—

XLIX.

“ Ho ! beaux and pipers, wits and jumpers, ho !
Ye buxom blades that like to kiss the lasses ;
Ye that are skill'd sew'd up in sacks to go ;
Ye that excel in *horsemanship* of asses ;
Ye that are smart at telling tales, and know
On Rhyme's two stilts to crutch it up Parnassus ;
Ho ! lads, your sacks, pipes, asses, tales, prepare
To jump, play, ride, and rhyme, at ANSTER Loan and
FAIR !

L.

First, on the green turf shall each ass draw nigh,
Caparison'd or clouted for the race,
With mounted rider, sedulous to ply
Cudgel or whip, and win the foremost place ;
Next shall th' advent'rous men, that dare to try
Their bodies' springiness in hempen case,
Put on their bags, and, with ridic'ulous bound,
And sweat and huge turmoil, pass lab'ring o'er the
ground.

LI.

Then shall the pipers, gentlemen o' the drone,
Their pipes in gleesome competition screw,
And grace, with loud solemnity of groan,
Each his invented tune to th' audience new ;
Last shall each witty bard, to whom is known
The craft of Helicon's rhyme-jingling crew,
His story tell in good poetic strains,
And make his learned tongue the midwife to his brains.

LII.

And he whose tongue the wittiest tale shall tell,
Whose bagpipe shall the sweetest tune resound,
Whose heels, tho' clogg'd with sack, shall jump it well,
Whose ass shall foot with fleetest hoof the ground,
He who from all the rest shall bear the bell,
With victory in every trial crown'd,
He (mark it, lads !) to MAGGIE LAUDER's house
That self same night shall go, and take her for his spouse.*

LIII.

Here ceas'd the criers of the sturdy lungs ;
But here the gossip Fame (whose body's pores
Are naught but open ears and babbling tongues,
That gape and wriggle on her hide in scores)
Began to jabber o'er each city's throngs,
Blaz'ning the news through all the Scottish shores ;
Nor had she blabb'd, methinks, so stoutly, since
Queen Dido's peace was broke by Troy's love-truant
Prince.

LIV.

In every Lowland vale and Highland glen,
She nois'd th' approaching fun of ANSTER FAIR ;
Ev'n when in sleep were laid the sons of men,
Snoring away on good chaff-beds their care,
You might have heard her faintly murmur then,
For lack of audience, to the midnight air,
That from Fife's East Nook up to farthest Stornoway,
Fair MAGGIE's loud report most rapidly was borne away.

LV.

And soon the mortals, that design to strive
By meritorious jumping for the prize,
Train up their bodies, ere the day arrive,
To th' lumpish sack-encumber'd exercise ;
You might have seen no less than four or five
Hobbling in each town-loan in awkward guise ;
E'en little boys, when from the school let out,
Mimick'd the bigger beaux, and leap'd in pokes about.

LVI.

Through cots and granges with industrious foot,
By laird and knight were light-heel'd asses sought,
So that no ass of any great repute,
For twenty Scots marks could have then been bought ;
Nor e'er, before or since, the long-ear'd brute
Was such a goodly acquisition thought.
The pipers vex'd their ears and pipes t'invent
Some tune that might the taste of ANSTER MAC content.

LVII.

Each poet, too, whose lore-manured brain
Is hot of soil, and sprouts up mushroom wit,
Ponder'd his noddle into extreme pain
T' excogitate some story nice and fit :
When rack'd had been his skull some hours in vain,
He, to relax his mind a little bit,
Plung'd deep into a sack his precious body,
And school'd it for the race, and hopp'd around his study.

LVIII.

Such was the sore preparatory care
Of all th' ambitious that for April sigh :
Nor sigh the young alone for ANSTER FAIR ;
Old men and wives, erewhile content to die,
Who hardly can forsake their easy-chair,
To take, abroad, farewell of sun and sky,
With new desire of life now glowing, pray,
That they may just o'erlive our famous market-day.

CANTO II.

I.

LAST night I dream'd that to my dark bedside
Came, white with rays, the poet of the “ Quhair,”*
And drew my curtain silently aside,
And stood and smil'd, majestically fair ;
He to my finger then a ring applied
(It glitter'd like Aurora's yellow hair),
And gave his royal head a pleasant wag,
And said, “ Go on, my boy, and celebrate thy MAG !”

II.

The sun, upheariotting from Capricorn,
Had 'tween the Ram's horns thrust his gilded nose ;
And now his bright fist drops, each April morn,
O'er hill and dale, the daisy and the rose ;
Wantons the lewd Earth with the god unshorn,
And from her womb the infant verdure throws,
Whilst he, good paramour ! leaves Tithys' valley
Each morn by five o'clock, with her to sport and dally.

III.

Old Kelly-law, the kindly nurse of sheep,
Puts on her daisy-tissued gown of green ;
On all her slopes so verdurous and steep,
The bleating children of the flock are seen ;
While with a heart where mirth and pleasure keep
Their dwelling, and with honest brow serene,
The shepherd eyes his flock in mood of glee,
And wakes with oaten pipe the echoes of Carnbee.

IV.

And see how Airdrie woods upshoot on high
Their leafy living glories to the day,
As if they long'd t' embrace the vaulty sky
With their long branchy arms so green and gay !
Balcarras-craig, so rough, and hard, and dry,
Enliven'd into beauty by the ray,
Heaves up, bedeck'd with flow'rs, his ruffian-side,
Like giant hump with gawds, and boasts his tricky pride.

V.

Ev'n on the King's-muir jigs the jolly Spring,
Scattering from whin to whin the new perfume ;
While, near the sea-coast, Flora tarrying,
Touches the garden's parterres into bloom ;
With joy the villages and cities ring ;
Cowherd and cow rejoice, and horse and groom ;
The ploughman laughs amid his joyous care ;
And ANSTER burghers laugh in prospect of their Fair.

VI.

For lo ! now peeping just above the vast
Vault of the German Sea, in east afar,
Appears full many a brig's and schooner's mast,
Their topsails strutting with the vernal harr ;†
Near and more near they come, and show at last
Their ocean-thumping hulks all black with tar ;
Their stems are pointed toward ANSTER pier,
While, flying o'er their sterns, the well-known flags
appear.

* [James I. of Scotland.]

† The *harr* is the name given by the fishermen to that gentle breeze which generally blows from the east in a fine spring or summer afternoon.

VII.

From clear-skied France and muddy Zuyder-Zee,
They come, replenish'd with the stores of trade;
Some from the Hollander of lumpish knee
Convey his lintseed, stow'd in bag or cade;
Heav'n bless him! may his breeches countless be;
And warm and thick, and ever undecay'd!
For he it was that first supply'd the Scots
With linen for their sarks, and stout frieze for their coats.

VIII.

Some bring, in many an anker hooped strong,
From Flushing's port, the palate-biting gin,
Th' inspirer of the tavern's noisy song,
The top-delight, the nectar of each inn,
That sends a-bounding through the veins along
The loit'ring blood when frosty days begin,
The bev'rage wherein fiddlers like to nuzzle,
The gauger's joy to *seize*, and old wife's joy to guzzle!

IX.

Some from Garonne and bonny banks of Seine,
Transport in pipes the blood of Bacchus' berry,
Wherewith our lairds may fume the fuddl'd brain,
And grow, by bousing, boisterously merry;
And whereby, too, their cheeks a glow may gain,
Abashing ev'n the red of July's cherry;
Oh, it is right—our lairds do well, I ween;
A bottle of black wine is worth all Hippocrene!

X.

Soon, hurried forward by the skittish gales,
In ANSTER harbour every vessel moors;
Furl'd by the seamen are the flapping sails;
Fix'd are the halsers to the folk-clad shores;
Their holds discharge the wealth of Gallia's vales,
And Amsterdam's and Flushing's useful stores,
All to augment, with commerce' various ware,
The bustle and the trade of famous ANSTER FAIR.

XI.

Nor distant now the day; the cream-fac'd sun,*
That, rising, shall engild to-morrow's air,
Shall shine with courteous beams upon the fun
And frolic of the celebrated Fair;
And now, already, have the folk begun
(So eager are they the delight to share),
In flocks to MAGGIE'S borough to resort,
That they may all, betimes, be present at the sport.

XII.

Each hedge-lin'd highway of the king, that leads
Or straightly or obliquely to the Loan,
Seems, as the Muse looks downwards, pav'd with heads,
And hats and cowls of those that bustle on;
From Johnny Groat's House to the border-meads,
From isle of Arran to the mouth of Don,
In thousands puffingly to Fife they run,
Gold in their pockets lodg'd, and in their noddles fun.

XIII.

Say, Muse, who first, who last, on foot or steed,
Came candidates for MAGGIE to her town?
St Andrew's sprightly students first proceed,
Clad in their foppery of sleeveless gown;
Forth whistling from Salvador's gate they speed,
Full many a mettlesome and fiery loun,
Forgetting Horace for a while and Tully,
And mad t'embag their limbs and leap it beautifully.

XIV.

For ev'n in Learning's cobweb'd halls had rung
The loud report of MAGGIE LAUDER's fame,
And Pedantry's Greek-conning sapient tongue
In songs had wagg'd in honour of her name;
Up from their mouldy books and tasks had sprung
Bigent and Magstrand to try the game;
Prelections ceas'd—old Alma Mater slept;
And o'er his silent rooms the ghost of Wardlaw wept.

XV.

So down in troops the red-clad students come
As kittens blythe, a joke-exchanging crew,
And in their heads bear learned Greece and Rome,
And haply Cyprus in their bodies too;

* Anster Lintseed Market (as it is call'd) is on the 11th of April, or on one of the six days immediately succeeding.

Some on their journey pipe and play; and some
Talk long of MAG, how fair she was to view,
And as they talk (ay me! so much the sadder!)
Backwards they scale the steps of honest Plato's ladder.*

XVI.

Others, their heels of weariness to cheat,
Repeated tales of classic merriment,
How the fool Faunus, on his noiseless feet,
At midnight to the cave of Tmolus went,
Scorch'd as he was with Venus' fiercest heat,
On cuckold-making mischievous intent,
Till from the horny fist of hairy Hercules,
He got upon the cheek a most confounded jerk, alas!

XVII.

Nor come they only down; in chaise or gig
Th' endoctrin'd sage professors lolling ride,
Their heads with curl'd vastidity of wig
Thatch'd round and round, and queerly beautified;
In silken hose is sheath'd each learned leg;
White are their cravats, long and trimly tied.
Some say they came to jump for MAGGIE too,
But college-records say they came the sport to view.

XVIII.

See, as their coach-wheels scour the Eastburn-lane,
Rattling as if the pavement up to tear,
How men and women, huddling in their train,
And hallooing shouts of loud applause appear!
Red-check'd and white-check'd, stout and feeble men,
With staff or staff-less, draw to ANSTER near;
And such a mob come trampling o'er King's-muir,
They raise a cloud of dust that does the sun obscure.

XIX.

Next from Deninos, every house and hut,
Her simple guileless people hie away;
That day the doors of parish-school were shut,
And every scholar got his leave to play:
Down rush they light of heart and light of foot,
Big ploughmen, in their coats of hoddin grey,
Weavers despising now both web and treadle,
Collier and collier's wife, and minister and beadle.

XX.

Next, from the well-air'd ancient town of Crail,
Go out her craftsmen with tumultuous din,
Her wind-bleach'd fishers, sturdy-limb'd and hale,
Her in-knee'd tailors, garrulous and thin;
And some are flush'd with horns of pithy ale,
And some are fierce with drams of smuggl'd gin,
While, to augment his drowth, each to his jaws
A good Crail capon † holds, at which he rugs and gnaws.

XXI.

And from Kingsbarns and hamlet ‡ clep'd of boars,
And farms around (their names too long to add),
Sally the villagers and hinds in scores,
Tenant and laird, and hedger, hoddin-clad:
Bolted are all the East-nook houses' doors;
Ev'n toothless wives pass westward, strangely glad,
Propping their trem'lous limbs on oaken stay,
And in their red plaids drest as if 'twere Sabbath day.

XXII.

And bare-foot lasses, on whose ruddy face
Unfurl'd is health's rejoicing banner seen,
Trick'd in their Sunday matches edg'd with lace,
Tippets of white, and frocks of red and green,
Come tripping o'er the roads with jocund pace,
Gay as May-morning, tidy, gim, and clean,
Whilst, joggling at each wench's side, her joe
Cracks many a rustic joke, his pow'r of wit to show.

XXIII.

Then jostling forward on the western road,
Approach the folk of wind-swept Pittenweem,
So num'rous that the highways, long and broad,
One waving field of gowns and coat-tails seem;
The fat man puffing goes oppress'd with load
Of cumb'rous flesh and corpulence extreme;
The lean man bounds along, and with his toes
Smites on the fat man's heels, that slow before him goes.

* The student wishing to understand this ladder, may consult Plato. Conviv. tom. iii. page 211, of Serrani's edition.

† A Crail capon is a dried haddock.

‡ Boarhills.

XXIV.

St Monance, Elie, and adjacent farms,
 Turn their mechanics, fishers, farmers out;
 Sun-burnt and shoeless schoolboys rush in swarms,
 With childish trick, and revelry and shout;
 Mothers bear little children in their arms,
 Attended by their giggling daughters stout;
 Clowns, cobblers, cotters, tanners, weavers, beaux,
 Hurry and hop along in clusters and in rows.

XXV.

And every husbandman, round Largo-Jaw,
 Hath scrap'd his huge-wheel'd dung-cart fair and clean,
 Wherein on sacks stuff'd full of oaten straw,
 Sit the goodwife, Tam, Katey, Jock, and Jean;
 In flow'rs and ribbons drest the horses draw
 Stoutly their creaking cumbersome machine,
 As on his cart-head sits the goodman proud,
 And cheerily cracks his whip and whistles clear and loud.

XXVI.

Then from her coal-pits Dysart vomits forth
 Her subterranean men of colour dun,
 Poor human mouldwarps! doom'd to scrape in earth—
 Cimmerian people, strangers to the sun;
 Gloomy as soot, with faces grim and swarth,
 They march, most sourly leering every one,
 Yet very keen, at Anster Loan, to share
 The merriments and sports to be accomplish'd there.

XXVII.

Nor did Path-head detain her wrangling race
 Of weavers, toiling at their looms for bread;
 For now their slippery shuttles rest a space
 From flying through their labyrinths of thread;
 Their treadle-shaking feet now scour apace
 Through Gallowtown with levity of tread;
 So on they pass, with sack in hand, full bent
 To try their sinews' strength in dire experiment.

XXVIII.

And long Kirkaldy, from each dirty street
 Her num'rous population eastward throws;
 Her roguish boys with bare unstocking'd feet,
 Her rich ship-owners, gen'rous and jocose,
 Her prosp'rous merchants, sober and discreet,
 Her coxcombs pantaloon'd, and powder'd beaux;
 Her pretty lasses tripping on their great toes,
 With foreheads white as milk, or any boil'd potatoes.

XXIX.

And from Kinghorn jump hastily along
 Her ferrymen and poor inhabitants:
 And th' upland* hamlet, where, as told in song,
 Tam Lutar play'd of yore his lively rants,
 Is left dispeopled of her brose-fed throng,
 For eastward seud they now as thick as ants:
 Dunfermline, too, so famed for checks and ticks,
 Sends out her loom-bred men, with bags and walking-sticks.

XXX.

And market-maids, and apron'd wives, that bring
 Their gingerbread in baskets to the Fair;
 And cadgers with their creels, that hang by string
 From their lean horse-ribs, rubbing off the hair;
 And crook-legg'd cripples, that on crutches swing
 Their shabby persons with a noble air;
 And fiddlers with their fiddles in their cases,
 And packmen with their packs of ribbons, gauze, and laces.

XXXI.

And from Kinross, whose dusty streets unpaved
 Are whirl'd through heav'n on summer's windy day,
 Whose plats of cabbage-bearing ground are laved
 By Leven's waves, that clear as crystal play,
 Jog her brisk burghers, spruce and cleanly shaved,
 Her sullen cutlers and her weavers gay,
 Her ploughboys in their botch'd and clumsy jackets,
 Her clowns with cobb'l'd shoon stuek full of iron tacketts.

XXXII.

Next ride on sleek-mane'd horses bay or brown,
 Smacking their whips and spurring bloodily,
 The writers of industrious Cupar town,
 Good social mortals skill'd the pen to ply;

* Leslie

Lo! how their garments as they gallop down,
 Waving behind them in the breezes fly;
 As upward spurn'd to heav'n's blue bending roof,
 Dash'd is the dusty road from every bounding hoof.

XXXIII.

And clerks with ruffled shirts and frizzled hairs,
 Their tassel'd half-boots clear as looking-glass,
 And Sheriffs learn'd, and unlearn'd Sheriff-mairs,
 And messengers-at-arms, with brows of brass,
 Come strutting down, or single or in pairs,
 Some on high horse and some on lowly ass;
 With blacksmiths, barbers, butchers, and their brats,
 And some had new hats on, and some came wanting hats.

XXXIV.

Astraddle on their proud steeds full of fire,
 From all the tree-girt country-seats around,
 Comes many a huffy, many a kindly squire,
 In showy garb, worth many a silver pound;
 While close behind, in livery's base attire,
 Follows poor lacquey with small-bellied hound,
 Carrying, upon his shoulders slung, the bag
 Wherein his master means to risk his neck for M&G.

XXXV.

From all her lanes and alleys, fair Dundee
 Has sent her happy citizens away;
 They come with mickle jolliment and glee,
 Crossing in clumsy boat their shallow Tay;
 Their heads are bonneted most fair to see,
 And of the tartan is their back's array:
 From Perth, Dunkeld, from Brechin, Forfar, Glams,
 Roll down the sweaty crowds, with wearied legs and hams.

XXXVI.

And from the Mearnshire, and from Aberdeen,
 Where knit by many a wench is many a stocking,
 From Banff and Murray, where of old were seen
 The witches by the chief so fain to grow king,
 Descend in neckless coats brush'd smooth and clean,
 And eke with long pipes in their mouths a-smoking,
 The northern people, boisterous and rough,
 Bearing both chin and nose bedaub'd with spith of snuff.

XXXVII.

Comes next from Ross-shire and from Sutherland
 The horny-knuckl'd kilted Highlandman:
 From where upon the rocky Caithness strand
 Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began,
 And where Lochfine from her prolific sand
 Her herrings gives to feed each bord'ring clan,
 Arrive the brogue-shod men of gen'rous eye,
 Plaided and breechless all, with Esan's hairy thigh.

XXXVIII.

They come not now to fire the Lowland stacks,
 Or foray on the banks of Fortha's firth;
 Claymore and broad-sword, and Lochaber-axe,
 Are left to rust above the smoky hearth;
 Their only arms are bagpipes now and sacks;
 Their teeth are set most desparately for mirth;
 And at their broad and sturdy backs are hung
 Great wallets, cramm'd with cheese and bannocks and
 cold tongue.

XXXIX.

Nor staid away the Islanders, that lie
 To buffet of th' Atlantic surge exposed;
 From Jura, Arran, Barra, Uist, and Skye,
 Piping they come, unshav'd, unbreech'd, unmos'd;
 And from that Isle, whose abbey, structur'd high,
 Within its precincts holds dead kings enclosed,
 Where St Columba oft is seen to waddle
 Gown'd round with flaming fire upon the spire astraddle.

XL.

Next from the far-fam'd ancient town of Ayr,
 (Sweet Ayr! with crops of ruddy damsels blest,
 That, shooting up, and waxing fat and fair,
 Shine on thy braes the lilies of the west!)
 And from Dumfries, and from Kilmarnock (where
 Are night-caps made, the cheapest and the best)
 Blythely they ride on ass and mule, with sacks
 In lieu of saddles plac'd upon their asses' backs.

XLI.

Close at their heels, bestriding well-trapp'd nag,
Or humbly riding asses' backbone bare,
Come Glasgow's merchants, each with money-bag,
To purchase Dutch lintseed at ANSTER FAIR—
Sagacious fellows all, who well may brag
Of virtuous industry and talents rare;
Th' accomplish'd men o' the counting-room confest,
And fit to crack a joke or argue with the best.

XLII.

Nor keep their homes the Borderers, that stay
Where purls the Jed, and Esk, and little Liddel,
Men that can rarely on the bagpipe play,
And wake th' unsober spirit of the fiddle;
Avow'd freebooters, that have many a day
Stol'n sheep and cow, yet never own'd they did ill;
Great rogues, for sure that wight is but a rogue,
That blots the eighth command from Moses' decalogue.

XLIII.

And some of them in sloop of tarry side,
Come from North-Berwick harbour sailing out;
Others, abhorrent of the sick'n'ing tide,
Have ta'en the road by Stirling brig about,
And eastward now from long Kirkcaldy ride,
Slugging on their slow-gaited asses stout,
While, dangling, at their backs are bagpipes hung,
And, dangling, hangs a tale on ev'ry rhymers' tongue.

XLIV.

Amid them rides, on lofty ass sublime,
With cadger-like sobriety of canter,
In purple lustihood of youthful prime,
Great in his future glory, **ROB THE RANTEE**
(I give the man what name in little time
He shall acquire from pipe and drone and chanter);
He comes apparell'd like a trim bridegroom,
Fiery and flush'd with hope, and like a god in bloom.

XLV.

No paltry vagrant piper-carle is he,
Whose base-brib'd drone whiffs out its wind for hire,
Who, having stroll'd all day for penny fee,
Couches at night with oxen in the byre;
Rob is a Border laird of good degree,
A many-acred, clever, jolly squire,
One horn and shap'd to shine and make a figure,
And bless'd with supple limbs to jump with wondrous vigour.

XLVI.

His waggish face, that speaks a soul jocose,
Seems t'have been cast i'the mould of fun and glee,
And on the bridge of his well-arched nose
Sits Laughter plum'd, and white-wing'd Jollity;
His manly chest a breadth heroic shows;
Bold is his gesture, dignified and free;
Ev'n as he smites with lash his ass's hip,
'Tis with a seemly grace he whirls his glitt'ring whip.

XLVII.

His coat is of the flashy Lincoln green,
With silver buttons of the prettiest mould;
Each buttonhole and skirt and hem is seen
Sparkishly edg'd with lace of yellow gold;
His breeches of the velvet, smooth and clean,
Are very fair and goodly to behold;
So on he rides, and let him e'en ride on,
We shall again meet Rob to-morrow at the Loan.

XLVIII.

But mark his ass ere off he ride;—some say
He got him from a pilgrim lady fair,
Who, landing once on Joppa's wave-worn quay,
Had bought him of Armenian merchant there,
And prest his padded pack, and rode away
To sniff devotion in with Syria's air;
Then brought him home in hold of stout Levanter,*
All for the great good luck of honest **ROB THE RANTEE**.

XLIX.

Along Fife's western roads, behold, how hie
The travel-sweltry crowds to ANSTER LOAN,
Shaded, o'erhead, with clouds of dust that fly
Tarnishing heav'n with darkness not its own!
* Ship trading to and from the Levant, so called by seamen.

And scarcely can the Muse's lynx-sharp eye
Scan, through the dusty nuisance upward blown,
The ruddy plaids, black hats, and bonnets blue,
Of those that rush below, a motley-vestur'd crew!

L.

Nor only was the land with crowds opprest,
That trample forward to th' expected Fair;
The harass'd ocean had no peace or rest,
So many keels her foamy bosom tear;
For, into view, now sailing from the west,
With streamers idling in the bluish air,
Appear the painted pleasure-boats unleaky,
Charg'd with a precious freight—the good folks of Auld Reekie.

LI.

They come, the cream and flow'r of all the Scots,
The children of politeness, science, wit,
Exulting in their bench'd and gaudy boats,
Wherein some joking and some puking sit;
Proudly the pageantry of carvels floats,
As if the salt sea frisk'd to carry it;
Thé gales vie emulous their sails to wag,
And dally as in love with each long gilded flag.

LII.

Upon the benches seated, I descry
Her gentry; knights, and lairds, and long-nail'd fops;
Her advocates and signet-writers sly;
Her gen'rous merchants, faithful to their shops;
Her lean-cheek'd tetchy critics, who, Oh fy!
Hard-retching, spue upon the sails and ropes;
Her lovely ladies, with their lips like rubies;
Her fiddlers, fuddlers, fools, bards, blockheads, black-guards, boobies.

LIII.

And red-prow'd fisher-boats afar are spied
In south-east, tilting o'er the jasper main,
Whose wing-like oars, dispread on either side,
Now swoop on sea, now rise in sky again:
They come not now, with herring-nets supplied,
Or barbed lines to twitch the haddock train,
But with the townsfolk of Dunbar are laden,
Who burn to see the Fair—man, stripling, wife and maiden.

LIV.

And many a Dane, with ringlets long and red,
And many a starv'd Norwegian, lank and brown
(For over seas the fame of MAG had spread
Afar from Scandinavian town to town),
Maugre the risk of drowning, and the dread
Of *krakens*, isles of fish of droll renown,
Have dar'd to cross the ocean, and now steer
Their long outlandish skiffs direct on ANSTER pier.

LV.

Forward they scud; and soon each pleasure-barge,
And fisher-boats, and skiffs so slim and lax,
On shore their various passengers discharge,
Some hungry, queasy some and white as flax;
Lightly they bound upon the beach's verge,
Glad to unbend their stiffen'd houghs and backs:
But who is that, Oh Muse, with lofty brow,
That from his lacker'd boat is just forth-stepping now?

LVI.

Thou fool! (for I have ne'er since Bavius' days
Had such a dolt to dictate to as thou),
Dost thou not know by that eye's kingly rays,
And by the arch of that celestial brow,
And by the grace his ev'ry step displays,
And by the crowds that round him duck and bow,
That that is good King James, the merriest Monarch
That ever sceptre sway'd since Noah steer'd his own ark?

LVII.

For, as he in his house of Holyrood
Of late was keeping jovially his court,
The gipsy Fame beside his window stood,
And hollow'd in his ear fair MAG's report:
The Monarch laugh'd, for to his gamesome mood
Accorded well th' anticipated sport;
So here he comes with lord and lady near,
Stepping with regal stride up ANSTER's eastern pier.

LVIII.

But mark you, boy, how in a loyal ring
 (As does obedient subjects well become)
 Fife's hospitable lairds salute their King,
 And kiss his little finger or his thumb ;
 That done, their liege lord they escorting bring
 To ANSTER House,* that he may eat a crumb ;
 Where in the stucco'd hall they sit and dine,
 And into tenfold joy bedrench their blood with wine.

LIX.

Some with the ladies in the chambers ply
 Their bounding elasticity of heel,
 Evolving, as they trip it whirlingly,
 The merry mazes of th' entangl'd reel ;
 *Tween roof and floor, they fling, they flirt, they fly,
 Their garments swimming round them as they wheel ;
 The rafters creak beneath the dance's clatter ;
 Tremble the solid walls with feet that shake and patter.

LX.

Some (wiser they) resolv'd on drinking-bout,
 The wines of good Sir John englut amain ;
 Their glasses soon are fill'd, and soon drunk out,
 And soon are bumper'd to the brim again :
 Certes that laird is but a foolish lout,
 Who does not fuddle now with might and main ;
 For gen'rous is their host, and, by my sooth,
 Was never better wine applied to Scottish mouth.

LXI.

With might and main they fuddle and carouse ;
 Each glass augments their thirst, and keens their wit ;
 They swill, they swig, they take a hearty rouse,
 Cheering their flesh with Bacchus' benefit,
 Till, by and bye, the windows of the house
 Go dizzily whirling round them where they sit ;
 And had you seen the sport, and heard the laughing,
 You'd thought that all Jove's gods in ANSTER House
 sat quaffing.

LXII.

Not such a wassail, fam'd for social glee,
 In Shushan's gardens long ago was held,
 When Ahasuerus, by a blythe decree,
 His turban'd satraps to the bouse compell'd,
 And bagg'd their Persian panaches with a sea
 Of wine, that from his carved gold they swill'd,
 Whilst overhead was starr'd (a gorgeous show !)
 Blue blankets, silver-stretch'd—a heav'n of calico !

LXIII.

Nor less is the disport and joy without,
 In ANSTER town and Loan, through all the throng :
 *Tis but one vast tumultuous jovial rout,
 Tumult of laughing, and of gabbling strong ;
 Thousands and tens of thousands reel about,
 With joyous uproar blustering along ;
 Elbows pushing boringly on sides with pain,
 Wives hustling come on wives, and men dash hard on
 men.

LXIV.

There lacks no sport : tumblers in wondrous pranks,
 High-stag'd, display their limbs' agility ;
 And now they, mountant from the scaffold's planks,
 Kick with their whirling heels the clouds on high,
 And now, like cat, upon their dextrous shanks,
 They light, and of new monsters cheat the sky ;
 Whilst motley Merry-Andrew, with his jokes,
 Wide through the incorp'rate mob the bursting laugh
 provokes.

LXV.

Others upon the green, in open air,
 Enact the best of Davie Lindsay's plays ;
 While ballad-singing women do not spare
 Their throats, to give good ut'rance to their lays ;
 And many a leather-lung'd co-chanting pair
 Of wood-legg'd sailors, children's laugh and gaze,
 Lift to the courts of Jove their voices loud,
 Y-hymning their mishaps, to please the heedless crowd.

* Anster House was destroyed to its foundation in 1811.

LXVI.

Meanwhile the sun, fatigued (as well he may)
 With shining on a night till seven o'clock,
 Beams on each chimney-head a farewell ray,
 Illuming into golden shaft its smoke ;
 And now in sea, far west from Oronsay,
 Is dipp'd his chariot-wheel's refulgent spoke,
 And now a section of his face appears,
 And, diving, now he ducks clean down o'er head and ears.

LXVII.

Anon uprises, with blythe bagpipe's sound,
 And shriller din of flying fiddlestick,
 On the green loan and meadow-crofts around,
 A town of tents, with blankets roofed quick :
 A thousand stakes are rooted in the ground ;
 A thousand hammers clank and clatter thick ;
 A thousand fiddles squeak and squeal it yare ;
 A thousand stormy drones out-gasp in groans their air.

LXVIII.

And such a turbulence of gen'ral mirth
 Rises from ANSTER Loan upon the sky,
 That from his throne Jove starts, and down on earth
 Looks, wond'ring what may be the jollity :
 He roots his eye on shores of Forthan Firth,
 And smerks, as knowing well the market nigh,
 And bids his gods and goddesses look down,
 To mark the rage of joy that maddens ANSTER town.

LXIX.

From Cellardyke to wind-swept Pittenweem,
 And from Balhoulfie to Kilrennymill,
 Vaulted with blankets, crofts and meadows seem,
 So many tents the grassy spaces fill ;
 Meantime the Moon, yet leaning on the stream,
 With fluid silver bathes the welkin chill,
 That now earth's half-ball, on the side of night,
 Swims in an argent sea of beautiful moonlight.

LXX.

Then to his bed full many a man retires,
 On plume, or chaff, or straw, to get a nap,
 In houses, tents, in haylofts, stables, byres,
 And or without, or with, a warm night-cap :
 Yet sleep not all ; for by the social fires
 Sit many, cuddling round their toddy-sap,
 And ever and anon they eat a lunch,
 And rinse the mouthfuls down with flav'rous whisky
 punch.

LXXI.

Some, shuffling paper nothings, keenly read
 The Devil's maxims in his painted books,
 Till the old serpent in each heart and head
 Spits canker, and with wormwood sours their looks :
 Some o'er the chess-board's chequer'd champaign lead
 Their inch-tall bishops, kings, and queens, and rooks ;
 Some force, t' enclose the Tod, the wooden Lamb on ;
 Some shake the pelting dice upon the broad backgammon.

LXXII.

Others, of travell'd elegance polite,
 With mingling music MAGGIE's house surround,
 And serenade her all the live-long night
 With song and lyre, and flutes' enchanting sound,
 Chiming and hymning into fond delight
 The heavy night air that o'er shades the ground ;
 While she, right pensive, in her chamber-nook
 Sits pond'ring on th' advice of little Tommy Puck.

CANTO III.

I.

I WISH I had a cottage snug and neat
 Upon the top of many-fountain'd Ide,
 That I might thence in holy fervour greet
 The bright-gown'd Morning tripping up her side :
 And when the low Sun's glory-buskin'd feet
 Walk on the blue wave of th' Ægean tide,
 Oh I would kneel me down, and worship there
 The God who garnish'd out a world so bright and fair !

II.

The saffron-elbow'd Morning up the slope
Of heav'n canaries in her jewell'd shoes,
And throws o'er Kelly-law's sheep-nibbled top
Her golden apron dripping kindly dews;
And never, since she first began to hop
Up heav'n's blue causeway, of her beams profuse,
Shone there a dawn so glorious and so gay,
As shines the merry dawn of ANSTER Market-day.

III.

Round through the vast circumference of sky
One speck of small cloud cannot eye behold,
Save in the East some fleeces bright of dye,
That stripe the hem of heav'n with woolly gold,
Whereon are happy angels wont to lie
Lolling, in amaranthine flow'rs enroll'd,
That they may spy the precious light of God,
Flung from the blessed East o'er the fair Earth abroad.

IV.

The fair Earth laughs through all her boundless range,
Heaving her green hills high to greet the beam;
City and village, steeple, cot, and grange,
Gilt as with Nature's purest leaf-gold seem;
The heaths and upland muirs, and fallows, change
Their barren brown into a ruddy gleam,
And, on ten thousand dew-bent leaves and sprays,
Twinkle ten thousand suns, and fling their petty rays.

V.

Up from their nests and fields of tender corn
Full merrily the little sky-larks spring,
And on their dew-bedabbled pinions borne,
Mount to the heav'n's blue key-stone flickering;
They turn their plume-soft bosoms to the morn,
And hail the genial light, and cheer'ly sing;
Echo the gladsome hills and vallies round,
As half the bells of Fife ring loud and swell the sound.

VI.

For when the first up-sloping ray was flung
On ANSTER steeple's swallow-harb'ring top,
Its bell and all the bells around were rung
Sonorous, jangling loud without a stop;
For toilingly each bitter beadle swung,
Ev'n till he smok'd with sweat, his greasy rope,
And almost broke his bell-wheel, ush'ring in
The morn of ANSTER FAIR, with tinkle-tankling din.

VII.

And, from our steeple's pinnacle outspread,
The town's long colours flare and flap on high,
Whose anchor, blazon'd fair in green and red,
Curls, pliant to each breeze that whistles by;
Whilst on the boltsprit stern and topmast-head
Of brig and sloop that in the harbour lie,
Streams the red gaudery of flags in air,
All to salute and grace the morn of ANSTER FAIR.

VIII.

Forthwith from house and cellar, tent and byre,
Rous'd by the clink of bells that jingle on,
Uncabin'd, rush the multitude like fire,
Furious and squeezing forward to the Loan;*
The son, impatient, leaves his snail-slow sire;
The daughter leaves her man to trot alone;
So madly leap they, man, wife, girl, and boy,
As if the senseless Earth they kick'd for very joy.

IX.

And such the noise of feet that trampling pass,
And tongues that roar and rap from jaw to jaw,
As if ten thousand chariots, wheel'd with brass,
Came hurling down the sides of Largo-law;
And such the number of the people was,
As when in day of Autumn, chill and raw,
His small clouds Eurus sends, a vap'ry train,
Streaming in scatter'd rack, exhaustless, from the main.

* Anster Loan must, in those days, have been of great extent; at present its limits are contracted almost to the breadth of the highway.

X.

For who like arrant slugs can keep their heads
In contact with their pillows now unstirr'd!
Grandfathers leave their all-year-rump'd beds,
With moth-eat breeches now their loins to gird,
And, drawn abroad on tumbrils and on sleds
Chat off their years, and sing like vernal bird;
Men, whom cold agues into leanness freeze,
Imblanketed walk out, and snuff the kindly breeze.

XI.

And flea-bit wives, on whose old arms and cheeks
The spoiler Time hath driv'n his furrowing plough,
Whose cold dry bones have all the winter weeks
Hung shiv'ring o'er their chimney's peat-fed glow,
Now warm and flexible, and lithe as leeks,
Wabblingly walk to see the joyous show;
What wonder! when each brick and pavement stone
Wish'd it had feet that day to walk to ANSTER Loan!

XII.

Upon a little dappled nag, whose mane
Seem'd to have robb'd the steeds of Phaeton,
Whose bit, and pad, and fairly-fashion'd rein,
With silvery adornments richly shone,
Came MAGGIE LAUDER forth, enwheel'd with train
Of knights and lairds around her trotting on:
At James' right hand she rode, a beauteous bride,
That well deserv'd to go by haughtiest Monarch's side.

XIII.

Her form was as the Morning's blythesome star,
That, capp'd with lustrous coronet of beams,
Rides up the dawning orient in her car,
New-wash'd, and doubly fulgent from the streams—
The Chaldee shepherd eyes her light afar,
And on his knees adores her as she gleams;
So shone the stately form of MAGGIE LAUDER,
And so th' admiring crowds pay homage and applaud her.

XIV.

Each little step her trampling palfrey took
Shak'd her majestic person into grace,
And, as at times, his glossy sides she strook
Endearingly with whip's green silken lace,
(The prancer seem'd to court such kind rebuke,
Loitering with wilful tardiness of pace);
By Jove, the very waving of her arm
Had pow'r a brutish lout t' unbrutify and charm!

XV.

Her face was as the summer cloud, whereon
The dawning sun delights to rest his rays!
Compar'd with it, old Sharon's vale, o'ergrown
With flaunting roses, had resign'd its praise;
For why? Her face with heav'n's own roses shone,
Mocking the morn, and watching men to gaze;
And he that gaz'd with cold unsmitten soul,
That blockhead's heart was ice thrice bak'd beneath the Pole.

XVI.

Her locks, apparent tufts of wiry gold,
Lay on her lily temples, fairly dangling,
And on each hair, so harmless to behold,
A lover's soul hung mercilessly strangling;
The piping silly zephyrs vied t' unfold
The tresses in their arms so slim and tangling,
And thrid in sport these lover-noosing snares,
And play'd at hide-and-seek amid the golden hairs.

XVII.

Her eye was as an honour'd palace, where
A choir of lightsome Graces frisk and dance;
What object drew her gaze, how mean soe'er,
Got dignity and honour from the glance;
Woe to the man on whom she unaware
Did the dear witch'ry of her eye elance!
'Twas such a thrilling, killing, keen regard—
May Heav'n from such a look preserve each tender bard!

XVIII.

Beneath its shading tucker heav'd a breast
Fashion'd to take with ravishment mankind;
For never did the flimsy Coan vest
Hide such a bosom in its gauze of wind;

Ev'n a pure angel, looking, had confest
A sinless transport passing o'er his mind ;
For, in the nicest turning-loom of Jove,
Turn'd were these charming hills, t' inspire a holy love.

XIX.

So on she rode in virgin majesty,
Charming the thin dead air to kiss her lips,
And with the light and grandeur of her eye
Shaming the proud sun into dim eclipse ;
While round her presence clust'ring far and nigh,
On horseback some, with silver spurs and whips,
And some afoot with shoes of dazzling buckles,
Attended knights, and lairds, and clowns with horny
knuckles.

XX.

Nor with such crowd surrounded, nor so fair
In form, rode forth Semiramis of old,
On chariot where she sat in iv'ry chair
Beneath a sky of carbuncle and gold,
When to Euphrates' banks to take the air,
Or her new rising brickwalls to behold,
Abroad she drove, whilst round her wheels were pour'd
Satrap, and turban'd squire, and pury Chaldee lord.

XXI.

Soon to the Loan came MAG, and from her pad
Dismounting with a queen-like dignity
(So from his buoyant cloud, man's heart to glad,
Lights a bright angel on a hill-top high),
On a small mound, with turfy greenness clad,
She lit, and walk'd enchantment on the eye ;
Then on two chairs, that on its top stood ready,
Down sat the good King James, and ANSTER's bouny lady.

XXII.

Their chairs were finely carv'd, and overlaid
With the thin lustre of adorning gold,
And o'er their heads a canopy was spread
Of arras, flower'd with figures manifold,
Supported by four boys, of silver made,
Whose glitt'ring hands the vault of cloth uphold ;
On each side sat or stood, to view the sport,
Stout lord and lady fair, the flow'r of Scotland's court.

XXIII.

On their gilt chairs they scarce had time to sit,
When uprose, sudden, from th' applauding mob,
A shout enough to startle hell, and split
The roundness of the granite-ribbed globe ;
The mews of May's steep islet, terror-smit,
Clang'd correspondent in a shrill hubbub,
And had the moon then hung above the main,
Crack'd had that horrid shout her spotted orb in twain.

XXIV.

Thrice did their shouting make a little pause,
That so their lungs might draw recruiting air,
Thrice did the stormy tumult of applause
Shake the Fife woods, and fright the foxes there ;
Sky rattled, and Kilbrachmont's crows and daws,
Alarm'd, sung hoarsely o'er their callow care :
Oh never, sure, in Fife's town-girdled shire,
Was heard, before or since, a shout so loud and dire !

XXV.

Nor ceas'd th' acclaim when ceas'd the sound of voice,
For fiddlesticks, in myriads, bick'ring fast,
Shreik'd on their shrunken guts a shrilling noise ;
And pipe, and drone, with whistle, and with blast,
Consorted, humm'd and squeak'd, and swell'd the joys
With furious harmony too high to last ;
And such a hum of pipe and drone was there,*
As if on earth men pip'd, and devils drou'd in air.

XXVI.

Thus did the crowd with fiddle, lungs, and drone,
Congratulate fair MAGERE and their King,
Till at the last, wide-spreading round the Loan,
They form'd of huge circumference a ring,

* Such a yell was there,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air.—SCOTT'S *Marmion*.

Enclosing green space, bare of bush and stone,
Where might the asses run and suitors spring ;
Upon its southmost end, high chair'd, were seen
The Monarch and the dame, and overlook'd the green.

XXVII.

Anon, the King's stout trumpet blew aloud,
Silence imposing on the rabble's roar ;
Silent as summer sky stood all the crowd—
Each bag was strang'd and could snort no more
(So sinks the roaring of the foamy flood,
When Neptune's clarion twangs from shore to shore).
Then through his trump he bawl'd with such a stress,
One might have known his words a mile beyond Crawness.

XXVIII.

"Ho ! hark ye, merry mortals ! hark ye, ho !
The King now speaks, nor what he speaks is vain ;
This day's amount of bus'ness well ye know,
So what you know I will not tell again :
He hopes your asses are more swift than doe ;
He hopes your sacks are strong as iron chain ;
He hopes your bags and pipes are swoln and screw'd ;
He hopes your rhyme-cramm'd brains are in a famous
mood.

XXIX.

For, verily, in ANSTER's beauteous dame
Awaits the victor no despis'd reward ;
Sith well she merits that the starry frame
Should drop Apollo on that grassy sward,
That so he might, by clever jumping, claim
A fairer Daphne than whom once he marr'd ;
So fair is MAG : yet not her charms alone,
A present from the King shall be the victor's own.

XXX.

For as a dow'r, along with MAGGIE's hand,
The monarch shall the conqueror present
With ten score acres of the royal land,
All good of soil, and of the highest rent ;
Near where Dunfermline's palace-turrets stand,
They stretch, array'd in wheat, their green extent :
With such a gift the King shall crown to-day
The gen'rous toils of him who bears the prize away.

XXXI.

And he, prize-blest, shall enter MAGGIE's door,
Who shall in all the trials victor be ;
Or, if there hap no victor in the four,
He who shall shine and conquer in the three ;
But, should sly fortune give to two or more,
An equal chance in equal victory,
'Tis MAG's of these to choose the dearest beau :—
So bring your asses in, bring in your asses, ho !"

XXXII.

Scarce from his clam'rous brass the words were blown,
When from the globe of people issued out
Donkies in dozens, and in scores, that shone
In purple some, and some in plainer clout,
With many a wag astraddle plac'd thereon,
Green-coated knight, and laird, and clumsy lout,
That one and all came burning with ambition,
To try their asses' speed in awkward competition.

XXXIII.

And some sat wielding silver-headed whips,
Whisking their asses' ears with silken thong ;
Some thrash'd and thwack'd their sturdy hairy hips,
With knotted cudgels ponderous and strong ;
And some had spurs, whose every rowel dips
Amid their ribs an inch of iron long ;
And some had bridles gay and bits of gold,
And some had hempen reins most shabby to behold.

XXXIV.

Amid them entered, on the listed space,
Great ROB (the RANTER was his after name),
With Fm's broad ensign hoisted in his face,
And aug'ring to himself immortal fame ;
And aye, upon the hillock's loftier place,
Where sat his destin'd spouse, the blooming dame,
A glance he flung, regardless of the reins,
And felt the rapid love glide tingling through his veins.

XXXV.

She, too, upon the Bord'rer's manly size
 With prepossessing favour fix'd her sight ;
 For woman's sharp and well-observing eyes
 Soon single out the seemliest, stateliest wight ;
 And, oh ! (she to herself thus silent sighs)
 Were't but the will of Puck the dapper sprite,
 I could—La ! what a grace of form divine !—
 I could, in sooth, submit to lose my name in thine !

XXXVI.

Forward they rode, to where the King and Mac
 O'erlook'd, superior, from the southern mound,
 When from his brute alighting every wag,
 His person hunch'd into a bow profound,
 And almost kiss'd his shoes' bedusted tag,
 Grazing with nose most loyally the ground,
 As earthward crook'd they their corporeal frames
 Into obeisance due, before the gracious James.

XXXVII.

" Rise, rise, my lads," the jovial monarch said,
 " Here is not now the fitting place to ply
 The courtier's and the dancing-master's trade,
 Nuzzling the nasty ground obsciously ;
 Up, up—put hat and bonnet upon head—
 The chilling dew still drizzles from the sky ;
 Up—tuck your coats succinct around your bellies ;
 Mount, mount your asses' backs like clever vaulting
 fellows.

XXXVIII.

And see, that, when the race's sign is giv'n,
 Each rider whirl his whip with swingeing might,
 Or toss his whizzing cudgel up to heav'n,
 That with more goodly bang it down may light ;
 And let the spur's blood-thirsty teeth be driv'n
 Through hide and hair by either heal aright,
 For 'tis a beast most sluggish, sour, and slow ;
 Be mounting then, my hearts, and range ye in a row.

XXXIX.

And look ye northwards—note yon mastlike pole
 Tassel'd with ribbons and betrimm'd with clout,
 Yon—mark it—is the race-ground's northern goal,
 Where you must turn your asses' heads about,
 And jerk them southward, till with gladsome soul
 You reach that spot whence now you're setting out ;
 And he that reaches first, shall loud be shouted
 The happy, happy man—I'll say no more about it."

XL.

This said, they like the glimpse of lightning quick,
 Upvaulted on their backbones asinine,
 And marshal'd, by the force of spur and stick,
 The long-ear'd lubbards in an even line :
 Then sat, awaiting that momentous nick
 When James's herald should y-twang the sign :
 Each whip was rear'd aloft in act to crack,
 Each cudgel hung in sky surcharged with stormy thwack.

XLI.

Frisk'd with impatient flutter every heart
 As the brisk anxious blood began to jump ;
 Each human ear prick'd up it fleshiest part,
 To catch the earliest notice of the trump ;
 When hark ! with blast that spoke the sign to start,
 The brass-toned clarion gave the air a thump,
 Whoop—off they go ; halloo—they shoot—they fly !
 They spur—they whip—they crack—they bawl—they
 curse—they cry !

XLII.

A hundred whips, high-toss'd in ether, sung
 Tempestuous, flirting up and down like fire ;
 'Tween sky and earth as many cudgels swung
 Their gnarl'd lengths in formidable gyre,
 And, hissing, from their farther ends down flung
 A storm of wooden bangs and anguish dire ;
 Woe to the beastly ribs, and skulls, and backs,
 Foredoom'd to bear the weight of such unwieldy cracks !

XLIII.

Woe to the beastly bowels, doom'd, alas !
 To bear the spur's sharp steely agony ;
 For through the sore-gall'd hides of every ass
 Squirts the vext blood in gush of scarlet dye,

While as they slug along the hoof-crush'd grass,
 Rises a bray so horrid and so high,
 As if all Bashan's bulls, with fat o'ergrown,
 Had bellow'd on the green of ANSTER's frightened Loan.

XLIV.

Who can in silly pithless words paint well
 The pithy feats of that laborious race ?
 Who can the cudgellings and whippings tell,
 The hurry, emulation, joy, disgrace !
 'Twould take for tongue the clapper of a bell,
 To speak the total wonders of the chace ;
 'Twould need a set of sturdy brassy lungs,
 To tell the mangled whips, and shatter'd sticks and rungs.

XLV.

Each rider pushes on to-be the first,
 Nor has he now an eye to look behind ;
 One ass trots smartly on, though like to burst
 With bounding blood, and scantiness of wind ;
 Another, by his master bann'd and cursed,
 Goes backward through perversity of mind,
 Inching along in motion retrograde,
 Contrarious to the course which Scotland's Monarch bade.

XLVI.

A third obdurate stands and cudgel-proof,
 And steadfast as th' unchisel'd rock of flint,
 Regardless though the heaven's high marble roof
 Should fall upon his skull with mortal dint,
 Or though conspiring earth, beneath his hoof,
 Should sprout up coal with fiery flashes in't,
 Whilst on his back his griev'd and waspish master,
 The stubborn he stands, still bangs and bans the faster.

XLVII.

Meantime, the rabblement, with fav'ring shout,
 And clapping hand, set up so loud a din,
 As almost with stark terror frighted out
 Each ass's soul from his partic'lar skin ;
 Rattled the bursts of laughter round about,
 Grinn'd every phiz with mirth's peculiar grin,
 As through the Loan they saw the cuddies awkward
 Bustling some straight, some thwart, some forward, and
 some backward.

XLVIII.

As when the clouds, by gusty whirlwind riv'n,
 And whipp'd into confusion pitchy-black,
 Detach'd, fly diverse round the cope of heav'n,
 Reeling and jostling in uncertain rack,
 And some are northward, some are southward driv'n,
 With storm embroiling all the zodiac,
 Till the clash'd clouds send out the fiery flash,
 And peals, with awful roll, the long loud thunder crash.

XLIX.

Just in such foul confusion and alarm
 Jostle the cuddies with rebellious mind,
 All drench'd with sweat, internally so warm,
 They loudly bray before, and belch behind :
 But who is you, the foremost of the swarm,
 That scampers fleetly as the rain-raw wind ?
 'Tis ROBERT SCOTT, if I can trust my cyne ;
 I know the Bord'rer well, by his long coat of green !

L.

See how his bright whip brandish'd round his head,
 Flickers like streamer in the northern skies !
 See how his ass on earth with nimble tread
 Half-flying rides, in air half-riding flies,
 As if a pair of ostrich wings, out-spread,
 To help him on, had sprouted from his thighs !
 Well scamper'd ROB, well whipt, well spur'd, my boy !
 O haste ye, RANTER, haste—rush—gallop to thy joy !

LI.

The pole is gain'd ; his ass's head he turns
 Southward, to tread the trodden ground again ;
 Sparkles like flint the cuddy's hoof and burns,
 Seeming to leave a smoke upon the plain ;
 His bitted mouth the foam impatient churns ;
 Sweeps his broad tail behind him like a train ;
 Speed, cuddy, speed—Oh, slacken not thy pace !
 Ten minutes more like this, and thou shalt gain the race !

LII.

He comes careering on the sounding Loan,
 With pace unslacken'd hast'ning to the knoll,
 And as he meets with those that hobble on
 With northward heads to gain the ribbon'd pole,
 Ev'n by his forceful fury are o'erthrown
 His long-ear'd brethren in confusion droll ;
 For as their sides, he passing, slightly grazes,
 By that collision shock'd, down roll the founder'd asses.

LIII.

Heels over head they tumble ; ass on ass
 They dash, and twenty times roll o'er and o'er,
 Lubberly wallowing along the grass,
 In beastly ruin and with beastly roar ;
 While their vexed riders in poor plight, alas !
 Flung from their saddles three long ells and more,
 Bruis'd and commingl'd, with their cuddies sprawl,
 Cursing th' impetuous brute whose conflict caus'd their fall.

LIV.

With hats upon their heads they down did light,
 Withouten hats disgracefully they rose ;
 Clean were their faces ere they fell and bright,
 But dirty-fac'd they got up on their toes ;
 Strong were their sinews ere they fell and tight,
 Hip-shot they stood up, sprain'd with many woes ;
 Blythe were their aspects ere the ground they took,
 Grim louring rose they up, with crabbed ghastful look.

LV.

And, to augment their sorrow and their shame,
 A hail abhor'd of nauseous rotten eggs,
 In rascal vollies from the rabble came
 Opprobrious, on their bellies, heads, and legs,
 Smearing with slime that ill their clothes became,
 Whereby they stunk like wash-polluted pigs,
 For in each sputt'ring shell a juice was found,
 Foul as the dribbling pus of Philoctetes' wound.

LVI.

Ah ! then with grievous limp along the ground,
 They sought their hats that had so flown away,
 And some were, cuff'd and much disaster'd, found,
 And haply some not found unto this day :
 Meanwhile, with vast and undiminish'd bound,
 Sheer through the bestial wreck and disarray,
 The brute of Mesopotam hurries on,
 And in his madding speed devours the trembling Loan.

LVII.

Speed, cuddy, speed—one short, short minute more,
 And finish'd is thy toil, and won the race !
 Now, one half minute and thy toils are o'er—
 His toils are o'er, and he has gain'd the base !
 He shakes his tail, the conscious conqueror ;
 Joy peeps through his stupidity of face ;
 He seems to wait the Monarch's approbation,
 As quiver his long ears with self-congratulation.

LVIII.

Straight from the stirrup Ron dislodg'd his feet,
 And, flinging from his grasp away the rein,
 Off sprung, and louting in obeisance meet,
 Did lowly duty to his King again :
 His King with salutation kind did greet
 Him the victorious champion of the plain,
 And bade him rise, and up the hillock skip,
 That he the royal hand might kiss with favour'd lip.

LIX.

Whereat, obedient to the high command,
 Great ROBERT SCOTT, upbolting from the ground,
 Rush'd up, in majesty of gesture grand,
 To where the Monarch sat upon the mound,
 And kiss'd the hard back of his hairy hand,
 Respectfully, as fits a Monarch crown'd ;
 But with a keener ecstacy he kiss'd
 The dearer tend'rer back of MAGGIE'S downy fist.

LX.

Then took the trumpeter his clarion good,
 And, in a sharp and violent exclaim,
 Out from the brass among the multitude,
 Afar sent conqu'ring ROB'S illustrious name ;

Which heard, an outcry of applause ensued,
 That shook the dank dew from the starry frame ;
 Great ROBERT'S name was halloo'd through the mob,
 And Echo blabb'd to heav'n the name of mighty ROB.

LXI.

But, unapplauded, and in piteous case,
 The lagers on their vanquish'd asses slow,
 Shame-stung, with scurvy length of rueful face,
 Ride sneaking off to save them further woe ;
 For, cramm'd with slime and stench and vile disgrace,
 Th' abominable shells fly moe and moe,
 Till slink the men amid the press of folk,
 Secure from shame, and slime, and egg's unwholesome yolk.

CANTO IV.

I.

There are who say (the devil pinch them for it !)
 That I am but a silly poetaster,
 A trencher-licker in Apollo's court,
 A sorry boy, an arrant paper-waster ;
 The louts ! I'll make them mend their bad report,
 Or on their mouths will clap a pitchy plaster ;
 Ye blockheads, read my ass-race, and avow it,
 That I'm Homeric stuff—ay, every inch a poet.

II.

Again, the herald at the King's desire,
 His tube of metal to his mouth applied,
 And, with a roysting brazen clangour dire,
 Round to the heaving mass of rabble cried,
 Inviting every blade of fun and fire,
 That wish'd to jump in hempen bondage tied,
 Forthwith to start forth from the people's ring,
 And fetch his sack in hand, and stand before the King.

III.

No sooner in the sky his words were blown,
 Than through the multitude's compacted press,
 Wedging their bodies, push to th' open Loan
 Th' audacious men of boasted springiness ;
 Some Sampson-thigh'd, and large and big of bone,
 Brawn-burden'd, six feet high or little less,
 Some lean, flesh-wither'd, stinted, oatmeal things,
 Yet hardy, tough, and smart, with heels like steely springs.

IV.

Nor were the offer'd candidates a few ;
 In hundreds forth they issue, mad with zeal
 To try, in feats which haply some shall rue,
 Their perilous alacrity of heel ;
 Each mortal brings his sack wherein to mew
 As in a pliant prison, strong as steel,
 His guiltless corse, and clog his nat'ral gait
 With cumbrance of cloth, embarrassing and strait.

V.

And in their hands they hold to view on high
 Vain-gloriously their bags of sturdy thread,
 And toss and wave them in th' affronted sky,
 Like honour-winning trophies o'er their head,
 Assuming merit, that they dare defy
 The dangers of a race so droll and dread :
 Ah, boast not, sirs, for premature's the brag ;
 'Tis time in troth to boast when off you put the bag !

VI.

Onward they hasten'd, clamorous and loud,
 To where the Monarch sat upon the knoll,
 And, having to his presence humbly bow'd,
 And bared of reverential hat their poll,
 Their dirty sacks they wagg'd, erect and proud,
 Impatient, in their fiery fit of soul,
 And pertly shak'd, ev'n in the Monarch's eyes,
 A cloud of meal and flour that whirling round them flies.

VII.

But as the good King saw them thus prepar'd
 To have their persons scabbard in cloth,
 He order'd twenty soldiers of his guard,
 All swashing fellows and of biggest growth,

To step upon the green Loan's listed sward,
That they may lend assistance, nothing loath,
To plunge into their pliant sheaths, neck-deep,
Th' ambitious men that dare such over-vent'rous leap.

VIII.

They stepp'd obedient down, and in a trice
Put on the suitors' comical array;
Each sack gap'd wide its monstrous orifice,
To swallow to the neck its living prey;
And, as a swineherd puts in poke a grice
To carry from its sty some little way,
So did the soldiers plunge the men within
Their yawning gloomy gulfs, ev'n to the neck and chin.

IX.

As when of yore the Roman forum, split
By earthquake, yawn'd a black tremendous hole,
Voracious, deep'ning still, though flung in it
Were stones and trees with all their branches whole,
Till, in a noble patriotic fit,
The younker Curtius of devoted soul
Down headlong yarely gallop'd, horse and all,
And dash'd his gallant bones to atoms by the fall:

X.

So fearlessly these men of fair Scotland
(Though not to death) down plung'd into their sacks,
Entoiling into impotence to stand
Their feet, and mobbling legs, and sides, and backs,
Till tightly drawn was every twisted band,
And knotted firmly round their valiant necks,
That, in their rival rage to jump forthright,
They might not struggle off their case of sackcloth tight.

XI.

Nor, when their bodies were accoutred well,
Upon their cumber'd feet stood all upright,
But some, unpractic'd or uncautious, fell
Sousing with lumpish undefended weight,
And roll'd upon the turf full many an ell,
Incapable of uprise, sad in plight;
Till, rais'd again, with those that keep their feet,
Join'd in a line they stand, each in his winding-sheet.

XII.

Oh 'twas an awkward and ridic'ulous show,
To see a long sack-muff'd line of men,
With hatless heads all peeping in a row
Forth from the long smocks that their limbs contain!
For in the wide abyss of cloth below,
Their legs are swallow'd and their stout arms twain;
From chin to toe one shapeless lump they stand,
In clumsy uniform, without leg, arm, or hand!

XIII.

And such their odd appearance was, and show
Of human carcasses in sackcloth dight,
As when the trav'ler, when he haps to go
Down to Grand Cairo in the Turk's despite,
Sees in her chamber'd catacombs below
Full many a mummy horribly upright,
A grisly row of grimly-garnish'd dead,
That seem to pout, and scowl, and shake the brainless head.

XIV.

So queer and so grotesque to view they stood,
All ready at the trump's expected sound,
To take a spring of monstrous altitude,
And scour with majesty of hop the ground:
Yet not so soon the starting-blast ensued;
For, as they stand intent upon the bound,
The hum'rous Monarch, eyeing their array,
Gave then his good advice before they rush'd away.

XV.

"Oh friends! since now your loins are girt," he cried,
"For journey perilous and full of toil,
Behoves it you right cautiously to guide
Your ticklish steps along such vexing soil;
For sorry is the road, and well supplied
With stumps and stumbling-blocks and pits of guile,
And snares, and latent traps with earth bestown,
To catch you by the heels, and bring you groaning down.

B

XVI.

And woe betide, if unaware you hap
Your body's well-adjusted poise to lose,
For bloody bump and sorrowful sore slap
Await your falling temple, brow, and nose;
And, when once down and fetter'd in a trap,
Hard task 'twill be to extricate your toes:
So, lads, if you regard your noses' weal,
Pray pick out stable steps, and tread with wary heel.

XVII.

And he that longest time without a fall
Shall urge his sad perplexity of way,
And leave behind his fellow-trav'lers all,
Growling for help and grovelling on the clay;
He, for his laudable exertions, shall
Be sung the second victor of the day:
And so God speed you, sirs!" The monarch spoke,
And on the surging air the trumpet's signal broke.

XVIII.

As when a thunderclap, prelude nigh
A storm, growls on the frontiers of the west,
Ere yet the cloud, slow toiling up the sky,
Hath in its mass the mid-day sun suppress,
Alarm'd the timid doves that basking lie
Upon their cot's slope sunny roof at rest,
At once up-flutter in a sudden fray,
And poise th' unsteady wing, and squir in air away:

XIX.

So started, as the herald gave the blast,
At once the suitors in their sacks away,
With gallant up-spring, notable and vast,
A neck-endang'ring violent assay:
The solid earth, as up to sky they past,
Push'd back, seem'd to retire a little way;
And, as they up-flew furious from the ground,
The gash'd and wounded air whizz'd audibly a sound.

XX.

As when on summer eve a soaking rain
Hath after drought bedrench'd the tender grass,
If chance, in pleasant walk along the plain,
Brushing with foot the pearl-hung blades you pass,
A troop of frogs oft leaps from field of grain,
Marshall'd in line, a foul unseemly race,
They halt a space, then vaulting up they fly,
As if they long'd to sit on Iris' bow on high:

XXI.

So leap'd the men, half-sepulchred in sack,
Up-swinging, with their shapes be-monstring sky,
And coursed in air a semicircle track,
Like to the feath'ry-footed Mercury;
Till, spent their impetus, with sounding thwack
Greeted their heels the green ground sturdily;
And some, descending, kept their balance well,
Unbalance'd some came down, and boisterously fell.

XXII.

The greeted earth beneath the heavy thwacks
Of feet that centripetal down alight,
Of tingling elbows, bruised loins and backs,
Shakes passive, yet indignant of the weight;
For, o'er her bosom, in their plagu'y sacks,
Cumbrously roll (a mortifying sight!)
Wreck'd burgher, knight, and laird, and clown pell-mell,
Prostrate, in grievance hard, too terrible to tell.

XXIII.

And aye they struggle at an effort strong
To reinstate their feet upon the plain,
Half-elbowing, half-kneeing, sore and long
Abortively, with bitter sweat and pain,
Till, half upraised, they to their forehead's wrong
Go with a buffet rapping down again,
And sprawl and flounce, and wallow on their backs,
Crying loud for help t' uncord their dolorous sacks.

XXIV.

Not in severer anguish of distress
The fabled giant under Etna lies,
Though rocks and tree-proud promontories press
With vengeance fitting Jove his ruffian size;

Wallowing supine beneath the mountain's stress,
Half-broil'd with brimstone ever hot, he fries,
And, as he turns his vasty carcass oer,
Out-belches molten rocks, and groans a hideous roar.

XXV.

In such vexatious plight the mortals lie
That founder'd on the threshold of the race,
Where let us leave them, and lift up our eye
To those that keep their feet, and hop apace.
Gramercy! how they bounce it lustily,
Maugre their misery of woven case!
How with their luggage scour they o'er the Loan,
And toil, and moil, and strain, and sweat, and lumber on.

XXVI.

Strange thing it is that men so penn'd in clout,
So wound with swaddling-clothes, should trip it so!
See how with spring incomparably stout,
Spurning the nasty earth, they upward go,
As if they wish'd t'unsoccket and knock out
With poll the candles that i'th' night-sky glow!
See how attain'd the zenith of their leap,
Earthward they sink again with long descending sweep!

XXVII.

They halt not still; again aloft they hop,
As if they tread the rainbow's gilded bend,
Again upon the quaking turf they drop,
Lighting majestic on their proper end;
I ween, they do not make a moment's stop;
Oh who may now his precious time misspend!
'Tis bustling all and swell'd ring—but behold!
Swop! there a jumper falls aflat upon the mould!

XXVIII.

How can his gyved arms be forward thrust
To break the downsway of his fall just now!
Ah, 'tis his tender nose alone that must
In loving-kindness save from bump his brow;
His soft nose, to its site and duty just,
Is martyr'd to its loyalty, I trow,
For, flatten'd into anguish by the clod,
It weeps, see how it weeps, warm trickling tears of blood!

XXIX.

He bleeds, and from his nostrils' double sluice
Redly bedews the sod of ANSTER Loan,
Till, in a puddle of his own heart's juice,
He welt'ring writhes with lamentable moan,
And sends his sack in curses to the deuce,
Banning the hour when first he put it on;
Meanwhile, o'erlabour'd in their hobbling pother,
Douse, drops a second down, and whap! there sinks
another!

XXX.

Wearied, half-bursten with their hot turmoil,
Their lungs like Vulcan's bellows panting strong,
Pow'rless to stand, or prosecute their toil,
Successively they souse and roll along,
Till, round and round, the carcass-cumber'd soil
Is strewn with havoek of the jumping throng,
That make a vain endeavour off to shuffle
The cruel sackcloth coil, that does their persons muffle.

XXXI.

All in despair have sunk, save yonder two
That still their perpendic'lar posture keep,
The only remnant of the jumping crew,
That urge their emulous persisting leap;
Oddspittkins! how with poise exactly true
Clean forward to the ribbon'd pole they sweep;
I cannot say that one is 'fore the other,
So equal side by side they plod near one another.

XXXII.

The pole is gain'd, and to the glorious sun
They turn their sweaty faces round again;
With inextinguishable rage to run,
Southward unflagging and unquell'd they strain.
What! Is not yonder face, where young-ey'd Fun
And Laughter seem enthron'd to hold their reign,
One scen before—ev'n Rob the Bord'rer's phiz?
Ay, now I ken it well, by'r lakin it is his!

XXXIII.

Haste, haste ye, Rob, half-run, half-fly,
Wriggle and wrestle in thy bag's despite;
So! shoot like cannon-bullet to the sky;
So! stably down upon thy soles alight;
Up, up again, and fling it gallantly!
Well flung, my Rob, thou art a clever wight;
'Sblood, now thy rival is a step before;
String, string thy sinews up, and jump three yards and
more!

XXXIV.

'Tis done—but who is he that at thy side
Thy rival vigorously marches so!
Declare, oh Muse, since thou art eagle-ey'd,
And thine it is, ev'n at a glance, to know
Each son of mortal man, though mumm'd and tied
In long disguising sack from chin to toe!
"He, boy, that marches in such clumsy state,
Is old Edina's child, a waggish Advocate:

XXXV.

For he too has for MAGGIE LAUDER dar'd
To prove the mettle of his heel and shin,
A jolly wight, who trickishly prepar'd
A treach'rous sack to scarf his body in;
A sack, whose bottom was with damp impair'd,
Fusty, half-rotten, mouldy, frail, and thin,
That he, unseen, might in the race's pother,
Thrust out one helpful leg, and keep inea'g'd its brother.

XXXVI.

And seest thou not his right leg peeping out,
Enfranchis'd, trait'rously to help his gait,
Whilst th'other, still imprison'd in its clout,
Tardily follows its more active mate?"
I see it well—'tis treachery, no doubt;
Beshrew thee now, thou crafty Advocate!
Unfair, unfair! 'tis quite unfair, I say,
Thus with illicit leg to prop thy perilous way!

XXXVII.

Half-free, half-clogg'd, he steals his quick advance,
Nearing at each unlieens'd step the base,
While honest ROBERT plies the harder dance,
Most faithful to his sack and to the race;
Now for it, Rob—another jump—but once—
And overjump'd is all th' allotted space;
By JOVE, they both have reach'd the base together,
Gain'd is the starting-line, yet gain'd the race hath
neither!

XXXVIII.

At once they bend each man his body's frame
Into a bow, before the King and MAG;
At once they ope their lips to double-claim
The race's palm (for now Auld Reekie's wag,
As snail draws in its horn, had, fy for shame!
Drawn his dishonest leg into his bag);
At once they plead the merits of their running,
Good Rob with proofs of force, the wag with quips and
punning.

XXXIX.

Me lists not now to variegate my song
With all his sophistry and quip and pun;
Oh 'twould be tiresome, profitless, and long,
To quote his futile arguments air-spun,
His oratoric tricks that dress the wrong
In garb of right, his gybes of naughty fun,
Quiddits and quillits that may well confound one,
And make a rotten sack appear a goodly sound one!

XL.

But ROBERT to the people's sight appeal'd,
And to the eyes of royal JAMES and MAG,
Who saw his rival's foot too plain reveal'd,
And impudently peering from its bag:
He said 'twas rogish thus to come a-field
With such a paltry hypocritic rag;
The very hole through which his foot was thrust,
Gapes evidence to prove his claim was quite unjust.

XLI.

Long was the plea, and longer it had been,
Had not the populace begun aloud
To express with clamour their resentment keen
At him who quibbl'd in his rotten shroud:
A thousand hands, uplifted high, were seen
Over the hats and bonnets of the crowd,
With paly hens' eggs that their fingers clench,
To hurl upon his sack conviction, slime, and stench.

XLII.

Which, when he saw all white upheld to view,
Ready to rattle shame about his ears,
He straightway the perplexing claim withdrew,
Urg'd to resign by his judicious fears;
For had he but one minute staid or two,
He for his subtilities, and quirks, and jeers,
Had reap'd a poor and pitiful reward,
And smell'd from head to foot—but not with Syrian nard.

XLIII.

The Monarch, then, well pleas'd that thus the mob
Had settl'd with prejudging voice the case,
Orders his trumpeter to blazon ROSE,
Again the winner of the second race:
The fellow blew each cheek into a globe,
And puff'd into deformity his face,
As to the top of heav'n's empyreal frame
He, in a storm of breath, sent up the conqueror's name.

XLIV.

His name the rabble took; from tongue to tongue
Band'd it flew like fiery-winged shot,
That the blue atmosphere around them rung
With the blabb'd honours of great ROBERT SCOTT;
Nor when they thus his triumph stoutly sung,
Were the race-founder'd gentlemen forgot,
That in their trammels still a-flound'ring lay,
And, had they not been rais'd, had lain there to this day.

XLV.

But soon up-rear'd they were: the lads, that late
Had help'd their uncouth livery to don,
Now step upon the green compassionate,
To free them from the house of dole and moan:
The cords, that on their necks were knotted straight,
Are loos'd, and as they lie extended prone,
Of their long scabbards are discas'd the men,
And stand upon their feet, unclogg'd, and free agen.

XLVI.

They take no time (such shame the vanquish'd stung)
Each to snatch up his bag and bring it off;
Away they start, and plunge amid the throng,
Glad their embarrassment of cloth to doff
(So shoots the serpent to the brake along,
And leaves to rot his cast despised slough);
Deep in the throng with elbows sharp they bore,
And fear contemptuous laugh and hateful egg no more.

XLVII.

But now the sun, in mid-day's gorgeous state,
Tow'rs on the summit of the lucid sky,
And human stomachs that were cramm'd of late,
Now empty, send their silent dinner-cry,
Demanding something wherewithal to sate
Their hunger, bread and beer, or penny-pic:
The crowd, obedient to the belly's call,
Begin to munch and eat and nibble, one and all.

XLVIII.

Some from their pockets, or their wallets, drew
Lumps of the roasted flesh of calf or lamb;
Some ply their teeth-arm'd grinding jaws to chew
The tougher slices of the thirsty ham;
Others with bits of green cheese nice and new
Ev'n to the throat their clownish bellies cram,
While horns of ale, from many a barrel fill'd,
Foam white with frothy rage, and soon are swigg'd and
swill'd.

XLIX.

JAMES, too, and MAG, and all the courtly train
Of lords and ladies round them not a few,
With sugar'd biscuits sooth'd their stomachs' pain,
For courtly stomachs must be humour'd too;

And from their throats to wash the dusty stain
That they had breath'd when from the sacks it flew,
A glass of wine they slipp'd within their clay,
And if they swallow'd twain, the wiser folk were they.

L.

Nor ceas'd the business of the day meanwhile;
For as the Monarch chew'd his sav'ry cake,
The man whose lungs sustain the trumpet's toil,
Made haste again his noisy tube to take,
And with a cry, which, heard full many a mile,
Caus'd the young crows on Airdrie's trees to quake,
He bade the suitor-pipers to draw nigh,
That they might, round the knoll, their powers of piping
try.

LI.

Which, when the rabble heard, with sudden sound
They broke their circle's huge circumference,
And, crushing forward to the southern mound,
They push'd their many-headed shoal immense,
Diffusing to an equal depth around
Their mass of bodies wedg'd compact and dense,
That, standing nigher, they might better hear
The pipers squeaking loud to charm Miss MAGGIE'S ear.

LII.

And soon the pipers, shouldering along
Through the close mob their squeez'd uneasy way,
Stood at the hillock's foot, an eager throng,
Each asking licence from the King to play;
For with a tempest, turbulent and strong,
Labour'd their bags impatient of delay,
Heaving their bloated globes outrageously,
As if in pangs to give their contents to the sky.

LIII.

And every bag, thus full and tempest-ripe,
Beneath its arm lay ready to be prest,
And on the holes of each fair-polish'd pipe,
Each piper's fingers long and white were plac'd:
Fiercely they burn'd in jealous rivalry;
Each madding piper scoff'd at all the rest,
And fleer'd and toss'd contemptuously his head,
As if his skill alone deserv'd fair MAGGIE'S bed.

LIV.

Nor could they wait, so piping mad they were,
Till JAMES gave each man orders to begin;
But in a moment they displode their air
In one tumultuous and unlicens'd din;
Out-flies, in storm of simultaneous blare,
The whizzing wind compress their bags within,
And whiffing through the wooden tubes so small,
Growls gladness to be freed from such confining thrall.

LV.

Then rose, in burst of hideous symphony,
Of pibrochs and of tunes one mingled roar;
Discordantly the pipes squeal'd sharp and high,
The drones alone in solemn concord snore;
Five hundred fingers, twinkling funnily,
Play twiddling up and down on hole and bore,
Now passage to the shrilly wind denying,
And now a little rais'd to let it out a-sighing.

LVI.

Then rung the rocks and caves of Billyness,
Reverberating back that concert's sound,
And half the lurking Echoes that possess
The glens and hollows of the Fifean ground;
Their shadowy voices strain'd into excess
Of out-cry, loud huzzaing round and round
To all the Dryads of Pitkirie wood,
That now they round their trees should dance in frisky
mood.

LVII.

As when the sportsman with report of gun,
Alarms the sea-fowl of the Isle of May,
Ten thousand mews and gulls that shade the sun
Come flapping down in terrible dismay,
And with a wild and barb'rous concert stun
His ears, and scream, and shriek, and wheel away;
Scarce can the boatman hear his plashing oar;
Yell caves and eyries all, and rings each Maian shore.

LVIII.

Just so around the knoll did pipe and drone
Whistle and hum a discord strange to hear,
Tort'ring with violence of shriek and groan,
Kingly, and courtly, and plebeian ear ;
And still the men had humm'd and whistl'd on,
Ev'n till each bag had burst its bloated sphere,
Had not the King, uprising, wav'd his hand,
And check'd the boist'rous din of such unmanner'd band.

LIX.

On one side of his face a laugh was seen,
On t'other side a half-form'd frown lay hid ;
He frown'd, because they petulantly keen,
Set up their piping forward and unbid :
He laugh'd, for who could have control'd his mien,
Hearing such crash of pibrochs as he did !
He bade them orderly the strife begin,
And play each man the tune wherewith the fair he'd win.

LX.

Whereat the pipers ceased their idle toil
Of windy music wild and deafening,
And made too late (what they forgot e'erwhile)
A gen'ral bow to MAGGIE and their King ;
But as they vail'd their bare heads tow'rd the soil,
Oh then there happ'd a strange portentous thing,
Which had not good my Muse confirm'd for true,
Myself had not believed, far less have told to you.

LXI.

For lo ! whilst all their bodies yet were bent,
Breaks from the spotless blue of eastern sky
A globe of fire, (miraculous oment !)
Bursten from some celestial cleft on high ;
And thrice in circle round the firmament
Trail'd its long light the gleamy prodigy,
Till on the ring of pipers down it came,
And set their pipes, and drones, and chanters in a flame.

LXII.

'Twas quick and sudden as th' electric shock—
One moment lighted and consumed them all ;
As is the green hair of the tufted oak
Scath'd into blackness by the fulmin' ball ;
Or, as spark-kindled, into fire and smoke,
Flashes and fumes the nitrous grain so small,
So were their bagpipes, in a twink, like tinder
Fired underneath their arms, and burn'd into a cinder.

LXIII.

Yet so innocuous was the sky-fall'n flame,
That, save their twangling instruments alone,
Unsing'd their other gear remain'd the same,
Ev'n to the nap that stuck their coats upon ;
Nor did they feel its heat, when down it came
On errand to destroy pipe, bag, and drone ;
But stood in blank surprise, when to the ground
Dropt down in ashes black their furniture of sound.

LXIV.

Crest-fall'n they stood, confounded and distress'd,
And fix'd upon the turf their stupid look,
Conscious that Heav'n forbade them to contest
By such a burning token of rebuke.
The rabble, too, its great alarm confest,
For every face the ruddy blood forsook,
As with their white, uprolling, ghastly eyes
They spied the streaky light wheel whizzing from the
skies.

LXV.

And still they to that spot of orient heav'n,
Whence burst the shining globe, look up aghast,
Expecting, when th' empyreal pavement riv'n,
A second splendour to the earth should cast ;
But when they saw no repetition giv'n,
Chang'd from alarm to noisy joy at last,
They set up such a mix'd tremendous shout,
As made the girdling heav'ns to bellow round about.

LXVI.

And such a crack and peal of laughter rose,
When the poor pipers bagpipe-less they saw,
As when a flock of jetty-feather'd crows,
On winter morning when the skies are raw,

Come from their woods in long and sooty rows,
And over ANSTER through their hoarse throats caw ;
The sleepy old wives, on their warm chaff-beds,
Up from their bolsters rear, afear'd, their flannel'd heads.

LXVII.

Then did th' affronted pipers sink away,
With faces fix'd on earth for very shame ;
For not one remnant of those pipes had they
Wherewith they late so arrogantly came ;
But in a black and ashy ruin lay
Their glory moulder'd by the scathing flame ;
Yet in their hearts they curs'd (and what the wonder ?)
That fire to which their pipes so quick were giv'n a
plunder.

LXVIII.

And scarce they off had slunk, when with a bound
Great ROBERT SCOTT sprang forth before the King ;
For he alone, when all the pipers round
Stood rang'd into their fire-devoted ring,
Had kept snug distance from the fated ground,
As if forewarn'd of that portentous thing ;
He stood and laugh'd, as underneath his arm
He held his bagpipe safe, unseath'd with fiery harm.

LXIX.

His hollow drone, with mouth wide-gaping, lay
Over his shoulder pointing to the sky,
Ready to spue its breath, and puff away
The lazy silver clouds that sit on high :
His bag swell'd madly to begin the play,
And with its bowel-wind groan'd inwardly ;
Not higher heav'd the wind-bags, which of yore
Ulysses got from him who ruled th' Æolian shore.

LXX.

He thus the King with reverence bespoke :
" My liege, since heav'n with bagpipe-level'd fire
Hath turn'd my brethren's gear to dust and smoke,
And testified too glaringly its ire,
It fits me now, as yet my bagpipe's poke
Remains unsing'd, and every pipe entire,
To play my tune—Oh King, with your good will—
And to the royal ear to prove my piping skill."

LXXI.

Nodded his liege assent, and straightway bade
Him stand a-top o' th' hillock at his side ;
A-top he stood ; and first a bow he made
To all the crowd that shouted far and wide ;
Then, like a piper dext'rous at his trade,
His pipes to play adjusted and applied ;
Each finger rested on its proper bore ;
His arm appear'd half-raised to wake the bag's uproar.

LXXII.

A space he silent stood, and cast his eye
In meditation upwards to the pole,
As if he pray'd some fairy pow'r in sky
To guide his fingers right o'er bore and hole ;
Then pressing down his arm, he gracefully
Awak'd the merry bagpipe's slumb'ring soul,
And pip'd and blew, and play'd so sweet a tune,
As might have well unspher'd the reeling midnight moon.

LXXIII.

His ev'ry finger, to its place assign'd,
Mov'd quiv'ring like the leaf of aspen tree,
Now shutting up the skittish squeaking wind,
Now op'ning to the music passage free ;
His cheeks, with windy puffs therein confin'd,
Were swoln into a red rotundity,
As from his lungs into the bag was blown
Supply of needful air to feed the growling drone.

LXXIV.

And such a potent tune did never greet
The drum of human ear with lively strain ;
So merry, that from dancing on his feet
No man undeaft could stockishly refrain ;
So loud, 'twas heard a dozen miles complete,
Making old Echo pipe and hum again,
So sweet, that all the birds in air that fly,
Charm'd into new delight, come sailing through the sky.

LXXV.

Crow, sparrow, linnet, hawk, and white-wing'd dove,
Wheel in aerial jig o'er ANSTER Loan;
The sea-mews from each Maian cleft and cove
O'er the deep sea come pinion-wafted on;
The light-detesting bats now flap above,
Scaring the sun with wings to day unknown—
Round ROBERT's head they dance, they cry, they sing,
And shear the subtil sky with broad and playful wing.

LXXVI.

And eke the mermaids that in ocean swim,
Drawn by that music from their shelly caves,
Peep now unbashful from the salt-sea brim,
And founce and splash exulting in the waves;
They spread at large the white and floating limb,
That Neptune amorously clips and laves,
And kem with combs of pearl and coral fair
Their long sleek oozy locks of green redundant hair.

LXXVII.

Nor was its influence less on human ear;
First from their gilded chairs up-start at once
The royal JAMES and MAGGIE seated near,
Enthusiastic both and mad to dance:
Her hand he snatch'd, and look'd a merry leer,
Then caper'd high in wild extravagance,
And on the grassy summit of the knoll,
Wagg'd each monarchical leg in galliard strange and droll.

LXXVIII.

As when a sun-beam, from the waving face
Of well-fill'd waterpail reflected bright,
Varies upon the chamber-walls its place,
And, quiv'ring, tries to cheat and foil the sight;
So quick did MAGGIE, with a nimble grace,
Skip patt'ring to and fro, alert and light,
And, with her noble colleague in the reel,
Haughtily heav'd her arms, and shook the glancing heel.

LXXIX.

The Lords and Ladies next, who sat or stood
Near to the Piper and the King around,
Smitten with that contagious dancing mood,
'Gan hand in hand in high lavolt to bound,
And jig'g'd it on as featly as they could,
Circling in sheeny rows the rising ground,
Each sworded Lord a Lady's soft palm gripping,
And to his mettle rous'd at such unwonted piping.

LXXX.

Then did th' infectious hopping-mania seize
The circles of the crowd that stood more near,
Till, round and round, far spreading by degrees,
It madden'd all the Loan to kick and rear;
Men, women, children, lilt and ramp, and squeeze,
Such fascination takes the gen'ral ear!
Ev'n babes that at their mothers' bosoms hung,
Their little willing limbs fantastically flung!

LXXXI.

And hoar-hair'd men and wives, whose marrow age
Hath from their hollow bones suck'd out and drunk,
Canary in unconscionable rage,
Nor feel their sinews wither'd now and shrunk;
Pellmell in random couples they engage,
And boisterously wag feet, arms, and trunk,
As if they strove, in capering so brisk,
To heave their aged knees up to the solar disk.

LXXXII.

And cripples from beneath their shoulders fling
Their despicable crutches far away,
Then, yok'd with those of stouter limbs, up-spring
In hobbling merriment, uncouthly gay;
And some on one leg stand y-gamboling;
For why! The other short and frail had they;
Some, whose both legs distorted were and weak,
Dance on their poor knee-pans in mad preposterous
freak.

LXXXIII.

So on they trip, King, MAGGIE, Knight, and Earl,
Green-coated courtier, satin-snooded dame,
Old men and maidens, man, wife, boy, and girl,
The stiff, the supple, bandy-legg'd, and lame—

All suck'd and wrapt into the dance's whirl,
Inevitably witch'd within the same;
Whilst Rob, far-seen, o'erlooks the huddling Loan,
Rejoicing in his pipes, and squeals serenely on.

LXXXIV.

But such a whirling and a din there was,
Of bodies and of feet that heel'd the ground,
As when the Maelstrom in his craggy jaws
Engluts the Norway waves with hideous sound;
In vain the black sea-monster plies his paws
'Gainst the strong eddy that impels him round;
Rack'd and convuls'd, the ingorging surges roar,
And fret their frothy wrath, and reel from shore to
shore.

LXXXV.

So reel the mob, and with their feet up-cast
From the tramp'd soil a dry and dusty cloud,
That shades the huddling hurly-burly vast
From the warm sun as with an earthy shroud;
Else, had the warm sun spied them wriggling fast,
He sure had laugh'd at such bewitched crowd,
For never, since heav'n's baldric first he trod,
Tripp'd was such country dance beneath his fiery road.

LXXXVI.

Then was the shepherd, that on Largo-law
Sat idly whistling to his feeding flock,
Dismay'd, when looking south-eastward he saw
The dusty cloud more black than furnace-smoke;
He lean'd his ear, and catch'd with trembling awe
The dance's sound that thr'ambient ether broke;
He bless'd himself and cried, "By sweet St John!
The devil hath got a job in ANSTER's dirty Loan."

LXXXVII.

At length the mighty Piper, honest Rob,
His wonder-working melody gave o'er,
When on a sudden all the flouncing mob
Their high commotion ceas'd and toss'd no more;
Trunk, arm, and leg, forgot to shake and bob,
That bob'd and shak'd so pariously before;
On ground, fatigu'd, the panting dancers fall,
Wond'ring what witch's craft had thus embroil'd them
all.

LXXXVIII.

And some cried out, that o'er the Piper's head
They had observ'd a little female fay,
Clad in green gown, and purple-striped plaid,
That fed his wind-bag, aidant of the play;
Some, impotent to speak, and almost dead
With jumping, as on earth they sat or lay,
Wip'd from their brows, with napkin, plaid, or gown,
The globes of shining sweat that ooze and trickle down.

LXXXIX.

Nor less with jig o'er-labour'd and o'er-wrought,
Down on their chairs dropt MAGGIE and the King,
Amaz'd what supernat'ral spell had caught
And forc'd their heels into such frolicking;
And much was MAG astonish'd, when she thought
(As sure it was an odd perplexing thing)
That ROBERT's tune was to her ear the same
As what Tom Puck late play'd, when from her pot he came.

XC.

But from that hour, the Monarch and the mob
Gave MAGGIE LAUDER's name to ROBERT's tune,
And so shall it be call'd, while o'er the globe
Travels the waning and the crescent moon,
And from that hour the puissant Piper ROB,
Whose bagpipe wak'd so hot a rigadoun,
From his well-manag'd bag, and drone, and chanter,
Obtain'd the glorious name of Mighty ROB THE RANTER.

CANTO V.

I.

Oh for that pond'rous broomstick, whereon rode
Grim Beattie Laing,* hors'd daringly sublime!
So would I fly above the solar road,
To where the Muses sit on high and chime;

* The famous witch of Pittenweem. See *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*.

Eigh! I would kiss them in their bright abode,
And from their lips suck Poetry and Rhyme;
Till Jove (if such my boldness should dispense him)
Cry, "Fy, thou naughty boy! pack off and moult thy
besom."

II.

It needed not that with a third exclaim,
King JAMES's trumpeter aloud should cry
Through his long alchemy, the famous name
Of him who, piping, got the victory;
For, sooth to tell, man, boy, and girl, and dame,
Him the great Prince of Pipers testify,
Not with huzzas and jabbering of tongues,
But with hard puffing breasts and dance-erwearing
lungs.

III.

And truly had the crier will'd to shout
The doughty Piper's name through polish'd trump,
His breath had not suffic'd to twang it out,
So did the poor man's lights puff, pant, and jump:
Wherefore to rest them from that dancing-bout,
A while they sat or lay on back or rump,
Gulping with open mouths and nostrils wide
The pure refreshing waves of Jove's aerial tide.

IV.

But, unfatigued, upon the hillock's crown
Stood ROB, as if his lungs had spent no breath,
And looked with conscious exultation down
Upon the dance's havoc wide beneath,
Laughing to see th' encumber'd plain bestrown
With people whirl'd and wriggled nigh to death;
Erelong he thus address, with reverend air,
The King that, breathless yet, sat puffing in his chair:

V.

"My Liege! though well I now with triple claim
The guerdon of my threefold toils may ask,
As independent of success i'the game
Of jingling words, the ballad-maker's task;
Yet, as I too with honourable aim
Have tapp'd Apollo's rhyme-o'erflowing cask,
Allow me, good my King! to ope my budget,
And tell my witty tale, that you and MAG may judge it."

VI.

Whereto his breathless King made slow reply
(He drew a gulp of air each word between)—
"Great—Piper!—Mighty—Rob!—Belov'd—of sky!
Oh prov'd—too well thy—piping craft—has been;
Witness my lungs—that play so puff—ingly,
And witness yonder—laughter-moving scene!
I'm pinch'd for wind—Ha, ha!—scarce breath I draw—
Pardi!—a sight like yon my Kingship never saw!

VII.

Woes me! how sweating in prostration vast,
Men, wives, boys, maidens, lie in dust bestrown,
Gaping for respiration, gasping fast,
Half my liege subjects wreck'd on ANSTER Loan!
'Twill need, methinks, a hideous trumpet-blast,
To rouse them from thus grov'ling basely prone;
For such effort my man's lungs yet are frail;
So, Rob, take thou his trump and rouse them for thy
tale."

VIII.

He spake, and at the hint, the Ranter took
The throated metal from the Herald's hand,
And blew a rousing clangour, wherewith shook
Green sea, and azure sky, and cloddy land:
Up-sprung, as from a trance, with start'd look,
The prostrate people, and erected stand,
Turning their faces to the knap of ground,
Whence burst upon their ears the loud assaulting sound.

IX.

Then, crowding nearer in a vasty shoal,
They press their sum of carcases more close,
Till crush'd, and cramm'd, and straiten'd round the knoll,
They rear and poise their bodies on their toes:

So were they pack'd and mortis'd, that the whole
Seem'd but one lump incorp'rate to compose;
One mass of human trunks unmov'd they show,
Topp'd with ten thousand heads all moving to and fro.

X.

And from the tongues of all those heads there rose
A confus'd murmur through the multitude,
As when the merry gale of summer blows
Upon the tall tops of a stately wood,
And rocks the long consecrated boughs,
Rustling amid the leaves a discord rude;
High perch'd aloft the cuckoo rides unseen,
Embower'd with plenteous shades, and tufts of nodding
green.

XI.

Then wav'd the RANTER round and round his hand,
Commanding them to still their hubbub loud:
All in a moment, still and noiseless, stand
The widely-circumfus'd and heaving crowd,
As if upon their gums at ROB's command
Were pinn'd those tongues that jabber'd late so proud;
Tow'rds him, as to their centre, every ear
Inclines its mazy hole, th'expected tale to hear.

XII.

But when the RANTER from his height beheld
The silent world of heads diffus'd below,
With all their ears agape, his visage swell'd,
And burn'd with honest laughter's ruddy glow;
For who had not from gravity rebell'd,
Girt with infinitude of noddles so!
He soon into composure starch'd his phiz,
And op'd his fluent mouth, and told his tale, which is—

XIII.

"Where Thirdpart-house upon the level plain
Rears up its sooty chimnies high in air,
There liv'd of old, in ALEXANDER's reign,
Miss SUSAN SCOTT, a lady young and fair,
Who sith that death her parents both had ta'en,
Sole child, their coffers and their fields did heir—
Their fields, that waved with Ceres' green array,
Their coffers, gorged with gold, where Mammon pri-
son'd lay.

XIV.

Her form was beauteous as the budding spring,
Shaped by the mother of almighty love;
Her soul was but a sorry paltry thing,
As o'er was quicken'd by the breath of Jove:
Her person might have pleased a crowned King,
Or shone a Dryad in her Thirdpart grove;
Her soul, her silly soul, alas, to tell!
Was as a rotten egg enclosed in golden shell.

XV.

All day she, sitting at her window, cast
O'er her estate a proud and greedy eye;
Now measuring her fields, how broad, how vast,
How valuably rich they sunning lie;
Now summing up the bolls that in the blast
Wave yet unshorn, obnoxious to the sky,
And counting, avariciously, what more
Of gold th' unsickl'd crop would add unto her store.

XVI.

But when the grim and hooded night let fall
O'er Thirdpart's smoky roofs her ugly shade,
She hasten'd from her candle-lighten'd hall
To where her darling offer'd god was laid,
And freeing him with key from box's thrall,
On floor the gaudy deity display'd,
And with a miser's fumbling palm'd each toy,
And kiss'd bare Mammon's limbs, and laugh'd in silly joy.

XVII.

With her resided that fam'd wizard old,
Her uncle and her guardian, MICHAEL SCOTT,
Who there, in Satan's arts malignly bold,
His books of dev'lish efficacy wrote;
And, lack'd round (tremendous to be told!)
With demons hung with tails like shaggy goat,
Employ'd their ministrations damn'd to ring
Madrid's resounding bells, and fright the Spanish King

XVIII.

Fit guardian he for such a peevish ward :
 He cheek'd not her perversity of soul,
 But, hell's pernicious logic studying hard,
 Gave up the lady to her own control :
 Thus fostering, by his foolish disregard,
 The cank'ring vice that o'er her spirit stole :
 Captious and proud she was, and fond of strife—
 The pertest, prettiest jade of all the girls of Fife.

XIX.

Yet not the less her beauty's wafted fame
 A mob of suitors to her mansion drew ;
 Her face had charms to lure them and inflame,
 Her dow'r had mickle fascination too :
 On cap'ring steeds from all the county came
 Fife's sparkish lairds, all resolute to woo,
 And win, with courtship's sly assiduous art,
 Fair SUSAN'S worthy dow'r, and pettish worthless heart.

XX.

So num'rous were her lovers, that, in troth,
 I scarce by name can reckon up them all ;
 ARDROSS and LARGO, gallant fellows both,
 PITCORTHE, and RANKELOR, and NEWHALL,
 And NEWARK, with his coat of scarlet cloth,
 And short STRAVITHY, and RATHILLET tall,
 And proud BALCOMIE with his tassel'd hat,
 And GIBLISON the lean, and SAUCHOP round and fat.

XXI.

All these, and many more love-pining men,
 She flouted from her chamber scornfully ;
 To one alone she us'd not such disdain,
 The goodly CHARLY MELVIL of Carnbee ;
 For he, the singly cunning of the train,
 Enfore'd with costly gifts his am'rous plea,
 And brib'd her dull affections icy-cold,
 With jewel'd gairish rings, and knacks of labour'd gold.

XXII.

For ev'ry time he snatch'd her downy fist,
 With its soft warmth to paddle and to play,
 He hung a bracelet on her iv'ry wrist,
 A golden bracelet like a sunbeam gay ;
 And when her lip he rapturously kist
 (A kiss she ne'er refus'd for such a pay),
 He dropt upon her white neck from his hand
 A tang'd chain of gold, worth many a rood of land.

XXIII.

Till of his trinkets so profuse he grew,
 That soon exhausted was his purse's store,
 And half his lands were in a month or two
 Mortgaged for money to procure her more ;
 Yet ne'er could he prevail on froward SUE,
 Though ne'er he ceas'd t'importune and implore,
 T' appoint the long-retarded marriage-day,
 And cure his love, and give her promised hand away.

XXIV.

One summer eve, as in delightful walk,
 Handed, they past down Thirdpart's avenue,
 And, in a lightsome interchange of talk,
 Whined out their loves, as lovers use to do,
 Whilst ev'ry hairy bush upon its stalk
 Nodded for joy around them where it grew,
 CHARLES took advantage of the lovely hour,
 Again t' impress his suit with tongue's glib wordy power.

XXV.

'Oh my sweet SUSAN ! sweet my SUSAN oh !—
 (Here beat the poor laird his afflicted breast)—
 'Cast round thine eye, that eye that witches so,
 On God's wide world in beauty's garment drest,
 On yonder many-listed clouds that glow
 Heav'n's tap'stry curtaining the blazing west,
 On yonder setting rays up-shot on high,
 Like tiny wires of gold asslant the gorgeous sky.

XXVI.

Look how the bushy top of ev'ry tree
 Is mantled o'er with evening's borrow'd sheen,
 And seems to wag and wave more boastfully
 To the sweet breeze its leafy wig of green ;

Each herb, and flower, and whin, and bush, we see,
 Laughs jocund in creation's richest scene,
 Whilst earth reflects on heav'n, and heav'n on earth,
 Of God's created things the beauty and the mirth :

XXVII.

All these are passing lovely to the view,
 But lovelier, tenfold lovelier, are to me,
 Thy form and countenance, my bonny SUE !
 Creation's beauties all are summ'd in thee ;
 Thine eye out-lustres heav'n's most lucid blue ;
 Thy cheek out-blooms earth's bloomiest flower and
 tree ;
 And evening's gaudy clouds, that paint the air,
 Are fripp'ry to the locks of thy long golden hair !

XXVIII.

Then hey ! my sweetening, when shall come the day
 Ordain'd to give me such transcendent charms !
 Still must I pine and fret at thy delay,
 Capriciously forbidden from thy arms,
 And, like a pair of bellows, puff away
 My sighs, and swelter in hot Cupid's harms !—
 For heav'n's sake, SUSAN, on my case have pity,
 And fix our wedding-day, my chick, my dear, my pretty !

XXIX.

This said, he, gazing on her saucy eye,
 Forestalls the angry answer of her tongue ;
 When hark ! a sound of rushing, wildly high,
 Is heard the trees adjoining from among,
 As if a whirlwind, bursting from the sky,
 Their tops on one another sore had swung ;
 And lo ! out-springs in maddest pitch of wrath,
 PITCORTHE'S biggest bull upon their peaceful path.

XXX.

'Fly, fly, my love ! the gen'rous MELVIL said,
 And interpos'd to meet the monster's shock ;
 For fiercely rush'd he on th' endanger'd maid,
 Mad at the glaring of her scarlet frock :
 'Fly, fly, my love !—she turn'd about and fled,
 With face through terror pale and white as smoke,
 And left her laird, at danger of his skull,
 To wrestle for his life, and parry with the bull.

XXXI.

The bull's long horns he grip'd, and tow'rd the ground
 Press'd down with might his lugsy head robust,
 Whilst, madder thus defrauded of his wound,
 The brawny brute his bulk still forward thrust,
 And, riving with his heels the soil around,
 Bespatter'd heav'n with turf, and sod, and dust,
 And bellow'd till each tree around him shook,
 And Echo bellow'd back from her aerial nook.

XXXII.

At last th'intrepid lover, guessing well
 That now far off from harm his SUE was sped,
 Ungrip'd the horns, that, white and terrible,
 From brow their long and curling menace spread ;
 But scarce his grasp was loos'd, when (sad to tell !)
 Th'advantag'd brute toss'd churlishly his head,
 And with one horn, that suddenly uprose,
 Demolish'd and tore off the gallant MELVIL'S nose.

XXXIII.

Clean by the roots uporn was MELVIL'S nose,
 Leaving its place deform and foul with blood ;
 Yet stood he not to reap some heavier blows,
 And catch in napkin the red rushing flood ;
 But quite regardless of his face's woes,
 He, hurrying down the alley of the wood,
 Flew as if life were hung upon his heels ;
 Nor in his sweaty haste his nose's torment feels.

XXXIV.

Thus by the mettle of his heels he bore
 His life in safety from the brute away,
 And left behind his wound's unsightly gore,
 To all the wild-cats of the grove a prey :
 Homeward, in dumpish mood, afflicted sore,
 He took with lamentation loud his way,
 Wailing his piteous bitterness of case,
 His nasal honours crush'd, and ghastly havock'd face.

XXXV.

Six weeks he kept his mansion at Carnbee,
 Waiting his nose's re-establishment,
 In vain; repair'd, alas! it could not be,
 Too sore that horn the cartilage had shent.
 Five's surgeons crowding came, for love of fee,
 With plasters and with saws of loathsome scent,
 In vain; what could or saw or surgeon do?
 Gone was the good old nose, and who could rear a new?

XXXVI.

Meanwhile he ceas'd not, twice a week, to send
 Sweet cards to her, who did his thoughts employ,
 Memorials dear, which as he sat and penn'd,
 Perch'd laughing on his quill Love's mighty boy,
 And on the paper from its inky end
 Distill'd delight, and tenderness, and joy;
 His cards he sent, but (oh, the sin and shame!)
 From wicked shameless SUE there ne'er an answer came.

XXXVII.

Nor could her cruel silence be explain'd,
 Till Fame blew up the tidings to his house,
 That she, for whom his nose was marr'd and pain'd,
 To whom so long he had address his vows,
 Had, for another, now his love disdain'd,
 Urg'd by her uncle NEWARK to espouse;
 That publish'd were their bans, that now was fixt
 The wedding to be held on Monday forenoon next.

XXXVIII.

Then was the heart of injur'd MELVIL rent
 With bitter passion at a slight so base;
 That moment up he started, with intent
 To go and chide th'apostate to her face:
 Forth from his house in surly chafe he went,
 Apparell'd in his coat of golden lace;
 And eastward took his way alone and sad,
 Half cursing, in his heart, a maid so base and bad.

XXXIX.

But when the little boys and girls survey'd
 His lack-nose visage as he travell'd by,
 Some to their mothers' houses ran, afraid
 To tell them what a face had met their eye;
 Some with their fingers pointed undismay'd
 Giggling and blythe at his deformity;
 Ev'n ploughmen, at the road-edge, paus'd from toil,
 And held their sturdy sides, and loudly laugh'd a while.

XL.

Yet onward held the hapless laird his gait,
 Regardless of their mockery and scorn;
 His sole vexation was the girl ingrate,
 In whose defence his beauty had been shorn.
 He soon attain'd the ample hall, where sate,
 In morning dishabile, the fair forsworn;
 And, ent'ring boldly in his angry mood,
 With grimly-flatten'd face before her frowning stood.

XLI.

'Fy, horror! who art thou,' she scoffing said,
 'That with defeature horrible to see,
 Dar'st thus into my room advance thy stride,
 To fright my lapdog, and to sicken me?
 Go, hie thee homeward, thou deform, and hide
 That aspect in the dingles of Carnbee;
 There with thy rabbits burrow thee, till sprout
 Forth from between thy cheeks a beautifying snout.'

XLII.

This said, th'insulting creature from her chair,
 Red with resentment, on a sudden springs,
 And bolting forward with a saucy air,
 Her shapely person from the chamber flings,
 Leaving her honest laird confounded there,
 Heart-anguish'd by vexation's sharpest stings,
 That he may vent his anger and his fume
 On the fair carved chairs that decorate her room.

XLIII.

He got no long time to displode and vent
 On the fair chairs his bosom-choking ire;
 For, from his closet by Miss SUSAN sent,
 Sir MICHAEL rush'd, the sorcerer stout and dire,

With staff in hand, to rattle chastisement
 Upon the ribs and backbone of the squire:
 He beat him from the house with magic stick,
 And added surly words, and rude discourteous kick.

XLIV.

Poor MELVIL! griev'd, and mortified, and damp't,
 His back he turn'd upon th'uncivil door,
 And, musing vengeance, down the alley tramp't,
 As boil'd his heart with indignation o'er;
 He bit his lip, and curs'd the soil, and stamp't,
 Chafing his wrath with imprecation more;
 For what man, so misus'd, could have forborne
 To ban Sir MICHAEL SCOTT, and SUE the fair forsworn?

XLV.

So down the avenue he banning past,
 Scarce conscious whither in his fret he went,
 Till twilight tenanted the sky at last,
 Pavilioning o'er earth her sable tent,
 And the round moon, up-wheeling from the vast
 Of sea, in pomp of clouds magnificent,
 Embellish'd, with her sober silvery shine,
 The leaves and barky trunks of Thirdpart's fir and pine.

XLVI.

'Alas! was e'er like me poor lover crost?
 (He thus aloud deplored his wretched case)
 'So fool'd, abus'd, and cocker'd to my cost,
 So beaten into sorrow and disgrace!
 Was't not enough that for the jade I lost
 The rising honours of my ruin'd face;
 But, like a hedge-born beggar tattars-hung,
 Thus from her hated gate I must be switch'd and flung!

XLVII.

May vengeance seize thee, thou foul wizard churl,
 For basting me at such an irksome rate!
 May Satan gripe thee by thy heel, and hurl
 Thy carcass whizzing through hell's hottest gate!
 And as for thee, thou proud ingratel girl,
 Whose baseness, to my grief, I know too late,
 May some good pow'r, the injur'd lover's friend,
 On thy perfidious head a wing'd requital send!

XLVIII.

His pray'r he thus ejaculating spake,
 Nor knew that some good pow'r was nigh to hear;
 For in the middle of a flow'ry brake,
 That white with moonshine spread its thicket near,
 Lay Tommy Puck, the gentle fay, awake,
 And Mrs Puck, his gentle lady dear,
 Basking and lolling in the lunar ray,
 And tumbling up and down in brisk fantastic play.

XLIX.

Quoth frisky Tommy to his elfin wife,
 'Didst thou not hear the gentleman, my chuck?
 'Tis young CARNBEE, the sweetest laird of Fife,
 Whom sour Sir MICHAEL with his cane has struck.
 What think ye? By Titania's precious life!
 Fits it not now the tender-hearted Puck
 T'assist an injur'd lover, and to plot
 A scheme of nice revenge on SUE and MICHAEL SCOTT!'

L.

'O yes, my dear!' his fairy consort said,
 'Go forth, and to the man address thy talk:'
 This heard, he from his bushy arbour's shade
 Flung out his nimble stature on the walk,
 And stood in dwarfish finery array'd,
 Gaudy as summer-bean's bloom-cover'd stalk;
 He doff'd his hat, and made a bow profound,
 And thus bespoke the laird in words of pleasing sound:

LI.

'Marvel not, MELVIL, that before thy feet
 I plant me thus in fearless attitude;
 For I have heard, within my close retreat,
 What thou hast utter'd in thy fretful mood;
 And well I know thy truth how with deceit
 Repaid, thy faith with base ingratitude:
 Good soul! I pity thee with all my heart,
 And therefore from my bush to thy assistance start.

LIII.

For much it grieves Tom Puck's too feeling breast,
That one so good, so liberal and true,
Should thus become a laughter and a jest,
Mock'd, jilted, beaten into black and blue:
I like to help whom malice has oppress,
And prompt a lover generous as you;
So with attention list what I propose,
To baffle and avenge, and laugh to scorn your foes.

LIIII.

On Monday next, th'appointed wedding-day,
For perjurd SUE her NEWARK to espouse,
When her long hall with feasting shall be gay,
And smoke with meats, with riot, and with house,
From thy paternal mansion haste away,
At height of noon, to Thirdpart's bustling house,
That thou, by time of dinner, may be there,
Prepar'd to climb the steps of her detested stair.

LIV.

And when th'exulting bridegroom and his bride,
Surrounded with their festive spousal train,
Are seated at their tables long and wide,
Wielding their noisy forks and knives amain,
Then burst into the hall with dauntless stride,
Through menials, greasy cooks, and serving-men,
Nor speak a word though in thy way they stand,
But dash the scroyles aside with swing of boist'rous hand.

LV.

Surprise, be sure, shall seize the feasters all
At such a bold intruder on their treat;
Their forks, half-lifted to their mouths, shall fall
Down on their plates, unlighten'd of their meat;
Yet speak not still, but casting round the hall
An eye whose every glance is fire and threat,
Thou in a corner of the room shalt see
Sir MICHAEL's magic staff, the same that basted thee.

LVI.

Snatch up that magic energetic stick,
And, in thy clench'd hand wielding it with might,
On MICHAEL's white bald pate discharge thou quick
A pelt enough to stun the wizard wight:
Strange consequence shall follow from that lick;
Yet be not thou amaz'd or struck with fright,
But springing to the table's upper end,
Let on his niece's nose an easier pat descend.

LVII.

I will not now unfold what odd event
From either stroke will suddenly ensue;
Enough to know, that pteuous punishment
Shall light on grim Sir MICHAEL and on SUE:
Go—by your nose's cure, be confident
That Tommy Puck aright thus counsels you.—
This said, he, from a vial silver-bright,
Pour'd out upon his palm a powder small and white;

LVIII.

And to his mouth up-lifting it, he blows
The magic dust on MELVIL's blemish'd face,
When (such its power) beheld another nose
Sprouts out upon the scarr'd and skinless place,
And to th'astonish'd moon, fair-jutting, shows,
Its supplemental elegance and grace:
Which done, he, shining like a bright glow-worm,
Plung'd deep amid the brake his puny pretty form.

LIX.

Amaze had taken MELVIL, when appear'd
Erect before his steps the pigmy fay;
Yet not with less attention had he heard
What courteous Tommy did so kindly say:
That heart, late vex'd and tortur'd, now was cheer'd,
And merrily beat in Hope's delightful play:
Homeward he jogg'd from Thirdpart's haunted shade
Proud of his novel nose, and Tommy's tender'd aid.

LX.

Arriv'd the day when saucy SUE should wed
Young NEWARK, vap'ring in his scarlet coat;
From his paternal mansion MELVIL sped
To Thirdpart house, t'achieve his ready plot.

'Twas dinner-time; the tables all were spread
With luscious sirloins reeking richly hot,
Gravies and pies, and steaming soups of hare,
And roasted hen and goose, and titbits nice and rare.

LXI.

SUE at the table's place of honour sat,
Dealing the warm broth from its vessel out;
Whilst, slashing with his knife through lean and fat,
Carv'd at the lower end Sir MICHAEL stout:
'Twas nought but mirth, and junketing, and chat,
And handing wings and legs of fowl about,
And noise of silver spoons, and clank and clatter
Of busy forks and knives, of porringer and platter.

LXII.

Squire MELVIL heard without the dinner's din:
Nor tarried; but with brisk and boist'rous bound,
Jump'd up the stairs, and rudely rushing in,
Dash'd down whom standing in his way he found;
Menials and apron'd cooks of greasy chin,
Fist-founder'd, went a-rapping to the ground,
With all their loads of sauces, meats, and plates,
In ruin fat and rich hur'd on their pitiful pates.

LXIII.

Astonish'd were the feasters when they view'd
Such bold intruder stand before their eyes;
The morsels in their mouths that lay half-chew'd,
Could not be swallow'd through their great surprise;
Their half-raisd forks, bestuck with gobbets good,
Dropt, as if impotent more high to rise;
Each on his neighbour cast a meaning stare,
As if he dumbly ask'd, What does Squire MELVIL there!

LXIV.

'Twas for a moment silent in the hall,
As if pale Death, the chapless and the grim,
Had taken by the throat, and choak'd them all,
With his long, fleshless, scraggy, fingers slim;
Till, throwing round his glance from wall to wall,
The Squire discern'd the staff with tassel trim—
Sir MICHAEL's staff with head of silver white,
Wherewith he was enjoin'd its owner's poll to smite.

LXV.

He flew, he grasp'd it by its silver rind,
And to the ceiling swinging it on high,
Brought down on MICHAEL's pate, as quick as wind,
A pelt that whizz'd and rattl'd horribly;
Sounded his bald skull with the stroke unkind,
Re-echoing in each lore-fill'd cavity,
When, oh the wonder! on his high arm-chair,
Chang'd was the churlish knight that instant to a hare!

LXVI.

His dainty head with learning so replete,
Collaps'd, grew round, and little, and long-ear'd;
His arms, that yet were stretch'd to carve the meat,
Quite shrunken into two fore-legs appear'd;
His brawny thighs turn'd hind-legs on his seat
Whereon his metamorphos'd form was rear'd;
And, to complete the quadruped, out-sprouted
A short tail from his rump with pteuous hair about it.

LXVII.

He sat not long, so transmew'd, on his chair,
But, lighting on the carpet-cover'd floor,
Seudded as swift as lightning down the stair,
On his four bestial legs, to gain the door:
'Hollo!' cried boy and groom, 'A hare! a hare!
As flew he from the house their eyes before:
'Hollo! let loose on puss the fleet grey-hound!
Was baw'd in Thirdpart's court from one to t'other
round.

LXVIII.

Unkennel'd in a twink was fleet grey-hound,
And after puss commenc'd the keen pursuit;
O'er plough'd, o'er sown, o'er green, o'er fallow ground,
With lev'ret craft, and wile of weary foot,
With skip and scud and ditch-o'erleaping bound,
The wizard ran in guise of hairy brute,
While snuffing out with sapient nose his track,
Came yelling at his heels all Thirdpart's clam'rous pack.

LXIX.

Eastward they scour'd, out-scampering the gale,
 Long-winded dog and pury panting hare,
 Till, taking refuge in the streets of Craik,
 Sir MICHAEL plung'd him in a jaw-hole there,
 And left, without, his foes with wagging tail
 Worrying the sky with bark of loud despair,
 As he, secure, was fain to slink and cuddle
 Eneav'd beneath the street within his miry puddle.

LXX.

There let us leave the knight to cuddle fain,
 And long-tongued dog to volley out his yell,
 And turn we to the banquet-hall again,
 Where MICHAEL's metamorphosis befell :
 No sooner saw the squire that not in vain
 The staff had lighted, but succeeded well,
 Than, bounding up to where jilt SUSAN sat,
 On her fair nose's bridge he brought a gentle pat.

LXXI.

A second miracle ensues ; for lo !
 That nose, her countenance's pride and grace,
 Grows out, and shoots, and lengthens at the blow,
 Ridiculously sprouting from her face,
 And aye it swells and beetles moe and moe,
 Tap'ring to such a length its queer disgrace,
 That dips its point at last amid the broth,
 That near her lies in dish upon the table-cloth.

LXXII.

Nor did her aspect only suffer shame ;
 For, in proportion as extends her nose,
 Her shoulders, late so beautiful of frame,
 Into a hump up-heaving, hugely rose,
 Most mountainous and high, as ill became
 Fair bride array'd in sumptuous wedding clothes ;
 Her very gown was burst and riven through
 With the large fleshy swell, so strangely big it grew !

LXXIII.

Then shook the room with laughter's frequent crack,
 As saw the guests each droll exorcism rise ;
 One pointed to her still up-heaving back,
 One to her nose's still-enlarging size ;
 ' Ha ! ha ! ' from every squire's throat loudly brake,
 ' Te-hee ! ' each lady chuckles and replies ;
 ' Heav'n's, what a hideous nose ! ' cried every dame ;
 ' Heav'n's, what a hideous hump ! ' did every laird ex-
 claim.*

LXXIV.

Such was the punishment which silly SUE
 From her resentful much-wrong'd lover bore ;
 And so was sour Sir MICHAEL punish'd too,
 For caneing honest MELVIL from her door :
 Wherefore, as now the work of vengeance due
 Was finish'd, CHARLIE left her chamber-floor,
 And turn'd his face, rejoicing, towards home,
 Mutt'ring his grateful thanks to little elfin Tom."

CANTO VI.

I.

OH that my noddle were a seething kettle,
 Frothing with bombast o'er the Muses' fire !
 Oh that my wit were sharper than a nettle !
 Oh that with shrill swan-guts were strung my lyre !
 So would I rant and sing with such a mettle,
 That each old wife in Fife's full-peopled shire
 Should Maenad-like, spring from her spinning wheel,
 And frolic round her bard, and wince a tott'ring reel.

II.

Scarce had the victor ceas'd his hindmost clause,
 When from th'immensity of folk afar,
 Rose such a hideous shout of loud applause,
 As ever stunn'd with outery sun or star ;
 Each tongue grew riotous within its jaws,
 Clacking an acclamation popular ;
 Hands, high o'erhead uplifted, round and round,
 Struck plausive palm on palm, and clapt a rattling sound.

* Wieland gives to one of his fairy tales a catastrophe somewhat similar, if I recollect right, to the above.

III.

And twice ten thousand hats, aloft upthrown
 In black ascension, blot heav'n's blue serene,
 O'ercanopying ANSER's crowded Loan
 With crown and rim, as with a dusky screen ;
 And bonnets broad, and caps of sharp'ning cone,
 Afloat 'twixt earth and firmament are seen,
 And lasses' cowl, and hoods, uptost on high,
 Eneoreach with tawdry clout upon the clouds of sky.

IV.

As when a troop of locusts, famine-pin'd,
 From Edom's unblest monster-breeding womb,
 Sail on the hot wings of the southern wind,
 Wriggling aloft their sky-hung mass of gloom ;
 And where El Sham's clear golden riv'lets wind,
 Through her gay gardens distributing bloom,
 They light, and spread their devastation round,
 Bepainting black as pitch the green luxuriant ground.

V.

Just such a darkness mounts into the sky,
 Of hat and hood, of bonnet and of cap,
 So thick, that those who swing them up on high
 Below i'the shade are heard to shout and clap ;
 For still the folk applaud it lustily,
 And pain their tingling palms with noisy rap,
 Expressing thus, with deaf'ning acclamation,
 Of ROBERT's merry tale their hearty approbation.

VI.

Nor sits the Monarch idle to th'acclaim ;
 But, rising up majestic from his chair,
 With kingly praise augments the victor's fame,
 And clapping, grinds between his palms the air :
 Then seizes he the fingers of the dame,
 And, gently raising from her seat the fair,
 He, as the sign and seal of marriage-band,
 Slips into ROBERT's grasp his MAGGIE's tender hand.

VII.

He bade his choir of trumpeters apply
 To mouth their hollow instruments of sound,
 And, in an unison of clangour high,
 Publish the marriage to the world around :
 The fellows blew it to the peak of sky,
 And sky sent down again the loud rebound :
 Earth did to heav'n's high top the news up-throw,
 And heav'n re-bruited back th'alarum down below.

VIII.

But now the beam-hair'd coursers of the sun,
 All-smoking with their fiery hot fatigue,
 Their task of charioting had pran'd and run,
 And hurl'd in sea their hissing golden gig :
 Their unshorn driver had but just begun
 Beyond the isle of Bute the wave to swig ;
 And, twinkling o'er Auld Reekie's smoke afar,
 Peep'd through heav'n's mantle blue the modest evening
 star.

IX.

And soon the Moon in hood of silver drest,
 All glistening and gladsome as may be,
 Forth from her glorious casement in the east
 Look'd laughing down upon both land and sea ;
 And on the bosom of the dark'ning west
 Her pearly radiance shot rejoicingly :
 Also the heads of all that fill the Loan
 Wax'd yellow with the rays that on them streaming
 shone.

X.

Wherefore, as now the damp nocturnal air
 Began to dribble down its chilly dew,
 And as, of all the business of the Fair,
 Nought now remain'd upon the green to do ;
 The herald, from beside the monarch's chair,
 Abroad the signal of dispersion blew,
 That the wide multitude, disspread around,
 Should now break up its mass, and leave the nighted
 ground.

XI.

Which heard, the congregated folk upbroke
 With loud disruption their diffusion vast,
 And, split and shoaling off in many a flock,
 With homeward squeeze they turbulently past :

Beneath their feet the pillar'd earth did rock,
As up to Jove a dusty cloud they cast,
That blear'd the bright eyes of Night's glimm'ring queen,
And chok'd the brilliant stars, and dimm'd their twink-
ling sheen.

XII.

And such the clutter was, when shoal from shoal
With violent impulse was torn and riv'n,
As when the vaulting ice, that floors the pole,
Touch'd by the fiery shafts of warming heav'n,
Splits into fractur'd isles, that crash and roll
Diverse, athwart the molten ocean driv'n ;
The Greenland boatman hears the noise afar,
And blesses for its heat day's winter-routing star.

XIII.

So loudly rush'd from ANSTER's cumber'd Loan,
The burdenous and bustling multitude,
Kicking th'o'ertrampled earth they trod upon
With saucy heel in their impetuous mood ;
Some to their tents of blanket jump'd anon,
That on the fields and crofts adjoining stood ;
Some to their booths and houses in the town,
Hie hot with huddling haste, and hop and hurry down.

XIV.

Meanwhile, the King, as now sufficient space
Was for his passage clear'd about the mound,
Descended from his lofty honour'd place,
Where sat he mid his gallant courtiers round :
Close at his right hand downward walk'd with grace,
The well-earn'd prize, bright MAGGIE the renown'd ;
While the great victor, at his other side,
Attended blythe and brisk, exulting in his bride.

XV.

On their brave nags their persons up they swing,
And to the borough gently jogging ride,
Hemm'd thick around with an illustrious ring
Of gay Court-ladies, trooping side by side,
And Lords, whose coats with gold-lace spang'd, fling
Back on th'abashed Moon her beamy pride,
And jolly Knights, and booted Esquires stout,
And burghers, clowns, and boys, a noisy rabble-rout.

XVI.

As downward to the town they tramp and trot,
The mingled peals of gratulation rise ;
For on their catlings, fiddlesticks, I wot,
Bicker'd and skipt in funny furious wise,
And trumpet rear'd again its solemn note
Sonorously, assailant on the skies,
Full loudly lifting in a jocund tune,
The name of RANTER ROB up to the man i'the moon.

XVII.

And sounding cymbals clink and ring sublime,
Clash'd overhead in lofty unison ;
And fife and flute in merry whistle chime,
Soothing the lulled ear with dulcet tone ;
While aye the bass-drum, at his proper time,
Swallows the music with his sudden groan ;
Till drum, flute, cymbal, trumpet, all are drown'd
In shouts, that pealing rise from the mad mob around.

XVIII.

Thus rode the train, as if in triumph down,
Exulting, through the night's moon-gilded shade,
Till reaching MAGGIE's quarter of the town,
Stops at her house the splendid cavalcade.
(For be it now, my good co-townsmen, known,
That in th'East-green's best house fair MAGGIE staid,
Near where St Ayle's small lodge in modern day
Admits to mystic rites her bousy masons gay.)

XIX.

At MAGGIE's door they stopp'd ; when, lighting there,
The bridegroom brisk, and jolly-minded King,
And showy Nobleman, and Lady fair,
From pad and saddle on the causey spring,
And, passing in due order up her stair,
The good landlady to her chamber bring,
A pomp of rare attendance brave and bright,
With sweetly-biting jest, and joke of dear delight.

XX.

In her torch-brighten'd chamber down they sate
Upon her chairs, jocundly one and all,
And exercise their tongues in social prate,
Till MAGGIE's cooks and JAMES's seneschal
May well prepare and range each supper plate
On her long table in her dining-hall :—
There let us leave a while, King, Lord, and Lady,
And saunter through the town till supper's fare be ready

XXI.

Heav'ns ! how from street to street the people reel,
As if they knew not where to rush for joy !
How rocks the causey with incessant heel
Of hurrying man, and wife, and maid, and boy !
From lane and wynd the sounds of gladness peal,
Hitting the stars with clamorous annoy ;
As all the houses' walls and roofs are bright
With bonfire's yellow glow, and candles' gentler light.

XXII.

For in each window's every pane is seen,
Stuck into fity-fashion'd wood or clay,
A tallow candle flinging forth its sheen,
T'augment th'illumination's grand display ;
How flame the houses with a lustre keen,
In emulation of the sun-bright day !
Ev'n the poor old-wife's backroom-window glows,
Gilding the good green kail that underneath it grows.

XXIII.

While in each well-paved street and alley strait,
And at the Cross, and up along the Loan,
Their spiry curls huge bonfires elevate,
Cracking with heat the ground and causey-stone ;
For ev'ry bonfire was a cart-load great
Of Dysart coal, that redly flash'd and shone,
Emblazing with its tongues of flame so bright,
The dusk and smutty brow of star-bestudded night.

XXIV.

And, gawtress'd round each ruddy fire about,
Hogsheads of porter and of cheery ale,
Forth from their little gurgling lung-holes spout
Their genial streams in tankard, pot, and pail :
Oh 'twas a wild notorious guzzling-bout !
That night no throat was narrow, or was frail,
But, in long draughts delicious, swallow'd down
The barley's mantling cream, and bev'rage stout and brown.

XXV.

(Not from thy brew-house's well-barrell'd store,
Oh ROGER ! comes a drink of stronger proof,
Though foams thy hearty ale the tankard o'er,
And sends its cork a-thund'ring to the roof :
Ev'n ancient men, whose hairs were thin and hoar,
Then staid not from the fuddle's fun aloof,
But drank till every head was giddy turning,
And to their reeling eyes each fire in sky seem'd burn-
ing.

XXVI.

Yet not all night each brisk warm-blooded boy,
Sat drinking with his sweetheart blythe and boon ;
They on the Loan, in many a reel, employ
Their bouncing bodies wriggling to the moon,
And almost wince away their heels for joy,
Tossing and riving their dance-bursten shoon,
Whilst, ever and anon, or ere she wist,
Smack by her partner dear each bonny lass was kiss'd.

XXVII.

Such out of doors was the disport and house ;
But higher was the pitch of joy within ;
That night was ANSTER's every barn and house
Converted into tippling-shop and inn ;
Garrets and bed-rooms reek with hot carouse,
And steaming punch of whisky and of gin ;
The kitchen fires are crowded round and round
With rings of lively lads, that swig their bowls profound.

XXVIII.

Hey ! how their glasses jingle merrily !
How rings the table with their revel-roar !
How, as they toast their MAG with three times three,
Sounds with loud heel the vex'd tormented floor !

They sing, they clap, they laugh with honest glee;
Were never seen such merry men heretofore!
Through window glass and stony wall bursts out
Abroad on night's dull ear the wassail's frequent shout.

XXXIX.

But now, in MAGGIE'S tapestry-deck'd hall,
Serv'd is the sumptuous marriage-supper up,
And clean neat-handed cook and seneschal
Hath set each mess, and dish, and plate, and cup;
So down in seemly order sit they all,
With stomachs stiff and resolute to sup,
And set their griding forks and knives to work,
On turkey, goose, and hen, cold veal, and check of pork.

XXX.

Behoves it not my bardship to relate
What various viands burden'd MAGGIE'S board;
What lay on this, and what on t'other plate,
What Lady first was help'd, and by what Lord,
What mess the King, and what the others ate:
That would be tedious trifling, 'pon my word;
I will not do't, though I could tell, in sooth,
How oft each fork was rais'd to every munching mouth.

XXXI.

Suffice it, good my townsmen, that ye know,
That there fastidious teeth found pleasant food,
That all the cates that kingly banquets show
Were spread before them, fragrant, rich, and good;
And that, though some ate less and some ate more,
Each ate as much, be certain, as he could;
Till, tir'd at last of piddling with their gums,
They eas'd of knife and fork their fingers and their thumbs.

XXXII.

But when the sound of teeth had ceas'd i' the hall,
And fork and knife lay idle on their plate,
And guest and hostess, backward leaning all,
Their picktooths now were plying, saturate,
Up from his seat arose the bridegroom tall,
Where to his blooming spouse oppos'd he sate,
And, e'er the table-cloth was ta'en away,
He turn'd him to the King, and thus address his say:—

XXXIII.

"Think not, my Liege, that fortune or that chance
To-day hath made me in my conquest blest,
Impelling me by casual circumstance,
To jump without a warrant like the rest;
'Twas not alone with Heav'n's high suffrance,
I put my jumping-prowess to the test;
'Twas by its order I in sack was bound;
'Twas with its favour too that I my bride have found.

XXXIV.

Nor deem that some dumb beldam, Satan's tool,
Or wily witch, or second-sighted seer,
Hath, oracling, deceiv'd me like a fool,
To think I to supernal Pow'r am dear;
No, Monarch; by the cowl of old St Rule!
I heard the order with no proxy ear,
And with my own true eye unfalsified,
I ev'n upon my chair the goodly vision spied:

XXXV.

For, on an evening in December last,
('Twas just the evening of that day, whereon
The stout-lung'd criers through the Border past,
Proclaiming what should hap in ANSTER Loan,
As down to supper's sober cool repast
I sat me in my dining-room alone,
Musing upon the late heard news so odd,
Blown from the trump of fame and crier's throat abroad.

XXXVI.

I happen'd in my fingers up to take
The pepper-box, where lurk'd my spicy stores,
And held it o'er my plate, intent to shake
The fragrant atoms from its little bores,
When, as my hand inverted it, there brake
Out from the tin lid's perforated pores,
A stream of beauteous smoke, that, like a mist,
Curl'd its delicious wreaths around my shaded fist.

XXXVII.

Astonish'd at the prodigy, I threw
The steaming box upon the table-cloth,
When, more with miracle t'amaze my view,
It frisk'd and trotted mid the plates; 'trotth,
And ceas'd not from its num'rous holes to spue
Its incense white as flakes of ocean froth,
Up-sending to the ceiling of the room
Its supernat'ral flux of pure and fragrant fume.

XXXVIII.

I sat and gaz'd—not long; when, strange to say,
Forth from that reeky pillar's paly base,
Started at once a little female fay,
Giggling and blythely laughing in my face:
Her height was as the lily, that in May
Lifts to the sun her head's evermeil'd grace;
Her beauty as the rays of various glow,
That glorify the length of heav'n's sea-drinking bow.

XXXIX.

The gown in which her elf-ship was array'd,
Like to the peacock's painted feather shined,
And on the table-cloth redundant spread
Its lustrous train for half a foot behind;
Over her breast her purple-striped plaid
Lay floating loose and thin as woven wind;
And gorgeous was her head-dress, as the hue
Of Iris-flower, that spreads her velvet petals blue.

XL.

Deck'd was her neck's circumference with row
Of diamonds, strung on thread in costly band,
Small pearly berries that are wont to grow
Upon the bushes of old Fairyland;
And in each diamond's orb so fair in show,
My candle's image burning seem'd to stand,
That her white slender neck was all in gleam,
Doubly unpearled thus with light's reflected beam.

XLI.

And pendant from her neck, by golden thread,
A little dangling silver lute I saw,
Of fashion rare, and quaintly polished,
Not thicker than a pipe of oaten straw:
She laugh'd and nodded courteously her head,
Belike to clear away my doubt and awe,
For, sooth to say, I was not unafear'd,
When from my pepper-box good lady fay appear'd.

XLII.

She dropt a curtsy, reverently low,
And thus bespoke in clear and mellow voice;
'Twas sweeter than the chiming winds that blow
Upon the Æolian harp a whiffled noise:—
'Excuse me, good your worship! that I so
With my quaint presence mar your supper's joys;
I have some little matter to impart;
'Twill not detain you long.—Nay, ROBERT, do not start:

XLIII.

Compose thee, Squire, and calmly give thine ear
To what shall from my gentle mouth proceed,
For mickle shall it profit thee to hear,
And prize aright the value of my rede;
And be assur'd thy person, ROB, is dear
To the slim creatures of the fairy breed,
That thus I peer from out my box of spice,
To tender, for thy weal, my uncompell'd advice:

XLIV.

Hast thou not heard the wond'rous news to-day,
Through all the marches of the Border blown,
Of sports, and games, and celebrations gay,
Promulgate to be held in ANSTER Loan,
And that a maid the victor's toils shall pay,
A maid, whose beauty is excell'd by none!
Thou hast—and I surprised thee deep in muse,
A-pond'ring on th'import of such amazing news:

XLV.

Go, when o'er Cockraw peeps light's golden horn,
And seek a supple ass whereon to ride;
Go, seek a long sack, sturdy and untorn,
Wherein to jump with drolly-trammel'd stride;

Go, seek a bagpipe whose wind-pouch unworn,
 May well the wrath of prison'd breath abide;
 Go, set thy brain to work like vat of ale,
 And skim thou off for MAG some smart ingenious tale.

XLVI.

And know, when at the Loan is tried thy skill,
 Thy ass I'll nettle on with spur unseen;
 Into thy bones and sinews I'll instil
 Great vigour to o'erjump the quaking green;
 Thy bagpipe's pouch with tempest I will fill,
 Lending thy tune a witchery not mean;
 And from thy study-rack'd perplexed brains,
 A merry tale I'll squeeze, the helpmate of thy pains.

XLVII.

So shalt thou, Squire, in Scotland's view be crown'd
 Upon the spot with victory and fame,
 And ride a happy bridegroom from the ground,
 Elate and glorying in thy peerless dame:
 Yet when thy toil's transcendant prize is found,
 And marriage revelries thy joy proclaim,
 I charge thee, as my aid shall make thee blest,
 Forget not what I now, as to my box, request:

XLVIII.

This box—this pepper-box—this homely shrine,
 Wherein confin'd by wizard spell I stay,
 Must be transported in a pouch of thine,
 When thou to ANSTER Loan dost take thy way;
 And when thou down to marriage feast and wine
 Shalt sit, in MAGGIE's hall, a bridegroom gay,
 Then from thy pocket draw it in a trice,
 And on the table-cloth lay down the box of spice.

XLIX.

Ask not the purport of my odd behest;
 'Twill be unriddl'd in the proper place;
 'Tis thine t'effect the task, and leave the rest
 To Madam Puck's good complaisance and grace.—
 Here Madam Puck her piping voice suppress,
 And, with a sweet smile on her little face,
 Rear'd up the small lute in her lily fist,
 And with her rose-red lip its furbish'd silver kiss'd.

L.

She play'd a tune so delicate and sweet,
 So overpowering with its ravishment,
 That sit I could no longer on my seat,
 But up and cap'ring o'er my chamber went,
 As if within the soles of both my feet,
 A store of frisky Mercury was pent
 (And, by the bye, 'twas just the tune with which
 My bagpipe did to-day your reeling Loan bewitch).

LI.

At length she ceas'd, and in a stroke o'the eye
 Delv'd down within her jail of tin again,
 And in her stead left curling bonnily
 A smoke whose odour ravish'd nose and brain—
 No more, my gracious Liege—what need have I
 Longer to talk, where talking would be vain!—
 Behold—what Mrs Puck commanded me—
 'Tis but a sorry thing—the pepper-box—d'ye see!'

LII.

Thus speaking, from the pocket of his coat,
 Wherein he had convey'd it to our town,
 The goblin-haunted pepper-box he brought,
 And, laughing, set it on the table down;
 Great laughter crackled in the Monarch's throat,
 As on the cloth he saw the tin y-thrown;
 And giggling guest 'gan fling his jeers and jokes
 Upon the paltry frame of Rob's poor pepper-box.

LIII.

But soon was changed their blythe to fearful mood,
 When strait, afore each half-mistrusting eye,
 The bawbling box of pepper, where it stood,
 Began again to dance spontaneously,
 And fidg'd and frisk'd, in strange inquietude,
 Among the plates that thickly-ranged lie,
 Directing to the table's middle part
 Its motion by the side of broken pie and tart.

LIV.

Yet to a greater pitch their wonder grew,
 When, at the table's other end, they spy
 Fair MAGGIE's mustard-pot commencing too
 To gambol and to fidge in sympathy
 (The self-same pot, whence burst to MAGGIE's view,
 Of late Tom Puck, with brightly-breeched thigh);
 As would a hen leap on a fire-hot griddle,
 So leap'd the mustard-pot toward the table's middle.

LV.

Short while they flirted, pepper-box and pot,
 Most laughable, yet fearful to be view'd,
 Till, meeting on the table's midmost spot,
 Stock-still th'ignoble bouncing vessels stood,
 And from their little cells, where lay the hot
 Ground pepper, and the biting mustard good,
 Were in a moment seen at once to break
 Two parallel white shafts of silv'ry spouting reek.

LVI.

Ascending curl'd, not long, each sep'rate fume,
 Up-throwing to the roof its preciousness,
 When with a fire-flash that emblaz'd the room,
 Burst from the hollow mustard-pot's recess
 Good Tommy Puck, the fay of roseate bloom,
 Clad in his custom'd gaudery of dress;
 And, with a second gleam of flashy light,
 Sprung from the spicy-box good Madam Puck to sight.

LVII.

With faces to each other turn'd they rise,
 Scarce sunder'd by a finger's length of space,
 And, in an instant, as they recognise,
 With glimpse of quick eye, each the other's face,
 They fall, as if o'ercome with sweet surprise,
 On one another's necks in close embrace,
 Like friends that, having long liv'd far apart,
 Meet and relieve in tears the joy-o'erburden'd heart.

LVIII.

Astonishment his whitely ensign shows
 On each spectator's visage at the sight;
 Courtier and King, that sat to table close,
 Slightly push'd back their chairs, confounded quite;
 The ladies hid their faces in their clothes,
 Or underneath the table slunk for fright;
 Save MAG and ROB, who laugh'd to see once more,
 The tricky kindly ouphes that hail'd them heretofore.

LIX.

Awhile the pair of pigmies on the spot,
 Lock'd their fantastic persons jole to jole,
 And, as two doves of plummy-varnish'd throat
 Sit billing in their dove-cot's nested hole,
 Their liquid wee lips twitter'd kisses hot
 In fond commutuality of soul;
 It was a treat to see how sweetheart-like
 Their fiery fairy mouths the dear collision strike!

LX.

At length, as rapture's first excess was past,
 They disentangle their endear'd embrace,
 And, tow'rd the King and guests that sat aghast,
 Turn'd round each nimble prettiness of face;
 Dame Puck, to MAG and those beside her plac'd,
 Let fall a curtesy with a courtly grace;
 Tom, fronting JAMES, took hat from off his brow,
 And curv'd his goblin back into a goodly bow.

LXI.

A glance upon the company he shot,
 And smil'd on MAG that sat at head o'the board,
 Then from his silly dulcet-piping throat
 Sweet utterance of word-clad breath he pour'd:—
 "Oh Monarch! let amazement seize thee not;
 Be of good cheer, each dame and noble Lord!
 Ungown your timid faces, all ye fair!
 Draw ye to table close, each gentleman your chair!

LXII.

For do not think that in us twain you spy
 Two spirits of the perter wicked sort,
 That, buzzing on bad errand through the sky,
 In pranks of molestation take their sport,

Confounding old-wives' churns, and slipping sly
Their stools from underneath them to their hurt,
Or chucking young sweet maids below the chin,
That so they bite the tongue their tender mouths within.

LXIII.

Of kindlier hearts are Tommy and his spouse,
Aidant to some, benevolent to all ;
For oft we sweep the thrifty matron's house
With besom quaint, invisible, and small,
Oft from her cheese and butter chase the mouse,
Preyless, into the cavern of his wall,
And oft her churn-staff gripe, that in a twink
The waves of bubbling cream to buttery masses sink.

LXIV.

But chiefly of young lovers true and kind,
The patrons and the guardians good are we,
Linking each mutual and harmonious mind
In silver cord of dear complacency ;
But when the vows, that should restrain and bind,
Broke to another's misery we see,
'Tis ours to take the injur'd lover's part,
And on the perjurd head deal out th'avenging smart.

LXV.

Witness what vengeance hit Miss SUSAN SCOTT,
Whose back and visage, for her breach of troth,
Obtain'd a penal and opprobrious blot,
Sworn out to counterpoise each other's growth ;
And though, for our suggestion of that plot,
To punish her and her sour guardian both,
My wife and I hath suffer'd hard and long,
Yet, by my Monarch's beard ! 'twas right t'avenge the
wrong.

LXVI.

Oh we have suffer'd much !—that wizard foul
(Beshrew his meagre vile malicious ghost !)
No sooner 'scap'd from Crail's vile sewer-hole,
And took again the shape that he had lost,
Than, with his long-tail'd demons black as coal,
That whiz to serve him from hell's ev'ry coast,
Consulting in his study, soon he learn'd
Who prompted CHARLES to wreak the vengeance justly
earn'd.

LXVII.

Then churn'd the sorcerer's mouth the surly foam ;
He clench'd his fist, and swore by Beelzebub,
He forthwith should o'er half the country roam,
Beating each thicket with his oaken club,
To find out dapper intermeddling Tom
In his inhabited and secret shrub,
And heel him forth reluctant to the day,
And for his pranks chastise upon his breech the fay.

LXVIII.

His hat he put on his craft-erammed head ;
He grip'd his huge gnarl'd staff in hand,
And down his study-stair, with sounding tread,
Came spitting smoke like newly-lighted brand ;
Forth from the gate he in a hurry sped,
To beat the total bushes of the land,
Cursing at every step the harmless breed
Of elfs, that aid the wrong'd in grievous time of need.

LXIX.

Need it be told ! Alas ! too soon he found
The bush, where with my dame I sleeping lay ;
Too soon his cudgel, thrashing round and round,
Graz'd our slim bodies in its dang'rous play ;
And, had not Ob'ron sav'd us both from wound,
Our brains had fairly been dash'd out that day ;
We woke—we shriek'd—his rugged hand he stretch'd,
And from our leafy bed us by the heels he fetch'd.

LXX.

His long-nail'd hairy fingers, grasping tight
Our waists, uprear'd us to his bearded chin,
And held us there in melancholy plight,
Wriggling our innocent frail members thin :
He spat upon our faces with despite,
Glooming his phiz into a joyful grin ;
Then, lowering down, he plung'd us ere we wot,
Each int'a sep'rate pouch of his great clumsy coat.

LXXI.

There lay we button'd in, and closely pent
In a dark dungeon of detested cloth,
As, tracing back his steps, he homeward went,
And to his chamber bore us dangling both ;
He drew us forth, the wicked churl, intent
On base revenge, malevolent and wroth,
And with unseemly usage treated each,
And slapp'd with scurvey palm my little harmless breech.

LXXII.

Then did he in his wickedness begin
To practise his detestable device ;
He took a paltry pepper-box of tin,
And, hoisting up my consort in a trice,
He push'd her weeping ladyship within,
Clean through the lid amid the pungent spice
(For fairy shapes can be contracted so
As through a needle's eye right easily to go) :

LXXIII.

He push'd her shrieking down into the cell,
With cruel taunt and mocking devilish,
And mutter'd o'er her a confining spell
Of hell's abhor'd and uncouth gibberish :—
'Lie there, Dame Puck !' he cried, 'and bed thee well
In the snug durance of thy penal dish ;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb !'

LXXIV.

A sorry mustard-pot then took the Knight,
And, 'tween his fingers lifting me sublime,
He push'd and plung'd me, yelling with affright,
Amid the mustard's yellow sloughy slime ;
And, 'Lie thou there,' he cried, 'thou meddling sprite !
And do the proper penance for thy crime ;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb !'

LXXV.

Nor meet Tom Puck and Madam Puck agen,
Until the fairest maid of Scottish land
Shall to the supplest of all Scotland's men,
Charm'd by his jumping, give her bed and hand !
This said, he mumbled o'er me in my den
His damned spell too hard to understand,
Of virtue to impound, and cage me there,
Ev'n till the day foredoom'd to let me loose to air.

LXXVI.

And further, he, to sunder us the more,
And interpose large space between us twain,
To Melrose Abbey journeying, with him bore
The spicy jail, where lay my spouse in pain,
And gave it to the monks, skill'd deep in lore,
That in their charge it might for years remain,
To grace the abbey-table, and supply
Their kail on feasting-days with pepper hot and dry.

LXXVII.

And there, methinks, for ages it has been ;
Till, as roll'd onward Time's fulfilling round,
By the wise care of our fair fairy-queen,
To ROB THE RANTER's house the way it found,
Where, from her box upstarting to his eyne
(The spell that moment lost its power t'impound),
My wife had Scotland's supplest man prepare,
All for her weal and his, to jump at ANSER FAIR.

LXXVIII.

For me—when first that stern felonious Knight,
Had dungeon'd me in penal-pot so fast,
My jail he did commit that very night
To Pittenweem's fat monks of belly vast,
That from its small profundity they might
Supply with mustard every rich repast,
And in the abbey-pantry guard the cell,
Where I, alas ! was doom'd for many an age to dwell.

LXXIX.

And there I dwelt in dolesome house of clay,
Far sunder'd from my wife in sad divorce ;
Till onward drew the freedom-giving day,
Fix'd and appointed in Time's fatal course,

When Oberon, the silver-scepter'd fay,
That rules his phantom-tribes with gentle force,
My mustard-pot by secret means convey'd
To MAGGIE'S house—the house of Scotland's fairest
maid.

LXXX.

Here, as one night upon her supper-board,
Imbogg'd amid my biting mire I lay,
My king a moment broke the spell abhorr'd,
That kept me pent and pester'd night and day:
I rose, I loos'd my tongue to mortal word,
Commanding her to publish sans delay,
The merry games effectual to decide
What supplest-sinew'd Scot should gain her for his bride

LXXXI.

Abroad the games were blown o'er Scottish ground,
And hurried thousands in to ANSTER FAIR:
The work is done—the supplest man is found;
He sits the Bridegroom and the Landlord there;
The fairest Maid of all the realm around
Sits yonder, star-like shining on her chair—
The happiest couple they of all beside:
God bless you richly both, fair Bridegroom and fair
Bride!

LXXXII.

Nor think, my wedded dears! that you alone
By ANSTER'S gamesome FAIR are render'd blest;
We, too, that have so long with mutual moan
In torment and divorcement liv'd distress,
Meet now again (great thanks to Oberon!)
Re-wedded, re-possessing, re-possess'd,
A pair of happy fays conjoin'd for ever,
Whom henceforth wizard's hate shall have no might to
sever.

LXXXIII.

And now, my Lord, oh King! we must away
To taste the sweets of new-found liberty,
To ride astraddle on the lunar ray
In airy gallop to the top of sky,
And lave our limber limbs, and splash and play
Amid the milk that dims the galaxy:

Farewell!—may joys be rain'd on each of you!
Adieu, thou Bridegroom sweet! thou bonny Bride,
adieu!"

LXXXIV.

This having said, he on his shiny hair
Did gracefully his silver'd hat replace,
And seizing by the hand his lady fair,
A while look'd smerking, winking, in her face;
Then swift as spark from fire, or beam from star,
That unsubstantial, slim, frail, fairy-brace,
From table heaving off their phantasms small,
Sheer through the window flew of MAGGIE'S dining-hall.

LXXXV.

Sheer through the window fleetly flew the twain,
Mocking the eye that tried to follow them;
Yet, strange to add! nor wood nor glassy pane
Was injur'd of the fay-pierc'd window frame—
Amazement ran in every beating vein
Of Bride, and Groom, and King, and Lord, and Dame,
As they beheld the coupled goblins fly
Through window-shut and glass abroad into the sky

LXXXVI.

Recover'd quickly of their short surprise,
They drew to table nearer each his chair;
"A bumper fill," the sportive Monarch cries,
"To Tom and Lady Puck, the elfin pair!"
Landlord and guest his brimming glass supplies
From bottle with the dainty vine-blood rare;
Clean to the dregs their glasses drink they all,
As "Tom and Mrs Puck!" sound echoing through the
hall.

LXXXVII.

Thus they the social happy minutes spend
In wine, and chat, and harmless revelry,
Till slow began the round moon to descend
Down the starr'd ladder of the western sky,
And sleep, that toil-worn man's frail frame must mend,
His sponge's balsam wrung on human eye;
From table, then, withdrew to sleeping room,
Courtier, and King, and Dame, and Bride, and glad
Bridegroom.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE WINTER DAY.

ADDRESSED TO R. S.—, ESQ.

Now Jove in flaky snow descends;
A sounding storm the welkin rends;
Fountains and pools are all congeal'd,
And frost doth bristle hill and field;
Then, boy, with fuel heap the hearth,
Excite th'illum'd room to mirth,
Spread on the board the smoking feast,
And from the wine-crypt bring the best.

See, see! how spatter'd thick and white,
The snow up-choke the window's light;
Glass panes within are bright embost,
With pretty forests carv'd by frost:
And, hark! how o'er the chimney raves
The wind let loose from Norway's caves,
Scowling, as if with anger mad,
That we within should be so glad.

Come, come, my friend, and leave a while
Day's soul-absorbing endless toil;
Within, without, each sight invites
T'enjoy the chamber's boon delights;
The candles on the table glow,
The damask cloth outshines the snow;
Cup, wine-glass, platter, all are bright,
The very chairs shine out with light.

Without, the tempest lords it high,
As if his own were all the sky;

The snow-fraught clouds, low-hung and black,
O'er-scud the world with rapid rack;
Scarce in the streets a shiv'ring white
Is seen, with nose all blue and white;
Scarce in the fields may Robin find
A refuge from the drift and wind.

Then come, my friend, and as thy part,
Bring to my feast a jocund heart—
A soul dispos'd to join with me,
In talk of dear philosophy;
No slanders shall our speech pollute,
No noise, no long and proud dispute,
Such as fall out in faction's brawls—
Where wisdom muses, folly bawls.

Away with these, but in their stead,
Be our discourse of sages dead,
And how their wisdom hath refin'd,
And crown'd with god-like grace mankind;
Themes talk'd of many years ago
By Solon or by Solomon—

Themes wherewith Plato, at his feasts,
Made jovial, ev'n as Jove's, his guests.
But should it hap to be our mood,
T'alight from wisdom's altitude,
Why, we can childish-sportful be;
Who have so good a right as we?
Though learn'd and grave, at times we can
Keep up the glee with any man,
Nay—none alive I know or see
Can nonsense talk like you and me!

SONG—MINNIE TO HER SPINNIN'-WHEEL.

Imitated from the German of Burger.

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
 The roofs and wa's are dash't wi' rain;
 The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;
 But here I sit fu' warm and dry,
 And care na for the blasts out-by,
 Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
 Hey, how the towslet tow comes down!
 Hey, how the wheel rins roun' and roun'!
 How merrily, hey, the tirlin' pinn
 Snaps wi' its iron teeth the yairn,
 Aye followin' fast the birrin' wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
 Kate's bridal day will soon be here,
 And she maun hae her pairt o' gear;
 The weaver's hands are toom o' wark,
 He's crying loud for sheet or sark,
 And flytes you, lazy spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
 Haud aff, ye bairns, touch nae the rock,
 Play farrer aff, wee Jean and Jock;
 For Minnie is taskit, and set to hae
 A brow linen wab ere sweet May-day,
 Wi' birrin' at her spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
 The roofs and wa's are dash'd wi' rain;
 The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;
 But here I sit fu' warm and dry,
 And care na for the blasts out-by,
 Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

ODE TO PEACE.

1814.

Daughter of God! that sits on high
 Amid the dances of the sky,
 And guidest with thy gentle sway
 The planets on their tuneful way;
 Sweet PEACE! shall ne'er again
 The smile of thy most holy face,
 From thine ethereal dwelling-place,
 Rejoice the wretched weary race
 Of discord-breathing men!

Too long, oh gladness-giving Queen!
 Thy tarrying in heav'n has been;
 Too long o'er this fair blooming world
 The flag of blood has been unfurl'd,
 Polluting God's pure day;
 Whilst, as each madd'ning people reels,
 War onward drives his scythed wheels,
 And at his horse's bloody heels
 Shriek Murder and Dismay!

Oft have I wept to hear the cry
 Of widow wailing bitterly;
 To see the parent's silent tear
 For children fall'n beneath the spear;
 And I have felt so sore
 The sense of human guilt and woe,
 That I, in Virtue's passion'd glow,
 Have cursed (my soul was wounded so)
 The shape of man I bore!

Then come from thy serene abode,
 Thou gladness-giving Child of God!
 And cease the world's ensanguin'd strife,
 And reconcile my soul to life;
 For much I long to see,
 Ere to the grave I down descend,
 Thy hand her blessed branch extend,
 And to the world's remotest end
 Wave Love and Harmony!

ON MY MOTHER'S DECEASE,

NOVEMBER 1831.

My mother dead! what weight of grief
 Lies in these little words to me!
 Again, again, I am a child,
 And fond affection's tears flow free!
 Back, back, into my school-boy days,
 Rushes my eager memory,
 And stirreth up the various scenes
 A mother's love endear'd to me.

Again I see her anxious look,
 When childhood's sorrows on me lay;
 I hear her voice, which, full of hope,
 Sooth'd all these childish ails away;
 Each word she spoke, each kindly deed
 That from her fond hand flutt'ring came,
 All rise afresh to sanctify,
 Still more a mother's sacred name.

When from on high affliction came,
 And fill'd my father's house with tears,
 For her alone I felt—for her
 My unconfessing soul had fears;
 When joy came like an angel down,
 To wipe the sorrows God had giv'n,
 'Twas for her sake alone I bless'd
 That gladness which came down from Heav'n.

Alas! from day to day I saw
 Her feeble frame grow feeble more,
 Whilst winter, that to youth gives joy,
 His deadly gripe lay on her sore.
 I mark'd her tott'ring step—I tried
 Kindly to chide her into glee;
 Yet scarce at bed-time could her lips
 Utter the old "Good-night" to me.

At last the yet unwither'd bloom
 That dim upon her face did lie,
 Sunk, sunk at once to mortal pale;
 I saw it—saw my mother die!
 And, though her eye beheld me not,
 Her features look'd tranquillity,
 And from behind the veil of death
 Sent her last blessing unto me!

Thanks, thanks, to Heav'n! my wish, my pray'r,
 Hath been for many a changeful year,
 That God might spare my life for this—
For this—a mother's heart to cheer.
 And now that I have seen her age
 Made glad, have seen her die in peace,
 Careless and tranquil I await
 The term of this my mortal race.

TO MY MOTHER'S SPINNING-WHEEL.

WRITTEN THE DAY AFTER HER DEATH—NOV. 1831.

Lo! silent now and motionless
 Within the corner stands
 The busy little engine, once
 Mov'd by my mother's hands.
 I bought it for her, low and light,
 To turn in easy wise,
 Thereby t'invite her aged feet,
 To gentle exercise.

How gladly she sate her down,
 Her self-set task to ply!
 How lightsomely beside the hearth
 Did winter evenings fly!
 I question'd her of thrift, and all
 Her linen-making toils,
 And she inform'd my ignorance
 All readily with smiles.

Idle a while the engine stood,
 In autumn's jolly reign;
 She chid herself for idleness,
 And sought her wheel again,

She spread the flax all smooth, she warp'd
 It round the distaff fair;
 Alas! her hand ne'er touch'd the work—
 She died, and left it there!
 And now another hand must spin
 The flaxen remnant out;
 A foot of greater energy
 Must force the wheel about.
 No more my chamber with its hum,
 At eve shall shaken be;
 A housewife's thrift, a housewife's toils,
 No more have charms for me!
 Yet, little engine! though thy sound
 No more shall please mine ear,
 Yet ever to mine eye thou shalt
 Be a memorial dear.
 Ev'n for her sake that exercis'd
 Her aged foot on thee,
 I'll look on thee with love, and thou
 Shalt never part from me!

THE TANGIERS GIANT.*

In Tangiers town, as I've been tauld,
 There liv'd intill the times of auld
 A giant stout and big,
 The awfuest and the dourest carl
 That on the outside o' this warl'
 E'er wallop'd bane or leg.

When he was born, on that same day,
 He was like other weans, perfay,
 Nae langer than a ladle,
 But in three days he shot sae lang,
 That out wi's feet and head he dang
 Baith end-boards o' his cradle.

And when the big-baned babe did see
 How that his cradle, short and wee,
 Could haud him in nae langer,
 His passion took a turrivee—
 He grippit it, and garr'd it flee
 To finders, in his anger.

Ere he was spain'd, what beef, what bane,
 He was a babe o' thretty stane,
 And bigger than his mither;
 Whan he for 's parritch grat at morn,
 Men never heard syn they were born
 A yowl sae fu' o' drither.

When he'd seen thretty years or sae,
 Far meikler was his little tae
 Than meikle Samuel's shouter;
 When he down on a stool did lean,
 The stool was in an instant gane,
 And brizz'd clean down to pouter.

When through the streets o' Tangiers town
 He gaed, spaziering up and down,
 Houses and kirks did tremble;
 O' his coat-tail the vera wap
 Rais'd whirlwinds wi' its flichterin' flap,
 And garr'd auld lum-heads tumble.

Had ye been ten mile out o' town,
 Ye might hae seen his head aboon
 The highest houses towrin'.
 Ilk awfu' tramp he gave the ground,
 Garr'd aik-trees shake their heads a' round,
 And lions rin hame coverin'.

To shaw his pow'r unto the people,
 Ance in his arms he took the steeple,
 Kiss'd it, and ca'd it brither;

Syne from its bottom up it wrung,
 And in the air three times it swung,
 Spire, bell, and a' thegither!

And when he'd swung it merrily,
 Again upon its bottom he
 Did clap it down sae clever,
 Except a sma' crack half-way round,
 The steeple stood upon its found,
 As stout and straucht as ever!

Ae king's birth-day, when he was fu',
 Twa Tangier chaps began to pu'
 His tails; when, on a sudden,
 Ane by the richt leg up he grippit,
 The tither by the neck he snippit,
 And sent them skyward seuddin'.

On earth they ne'er again cam down;
 Ane in a tan-pit i' the moon
 Fell plump, and breath'd his last;
 The tither ane was jammit ticht
 'Tween twa stars o' the Pleiads bricht,
 Whair yet he's sticking fast.

Ae day, when he stood near the sea,
 A fleet o' Tyrian ships in glee
 Was sailing gawey by—
 He gript ae frigate by the mast,
 And frae the deep wi' powstie vast
 He rais'd her in the sky:

And then the great ship up he tumml'd—
 Her mast was down, her hulk up-whumm'l'd,
 Her keel high i' the lift;
 Captain and cargo down cam rummlin',
 Marines, and men, and meat, cam tummlin'
 Down frae her decks like drift.

He had a mammoth for his horse,
 Whairon wi' mighty birr and force
 He rade baith up and down;
 My certy! whan on him he lap,
 For hill nor tree he didna stap—
 For tower, nor yet for town.

From Calpe to the Chinese war'
 He travell'd in a day or twa;
 And as he gallop't east,
 The tower of Babel down he batter'd—
 For five miles round its bricks were scatter'd,
 Sic birr was in his beast!

But whan he cam to Eebatan,
 A terrible strabusch was than;
 He soucht na street nor yett,
 But hurly-burly, smash, smash, smash,
 Through wa's and roofs he drave slap-dash,
 Down-dundering a' he met:

What wi' his monster's thunderin' thud,
 And what wi' brusch, and smusch, and scud,
 O' rafters, slates, and stanes,
 Ten thousand folk to dead were devell'd
 Ten thousand mair were eirthlins level'd,
 Half-dead wi' fractur'd banes.

He travell'd, too, baith north and south,
 Whiles for his hunger, whiles for drouth.
 At Thebes* he brak his fast;
 And at the far Cape o' Good Houp,
 He took his denner, and a stoup
 O' wine for his repast.

He tried, too, on his fearsome horse,
 His way up to our Pole to force
 To spy its whirlin' pin;
 Up to the arctic ice-ribb'd flood
 Nicherin' he cam, as he were wud,
 Wi' dirdom and wi' din.

As north he rode, he didna wait
 To mak a brig over Helle's strait,
 Like Persia's pridefu' king;
 He loupit from Abydos' strand,
 And thwack! on Sestos' beach did land,
 Makin' hail Europe ring.

* Egyptian Thebes.

* For this giant of ninety feet or more, we have somewhat like classical authority. "Gabinus, the Roman historian, makes mention of the sepulchre of Antalus, near Tingi [or Tangiers], as also of a skeleton sixty cubits long [some better copies have six], which Sertorius disinterred and again covered with earth."—*Strabo lib. 17, cap. 3.*

As up through Thrace his beast did scour,
 He kick'd up sic ane cloud o' stour
 From his gambadin' hoof,
 The king o' Thrace, where he in's ha',
 Sat dinin' wi' his princes braw,
 Was chokit wi' the stooft.

But when he reach'd Siberia's shore,
 His monster wi' a grouson roar,
 Down sank amang the snaw;
 The beast was smor'd, and ne'er gat out;*
 The rider, wi' ane damnet shout,
 Sprang aff, and spreul'd awa!

His end was like his lawless life;
 He challeng'd Atlas in some strife,
 T'uphaud heiv'n on his head;
 He tried the starry heiv'n t'uphaud—
 Down cam the lift, and wi' a daud,
 It smor'd the scoundrel dead!

MORAL.

From this dour giant we may see
 How little, mighty limb and thie,
 The human race bestead;
 A wee bit man wi' meikle sense,
 Is better than ane earle immense
 Wi' nonsense in his head!

TAMMY LITTLE.

Wee Tammy Little, honest man!
 I kent the body weel,
 As round the kintra-side he gaed
 Careerin' wi' his creel.

He was sae slender and sae wee,
 That aye when blasts did blaw,
 He ballasted himself wi' stanes
 'Gainst bein' blawn awa.

A meikle stane the wee bit man
 In ilka coat-pouch clappit,
 That by the mighty gowlin' wind
 He michtna down be swappit.

When he did chance within a wood
 On simmer days to be,
 Aye he was friehtit lest the craws
 Should heise him up on he;

And aye he, wi' an silken cud,
 The air did thump and beat,
 To stap the craws frae liftin' him,
 Up to their nests for meat.

Ae day, when in a barn he lay,
 And thrashers thrang were thair,
 He in a moment vanish'd aff,
 And nae man could tell whair.

They lookit till the riggin' up,
 And round and round they lookit,
 At last they fand him underneath
 A firlo' cruyle'd and crookit.

Ance as big Samuel past him by,
 Big Samuel gave a sneese,
 And wi' the sough o't he was cast
 Clean down upon his knees.

His wife and he upon aye day
 Did chance to disagree,
 And up she took the bellowses,
 As wild as wife could be;

She gave ane puff intill his face,
 And made him, like a feather,
 Flee frae the tae side o' the house,
 Resoundin' till the tither!

* An enormous animal of the Mammoth class was disclosed by the melting of the snow in 1801, upon the snow-buried confines of Siberia. How the monster got there—how it was entombed there—appeared inexplicable to the philosophical inquirers of that period, and is only, and to our satisfaction, explained by the story of the text.

Ae simmer e'en, when as he through
 Pitkirie forest past,
 By three braid leaves, blawn aff the trees,
 He down to yird was cast;
 A tirl o' wind the three braid leaves
 Down frae the forest dang,
 Ane frae an ash, ane frae an elm,
 Ane frae an aik-tree strang;
 Ane strak him sair on the back neck
 Ane on the nose him rappit,
 Ane smote him on the vera heart,
 And down as dead he drappit.
 But ah! but ah! a drearier dool
 Ance hapt at Ounston-dammy,
 That heis'd him a' thegither up,
 And maist extinguish't Tammy:
 For as he came slow-daunderin' down,
 In's hand his basket hingin',
 And staver'd ower the hie-road's breidth,
 Frae side to side a-swingin',
 There came a blast frae Kelly-law,
 As bauld a blast as ever
 Auld snivelin' Boreas blew abraid
 To make the warld shiver.
 It liftit Tammy aff his feet,
 Mair easy than a shavin',
 And hur'l'd him half a mile complete
 Hie up 'tween earth and heav'n.

That day puir Tammy had wi' stanes
 No ballasted his body,
 So that he flew, maist like a shot,
 Ower corn-land and ower cloddy.

You've seen ane tumbler on a stage
 Tumble sax times and mair,
 But Tammy weil sax hundred times
 Gaed tumblin' through the air.

And when the whirly-wind gave ower,
 He frae the lift fell plumb,
 And in a blink stood stickin' fast
 In Gaffer Glowr-weel's lum.

Ay—there his legs and body stack
 Amang the smotherin' soot;
 But by a wonderfu' good luck,
 His head kept peepin' out.

But Gaffer Glowr-weel, when he saw
 A man stuck in his lum,
 He swarf'd wi' drither clean awa,
 And sat some seconds dumb.

It took five masons near an hour
 A' riving at the lum
 Wi' picks (he was sae jamm'd therein)
 Ere Tammy out could come.

As for his basket—weel I wat,
 His basket's fate and fa'
 Was, as I've heard douce neighbours tell,
 The queerest thing of a'.

The blast took up the body's creel,
 And laid it on a cloud,
 That hare it, sailin' through the sky,
 Richt ower the Firth's braid flood.

And when the cloud did melt awa,
 Then, then the creel cam' down,
 And fell'd the town-clerk o' Dunbar
 E'en in his ain good town.

The clerk stood yelpin' on the street
 At some bit strife that stirr'd him,
 Down cam' the creel, and to the yird
 It dang him wi' a dirdom!

THE EPITAPH FOR TAMMY.

Oh Earth! oh Earth! if thou hast but
 A rabbit-hole to spair,
 Oh grant the graff to Tammy's corp,
 That it may nestle thair:

And press thou light on him, now dead,
 That was sae slim and wee,
 For, weel I wat, when he was quick,
 He lightly prest on thee!

EPITAPH ON DAVID BARCLAY,

CHURCH-WARDEN IN ANSTRUTHER EASTER.

Here sleeps, from noisy mirth and laughter free,
 The happiest man o' th' eighteenth century;
 One who sat merrier on his cobbler's stool,
 Than Louis Capet on his throne of rule;
 He, who more harmless and with greater glee,
 Made graves for corpses at the digger's fee,
 Than proud Napoleon, for th' imperial spoil,
 Made graves for millions o'er all Europe's soil;
 What bliss heroic crown'd poor Barclay's state!
 His very littleness did make him great!
 Day chased day with pregnant laughter fraught,
 Or some new joke, or some new old-shoe brought;
 Night chased night with cheek-relaxing mirth,
 And with fresh frolic made resound his hearth;
 When brain-mad Europe reel'd from shore to shore,
 And kings and peoples battl'd long and sore,
 He on his stool, which no commotion shook,
 Sat imperturb'd, nor of the rage partook;
 What day the head of murder'd Capet fell,
 And kingdoms shudder'd at the tocsin's knell,
 He, in his cobbler's chamber fearing nought,
 Sat whistling to his shadow as he wrought;
 What day Napoleon from his height renown'd,
 Was shook by Europe's earthquake to the ground,
 His bloodless awl with unconcern he plied,
 And sung his ditty by his ingle-side!
 What day reformless Wellington was chas'd
 Home to his barricaded house in haste
 By England's men, that banded far and wide
 To beat him down that beat Napoleon's pride,
 Our Barclay, unannoy'd by earthly thing,
 Cock'd in his clean snug chamber like a king;
 He, rather as a cobbler blythe and free,
 And as *himself*, chose sapiently to be,
 Than, as the prop of kings and man of pride,
 To terrify and to be terrified.
 Peace, peaceful David, to thy shade, I say;
 And, when thou com'st forth at the judgment day,
 Whilst conquerors rise with shudd'ring and with pain,
 Afraid to face the ghosts of those they've slain,
 Thou shalt uprise with gladness in thy face,
 To claim the prize of innocence and peace!

ON THE SAME.—(SCOTCH.)

Here lies ane wight, ca'd David Barclay,
 Weel sepulcher'd amang his hard clay;
 Sma' man he was, whan he did flourish—
 He was but beadle o' this parish,
 And mendit soles, and chimlas soopit,
 And blew mouse-wabs frae aff the pupit;
 But now, when cramm'd in this wee partie,
 He's just as great as Bonaparte!
 Nae difference, save that David here
 At hame sleeps 'mang his kindred dear,
 Wi' ilka star, that kent him livin',
 Blinkin' upon him blythe frae heaven:
 Whereas the Emperor rots afar
 At the world's end, 'neath Hydra's star,
 'Mang foreign worms that keen devour him,
 And the cauld south-pole skytin' owre him.
 This Barclay was a canty chappie,
 Skull-handlin' made him nae less happy:
 'Twas but his trade was melancholy,
 His spirit aye was blythe and jolly.
 King George the Third that ruled this land,
 Wi' a braw sceptre in his hand,
 And George's ilka son and daughter,
 Ne'er took sic hearty gaups o' laughter.
 I meikle doubt if a' the thrang
 O' kings that in braid Europe rang,
 Frae that black-starr'd year achtynine,
 E'en till the day I write this line,
 Enjoy'd their lives wi' sic ane gust,
 As David wha sleeps here in dust;

Sae, to be merry in this widdle,
 Ilk station serves—heigh, laigh, and middle:
 Its a' ae woo—king, lord, or beadle!
 And let a man be mean or glorious,
 Owre armies, or auld shoon, victorious,
 Wield swords on fields, or awls on stools,
 A' dreel alike Death's dreary dools,
 And land at length amang the *mools!*

TRANSLATIONS.

ODE

FROM THE PERSIAN OF HAFIZ.

Aee bad neseem yeear daree, &c.

Sweet gale, that on thy wings dost bear
 Through sky the fragrance of my fair—
 Ah! 'tis from her, I know 'tis from
 The paradise of fume divine,
 That does her angel-form enshrine,
 That thou so balmy rich dost come!
 Sweet breeze, that gambolst abroad,
 Scatt'ring through thine ethereal road,
 Rich odours purloin'd from my fair;
 Beware! such pilfering I forbid;
 What right hast thou, a thief, to thrid
 The tangles of her golden hair?

Oh rose! that on thy prickly tree,
 Rightest thyself in boastful glee,
 As beautiful beyond compare—
 What, what art thou, with all thy grace,
 To paragon thee to the face
 Of her, whom God hath deck'd so fair!

Oh thou Narcissus! that so sweet
 Hangest, in mid-day's hour of heat,
 Thy leaves all languishingly faint—
 What, what art thou to her bright eye,
 That rolls itself so tenderly
 In love's luxurious languishment!

Oh pine! that shootest up so high,
 As if t'enclasp thy love the sky,
 With thy tall arms that tower and twine,
 Compar'd with her, as she doth move
 Stately through garden or through grove,
 What grace, what glory can be thine?

Oh ev'ry fragrant herb that round
 Scatt'rest through all the garden's bound,
 Clouds of rich incense to the sun,
 Your luscious scents, your beauteous streaks,
 What are they to the gorgeous cheeks
 Of her, mine own bliss-breathing one!

Oh wisdom! with thy sapient stores,
 Thy ken sublime, whose glance explores
 Stars, lands, and oceans with their isles;
 In all thy range—land, sky, or sea—
 Seest thou ought better than to be
 Her lover, living on her smiles?

Courage, oh Hafiz! yet endure
 Thy trial; 'twill be crown'd, be sure,
 With the full harvest of her charms;
 If thou canst but thy pain support
 With patience, albeit hard, yet short,
 She flies all willing to thine arms!

THE FAIR MAID OF SHEERAZ.

FROM THE PERSIAN OF HAFIZ.

If that fair maid I fancy most,
 The pearl of Sheeraz and its boast,
 Would not my soul's desire withstand,
 Ev'n for the mole, whose sparkling speck
 Doth gem and glorify her cheek,
 I would bestow, would she but take,
 Bokhara and broad Samareand.

Bring, bring, oh boy! to soothe my pains,
Th'untasted wine that yet remains;
For, not in high-prais'd Paradise
Thou'lt find to make thy soul as glad,
The sweet banks of our Roccabad,
Or bow'rs of our Mosella, clad
With roses of a thousand dyes.

Ah me! these nymphs that kill and smile!
These sweet deceivers that embroil
Our city with a thousand frays!—
They rob, they desolate my breast,
They plunder me of peace and rest,
Like Turks, that, scouring to the west,
Flee with the plunder that they seize.

Yet though our love be strong indeed,
These nymphs, all-perfect, do not need
That love of ours, imperfect quite;
A face that God hath fashion'd fair,
Needs it (to shine beyond compare)
Perfumes, and paints, and deckings rare
Of art, so quaint and exquisite!

Come, talk to me of wine and glee,
Of song, and dance, and revelry;
Forego all thoughts that gloom forbode—
Nor fret thy wits to comprehend
Thy future haps, thy latter end;
'Tis bootless, as unwise, to send
Thy soul in bodeful search abroad.

Ah! now so keenly do I prove
The torture of delicious love
In my soul's marrow more and more,
That I can image in my thought,
How young-eyed Joseph's beauty smote
Zoleikha so—such frenzy wrought—
That chastity's dear veil she tore.

Oh thou! to me who dearer art
Than the life-blood that feeds my heart,
List to the voice of prudent men
Improve the day of bliss that flies—
So aged folks and sage advise—
And youth, that docile is and wise,
Will not the sage's saw disdain.

Thy tongue, capricious in its phrase,
Slanders me now, now loads with praise;
Heaven pardon thee for speaking ill!
Thou dost abuse Heav'n's gifts divine;—
Do words so bitter, so malign,
Become a ruby lip like thine,
Whence nought but sweetness should distil?

Oh Hafiz! when thy lips indite
Sweet lays, they seem like gems of light,
Pure pearls in row all-gorgeous strung;
Sing, sing them sweet, for on thy lays
Heav'n seems (the more their pomp t'emplaze)
To shed the lustre and the rays
Of her own Pleiads, downward flung.

ODE

FROM THE PERSIAN OF JAMMEE.

Herja ke kunem khaneh, &c.

Oh! in what place soe'er I stay,
By midnight, morning, or by day,
Thou art the inmate of my breast;
I cannot stop, I cannot stray,
But thy sweet image with me aye
Abides, my bosom's dearest guest!
Sleep I at night, I then behold,
Enchas'd in fancy's garish gold,
Thy form, begemming all my dreams;
If lonely in my room I walk,
I see thee sit, I hear thee talk,
And, though awake, my fancy teems.

When in the tavern down I sit
With boon companions loath to quit,
The wine but fires thine image more;

When I with wordly-minded men
Converse of business and its gain,
Thee, thee, mine idol, I adore!

When in th'assembly-room the dance
Joyous beneath the taper's glance,
Careers and flashes to and fro,
I see thy form (seen else by none),
More bright than Venus round the sun,
Circling the taper's glorious glow!

Should I put off my holy weeds,
And down to ocean's pearl-pav'd meads
Dive from the shore with daring leap,
There I, in each rich shell of sea,
A precious pearl, should spy out thee,
Enflaming the surrounding deep!

To each delight, far, near, or round,
Things hop'd in Heav'n, in earth things found,
Lost is thy Jammee's heart and mind;
Earth's jewels in thee are compress'd—
And Paradise, however blest,
In thee finds all her blessings join'd!

THE SWEETEST SPOT.

FROM THE PERSIAN OF MESNAVI.

Oh thou, whose foot erratic still,
And restless as thy wayward will,
From shore to steep, from vale to hill,
All round this glorious orb has reel'd,
Oh! say, of all thine eyes hath seen,
Each town of gold, each grove of green,
Which is the sweetest, happiest scene,
The richest town, the fairest field?

Oh lady, lady! that dear place,
Though poor of soil and scant in grace,
Where she we love, the girl whose grace
Has with sweet bondage bless'd the breast:
That spot where she in pomp doth bide,
However mean, o'er all beside,
Empires of power and lands of pride,
Is sweetest, richest, fairest, best!

Wherever dwells the maid we prize,
Bright as the moon that walks the skies,
Her presence doth imparadise
The nook where she in light doth move;
Were it a sunless cavern drear,
To her bless'd lover 'twould appear
More rose-bestrew'd, and bright, and clear,
Than Eden, rich with light and love!

Oh thou, my soul's belov'd! with thee
The dragon's dungeon would to me
But as a bower of roses be,
All pav'd and beautified with bliss;
Heart-plund'rer! whom I love too well,
With thee I joyously could dwell
Ev'n in the howling halls of hell,
And from thy lips an Eden kiss!

FROM THE PERSIAN OF SAADEE.

As Nushir-van, of blaz'd renown,
The king of many a shire and town,
Upon his death-bed lay,
His son, whose soul all meek in youth,
Show'd blossoms fair of worth and truth,
He call'd, and from his fluttering mouth
Address'd his dying say:—

“I go, my Hormuz! to th'abode
Of peace; but to thy father's God
I leave thee all secure:
Oh swerve not from the righteous way;
Be thou to helpless ones a stay;
So shall thy throne on justice aye
Be founded strong and sure!”

And be not slaggard then, though crown'd ;
In chains, like other princes, bound
Of ease and grandeur gay ;
Oh when on purple couch supine,
Thou wallowest redolent of wine,
Alas ! thy poor ones most do pine,
'Neath petty tyrants' sway.

Who lauds the shepherd that doth sleep,
When out among his harmless sheep
The bloody wolf is gone !
Arise, my son, and with thy might,
Protect the lowly and th'upright,
Since *through them* kings attain their height,
And reign *for them* alone !

My son, the people are the root—
The king the *tree*, that up doth shoot
High from it branching fair ;
If thriving be the root and sound,
The glories of the tree abound,
Exuberating round and round
Their sun-spread pride in air !"

THE FAIR ONE WHOM I MEAN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BURGER.

Oh, in what pomp of love serene
Smiles she, the fair one whom I mean !
Tell it, my pious mouth, to earth
Whose wonder-working hand shines forth,
Whereby in pomp of love serene
She smiles, that fair one whom I mean !
Who has illum'd and kindled bright
Like Paradise her eyes' blue light !
Ev'n he whose pow'r o'er sea and land,
Heav'n's blue bright bending arch hath spann'd ;
He hath illum'd and kindled bright
Like Paradise her eyes' blue light !
Who with such master-skill hath spread
Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red !
He who to th'almond's blossom lent
Its beauteous tincture, dew-besprent ;
He, with such master-skill, hath spread
Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red !
Who form'd her purple mouth so fair,
So rich with sweetness living there !
He who with lusciousness so mild,
Fills the red berry, July's child ;
He made her purple mouth so fair,
So rich with sweetness living there !
Who made her silken tresses flow
All-waving round her neck of snow !
He whose sweet west-wind o'er the plain,
Rocks the glad stalks of golden grain ;
He bade her silken tresses flow
All-waving round her neck of snow !
Who touch'd for heav'nly speech or song
Her voice with rapture all day long !
He who did lend the lark his note,
And philomel his tuneful throat ;
He touch'd for heav'nly speech or song
Her voice with rapture all day long !
Who hath so arch'd her beauteous breast,
Where pleasure has his golden rest !
He that the swan's white bosom fair
Curves out with plumage rich and rare ;
He hath so arch'd that beauteous breast
Where pleasure has his golden rest !
What artist fram'd, in high design,
Her waist, so delicate, so fine !
He from whose perfect mind beam'd forth
Beauty's each form in heav'n and earth ;
That mighty Artist did design
Her waist, so delicate and fine !
Who breath'd into her form a mind
So pure, angelical, and kind !

He that the angels made on high,
These holy children of the sky ;
He breath'd into her form a mind
So pure, angelical, and kind !
Oh praise, Great Maker ! to thine art,
And thanks warm-bursting from my heart,
That beauty's type enchants me so,
Crown'd with each grace thy world can show ;
Oh praise, Great Maker ! to thine art,
And thanks warm-bursting from my heart !
But ah ! for whom on earth below
Smiles she, attired in beauty so !
Oh God ! might I have ne'er been born,
Ne'er seen thy blissful light of morn,
If not *for me* in beauty so,
Smiles she, that fair one whom I know !

THE HUGE SHIP OF HIERO.

FROM THE GREEK OF ARCHIMELUS.

Somewhat amplified by the Translator.

Who plann'd, who rear'd, so vast of amplitude,
This mountain-ship, this labyrinth of wood !
Who founded, fortified, and laid in strength,
Her keel, enormous in its oaken length !
Who launch'd her down ! who drew her into sea
With ropes and rollers of immensity !
Who meted out with ochre and with line,
Her convex frame, plank'd round with fir and pine !
What axes, lighting with tremendous stroke,
Chipp'd her huge timbers and her knees of oak !
Like wood-crown'd Etna tow'ring to the clouds
She sits, encumb'ring with her weight the floods ;
Or like some island of the Cyclades,
Round which, displac'd, roll surlily the seas.
Have not the giants fram'd her for their use,
Their pleasure yacht for an Atlantic cruise,
To scud around the world in paddling play
With the blythe bright sun on a summer's day,
Then cross at night, oblique from pole to pole,
Peep o'er the ices, and survey the whole !
Her yards, for want of room, into the clouds
Thrust their heav'n-spanning arms, as by she scuds ;
Upon her main-top pitch'd, a giant might
Stretch out his hand toward the Zenith's height,
And pluck the Pleiads from their place of light.
Such cables bind her anchors as of yore
Were bound by Xerxes to the Abydian shore,
When by his bridge of boats and cables vast
Two continents with knots he coupl'd fast ;
Her stern, high rear'd with elevation bold,
In gorgeous letters over-fret with gold,
Proclaims his name whose heart the ship design'd,
Whose treasures answer'd his high soaring mind—
Great Hiero, who rules with mild command
Sicilia's happy hearts and happy land ;
Who built her for this noble use—that he
Might waft his country's harvests over sea ;
And from her huge life-giving hold, might bless
Lands with the gifts of Ceres honour'd less—
Greece, and his isles, when famine sore doth press.
Oh speed the vessel, Neptune ! be thy care
Her on thy vault of waters safe to bear ;
And not unworthy prove thyself to be
Of the great gallant gift conferr'd on thee,
This ship-o-ertowering ship, this palace of the sea !

THE MINSTREL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

"What minstrel voice is this that rings
So blythely by my castle wall !
Command the joyous wight that sings
To appear within and bless my hall."
The king commands—the page forth flies ;
The page returns ; the monarch cries—
"Admit, admit the old man to me,
That makes my court resound with glee !"

"Accept, oh sire, a bard's salute!
Accept it, lords and lovely dames!
What heav'n is here!—what glances shoot!
These stars! who may tell all their names!
Be shut, mine eyes! nor dare to gaze
On palace-pomp, and beauty's blaze;
Here is not place nor time, I ween,
Long to luxuriate with my eyne!"

He closed his eyelids, and begun
His harp-wed roundel, clear and strong;
The sturdy-hearted knights were won—
The ladies captivate with song;
The monarch, grateful for the joy,
Commands his page, the laughing boy,
To bring a golden chain, that he
Might pay the poet for his glee.

"Sire, give me not the golden chain;
The golden chain give to your knights,
That prop and decorate your reign
With gallantry, and feats, and fights;
Or to your chanc'lor, that maintains
The state's expense with sweat and pains;
Add, to his load of things of state,
The golden chain's less cumbrous weight!"

I sing as bird in spring-time sings,
Rock'd in his house of tufted tree;
The song that from glad heart up-rings,
Itself is rich repaying fee:
Yet, should I dare t'entreat at all,
'Twould be a guerdon slight and small—
But one draught of thy best of wine,
From golden cup so pure and fine!"

He got the cup—he drain'd its bliss;
"Oh draught, of heav'nly pow'r possess!
Oh blessed be the house, where this
Is of its blissful gifts the least!
Walk ye in joy up life's gay road,
So think of me, and thank your God,
With heart as throbbing warm as mine
Thanks you for your good cup of wine!"

THE VIOLET.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

A violet on the meadow stood,
And droop'd in dewy solitude,
Abash'd its gentle head:
There came, with bounding pace along,
A shepherd-maiden fair and young,
And hither-thither tript and sung,
Rejoicing o'er the mead.

Ah! (thinks the violet) were I now
But for a little while, I trow,
Fair nature's fairest bloom!
That she, my love that gambols near,
Might nip me idly dangling here,
And plant me on her bosom dear,
'T'expire in my perfume!

But ah! but ah! that maid tript by,
Nor did the bashful violet spy;
She trod poor violet!
It died, yet sung, as it did die,
I die, but die rejoicingly
That, by her dear foot trodden, I
So sweet a death have met!

KNIGHT TOGGENBURG.

FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER.

"I love thee, gentle knight! but 'tis
Such love as sisters bear;
Oh ask my heart no more than this—
That heart no more may spare!

In peace I see thy form appear,
In peace I see thee go;
But check that sigh, and stop that tear,
Their cause I may not know!"

In grief he heard her soft rebuke;
Mute from her arms he sprung;
Gave one farewell, one last fond look,
Then on his steed him swung.
He to his vassals orders gave,
Through all his Switzer-band,
To hie them to the Holy Grave,
Christ's banner in their hand.

Deeds were done there of force and fame
By ev'ry hero's arm;
Then tufted helms did wave and flame,
Amid Mohammed's swarm.
And Toggenburg's loud-rumour'd name
Fill'd Pagans with alarm;
Yet, in his heart, love's gloomy flame
Burn'd on with hidden harm.

One year he hath endur'd the grief—
Nor longer can it bear;
Abandon'd to unrest, the chief
Leaves Jewry and the war.
He sees a ship on Joppa's strand,
Just bound for Europe's seas—
Embarks for home, and that lov'd land,
Rich with *her* breath's sweet breeze.

And at *her* castle's silent gate
The pilgrim knocks in fear;
'Twas open'd—and a voice like fate
Came dreadful on his ear:—
"She whom you seek is now Heav'n's bride,
In cloister's still abode;
'Twas yesterday the bond was tied
That spous'd her to her God!"

Ah! now he leaves, full sad and sore,
His halls built fair and high;
His arms, his true steed, never more
Rejoice that warrior's eye.
From Toggenburg, his sire's domain,
He to the vale comes down,
Enwrap'd and hid, from fellows' ken,
By hairy hood and gown.

And there a little hut he rears,
Near to the linden-grove,
Where holy, in the midst appears,
The cloister of his love:
All day, from morning's earliest beam,
Till evening chill and late,
Still fondling hope's delirious dream,
There, there alone he sate.

And on the cloister's casement hung
All day untir'd his look,
Until the lattice clank'd and rung
Beneath her finger's stroke;
Till the dear damsel, angel-mild,
Th'espoused to her God,
Down on the valley look'd and smil'd,
And bless'd him with a nod.

And then in peace he, in his bower,
Lay down and slumber'd fain;
And rose rejoic'd at morning hour,
To feast his eyes again.
And so for many a day he sate,
And many a year and long,
Patient, withouten plaint, to wait
Until her lattice rung;

Till the dear damsel, angel-mild,
Th'espoused to her God,
Look'd on his little hut, and smil'd,
And bless'd him with a nod.
And so, one morn, he in the vale,
A corpse sate livid there,
And tow'rd the lattice, still his pale
Eye turn'd its lifeless glare!

LEONORE.

If the following translation of Burger's most celebrated poem has any merit, it must consist principally in its compression and brevity. The author's peculiar stanza, with the same collocation of rhymes, is here used by the translator; the lines, as to number of syllables, having the same metrical length, saving that the 2d, 4th, 7th, and 8th lines, which in the original terminate in double, here end in single rhymes. Each stanza, therefore, of this translation is less, by *four syllables*, than each of the original.

Young Leonore with light of morn
Up-rose from dreams of dread;
"My William! wilt thou ne'er return?
Art thou untrue or dead?"
He had, with royal Fred'rick's might,
March'd off for Prague to share the fight;
Nor tidings to his home
Had of his safety come.

Emp'rour and Empress, of that feud
Now weary, did surcease
Their bitterness of ireful mood,
And to the land gave peace;
And either host, with shouts that rang,
With cymbal's chime and clank and clang,
Crown'd with gay branches green,
Are homeward marching seen.

And far and near and round about,
On high-road, path, and street,
Come young and old all swarming out,
That homeward host to meet:
"Thanks, thanks to God!" wife, children cried;
"Welcome," cried many a blythesome bride.
But ah! for Leonore
Were kiss and bliss no more!

She question'd all the line along
Of him she lov'd so dear,
But none of all that soldier-throng
Gave to her word of cheer;
And when the troops had all pass'd by,
Her locks she tore with scream and cry,
And threw herself on ground
In plight of woe profound.

"Mercy, oh God!" her mother mild
Ran crying with alarms,
"What aileth thee, my dearest child?"
And caught her in her arms.
"Oh mother! what is done is done;
Now, farewell all beneath the sun!
With God no pity lies—
Woe, woe, to me!" she cries.

"Help, God! look on us from above!
Child! pray thy soul to peace;
What God hath done is done in love;
God is a God of grace!"
"Oh mother, mother! vain that thought—
God not to me in love hath wrought;
What boots thine idle prayer?
God hath of me no care!"

"Help, God! who best the father knows
Knows best his filial love;
To thy sad soul a sweet repose
God's sacrament shall prove."
"Oh mother, mother! to my woe
No sacrament can rest bestow—
That the dead man should live,
What sacrament can give?"

"How if that false false man, my child,
In Hung'ry's distant land,
(His faith renounc'd) hath thee beguil'd
For some new marriage-band?
Let his heart whirl about as wind,
No gain, no true-love shall he find;
When his soul seeks the pit
His sin shall punish it."

"Oh mother! thus to fret is vain—
My loss must needs be borne;
Death, death is now mine only gain;
Would I had ne'er been born!"

Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!
Perish my soul in gloom and night!
God's mercies cease to flow—
Woe to me, poor one, woe!"

"Help, God! nor into judgment go
With this thy poor weak child;
What her tongue saith she doth not know;
Forgive her wand'rings wild!
Oh child! thine earthly pain forget—
Heav'n's bliss and God before thee set;
So shall thy soul be join'd
To bridegroom true and kind."

"Oh mother! what is heavenly bliss?
Oh mother! what is hell!
With him, with him is heavenly bliss!—
Without my William, hell:
Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!
Perish my soul in gloom and night!
Without him, nor on earth
Nor heav'n, for me is mirth!"

Thus in her bosom and her brain,
Wild, wild despair did rage,
And with God's providence in vain
A rash war did she wage;
She wrung her hands, she smote her breast,
'Till the sun vanish'd in the west,
And up heav'n's golden arch
The golden stars 'gan march.

And hark! without, a trampling sound,
As if of hoof of steed;
And, down with clatter on the ground,
A rider bounds with speed;
And hark! and hark! the door's loose ring
'Gins tingle with a kling-kling-kling;
Then through the valve's close frame
Audible words there came:—

"Holloa! holloa! Up!—open, dear!
Dost wake, my girl, or sleep?
Continues yet thy love sincere?
Dost thou or laugh or weep?"
"Ha! William there!—so late at night!
Wept, watch'd, have I, a weary wight;
Ah, suffer'd direful woe!
Whence com'st thou riding so?"

"At midnight saddle we our steeds—
I from Bohemia ride;
Late, late I donn'd my bridal weeds,
To take thee hence, my bride."
"So quick!—ah William! first come in;
Hark to the wind's leaf-rustling din!
Ah, come! within my arms
Be warm'd from night's chill harms!"

"Let the wind blow, dear; let it stir
The leaves with rustling din;
My horse paws proud—loud clangs the spur—
I dare not house within:
Come, tuck thee up! spring, spring with speed
Behind me on my coal-black steed!
A hundred miles, dear bride,
We home to bed must ride!"

"This night a hundred miles wilt thou
Me home to bride-bed bring?
Hark! how the clock still hums—e'en now
Eleven hath ceas'd to ring!"
"Look here, look here! The moon shines bright!
We and the dead ride quick by night!
Ere twelve's long hour shall ring
Thee home to bed I bring!"

"Where is thy chamber, then?—oh where
The bed of our repose?"
"Far hence—'tis narrow, silent, drear,
Six boards its frame compose!"
"Room in't for me?" "For me and thee;
Up! spring thou, swing thou close to me!
The marriage-guests are met;
Doors open—meats all set!"

The maid tuck'd up, and up she sprung
 High on the horse in haste,
 And fast her lily-hands she flung
 Around the rider's waist ;
 And hurry, hurry !—hop, hop, hop !
 They gallop'd off sans stay or stop ;
 That horse and horseman blew,
 And sparks and splinters flew !

On right hand and on left how fleet
 Before their eyen did scud
 Hedges and heaths !—how 'neath their feet
 The bridges thunder'd loud !
 " Fears yet my love ! The moon shines bright !
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fast at night !
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"
 " Ah no !—yet leave the dead !"

What din this on the highway's verge ?
 Why flit the rav'ns o'erhead ?
 Hark ! clink of bell !—Hark ! dead man's dirge !—
 " *Let us entomb the dead.*"
 And aye the fun'ral-folk drew near,
 Coffin, and crape, and pall, and bier ;
 The song was like the shriek
 Of frogs, in pools that squeak.

" When twelve's long hour hath struck, with song
 And howl, then tomb thy dead ;
 Now, my young wife I bear along
 With me to bridal-bed !
 Come, sexton, with thy chanter-crowd,
 Shriek, shriek our bridal hymn aloud !
 Come priest, and speak the blessing,
 Ere bed-ward we be pressing !"

The song was at his bidding hush'd—
 Evanish'd bier and pall ;
 And at his horse's heels they rush'd—
 Priest, sexton, choir, and all ;
 And onward scudding without stop,
 They hurried, hurried—hop, hop, hop !
 That horse and horseman blew,
 And sparks and splinters flew !

How flew on right hand, how on left
 Huge forests with their hills !
 How flew on left, and right and left,
 Towers, turrets, rivers, rills !
 " Fears yet my love ! The moon shines bright !
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fleet by night !
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"
 " Ah ! let them rest, the dead !"

Look, look beside the gallows-tree,
 All round the murd'rous wheel,
 An airy people, dire to see,
 Doth in the moonshine reel !
 " Ha ! gloomy group ! come hither, come,
 And follow me with whine and hum !
 Trip ye our bridal dance
 As bed-ward we advance !"

The gloomy group, with wings that brush,
 Come flying fast behind,
 As rustles through the hazel-bush
 Amid dry leaves the wind ;
 And onward, onward !—hop, hop, hop !
 Flick'ring they flew, sans stay or stop !
 That horse and horseman blew,
 And sparks and splinters flew !

How flew what seemed the moon on high
 Down to th'horizon far !
 How scudded heav'n's vast zodiac by,
 With planet and with star !
 " Fears yet my love ! The moon shines bright !
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fleet at night !
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"
 " Woe's me ! let rest the dead !"

" Hey ! onward, horse ! the cock now crows—
 Our sand's nigh run, my steed ;
 On ! on ! the morning breeze now blows ;
 I smell it !—onward ! speed !
 Finish'd—ha !—finish'd now our race !
 The bride-bed opes its small chill space !
 Dead folk, how fast they trot !
 We are upon the spot !"

They stood beside a trellis-gate
 Of iron, drear to view ;
 'Twas touch'd—with clank and clang, the grate,
 Bar, bolt and lock, up-flew !
 The trellis'd valves rebound with force,
 And over graves was now their course ;
 Thick in the moonshine shone
 Tombs dark of carved stone !

Look, look ! e'en in a moment's space,
 (God's grace, how terrible !)
 Like tinder, dropping piece by piece,
 The rider's doublet fell !
 His head, so tufted late and fair,
 Grinn'd a grim skull, sans skin and hair—
 A skeleton the rest,
 With scythe and death's gear drest !

High pranc'd the steed with head elate—
 Fire flash'd as he did neigh ;
 When lo ! beneath her as she sate
 He vanish'd quite away !
 Loud howlings bellow'd down from air ;
 From graves low whimp'rings of despair
 The heart of Leonore
 'Tween death and life beat sore.

Now, round and round, by moon's pale glance
 Of ghosts the sheeted throng
 Gambol'd their grim and hideous dance,
 And shriek'd their shrilly song !
 " Be patient ! albeit hearts be riv'n,
 Yet quarrel not with God in heav'n ;
 Now thon'rt from flesh disjoin'd—
 God to thy soul be kind !"

END OF TENNANT'S POEMS.



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