

## CHAPTER IX.

# HEV TTHOLIS OVERCVMMMIS.

Beauty merits temples fair,  
 Valour merits altars rare,  
 Patience merits princely domes,—  
 He that tholis obercomes.

Beauty conquers with a glance,  
 Valour conquers with a lance,  
 Patience gathers gold from tomes,—  
 He that tholis obercomes.

Beauty's eyes may light the world,  
 Valour's flag may flaunt unfurl'd,  
 Patience dwells in humble homes,—  
 He that tholis obercomes.

*The Gaberlunzie.*



LOSING behind them the door of the low *howff*, and ascending the steep Bow-way, the Gaberlunzie and his guide felt invigorated by the pure morning breeze that fanned their cheeks; and their hearts glowed within them, as if touched by the balmy spirit of that deep quietude—that solemn repose which, at this early hour, hovered over the slumbering city. As they reached the High Street the great bell of St Giles struck three; the hour was repeated by the adjoining clocks, and again by numerous chimes of lesser power in different quarters of the town. It was a summer morning; the weather for some time had been very sultry, and a dense mist from the sea, which had lain heavily on the city during the whole of the preceding evening and night, now began to retreat before the blush of early morn although, as

if loath to depart, it still hung like a silvery shroud around the tall buildings forming this picturesque locality. All of a sudden, and in an incredibly short space of time, the mist rose in waving wreaths, and anon assumed the appearance of a half-rolled up curtain, discovering the under features of the cloud-capt edifices which it had hitherto concealed. In the far east, as seen in the distant perspective of the Canongate, and over the top of ancient Holyrood, a long thin streak of pale light stretched along the whole line of the horizon, the centre elevated into an arch, and enriched in colours by the rays of the rising sun, which began to shed a halo of glory over the whole scene. The sea in the expansive and winding bay of Aberlady had caught a stray sunbeam, and kept it struggling in its trembling bosom, while one solitary ray had perched on and lighted up a point on the weather-vane of old St Giles.

There were at this early hour few indications of anything like life to be met with in the streets. Some dingy sparrows chirruping on the sills of the windows, or hopping on the pavement, were busy picking up the almost imperceptible crumbs which constituted their morning's repast; or here and there a half-starved cur was disputing a bone with some needy pale-faced child of want, whom hunger had sent forth in search of food. Perchance, also, the eye might detect a squalid wretch, half-hidden beneath a dark doorway, sick at heart, and vainly attempting to assume the appearance of merriment or gaiety. There might likewise be seen emerging from some low tipping-house, whence gleamed an ominous dull red light, a fiery-faced toper, leaning on the arm of a drunken companion, who seemed himself to require the aid he was so ineffectually attempting to afford his neighbour. Probably, also, a stray bacchanalian, who had been found lying insensible in the gutter, was being conveyed in a barrow to the guard-house, by two of the sturdy and trusty city guardsmen, who, bearing their burden of inert matter, accompanied every step they trudged with a profusion of unintelligible Gaelic oaths.

As our friends the Gaberlunzie and Pedlar passed the Old Jail, or Heart of Midlothian, as it was more poetically called, a tall, thin, narrow tenement, which then stood in the middle of the High Street, pale faces, half in shadow, were dimly seen pressing against the grated windows, and pale hands grasping the iron bars of the house of bondage, while some trifling and

faintly whispered question gave evidence that within were many weary and sleepless watchers for the morning light. The sentinel at the door, who had been drooping and dozing on his post, startled by the sound of approaching footsteps, suddenly shot himself up into an erect position, and replied, in a short and characteristic grunt, to the morning salutation of the Gaberlunzie. Our friends passed on through the Kraims, a narrow passage between the jail and the church of St Giles, then occupied by small shops or booths, when the Gaberlunzie, recollecting how near he was to the residence of my uncle, stood still, irresolute for a moment, considering whether it might not be advisable to knock him up, and take him along with them. He felt pretty confident that the poor fiddler was the identical organist for whom they had been so long and anxiously seeking; and he was, moreover, desirous to communicate to his friend the earliest intelligence of the success of his mission. A moment's reflection on the uncertainty of this success, however, added to Peter's impatience, induced him to abandon the idea of disturbing the Parliament Square at that unseasonable hour, and he tacitly followed his guide, who seemed anxious that not a moment should be lost in reaching their place of destination.

Just as they had cleared the narrow lane, and had come within sight of the Cross Well, a little barefooted girl came running out of a dark-browed close with a jug in her hand, which she proceeded in great haste to fill with water from the well. So far as could be seen in the imperfect light of the morning, she seemed very beautiful. Long tresses of jet-black hair floated adown her back, and covered her shoulders. Her small feet, as she tripped over the cold gray flagstones, seemed unfitted for such rude exposure, and she tottered and stumbled as if suffering pain. It was evident at a glance that Nature had formed her in her finest mould, and of her most fragile material, and that she was but ill adapted to perform the rough duties of humble life. Although her clothing was mean, and miserably scanty, yet her whole appearance was clean and neat. Her raven tresses floating on her neck and around her face, heightened the glow on her rose-coloured cheeks; while her thin and imperfect covering served to reveal at a glance the symmetry of her form.

The impression which the appearance of this fair little

creature made on the Gaberlunzie, will be best seen in the following effusion, which seems to have been its result :—

## THE WEE RAGGIT LASSIE.

WEE, genty, timid, bashfu' wean,  
 Tott, totting through the street thy lane,  
 Like sunny keeks through cluds o' rain;  
                                   Thy face sae fair,  
 Peeps sweetly through thy clustering train  
                                   O' raven hair!

Thy wee bit neck and bosom bare,  
 Though tussled by the cauld raw air,  
 Are pearly pure and lily fair,  
                                   As snaw flakes fa'in';  
 An' thy wee cheeks glow like a pair  
                                   O' roses blawin'!

Thy form light as a fairy fay,  
 Thy facy sweet as flowery May,  
 Thine ee like dawn o' infant day  
                                   Waukin the east,  
 Till light an' lustre sparkle gay  
                                   In every breast!

Tho' sma' thy mak an' scrimp thy cleeding,  
 Tho' bleak thy hame and puir thy feeding,  
 Tho' scant thy lair an' laigh thy breeding,  
                                   Still we can see  
 Sweet Beauty a' the graces leading  
                                   Captive to thee!

Yet beauty's e'en a doubtfu' gift,  
 Wi' mickle show, but little thrift;  
 Wi' it the rich may mak a shift  
                                   To lead the fashion,  
 While humble beauty's cast adrift  
                                   On human passion!

O man! why wilt thou seek thy bane,  
 An' barter happiness for pain?  
 Why cast on beauty's flower a stain  
   That gaur's it wither?  
 I trow the heart gets little gain  
   That breaks anither!

Alack! puir wean, thy fate I fear,  
 Thy morning sky's e'en cauld an drear;  
 Dark poortith hovers in the rear,  
   Wi' boding scowl;  
 An' how can sic as thou win clear  
   O' faes sae foul?

Auld beldame Fortune, would I kenn'd her!  
 I wadna, wee thing, let thee wander  
 Wi' thy sma' limbs, sae slim an' slender,  
   Exposed an' bare;  
 And thy wee feet, sae jimp an' tender,  
   A' dinlin' sair!

Hail, holy Nature! thou whase power  
 Hast gi'en her beauty for her dower;  
 O tend wi' care this tender flower  
   That springs frae thee;  
 And rear her safe in Virtue's bower,  
   Aneath thine ee!

The fair creature to whom these verses refer was apparently about twelve years of age—a period when the frankness of childhood is about to be exchanged for the retiring modesty of the maiden. She had filled her pitcher as the Gaberlunzie and Pedlar approached, and was gliding away like a noiseless spirit into the gloom of the dark archway whence she had issued, when, glancing round, with that timid look which children often cast behind them, to ascertain whether they are observed or followed, she recognised the Pedlar. On perceiving him she came running forward, dropped a low courtesy, and looking him smilingly in the face, said, "Ah! ye hae come back; that's sae kind; come away, they'll a' be sae blythe to see ye; the auld man has just waukened up, and's

crying for water, water, and I hae come out as mither bade me, for a wee drap o' caller water frae the Cross Well; it's aye sae cauld in simmer, and my mither says there maybe a blessing in't."

"That's a kind, dear wee dawtie," said Peter, clapping her on the head, "I'll be awn ye a bawbee for that some day, when I'm rich. Are ye no feared to come out at this time o' the mornin' your lane? Are ye no fleyed for ghaists?"

"Na, na," said the little girl, "my grannie whiles cracks awa about bogles in her auld warld stories, and raves about them in her auld gruesome croons; but my mither tells me there's naething waur than oursel's in this world, and that the Gude Spirits will tak care o' me gin I be gude mysel'; sae ye see I cam out at her biddin, for she's no able to steer frae her bed since she had the fever, or she wad hae come to the well hersel'."

The Gaberlunzie, who had stood gazing on this being with feelings of the most intense interest, and had listened to her remarks as if they had been uttered by a voice from Heaven, wiped away a tear which gathered in his eye, turned half-round to Peter, and exclaimed, "What an angel! What a lesson does this juvenile apostle read us! Here you perceive her pure mind has rejected the absurd stories with which her grandmother's imagination teems, while it cherishes a belief in the lovely beings so like herself, which her mother with more wisdom has held up to her fancy's contemplation. Would that such principles were generally acted upon; that virtue were held up before our eyes, and vice allowed to remain shrouded in its own infamous obscurity. Show youth the beauty of virtue, and it will fly with horror from vice.

As the auld cock craws, sae the young cock learns,  
 Aye tak ye care what ye do afore bairns;  
 Their heads are muckle, though their limbs are wee,  
 An' O! the wee totts are gleg in the ee:  
 Then dinna fright your laddie wi' the "black boo" man,  
 But let him douk his lugs in his wee parritch pan;  
 Lay ye his rosy cheek upon your mou a wee,  
 How the rogue will laugh when his minny's in his ee.



As the auld cock craws, sae the young cock learns,  
 Aye tak ye care what ye do afore bairns ;  
     Though vice may be muckle, and virtue may be wee,  
     Yet a sma speck o' light will woo the dullest ee :  
 Then dinna fright us wi' the muckle black deil,  
 Show us mercy's bonnie face, an' teach us to feel ;  
     Though we think like men, we should feel like bairns,—  
 As the auld cock craws, sae the young cock learns.

The pure being, who seemed an impersonation of the moral in its best application inculcated in the old proverb, which forms the text or burden of these verses, stood listening to the Gaberlunzie with much attention and admiration. But the moment he had ceased, the tear started in her eye ; and, as if chiding herself for her delay, she tripped away into the shaded entry like a thing of light, seeming to throw a radiance around her on the dark wynd, which looked still darker and dingier when she had disappeared within its sinister depths.

The Gaberlunzie and Pedlar followed their young guide through the deep round archway formed by the junction, and extended through the breadth of the two tall front tenements. They then crossed a small paved square court, lighted from the top ; but so closely wedged together were the immense houses bounding the four sides of this area, that the speck of sky overhead looked not larger than a common toplight or cupola ; while persons with arms of ordinary length might have readily shaken hands from the windows on either side. Our two friends now descended another archway similar to the first, a little below the bottom of which, encasing a narrow turnpike stair, projected a fine bold tower, forming a very striking and attractive central point to the picture, and contracting the strait alley to one-half its originally narrow dimensions. To-

wards this turnpike they directed their steps, and had climbed nearly to the top of the spiral stair, when their attention was arrested by the sound of a voice chanting a melody in a very low and subdued tone. The voice was so sweet, and the air so soothing, that they involuntarily paused, and remained listening. The little girl was the first to break the silence, "Puir Phemie," she said, "is singing the auld man asleep again, wi' ane o' her sweet sangs; we maunna gang in till he's dovered ower, or we'll maybe scaur her. Ah! had it no been for her kindness at the time my mither lay sae lang senseless, we couldna hae gotten through; and he wha next to God was our protector, gaed out ae night a' shivering an' shakin' wi' the fever in his banes, to play at a grand ball, for the purpose o' gettin' twa-three shillings to buy meat till us, and cam hame in a burnin' fever, raving an' mad. Yet it was God wha sent him to help us, and my mither says He winna let our kind freend die. Follow me," continued she, gently ascending the attic stair. With hushed breaths and suppressed emotion they did follow, and heard distinctly the following chant:—

The fairy sprites are blowing  
 Their horns in the grassy dell,  
 Their melody is flowing—  
 A thousand echoes swell.  
 The tiny elves are crying,  
 Their dewy tears are lying  
 On the wounded floweret dying;  
 Hark! to the ding-dong bell.

O sweetly bloom'd the flower  
 In the merry month of May,  
 And 'neath June's leafy bower  
 Its heart beat warm and gay;  
 But while it lay asleeping,  
 Cold winter's blast came sweeping,  
 And the floweret fell aweeping,  
 Then fading, waned away.

The voice of the singer having gradually fallen, a perfect stillness succeeded. The little girl now stole into the house, the door of which she had considerably left open, lest the opening and shutting it on her return should disturb the



sufferer, and, looking around her with anxious gaze, set down the jug of water on a chair which seemed to serve for a table she then slipped to a bed that stood in a dark corner of the apartment, arranged the bedclothes, and, returning again to the door, waved her little hand as a signal to the visitors to enter. They did so, walking on tiptoe, and found a scene well calculated to excite their interest, and draw tears of pity from their eyes. The apartment in which they stood seemed to be the kitchen; an old woman sat on a low stool by the hearth, shivering with cold, although it was summer, and warming her shrivelled hands over the dying embers; her head lay forward in her lap, and as she groped on either side of the grate, apparently for her tobacco-pipe, her face was almost close to the fire, and her body closely folded together. Although she neither moved her body, nor turned round her head as the party came in, she was evidently aware that there were strangers in the room; for while they still stood in the centre of the floor, uncertain what they should do next, and somewhat oppressed with a feeling of awe, she turned her head to one side, as if listening. The child observing this, stepped lightly forward to her, and whispered a single word in her ear. Instantly she raised her head, and drawing her flannel-cap and hood or *faiky* over her shoulders, she murmured,—

“Ay, ay, bairn, ye may tak them ben, but they might as weel expect to mak me young again as him hale. He’s fairly worn-out; he canna last lang. The dead struggle may be dreigh, but it canna last for ever. What will come o’ that puir lassie wha tends him? To think o’t wad break the heart o’ a stane, let alane that o’ auld Katie Gray. Pass on, pass on,” she continued, while a flood of tears rolled down her aged cheeks, and a paroxysm of emotion almost choked her utterance; “pass on,” she continued, and her voice faltered still more; “pass on, and see the end o’t. There will be a streaking here ere morning. I thought langsyne, when my auld gudeman died, that the next after him wad hae been my ain; but ohon! ohon! I hae seen twa-three auld rotten trunks and young green saplings struck down since then; and our ain kind, merry, gude auld friend, to whase fiddlin’ my ae laddie was wont to dance sae lightly, has come to die aside me, and be sweeled by my baney fingers. Alackaday! and what will become o’ that puir lassie? I hae seen mony kind hearts



### MORNING VISIT

*The apartment in which they now stood, seemed to be the kitchen: an old woman sat on a low stool by the hearth, shivering with cold, although it was summer, warming her shrivelled hands over the dying embers.*

drowned in floods o' affection, but ne'er saw a creature tak on wi' grief like her. Ohon! ohon!" and she sunk forward into her old position, and again began to grope about for her tobacco-pipe.

Somewhat awestruck by this sepulchral and ill-boding address, the visitors passed through a narrow passage to an inner apartment, still beckoned on and preceded by their little guide. In the room which they now entered there was a small window facing the east, partially shaded by a green kerchief, that hung over it in place of a curtain. A pale stream of the morning light struggling in showed them distinctly every corner of the apartment. A glance served to convince them, that although one of poortith's bleak abodes, the room was remarkably tidy, in so far as that desirable concomitant of comfort could be expected to be associated with extreme poverty. The furniture was mean in the extreme. There were three chairs, two of which, wanting the backs, bore evident marks of having seen better days. Their old stuffed bottoms had been removed or worn out, and the boards by which they had been replaced were scrubbed very white, although they looked out of keeping with the black oaken frames in which they were set. A little circular table, with twisted legs, and deep, heavy-frame work, well burnished up, and having its youth renewed by repeated cosmetical applications, occupied the centre of the room; while in the corner stood an old-fashioned cupboard, open in front, with curiously curved shelves, which, alas! could no longer boast a bright parade of china. A small, rudely-carved bust of the Virgin adorned the top of this cupboard; and, above the fireplace, on the same side of the room, hung an old smoked print of the Taking down from the Cross. These, along with other little articles which lay scattered about, were tokens to the Gaberlunzie that some of the inmates of the house were Catholics, a sect whose veneration for such relics prevents them from parting with them even in their greatest extremity. The insignia of the musician's craft hung suspended in a corner of the apartment, while attached to the handle of the violin was a circular bouquet of yellow flowers, the centre of the wreath studded with a cross of dark blue violets. All this gave additional strength to the belief which the Gaberlunzie had so unaccountably entertained, that he was now in the right way to ascertain the fate of the Hepburn certificate, and that the

poor sufferer, to whose aid he had now come, was the identical organist of the Catholic chapel.

In an old-fashioned, low-stocked bed, which was thrust into a recess formed by the slope of the attic ceiling, lay the musician himself asleep; while over him bent the form of the being who nursed him, and whose every thought and feeling seemed absorbed in administering to his necessities. This was the same person who had sung the melody which so charmed them while they remained in the stair. A little dog, who seemed aware of the friendly feeling that had brought the visitors, as well as of the necessity for quietness, came creeping forth from under one of the chairs, and wagged its tail at Peter, as if delighted at seeing him. Poor Feckless Phemie—for it was that interesting being who hung over the couch of the suffering musician—slowly assumed an upright position, and, stretching forth her hands in a supplicating attitude, chanted in a low but distinctly audible tone the following song:—



**OFTLY** sleeps he, wake him not,  
 Broken hearts wail wearily;  
 Care and trouble both forgot,  
 Grief lies dreaming cheerily:  
 With a heigh ho, the wind will blow,  
 Through the leafless forest drearily!

Time may come with balmy breath,  
 Nature's sorrows healing;  
 Gentle love may keep cold death  
 From the humble sheiling:  
 With a heigh ho, the wind will blow,  
 Flowery odour stealing!

Ere the chant was completed, and while the Gaberlunzie and Peter stood motionless by the singer, the poor sufferer, who had only been in one of those heavy-breathing, half

slumbers, which generally accompany severe illness, awoke, and, with an almost supernatural effort, raised himself in the bed. With strained eyes he gazed into the partial obscurity in which the visitors were shrouded, when the Gaberlunzie, who had hitherto stood behind, stepped forward and carefully scanned the pale countenance of the emaciated being before him. Every line and lineament, making due allowances for the ravages of time and illness, were precisely the same in character with those of the man he sought. Satisfied of this, and unable longer to restrain his feelings, he exclaimed, "It is indeed my old friend the organist!" and he bent over the sufferer with all his keenest sensibilities awakened, and his face suffused with tears. The moment these words were uttered by the Gaberlunzie, the poor patient, who had been hitherto gazing in his face with a half unconscious expression, seemed at once restored to the full possession of his faculties, and, as he eagerly grasped the friendly hand which was proffered him, exclaimed in faltering accents, "Thank God, thank God, my deliverer hath come at last!" Then, as if his malady had returned in all its force, and some horrible vision had presented itself to his troubled sight, he turned away his face, stretched out both his hands in a supplicating attitude, and, with averted looks, screamed out in an unnaturally clear, strong, and loud voice, "Fire, fire! horror, save me, save me! I am innocent; indeed I am. Save me; oh! save me!" Then, as if nature could no longer sustain so violent an effort, he fell back exhausted; and it was some time before they were aware, from his returning pulsation, and his low, scarcely perceptible breathing, that he was still in the land of the living and in the place of hope.

A long and protracted illness succeeded this temporary fit of excitement, and, for many days and nights, the Gaberlunzie and Phemie sat watching every movement, and administering to every want of the poor sufferer, their mutual tears often falling together, and bedewing his thin and emaciated hands, which he held out to them as signs of recognition and gratitude, when unable to utter a syllable. The house was indeed a house of woe; and the Gaberlunzie, during his attendance on this sickbed, often experienced a heartfelt conviction of the truth so beautifully inculcated in Scripture, "That it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting."

The little girl who had conducted the Gaberlunzie and Peter to this abode of sickness, and suffering, and want, was the only member of the household (with the exception of her aged grandmother, now in her second childhood, and unfit for any exertion) who had escaped the dreadful malady, and it was to her exertions, young as she was, that they were chiefly indebted for support during their illness. The mother lay in a bed in the far corner of the kitchen, so weak from disease and want of proper nourishment that she was unfit to move. The fever had now indeed left her; some of the good, kind-hearted physicians, with which Edinburgh has always abounded, having attended her during her illness, and administered to her necessities. But poverty like hers is not clamorous, and charity is apt to slumber when not kept awake by solicitation. Thus had she been left latterly entirely dependent for support on what her little daughter earned at the humble occupation of knitting stockings, an employment at which Phemie, when in her calm mood, frequently lent her assistance. Often, indeed, the two continued at work during the whole night; and bright was the flush on the cheek of the child when she returned home from the hosier's shop of a morning with a whole shilling, to be divided and subdivided as the various wants of the inmates demanded.

The Gaberlunzie came in good time, like a minister of mercy, to render assistance to this sorely afflicted family, and he was not long among them till he became convinced of their genuine worth and virtue. The mistress of the house, who now lay in a convalescent state, was a widow, whose husband had been an intelligent tradesman, and had died leaving her with this one child, and an aged mother to provide for. That feeling of independence which is often the only patrimony an honest artizan has to bequeath to his family was religiously cherished, and the rule of conduct it dictated strictly adhered to by the widow, who held, as well she might, her husband's memory in high veneration. With this feeling the Gaberlunzie cordially sympathized, when one day, shortly after his arrival here, the little girl with a blush on her cheek brought to him carefully folded up, but exhibiting traces of having been much read and blurred in many places with tears, the following poem, with which she said her father had presented her when on his death-bed, and which her mother often cried over for hours at night when she thought she was asleep:—

## A FATHER TO HIS FIRST BORN.

COME to my arms, my sweet wee hinny,  
Fair image o' thine angel minny,  
Bright picture o' thy sainted granny,  
    To a' sae dear ;  
I gaze upon thy face, an' canna  
    But drap a tear.

Thy dimpled chin, thy rosy mou,  
The thought that lines thy lang deep brow,  
Thy dark blue een glint glintin' through  
    Thy father's heart ;  
Thou'rt my fond mither, form'd anew  
    In every part.

Thus Fancy like a seraph sings,  
And softly sweeps my harp's rude strings ;  
Whilst busy Memory fondly clings  
    To every tone,  
And from the heart's recesses brings  
    Scenes long since gone.

Then Memory, poised on Fancy's wing,  
Sends the lone mind a wandering ;  
And as amid the flowers of Spring  
    The snow-flake falls,  
So this young balmy breathing thing  
    The past recalls.

First pledge of love, pure bud of bliss,  
Young gem of light and loveliness,  
Ae rosy smile, ae balmy kiss  
    Frae thy wee mou,  
Floods a' my bosom's deep recess  
    Wi' bliss brim fou !

*THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALLET.*

Whilk o' us in our merriest glee  
 Can bask 'mid cludless skies like thee ;—  
 The dark rims o' thy sparkling ee  
     In glory glancing,  
 An' thy wee limbs, a' bounding free,  
     In rapture dancing ?

Thy mither wails the crumpled lace ;  
 While I maist smoor thy sweet wee face,  
 An' kiss, an' keek, and fondly trace  
     Wi' parent's ee,  
 The blushing bloom an' witching grace  
     That dawns in thee.

Thy speaking een are thrang revealing  
 Wee glinting keeks o' human feeling ;  
 An' thoughts are through thy bosom stealing  
     In infant play,  
 God knows may set thy heart a thrilling  
     Some future day.

Yet O ! it's harsh to bode an' snarl,  
 An' croak anent this queer auld warl',  
 Whaur some get thorns, an' some get laurel,  
     An' some get gear,  
 An' some slip through without a quarrel,  
     Or yet a tear ;

But there are floods o' joy an' pleasure,  
 Mair dear than life, mair rich than treasure,  
 Flows through the heart ; wha's strang embrasure  
     Hauds a' as brithers,  
 An' taks itsel' the self-same measure  
     It metes to ithers.

What pangs thrill through my throbbing heart  
 When thou gi'es an uncanny start ;  
 For gudesake, dinna greet ! the smart  
     O' cauld steel wound  
 Is naething to the piercing dart  
     O' that shrill sound.



Thy minnie's startled looks that yearn  
To ken what ails her sweet wee bairn,—  
What wylie ways she has to learn  
    To hush thy fears ;  
Nae mother's heart, though hard as airn,  
    Stands infant's tears.

Through a' the sunny daylight hours,  
While nursing a' thy opening flowers,  
She bigs thee mony flickered bowers  
    A' glistening green,  
That wyle awa the watery showers  
    Frae thy wee een :

She tends thee through the lang dark nights  
Wi' mony kindly feints an' sleights ;  
Her een wauk up like starry lights  
    Gin thou but sigh,  
Syne wi' a hush she lays thy frights,  
    An' stills thy cry.

There snugly nestling in her breast,  
Thou cuddles in thy cozy nest ;  
When thou art to her bosom prest,  
    Heaven's eye may see  
An image o' its haly rest  
    In her an' thee.

What hopes an' fears, what joys an' woes,  
What happy thoughts, what anxious throes,  
Throughout a mother's bosom glows  
    Through the long eyes,  
While watching thus her infant rose  
    Unfauld its leaves !

Hail ! heavenly Love, thy golden chain,  
That link by link unites the twain,  
Maks sma' the toil, an' great the gain  
    She has to earn,  
While nursing thus wi' heart fou fain  
    Her bonny bairn.



the house. My faither had gottin a hurt at his wark, and was very weak ; my mother sat in the back o' the bed haudin' him up, for he langed for light and air. He stretched out his lang white hand ower the bed, and clappit my head, and tald me to be gude to my mither, and then asked me to say, "The hour o' my departure's come ;" and when I had said the hymn through, he fell back into my mither's arms. The folk rushed to the bed, and I didna ken what was the matter, till some o' the neighbours took me up and kissed me, and ca'd me a faitherless wean, and then I kenned my faither was dead. He was ta'en awa to the burial hole, and I gat a wee black frock and bannet, and my mither aften took me till his grave, till ae day when we gaed we saw't howkit up to mak room for some ither puir bodie, and my mither ne'er could find heart to gang back since."

"Ay," said the Gaberlunzie, "and your grandmother, did she not stop with you at the time your father died ; and how did she behave on that trying occasion ?"

"Ah ! that was indeed a trying time for her, an' the first time e'er a tear had been seen to gather in her ee. When the lave rushed to the bed, she raise frae the laigh seat by the fire, whaur she had been sittin', an' opened the window to allow, as she said, 'the spirit o' her laddie to pass into glory.' She stood gazing into the air for a lang time without speakin' a word ; then she began to sob and sigh in the same way ye saw her when ye came in here first ; then she fell back into the arms o' twa kind neighbours wha were by, striving to comfort her, and the hale house thought she had followed my faither, until, in a short time, as if gifted wi' new life, she sprang up, and tottering to the bed, fell ower the dead body, an' grat like a wean."

"Poor woman," said the Gaberlunzie, "she would feel she had lost her prop and stay, and that all creation was now a blank to her. Your father has been a kind son, and you must follow his example in this, as in other parts of his conduct, which you say your mother has recommended for your imitation. A man with such strong affections as your father must have loved his mother dearly."

"Ay, sir," replied the child, "here is a poem he had made on her when he was young, that my grannie used to carry in her bosom, and still thinks she has it there ; but for fear it should be lost I took it frae her, slipped anither bit paper in its stead,

whilk just does as weel, as she canna see now, and has it a' on her memory ; so ye can tak a glance at it, gin ye please, sir."



### A SONG TO HIS MOTHER.

INE ain wee 'mensefu', mindfu' minny,  
Sae couthy, kindly, cosh, an' canny ;  
Just sit ye still a wee, an' dinna  
Tent your ain callant,  
Until he sketch your picture in a  
Wee hamely ballant.

There sit ye on the creepy stool,  
Weel clad wi' flannel-coat and cowl ;  
While simmering by the chumley jowl  
Sits your teapatty,  
And at your feet wi' kindly yowl,  
Whurrs your wee catty.

The bluid in your auld veins is thin,  
Sair shrivell'd now's your ance plump  
skin ;

Close to the ribs ye hirsle in  
Wi' clochrin' whaizle,  
Till in your cutty pipe ye fin'  
A red-het aizle.

When sunny simmer comes wi' flowers,  
On the door-stap thou sits for hours,  
An' ilka birdie round thee cowers,  
Cock, hen, an' chickens,  
While wi' an open hand thou showers  
Them walth o' pickens.

An' tho' ye now are auld an' doited,  
Your back sair bow'd, your pace sair toytod,  
Langsyne to ilka ploy invited,  
Your queenly air,  
Made a' your neighbour dames sair spited  
At tryst or fair.

On Sunday, when the kirk bell's jow  
 Set lika haly heart alowe,  
 To the auld kirk ye wont to row,  
     Toddlin' wi' me,  
 Aye welcomed by the Elder's bow,  
     An' Pastor's ee.

Thou'st been to me my mair than mither,—  
 Faither and mither baith thegither ;  
 In days o' dearth thou didna swither  
     To scrimp thy coggie,  
 To schule an' cleed as weel's anither,  
     Thy wee wild roguie.

While manhood's vigour nerves my arm,  
 While in my breast life's blood flows warm,  
 Frae ilka danger, skaith, or harm  
     I'll keep thee free,  
 Till death shall break the mystic charm  
     An' close thine ee !

Strong as is the pride and glory of the forest, the knotted oak, with its heart full of spring blood and its boughs laden with life-leaves, the blast that sweeps through the valley rends it up by the roots and lays it prostrate, while the old, stunted, and withered thorn is left to shake and shiver in the breeze. So had the rude spoiler death swept away the pride and glory of the household in his towering strength ; while the poor, aged parent, whom he had vowed to guard from every want and woe, till death had closed her eyes, was left to weep for the loss of her beloved son, and to mourn over his memory. Poor fellow ! sinewy-armed, strong-hearted, and nobly resolved though thou wert, thou wert smitten down in the prime of life, in the full vigour of manhood ! The family altar is laid prostrate ; the hearts of thy mother, wife, and child, are weary and desolate. Thou, their father, priest, and king, hast been removed from the government of thine own little kingdom, and art now a loyal subject in the realms of thy Heavenly King and Father ; yet still thy worshippers continue to worship thy memory with pious veneration ; and perhaps it might have been for the purpose of transferring their affection from earth to heaven that thou

wert thus removed thither before them. Peace to thy manes! thy poverty was of the earth—thy riches are in heaven.

Let no one attempt to undervalue the usefulness of intellectual acquirements to the working-classes, more especially when such acquirements are combined with industrious habits and sound moral principle. The humble author of the preceding poems, who had been unexpectedly and prematurely snatched away from his wife and child, and had left them little more than the pride of honesty, and a few such outpourings of affection as those just quoted, had given them a more glorious patrimony than silver and gold. He had left behind him an honest name, and his widow would have died sooner than have seen a blot on such a noble escutcheon. Hence, although her limited means compelled her to reside in a crowded stair, she kept herself aloof from her neighbours, knowing well the dangers to which youth and beauty are exposed in a city, especially in those crowded districts where poverty and vice have taken up their abode. So great was her care for her child, and so anxious was she to maintain that delicacy of feeling and sentiment which she well knew forms the fairest feature of the female character, that, even in the depths of her distress, she charged her daughter never either to make application for aid to any one, or to ask any money from the hosier in the Luckenbooths who employed them, unless it was in return for work done. Such instances of self-denial are by no means so uncommon as are supposed; and those who have been in the habit of searching for objects of charity, will acknowledge with the Gaberlunzie, that "decent pride can ill stoop to beg; and that mony a desolate widow wad rather dee o' want than let the world ken her necessities."

Having been anxious to keep this little episode of virtuous poverty entire, I owe my readers an apology for omitting to mention, in its proper place, that at an early hour of the morning on which the Gaberlunzie and Pedlar visited this house of woe, the former despatched the latter for a skilful physician, who, after examining the patient, reported that the fever had now taken a favourable turn, and that, if due care were taken, he had little doubt of his ultimate recovery. On the departure of the physician, the Gaberlunzie despatched Peter with a note to Laird Nairn, informing him of the success which was likely to attend his exertions. He however cautioned the Laird against

allowing his impatience to prevail against his better judgment so far as to induce him to expose himself to danger by a premature visit. "The fever was dangerous," he said, "and often fatal, and it would be better for the Laird to remain at home than come near a house the very air of which was contagious." He also stated, that it was not his intention to annoy the sufferer with any questions till he was thoroughly recovered. The least excitement, the physician had informed him, might have a fatal effect; and he had determined not to quit the bedside of the poor patient until he was strong enough to leave the house along with him, when the Laird might expect a visit from himself and the organist. He likewise remarked, that there was little cause for any fear on his own account; that he was well acquainted with suffering in all its forms and all its stages; having been where the sword and pestilence and plague had struck down thousands around him; that it was his firm conviction he lived for a purpose not yet accomplished; and having implicit faith in Providence, he trusted that his life would be spared until that end was attained.

Nairn loaded the messenger who brought him this welcome communication with a whole burden of provisions and cordials, and wrote the Gaberlunzie a note, stating how happy he would be to see him and the fiddler at the Mint, which he trusted they would soon be able to make their home; and, hastily dressing himself, hurried up to the Parliament Close to communicate the agreeable tidings to his esteemed friends and confidential advisers, Mr and Miss Hepburn. As might have been expected, there was great joy manifested in all their honest faces on this occasion,—Matty, who, after the Laird had perused the letter again and again, read it over to herself, at last exclaiming, "Od, he's a queer carle that Gaberlunzie; in my humble opinion, he's mair nor he lets on; he's a kind o' King Jamie in disguise—a real Gaberlunzie. When did ye e'er see a beggar write sic a hand as that?" continued she to Nairn; "look at the lang turns o' his l's, and the squirls o' his b's; he's been weel brought up, an' there's gentle blood in his veins, ye may rely on't."

"Well, madam," said Nairn, "do you know the same thought struck me when I first saw this note? Is it not very strange that both of our heads run so often together, like ponies in harness? You have, however, I must confess, generally the start of me, and make the best leader."

“Ay,” said my uncle, “but baith o’ you would soon fag, gin ye hadna me to drive you; or ye wad rin ower some brae or ither, breaking your ain necks an’ a’ them that risket themsel’s to your care.”

“Hoot awa, Watty, ye’re aye catchin’ up folk afore they fa’; ye dinna think that the Laird means to mak a horse o’ me?”

“Na, na,” said Watty, “or he wadna be lang o’ finding that the gray mare was the better horse.”

“Indeed, Watty,” retorted Matty, “ye maun neither be ower hard on us, nor ower proud o’ your ain driving; mind ye the auld byeword—



“HE RIDES SICKER WHA NEVER FA’S.

“GAE buckle your belt in your ain gude gate,  
 Gae draw your sword in your ain just cause;  
 But sit ye steeve in your saddle seat,—  
 For he rides sicker wha never fa’s.  
 Gae gird ye in armour gleaming bright,  
 And see that your harness be free frae flaws;  
 Ye may show your skill as a daring knight,—  
 But he rides sicker wha never fa’s.



“Then ride ye furth to the battle plain,  
An' seek for fame whaur the trumpet blaws ;  
Ye may prove to yoursel' that match ye've nane,—  
But he rides sicker wha never fa's.  
But gin ye're unhorsed by a stronger loon,  
An' 'mang your girthing lie heads an' thraws,  
Ye'll aiblins think o' the auld warld croon,—  
That he rides sicker wha never fa's.”

For some weeks the Gaberlunzie continued to reside constantly in the sky-cradled attic, attending to the wants, and administering to the comforts, not only of the musician, but of the interesting family whose virtues and necessities he felt to have strong and urgent claims on his benevolence. Every day he discovered some new feature in the character of those around him to elicit his warmest admiration. Here he saw the truth of his favourite motto, which graces the head of this chapter, triumphantly established. Here he had an additional proof, that poverty and vice are not inseparable companions ; and that although the former may at times threaten virtue with extinction, yet by long suffering and patient endurance, the virtuous mind not only overcomes temptation, but is elevated to a position from which it can look proudly down on the vain and gaudy trappings of wealth, and all its tinsel appendages.

With the aid of nutritious food and careful attendance, the widow in a short time recovered sufficiently to be able to assist in administering comfort to the musician, who was soon in a state of convalescence, and gave fair promise of a speedy and entire recovery. Notwithstanding the anxiety of the Gaberlunzie to ascertain the fate of those documents on which the claims of his protégé to the Hepburn estates chiefly rested, he resolved, in accordance with the determination which he had communicated to Nairn, not to ask a single question about them until the object of his attentions should be sufficiently recovered to leave his present residence, and take advantage of Nairn's kind and hospitable invitation.

It may easily be imagined, that during all this time the anxious minds of Hepburn and Nairn were fully occupied with the probable result of this matter. Many of their forenoon and evening sederunts were lengthened by prolix discussions. Many a time and oft did my uncle offer to bet his shop and all

that was in it, against Nairn's old house in the Mint, that the documents were safe, and that all was right; the Laird as often declining the bet, with a desponding shake of the head, and a remark that he was afraid it was all wrong.

"Laird," said Matty, who as usual was present and took part in the discussion, "ye maun be on the right scent. The hand o' Providence is wi' ye. This findin' o' the fiddler's like a miracle, and ye may rely on't bodes weel to the cause o' the bonnie heiress. Od, her vera look, hamely and kindly though it be, is enough to prove her claim in my een."

"Ah!" said Nairn, "but all eyes do not look on objects in the same light. Although Nature herself, in all her moods, is beautiful, still she appears more or less so in proportion as the mind that contemplates her is more or less happy. Creatures of a day, as we are, we often manage to accommodate our principles to our feelings and wishes, believing, at the same time, that we are acting from the purest motives. Hence, there may be other parties, who may find it their interest to adopt a different opinion from you, and to resist all the claims of the person in whose welfare you are so much interested, unless they can be legally established. Law is not synonymous with equity; and if this certificate be not forthcoming, I am afraid that there will be found a link awanting in the chain of evidence, without which her claims will not only be disputed, but be entirely set aside. However, let us hope for the best. Here comes our friend's messenger, and an odd-looking creature he is. Where on earth can the Gaberlunzie have picked him up?"

"Let's sift him," said Matty.

As if anticipating her wishes, and as if prepared to gratify them, Peter entered with a—

"Gude mornin' to ye a'! gude mornin' to ye a'! Ah! this has been a braw mornin' for the craps. Yon was a fine, fat, feeding shower we had last night, and just cam in time to save the grass, that was gettin' like brass wires. Od, I'm growin' as black as a crow wi' the smoke o' this Auld Reekie o' yours, and maun be aff to the country immediately; for my customers will be missing me sair, and I'm grown sae reisted they'll scarcely ken me again."

"What part o' the country do ye generally travel in maist, my man?" inquired Matty.

"Thro' a' parts, mem," replied Peter, "but my favourite spot is the Lang Whang, in the Upper Ward o' Lanarkshire. I'm best kenned, and maybe," he said smiling, "best liket there."

"Ay, I daursay," said my aunt. "Ye seem to be a body wham they may safely place dependence on; ye wad likely get acquainted wi' your freend the Gaberlunzie about that quarter?"

"Ay, mem, it was there whaur I gat acquainted wi' him, an' there whaur I gat my present wee pack, whilk, sma' though it be, cost him some bawbees to stock it. Ae night, about twa years ago, in a snaw storm, I had lost my first pack, and had wandered 'mang wreaths o' snaw for miles, when at length I fell down through the lum o' a farm-house ca'd Kelpie Cleugh, whaur the Gaberlunzie was sitting, an' he took pity on me, and filled my pack, or I might hae been beggin' my bread frae door to door." (Here aunt, uncle, and Nairn exchanged glances with each other, and seemed sufficiently puzzled.)

"Ay, but," said my aunt, "was that no robbin' Peter to pay Paul? Hadna the Gaberlunzie begged himsel' what he gae to you?"

"Na, na, mem," replied Peter, "the Gaberlunzie's nae beggar: he carries a wallet, indeed, but what's in't naebody kens; he ne'er carries awa frae ony house either siller or skran, farther than maybe a daud o' peas-bannock to help him across the Lang Whang, whaur I wish I were again, wi' a' my heart."

"Ay," remarked my aunt, "as you say, ye winna be lang o' getting your ain colour again when ye gang there. The vera heather there has a richer tint o' colour than it has here awa; nae ferlie ye're sic a blooming body. Od ye hae a fine time o't; and ye'll be makin' bawbees too, I'll warrant ye; what do ye deal in?"

"Deed, mem, just odds and ends—what I can afford to keep a sma' stock o'; and what I ken will suit the purses o' my customers. The farmers' daughters and servant lassies buy orra laces an' ribbons frae me; and the herds and farmers' sons buy napkins an' nick-nackets. I could whiles do mair, I think, about the Martinmas and Whitsunday times," he continued, looking into one of the counter glass-cases with a significant glance, "gin I had a sma' stock o' sic articles as ye hae here, but I maun wait till I grow richer."

"Do you do anything in the jewellery way?" inquired my uncle; "you would find it to pay you, I think?"

Peter's eye glistened, nay, his very mouth seemed to water, as he said, with a pawky expression of countenance, "Ah! I wish I were able to buy a sma' stock o' gude jewellery; I wadna langer carry the pinchbeck trash I'm obliged to be doin' wi'. If I had twa or three bits o' rings an' seals, like them that ye hae in your case here, I could sell them amang the country bodies. The lads an' lasses are fond o' things o' that kind, and I think they wad sooner gie me the bawbees than anither."

"I'll caution ye for that, my man," said Matty. "Ye ken how to butter a whitin' to please ony lad or lass among them, or I'm mista'en; and gin ye speak me fair, I'll maybe persuade my brother here to credit ye wi' twa or three o' these bits o' rings an' seals, that your heart an' ee seem sae fixed on."

"He shanna' want that," replied Watty. "Mr Nairn tells me that ye hae a warm heart, and hae shown muckle kindness to the puir bodies our friend the Gaberlunzie's amang; so come ye up afore ye leave the town, and I'll fill ye a wee drawer wi' trinkets that will tak the market; and gin they dinna sell, ye can just return them."

"That is very kind on your part, Walter," said Nairn, "and reminds me of what I owe this young man; you will therefore furnish him with a few good articles of jewellery at my expense. Say not a word," he continued to Peter, who threatened to be somewhat prolix in his expressions of gratitude, "say no more, man, but tell us how your patients are to-day."

"Sae weel," said Peter, "that ye may expect to see the Gaberlunzie an' fiddler the morn. Od, sic twa sib freens I never saw. They're like lad and lass, cracking awa like peaguns a' the hours o' the day an' night; sae quiet they are too, and still; I canna find out what's atween them. Do you ken gin they're kith an' kin?"

"Not I," said Nairn.

"Nor I," said Watty.

"Nor I," said Matty.

"Nor me," sighed Peter.