

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST MEETING WITH CROMEK—LETTER FROM MOLLANCE TO HIS BROTHER JAMES—FIRST INSTALMENT OF THE “REMAINS OF NITHSDALE AND GALLOWAY SONG”—“SHE’S GANE TO DWALL IN HEAVEN”—“BONNIE LADY ANNE”—CROMEK’S LETTERS—LEAVES FOR LONDON.

IN the summer of 1809, Mr. Cromek, a London engraver, and a great enthusiast in antiquarian lore, paid a visit to Dumfriesshire in the company of Mr Stothard, the celebrated landscape artist. “The object of their joint-visit,” says Mr. Peter Cunningham in his introduction to an edition of his father’s Poems and Songs, “was the collection of materials and drawings for an enlarged and illustrated edition of the Works of Burns.” Mr. Cromek had published, a few years before, a supplemental volume to Currie’s edition of the Works, and, pleased with the success of the “Reliques” (so the volume was entitled), was preparing for publication, at the same time, a select Collection of Scottish Songs, with the notes and memoranda of Burns, and such additional materials as his own industry could bring together.

“Mr. Cromek brought a letter of introduction to my father from Mrs. Fletcher, of Edinburgh, herself a poetess, and the friend of Sir Walter Scott and Campbell. A similarity of pursuits strengthened their acquaintance; their

talk was all about Burns, the old Border Ballads, and the Jacobite Songs of '15 and '45. Cromek found his young friend, then a stonemason earning eighteen shillings a-week, well versed in the poetry of his country, with a taste naturally good, and an extent of reading, for one in his condition, really surprising. Stothard, who had a fine feeling for poetry, was equally astonished.

“In one of their conversations on modern Scottish Song, Cromek made the discovery that the Dumfries mason on eighteen shillings a-week was himself a poet. Mrs. Fletcher may have told him as much, but I never heard that she did; this, however, is immaterial. Cromek, in consequence of this discovery, asked to see some of his ‘effusions’; they were shown to him; and at their next meeting he observed, as I have heard my father tell with great good humour, imitating Cromek’s manner all the while, ‘Why, sir, your verses are well, very well; but no one should try to write songs after Robert Burns, unless he could either write like him or some of the old minstrels.’ The disappointed poet nodded assent, changed the subject of conversation, and talked about the old songs and fragments of songs still to be picked up among the peasantry of Nithsdale. ‘Gad, sir!’ said Cromek, ‘if we could but make a volume—gad, sir!—see what Percy has done, and Ritson, and Mr. Scott, more recently, with his *Border Minstrelsy*.’ The idea of a volume of imitations passed upon Cromek as genuine remains flashed across the poet’s mind in a moment, and he undertook at once to put down what he knew, and set about collecting all that could be picked up in Nithsdale and Galloway. Cromek foresaw a volume of genuine verse, and entered keenly into the idea of the Nithsdale and Galloway publication. A few fragments were soon submitted. ‘Gad, sir! these are the things;’ and, like Polyphemus, he cried for

more. 'More, give me more; this is divine!' He never suspected a cheat, or, if at all, not at this time."

O! Allan, shall we call you *honest* Allan any more? thus to play upon the credulity of one who was so enthusiastic in his admiration of your own national poet, and who desired to save from oblivion the remains of the minstrelsy of your own native dale. Still, Burns confesses that he did something of the same kind with some of the same songs which he contributed to Johnson's Museum. He gave them to the world as old verses, to their respective tunes, while, in fact, little more than the chorus was ancient, though, he said, there was no reason to give any one that piece of intelligence. Motherwell also did the same thing, when he published in the "Harp of Renfrewshire" his "Cavalier's Song," commencing with the lines—

"A steed, a steed of matchlesse speede!
A sword of metal keene!"

and prefaced it by saying—"The following lines are written, in an old hand, in a copy of Lovelace's *Lucaste*, London, 1679," while all the time it was an original composition of his own, after the antique manner in phraseology and spelling. Now, though two blacks, or rather three, don't make a white, we mention this merely to show that Cunningham was not alone in this kind of literary imposition, or mystification, or by whatever euphemism it may be characterized. We have no doubt that this meeting with Cromek gave a stimulus to his muse, to carry out the project he had

so suddenly and secretly devised, and we can easily account for the "eleven split new songs" referred to in the following letter to his brother James, from Mollance, near Castle-Douglas:—

" Mollance, 3rd August, 1809.

" My dear James,—I have been 'holding high converse' in the path of song since I saw you. I have composed eleven 'split new ones,' one of which I have enclosed. Want of time prevents me from sending more, which I deem of superior worth. I have no place to compose my mind in, but in the Babelonian slang of tongues which compose a workman's kitchen. I am, however, much at my ease, and comparatively serious! I hope my sister-in-law is quite well, and my young namesake. I do not know when I will see you, probably not these six weeks.

" I am begun to my old trade of building whinstone. We have had an untoward time of it, working away late and hard. I care not much for hard work, but I meet it with unconcern. I see my lot is predestinated, and I cannot deviate from the path laid out for me. So, welcome labour, welcome toil, divine heaven sends them! I had better have a contented and easy mind although my carcass be wrapped in 'Muirland raploch, heplock plaiden,' than have an unquiet heart pranked out in superfine linetorum. Is not my idea good? Were a better plan to cast up I should accept of it; if not, let me be humbly wise.—With my kind respects to my sister-in-law, to my mother, to Peter, and all the rest, I remain, dear James, your affectionate brother, while

" ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

" Mr. James Cunningham, Dalswinton."

Mr. Cromek had not long returned home when he wrote to Cunningham on the subject which was so entirely engrossing his head and heart. His first communication was, "How are you getting on with your collection? Don't be in a hurry. I think between us we shall make a most interesting book." In reply to this Cunningham sent the first instalment of the so-called Remains, entirely an imitation only, but a very fine one, of the old ballad style:—

"SHE'S GANE TO DWALL IN HEAVEN.

"She's gane to dwell in heaven, my lassie,
 She's gane to dwell in heaven;
 Ye're owre pure, quo' the voice o' God,
 For dwelling out o' heaven!

"O what'll she do in heaven, my lassie?
 O what'll she do in heaven?
 She'll mix her ain thoughts wi' angels' sangs,
 An' make them mair meet for heaven.

"She was beloved by a', my lassie,
 She was beloved by a';
 But an angel fell in love wi' her,
 An' took her frae us a'.

"Lowly there thou lies, my lassie,
 Lowly there thou lies;
 A bonnier form ne'er went to the yird,
 Nor frae it will arise!

"Fu' soon I'll follow thee, my lassie,
 Fu' soon I'll follow thee;
 Thou left me nought to covet ahin',
 But tuke gudeness sel' wi' thee.

“ I looked on thy death-cold face, my lassie,
I looked on thy death-cold face;
Thou seemed a lily new cut in the bud,
An’ fading in its place.

“ I looked on thy death-shut eye, my lassie,
I looked on thy death-shut eye;
An’ a lovelier light in the brow of heaven,
Fell Time shall ne’er destroy.

“ Thy lips were ruddy and calm, my lassie, ,
Thy lips were ruddy and calm;
But gane was the holy breath o’ heaven
That sang the Evening Psalm.

“ There’s nought but dust now mine, lassie,
There’s nought but dust now mine;
My soul’s wi’ thee i’ the cauld grave,
An’ why should I stay behin’ !”

This very beautiful imitation of the ancient ballad was despatched to London, we have no doubt, with a feeling of pride, but, at the same time, we are certain, with a consciousness of trembling and fear on the part of the author as to the future success of the work, and the risk he ran of having his imposition discovered. Had it been for a song or two, or even half a dozen, but a whole volume of contraband lyrics was not a “consummation devoutly to be wished,” and we cannot therefore do otherwise than believe that it was with some misgiving that the first song was transmitted to London. Whether this was so or not, it was speedily succeeded by the following ballad:—

" BONNIE LADY ANNE.

" There's kames o' hinney 'tween my love's lips,
 An' gowd amang her hair,
 Her breasts are lapt in a holie veil:
 Nae mortal een keek there.
 What lips dare kiss, or what hand dare touch,
 Or what arm o' love can span,
 The hinney lips, the creamy loof,
 Or the waist o' Lady Anne?

" She kisses the lips o' her bonnie red rose,
 Wat wi' the blobs o' dew;
 But gentle lip, nor semple lip,
 Maun touch her lady mou';
 But a broider'd belt wi' a buckle o' gowd,
 Her jimpy waist maun span—
 Oh, she's an armfu' fit for heaven,
 My bonnie Lady Anne!

" Her bower easement is latticed wi' flowers,
 Tied up with silver thread,
 An' comely sits she in the midst,
 Men's longing een to feed.
 She waves the ringlets frae her cheek,
 Wi' her milky, milky han',
 An' her cheeks seem touch'd wi' the finger o' God,
 My bonnie Lady Anne!

" The morning cloud is tass'd wi' gowd,
 Like my love's broider'd eap;
 An' on the mantle which my love wears,
 Is mony a gowden drap.
 Her bonnie eebree's a holie arch,
 Cast by nae earthly han',
 An' the breath o' heaven's atween the lips
 O' my bonnie Lady Anne!

"I am her father's gard'ner lad,
 An' poor, poor is my fa';
 My auld mither gets my sair-won fee,
 Wi' fatherless bairnies twa;
 But my Lady comes, my Lady goes,
 Wi' a fou' an' a kindly han';
 Oh, the blessing o' God maun mix wi' my love,
 An' fa' on Lady Anne!"

In a note to this ballad it is said that there is a variation in the last verse well worth preserving. Indeed, a deal of unseemly chaff had intermixed with the heavy grain, which has cost a little winnowing and sieving.

"I am her daddie's gardener lad,
 An' poor, poor is my fa';
 My auld mither gets my sair-won fee,
 Wi' fatherless bairns twa.
 My een are bauld, they dwell on a place
 Where I darena' mint my han',
 But I water, and tend, and kiss the flowers
 O' my bonnie Lady Anne."

The enterprize on which Cunningham had ventured was not only in a moral point of view daring, but it was also one attended with considerable difficulty and hazard. He had undertaken to furnish a number of ancient ballads, sufficient to make a volume, collected in the districts of Nithsdale and Galloway, but he knew they were to be the productions of his own brain, from such traditional snatches as were floating about, and some of them not even that; and as his only time for composition was limited, even were the Muse willing, which it was possible might not always be the case, his engage-

ment might, therefore, fail. Besides, he might infer, from the enthusiasm which his friend Cromeck had shown in the matter, that it would not be long ere a demand would be made upon his poetic resources. This consideration might have upset the nerves of many a more highly gifted and experienced poet than he was at the time, still he never flinched, but set himself with all ardour to the work, building by day, and writing far into the night, or rather the morning, till he got so far ahead that final success appeared to him certain.

If he sent off the foregoing pseudo-antique specimens to his London friend, with a feeling of doubt and hesitancy, not only as to their reception, but also as to the propriety of the act, we may be certain that he awaited with great anxiety the nature of the verdict which would be pronounced upon them. He had not, however, long to wait in suspense. On their receipt, Mr. Cromeck wrote back in the most grateful and glowing terms, acknowledging the arrival of the valuable treasures he had secured, at the same time making some critical comments on certain words and phrases which they contained, showing that he was by no means an incompetent judge, and that he was well versed in ancient ballad lore. In the course of correspondence he occasionally put to his Nithsdale friend certain interrogatories which could not be very agreeable in the position assumed as a hunter of poetic relics, such as the one inquiring what the fragment of "A Tocher" was extracted from, and again earnestly requesting the names of the poets which Nithsdale and Galloway had produced. These were trying questions, and as a

“Don’t remember” might have aroused suspicion, it is probable that the answering of them was considered “more honoured in the breach than in the observance.” Here is Mr. Cromek’s acknowledgment of the first instalment:—

“64 Newman Street, 27th October, 1809.

“Thank you, very, very kindly, my good Allan, for your interesting letter, and the very fine poem it contained. Your *short* but *sweet* criticism on this wonderful performance supercedes the necessity of my saying a word more in its praise. I must, however, just remark that I do not know anything more touching, more simply pathetic, in the whole range of Scottish song. Pray, what d’ye think of its age? I am of opinion, from the *dialect*, that it is the production of a Border minstrel, though not of one who has ‘full *ninety* winters seen.’

“In *old* ballads *abstract ideas* are rarely meddled with— an old minstrel would not have personified ‘Gudeness,’ nor do I think he would have used compound epithets, ‘death-cold,’ ‘death-shut ee,’ &c.; much less would he have introduced the epithet ‘calm’ as it is applied in this song. A bard of the olden time would have said *a calm sea, a calm night*, and such like.

“The epithet ‘Fell’ (‘Fell Time’ in the last line of the 7th verse) is a word almost exclusively used by *mere* cold-blooded *classic* poets, not by the poets of nature, and it certainly has crept into the present song through the ignorance of reciters. We *must* remove it, and its removal must *not* be mentioned. We’ll bury it ‘in the family vault of all the Capulets.’

“‘Ye’re ower pure’—I do not recollect the word pure in

old, or, indeed, in modern Scotch ballads; but it may pass muster. I have read these verses to my old mother, my wife, sister, and family, till *all our hearts ache*.

“The last verse of ‘Bonnie Lady Anne’ contains a fine sentiment.

“The Jacobite Songs will be a great acquisition. I am pretty sure that among us we shall produce a book of consequence and interest. I have now arranged the plan of publication. I shall place Burns and his remarks, with the songs remarked on, at the front of the battle. These Songs will afford hints for many notes, &c. You and I will then come forward with our budget in an appendix, introduced with some remarks on Scottish Song, which *I much wish* you would try your hand at. I think you will succeed in this much better than myself. I would then conclude the book with a selection of principally old songs and ballads, from Johnson’s ‘Musical Museum.’ This selection will consist of about five-and-twenty or thirty of the best songs, which lay buried alive amid the rubbish of that heterogeneous mass.

“Speaking of the ‘Museum,’ I hope you will receive safe a copy of this work, six volumes, which I have got bound for you. The ‘Museum’ has become scarce since I published the ‘Reliques.’ Do me the favour to accept of these books, which I send under the full persuasion that to *you* they will be a mine of wealth.

“Your brother (Thomas) dined with us on the Sunday before last. He is a very good fellow. He desired me to remind you of an old woman, living (I hope) at Kirkbean, ‘ycleped *Margaret Corson*.’ She has, or had, a budget filled with songs. If you see her, ask her for what she may happen to recollect of an old fragment beginning—

‘D’ye mind, d’ye mind, Lady Margery,
When we handed round the wine,’ &c.

“From this woman you may also learn many particulars respecting ‘Mary’s Dream,’ and its author. If she lives at any distance, hire a horse and ride at my expense as boldly as ‘Muirland Willie,’ when he went a-courting. Pray get what you can from her respecting the history of this song and its author.

“My family beg their kindest wishes. Whether my wife will be able to welcome you to London *in broad Scots* I cannot tell; this I will venture to say for her, that she, as well as all of us, will welcome you in the simple old style language of the heart.

“On the subject of your *crossing the Sark* I will write fully in my next. At all events the spring must introduce *you* with other *wild* flowers to the notice of my London friends.

“I was glad to find you were pleased with the present of the song (‘The Blue-Eyed Lass’), in Burns’ handwriting. You may safely consider yourself a favourite to receive such a thing from *me*, I can assure you. Remember me very kindly at home. God bless you.

“R. H. CROMEK.

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“I begin to feel anxious to see what you have done. I beg of you to take a week from your employer, and sit down leisurely to the papers; for which *week* I will send you, by Johnson’s next parcel, a £2 note, with this old proverb as an apology for so doing, ‘He may well swim that has his head hadden up.’

“Adieu again,

“R. H. C.

“Mr. Allan Cunningham.”

Mr. Cromek is now more urgent than ever for Cunningham's departure to London, and even fixes the very time when he must appear in the great metropolis. His letter on that point is very jubilant, and must have greatly influenced the young stonemason in taking such an important step. Still we cannot help thinking that in the mind of Cunningham, from his careful moral training at home, and his regular observance of public religious ordinances after leaving his father's roof, there must have been a little misgiving as to what might be the result of this daring speculation. What if his so-called ancient ballads should be discovered by London critics to be spurious, mere imitations, and an imposition be charged upon him! Where could he hide his head, and would not his endeavours after literary fame be quenched, in so far as moral principle was concerned! Something of this sort must doubtless have passed through his mind ere the great undertaking was finally resolved on. But Mr. Cromek is urgent for him to go, and, besides, he has promised to use all his influence to obtain for him some permanent situation of emolument; a promise, however, which was not fulfilled, from some cause or another:—

“Friday, 27th January, 1810.

“My dear Allan,—While I recollect, I will tell you that I shall not put the Nithsdale Ballads to press till I am able to announce to Great Britain the arrival of your worship in the Metropolis, which I hope will be soon. You must be here by the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd of April or so. We will then sit

down and make a good book. I have arranged the materials already come to hand, and have written several *spruce* notes. I am absolutely dying to see 'Billy Blin,' and his many companions. 'The Lass of Inverness' is quite lovely. When you are here I will point out to you the beauty of these things as I feel them.

"The fragment of 'A Tocher' is curious and interesting. What is it extracted from? The History of the Pipers will tell well. As you say, 'Notices Concerning By-past Manners' are valuable. 'The Border Minstrelsy' hath scarcely any other merit. 'Muirland Willie' is *braw*. The picture of the Country Ale-House is so faithful that it might be painted from. Thank you for it very kindly. 'Maggie Lauder' will do *fine*. 'Blythsome Bridal'—sensible observant remarks. I envy you the sight of Lady Nithsdale's letter—pray steal it. At all events mark its date, and compare it with the printed copy, but don't talk about it, and inform me who possesses it. Let me have the History of the Fairies of Nithsdale and Galloway, and the Brownie. Adieu, my good friend, in great haste, your sincere

"R. H. C.

"Mr. Allan Cunningham."

[No date.]

"Pray what are the names of the poets Nithsdale and Galloway have produced?"

"I shall introduce 'Bothwell Bank' as the production of a friend, and you may claim it; but say nothing about it till it appears and you will hear it remarked on. It is too good to be thrown away; you must have it.

"Since I wrote the above, I have read your 'Bothwell Bank'

to Mr. Stothard. He is delighted with it. His taste is perfect. He wishes me to allow it to be shown to Mr. Rogers, the author of the 'Pleasures of Memory,' which I shall do. Adieu.

"R. H. CROMEK.

"Mr. Allan Cunningham."

"64 Newman Street, 8th Feb., 1810.

"I congratulate you very sincerely, my dear Allan, on the *good things* your two last contained. Your 'Brownie' is very fine. Something near the outline of your story Scott had picked up, but yours is so *rich* and *full* that I do not think it worth while, when I print it, to give the reader notice of any resemblance. I have now a clear ken of a *curious* book, on which we can pride ourselves, notwithstanding much *criticism*, which I plainly see it will get. I have got a famous motto for the book—Remains of *Nithsdale* and *Galloway* Song; with Historical and Traditional Notices relative to the Manners and Customs of the Peasantry, now first published by *R. H. Cromek*.

'We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its LEGEND or its SONG:
All silent now.'

"The variations of 'Tibbie Fowler' are very good, and the Notices also. From the specimen you have given in your 'Brownie,' I have every hope, from your other characteristic Tales, they will do wonders for our Ballads. I think you show the richness and pleasantry of your genius in these stories as much as in any sort of composition.

“ Do let us see you as *early in April* as you can. I think it would be best to go to Leith, and thence by sea to London; but more of this in due time. You may return by Liverpool when you do return.

“ I have engaged a scribe to make a fair copy of the materials for our volume, with the various notes, &c., in their proper places. Let me remind you not to forget the games of ‘*England and Scotland*,’ &c., &c.—there is no haste for them. As to the *Cutty Stool*, I don’t know if it would be *politically* good to write about it; if I should, I shall do it with a ‘noble daring.’ I fear I am not sufficiently *familiar* with it to do it justice. Try *your hand*, *i.e.*, if you think it worth shot. What a grand thing in the hands of Burns!

“ I beg you will not be afraid your communications will swell my volume too much: even a *small* volume has a *great* swallow. Did I ever ask you to write six lines (when I say *six* I only mean that number) of introduction to the old ballad, ‘The Wife of Auchtermuchty!’ It is a fine thing, and I wish to use it.

“ I beg of you not to approach me without some *Relique* of Burns. The plough that he turned up the mouse’s nest with *will do*, or if you can trace any of the descendants of his ‘Mountain Daisy,’ bring one in the button-hole of your coat, or *his* ox, or his ass, OR ANY THING THAT WAS HIS.—Adieu, very sincerely, your affectionate friend,

“ R. H. CROMEK.

“ As to Burns’ Apostrophe to old and forgotten Bards, it is exquisitely beautiful and tender. I do not think it would do as a motto, because, if you *reason* on the effect produced on your feelings, you will find that much of its beauty arises

from the circumstance of so great a poet as Burns himself sympathising with those sons of genius. Coming from a mere editor, the effect would be considerably diminished.

“ Mr. Allan Cunningham.”

“ 64 Newman Street, 22nd Feb., 1810.

“ My dear Allan,—I have got safe your last, containing the account of the Cutty Stool. Though ‘rude and rough,’ yet it is ‘ready-witted,’ and exceedingly to my wishes and purpose. I have been rewriting, and I hope you will think well of what I have done. I *think* I have given *still more* vigour to the strong parts. I have heightened the *pathos*, and I have aimed at a burst of eloquent indignation. But you shall see it and judge for yourself. I say you shall see it, because I have the work fairly transcribed, and I mean to indulge your longing een with a sight of this precious volume by Johnson’s next parcel. But, except your own, take care no *mortal eyes keek in*. However, in this act as you think fit, only BE CAUTIOUS not to divulge the *secrets* of the PRISON HOUSE. I shall send you the book, because you will then see my plan, and you may suggest hints of improvement, such as we further want in illustration.

“ You will see that I have enriched the text wherever I could by notes, and I have connected my remarks with the text, and this incorporation will preserve whatever consequence and value they may have. I regret that the notice of ‘Brownie’ must appear in a note, but it cannot be helped, it is too curious and novel to be overlooked, even by the most indolent reader. You will see we want the *sports* and *pastimes* alluded to in some of the poetry, and the Life of Lowe (author of ‘Mary’s Dream’), but if you have the materials, bring them with you, and write the descriptions here.

“The Cutty Stool you have done with *great ability*. I want a short notice of your lassie, which I will introduce by way of note to the bottom of the ballad of ‘Derwentwater.’ As to Lady Nithsdale’s letter, I hope you have not been at the trouble of copying it, as I have got from Edinburgh the number of the *Scots Magazine* in which it originally appeared. I only wish you to compare a printed copy with the manuscript, and mark the difference, if any. I want the date of it and the direction.

“You have not yet informed me of the authority on which you found the interesting anecdote of Murray’s treachery. It is absolutely necessary. When you have read this book I shall be miserable if it is not to your taste. It *must* excite much curiosity. I have a notion it will prove a precious crust for the critics.

“God bless you, my dear friend.

“R. H. CROMEK.

“Mr. Allan Cunningham.”

“22nd March, 1810.

“My dear Allan,—As the booksellers are *determined* to put our Nithsdale book *immediately* to the press, I write to beg that, if it suit you, you will set off as soon as possible. You *must* ‘buckle an’ come away.’ Pray send me the book by the *very first* mail, and ‘*taking the beuk*’ with it.

“Mr. Grahame, the author of ‘The Sabbath,’ is in town. His opinion is high indeed of the volume; it will do us all good, I hope. Write to me by return of post if you can, if but a line, and say when you think you will leave Scotland; at all events forward the book. The verses on Cowehill will be a great acquisition, from what you say of them.

“I am not angry with the booksellers for their resolute conduct; on the contrary, I think the sooner the volume is

out the better. Indeed, if it is not ready in two months, the season, as it is called, will be lost.—God bless you with all my heart.

“ R. H. C.

“ Mr. Allan Cunningham.”

“ 28th March, 1810.

“ My dear Allan,—I have received by this day’s mail the welcome news of your intended departure from Dumfries. My family rejoice most heartily with me. The firing of the Park and Tower guns, announcing a grand victory, would not have interested any of us *half as much*. I am very glad you showed the volume to Mrs. Copeland and her niece, and, from what you say, I am also happy that the printing has only just begun, and shall stop the press till I see you. I hope to receive the volume by to-morrow’s mail, and, be assured, I shall hold your pencil-marks most sacred.

“ One of the luckiest things that could have happened was the late visit from Mr. Grahame. The work will derive infinite advantage from his remarks. He augurs it a most warm reception from the public. But when you come, and when we lay our heads together, I am certain several things will be added, and others materially improved.

“ Now for your *amphibious* journey. I advise you not to stop at Edinburgh at all, and, as I know you will take this counsel, I have not enclosed a letter—except, on second thoughts, you *must* call for a moment on Mrs. Fletcher; and in case she should not be in town, and to guard against the carelessness of servants, write your name on a slip of paper, and leave it, with the message—that you were passing through Edinburgh to London. If you see her, say you are coming to me on a visit, and make my kindest respects to her. Then proceed to Leith, and stay all night in an inn—don’t

attempt to come in any part of the ship but the principal cabin on *any account*. I mention this, because, from some mistaken idea of saving a guinea, you may suffer much personal inconvenience. Keep as much on the deck as possible.

“ R. H. C.

“ Mr. Allan Cunningham.”

There is something warmly affectionate in the instructions and advice here given with reference to the voyage, and one's heart gratefully reciprocates the sentiments of kindness expressed towards the aspiring poetic Scotchman. Having always had a hankering after literature, and for some time back having cherished a desire to substitute mental for manual labour, he was the more easily persuaded to accept the invitation by the pleasing prospect which Mr. Cromek held out, and to try the great metropolis as a field for fortune and fame. He accordingly began to make preparations for leaving, amid the remonstrances of friends, and their admonitions on the folly of surrendering a present good for an uncertain future. They urged the dangerous tendency of a great city's temptations to lead the inexperienced astray; the difficulty of a stranger finding employment where thousands of native citizens could scarcely sustain life; and, lastly, the cutting off, as it were, by distance, all connection with kindred and home. But their efforts to restrain him were of no avail. Go he would.

When his arrangements were completed he took a temporary farewell of the lass o' Preston Mill, turned

his back upon Nithsdale, upon kith and kin, and bade his native land adieu! He was to sail from the port of Leith, the usual and most convenient mode of transit in those days, especially when anything in the shape of luggage had to be taken along. Having arrived there, and, being on the point of starting, an affectionate "Good-bye" was accorded him by comrades and friends. He himself thus describes the scene:—

"The hour of fame and distinction seemed, in my sight, at hand. I turned my eyes on London, and closed them on all places else. In vain my friends urged me to study architecture, and apply the talent, &c., &c. . . . On my way to the pier of Leith I met one of my old Edinburgh comrades, Charlie Stevenson by name, who was rejoiced to see me, and tried, over 'a pint of the best o't,' to persuade me to become his partner in the erection of two houses in the New Town, by which he showed me we should clear, by the end of the season, a hundred pounds each. I declined his kind offer. 'If,' I said, 'undertakings of that nature could have influenced me, I need not have left Dumfries, where, with certainty of success, I might either have begun business for myself, or been admitted into partnership with my masters, who would have been glad both of my skill and my connection. So I parted with worthy Charlie Stevenson, and committed myself to the waves in one of the Leith smacks, bound for London. Several of my comrades from the Vale of Nith, then at the University, waved me from the pier, and away I went, with groves of laurels rustling green before me, and fame and independence, I nothing doubted, ready to welcome me to that great city which annually swallows up so many high hopes and enthusiastic spirits."

Good-bye, for the present, Allan Cunningham, we shall soon meet again in the new field of your operations. Remember and act up to what you said some four years ago, in a letter to your parish minister, the good Mr. Wightman of Kirkmahoe, when you were giving an account of how you spent your time, and asking his advice for the future—"After returning thanks to God for my preservation, I retire to the embraces of sleep, and rise with a cheerful mind, judging it part of my tribute to my Maker. An honest and cheerful heart is almost all my stock. I fervently adhere to truth, and, to close all, I have an independent mind." Adieu! we shall soon meet again in the great metropolis.