

## CHAPTER XIV.

PUBLISHES TWO VOLUMES OF TALES—SONG, “THE FAIRY OAK OF CORRIE-WATER”—ANECDOTE OF CUNNINGHAM ON FAIRY MYTHOLOGY—SONG, “LADY SELBY”—ESSAY ON BURNS AND BYRON, A CONTRAST.

DURING the same year which brought his tragedy to the light he published, in two volumes, “Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry,” which had all, with one exception, previously appeared in the *London Magazine*. He had been urgently persuaded to collect them, make such alterations as he thought might improve them, and send them forth to the public in a permanent form. In making the announcement of their forthcoming publication to his brother James, he says:—“I cannot anticipate what their success may be, but I shall be satisfied with little, as the fire-edge has been taken off them already, and they cannot have the charm of novelty. In the drama I have made some amendments, and I am pleased to find that its reception has been so very favourable—indeed, the songs have obtained more notice than I had any reason to hope. . . . I am exceedingly busy in the way of my business, and can hardly call an hour of the day my own. I have some hopes of lessening this regular pressure of labour, for my health has never been very flourishing here, and the study which my little intercourse with the Press requires increases the trouble. I

know not how my present endeavours may end, but I am labouring to insure some relaxation of bodily exertion, and my future comfort." He was no doubt the more anxious about the success of his publications as his family was increasing, London living was expensive, and for school fees alone for his three boys he was paying thirty guineas a-year.

These tales are very interestingly narrated, brimful of description, and are freely interspersed with songs of varied measure and tone. They are sixteen in all, one of them extending over three parts. Of the Scottish tales, "Ezra Peden," a Presbyterian minister, and the "Placing of a Scottish Minister," perhaps verge a little too close on exaggeration, if not caricature, but a general idea may be obtained from them of what took place in olden times in connection with the kirk. Many customs now fallen into desuetude, and some altogether forgotten are there described with the vividness of one who had been an eye-witness of all that occurred. The minister's man in those days seems to have been an important personage, and performed a work in a small way something akin to that of the pioneers of Christianity into Scotland. "He contented himself with swelling the psalm into something like melody on Sunday, visiting the sick as a forerunner of his master's approach, and pouring forth prayers and graces at burials and banquetings as long and dreary as a hill sermon. He looked on the minister as something superior to man; a being possessed by a divine spirit, and he shook his head with all its silver hairs, and uttered a gentle groan or two, during some of the more

rapt and glowing passages of Ezra's sermons." Such was the minister's man in the days of old.

"The Placing of a Scottish Minister" refers undoubtedly to an ordination in Newabbey, in the Presbytery of Dumfries, when the assistance of the military required to be called in to effect the settlement. The minister was hooted, hissed, and pelted with mud, by a refractory people, who were indignant and furious because by the law of Patronage they had no voice in the choosing of their pastor. We have reason to believe that the narrative is a true description of what occurred on the occasion, and is therefore historical. Of course fictitious names are given, but the whole story is too strongly marked to be mistaken. Perhaps the most amusing and popular tale of the whole is "Elphin Irving, the Fairies' Cup-bearer." The scene is laid in a romantic vale in Annandale, and Elphin was taken away by the Fairy Queen, to be retained in her service for a term of seven years, his remuneration to be a kiss of her own sweet lips at the end of that period. His sister Phemie Irving was desirous to win him back, and one night, at a great gathering of the Fairies on Corriewater, she attempted the rescue, but failed at a certain stage of the procedure. The story bears a strong resemblance to young Tamlane, only it had a different result. It contains the following song:—

“THE FAIRY OAK OF CORRIEWATER.

“The small bird's head is under its wing,  
The deer sleeps on the grass;  
The moon comes out, and the stars shine down,  
The dew gleams like the glass:

There is no sound in the world so wide,  
 Save the sound of the smitten brass,  
 With the merry cittern and the pipe  
 Of the fairies as they pass.  
 But, oh! the fire maun burn and burn,  
 And the hour is gone, and will never return.

“The green hill cleaves, and forth, with a bound,  
 Come elf and elfin steed;  
 The moon dives down in a golden cloud,  
 The stars grow dim with dread;  
 But a light is running along the earth,  
 So of heaven’s they have no need:  
 O’er moor and moss with a shout they pass,  
 And the word is spur and speed:  
 But the fire maun burn, and I maun quake,  
 And the hour is gone that will never come back.

“And when they came to Craigyburn-wood,  
 The Queen of the fairies spoke:  
 ‘Come bind your steeds to the rushes so green,  
 And dance by the haunted oak:  
 I found the acorn on Heshbon Hill,  
 In the nook of a palmer’s poke,  
 A thousand years since; here it grows!’  
 And they danced till the greenwood shook:  
 But, oh! the fire, the burning fire,  
 The longer it burns it but blazes the higher.

“‘I have won me a youth,’ the elf Queen said,  
 ‘The fairest that earth may see;  
 This night I have won young Elph Irving  
 My cup-bearer to be.  
 His service lasts but for seven sweet years,  
 And his wage is a kiss of me.’  
 And merrily, merrily, laughed the wild elves  
 Round Corrie’s greenwood tree:  
 But, oh! the fire it glows in my brain,  
 And the hour is gone, and comes not again.

“The Queen she has whispered a secret word,  
 ‘Come hither, my Elphin sweet,  
 And bring that cup of the charmed wine,  
 Thy lips and mine to weet.’  
 But a brown elf shouted a loud, loud shout,  
 ‘Come, leap on your coursers fleet,  
 For here comes the smell of some baptized flesh,  
 And the sounding of baptized feet:’  
 But, oh! the fire that burns, and maun burn,  
 For the time that is gone will never return.

“On a steed as white as the new-milked milk,  
 The elf Queen leaped with a bound,  
 And young Elphin a stud like December snow  
 ’Neath him at the word he found.  
 But a maiden came, and her christened arms  
 She linked her brother around,  
 And called on God, and the steed with a snort  
 Sank into the gaping ground:  
 But the fire maun burn, and I maun quake,  
 And the time that is gone will no more come back.

“And she held her brother, and lo! he grew  
 A wild bull waked in ire;  
 And she held her brother, and lo! he changed  
 To a river roaring higher;  
 And she held her brother, and he became  
 A flood of raging fire;  
 She shrieked and sank, and the wild elves laughed  
 Till mountain rang and mire:  
 But, oh! the fire yet burns in my brain,  
 And the hour is gone, and comes not again.

“O maiden, why waxed thy faith so faint,  
 Thy spirit so slack and slaw?  
 Thy courage kept good till the flame waxed wud,  
 Then thy might began to thaw;  
 Had ye kissed him with thy christened lip,  
 Ye had won him frae ‘mang us a.’



Now bless the fire, the elfin fire,  
 That made thee faint and fa';  
 Now bless the fire, the elfin fire,  
 The longer it burns it blazes the higher."

Cunningham had a strong regard for the belief in the "Fairy Folk," as it enabled him to exercise his luxuriant fancy at will. The following anecdote is told of him on the subject. "Do you believe in fairies, Mac?" he said to a Celtic acquaintance one day in the course of conversation. "Deet, I'm no ferry shure," was the characteristically cautious reply of the mountaineer; "but do you pelieve in them your nainsel, Mister Kinnikum?" "I once did," said the burly poet, "and would to God I could do so still! for the woodland and the moor have lost for me a great portion of their romance, since my faith in their existence has departed." He then quoted the following lines from Campbell's address to the Rainbow:—

" When Science from Creation's face  
 Enchantment's veil withdraws,  
 What lovely visions yield their place  
 To cold material laws!"

Another poetic piece is worth extracting from these interesting volumes. The "Selbys of Cumberland" is the most imposing of the tales, and is written at greater length and in higher language than most of the others. As the song is complete in itself, it is unnecessary to give any summary or explanation of the story, which could scarcely be done in moderate space with anything like satisfaction:—

## "LADY SELBY.

" On the holly tree sat a raven black,  
And at its foot a lady fair  
Sat singing of sorrow, and shedding down  
The tresses of her nut-brown hair:  
And aye as that fair dame's voice awoke,  
The raven broke in with a chorusing croak.

" ' The steeds they are saddled on Derwent banks;  
The banners are streaming so broad and free;  
The sharp sword sits at each Selby's side,  
And all to be dyed for the love of me:  
And I maun give this lily-white hand  
To him who wields the wightest brand.'

" She coost her mantle of satin so fine,  
She kilted her gown of the deep-sea green,  
She wound her locks round her brow and flew  
Where the swords were glimmering sharp and sheen:  
As she flew, the trumpet awoke with a clang,  
And the sharp blades smote, and the bow-strings sang.

" The streamlet that ran down the lonely vale,  
Aneath its banks, half seen, half hid,  
Seemed melted silver—at once it came down  
From the shocking of horsemen—recking and red;  
And that lady flew—and she uttered a cry,  
As the riderless steeds came rushing by.

" And many have fallen—and more have fled:—  
All in a nook of the bloody ground  
That lady sat by a bleeding knight,  
And strove with her fingers to staunch the wound:  
Her locks, like sunbeams when summer's in pride,  
She plucked and placed on his wounded side.

" And aye the sorer that lady sighed,  
The more her golden locks she drew—

The more she prayed—the ruddy life's-blood  
 The faster and faster came trickling through:—  
 On a sadder sight ne'er looked the moon,  
 That o'er the green mountain came gleaming down.

“ He lay with his sword in the pale moonlight;  
 All mute and pale she lay at his side—  
 He, sheathed in mail from brow to heel—  
 She, in her maiden bloom and pride:  
 And their beds were made, and the lovers were laid,  
 All under the gentle holly's shade.

“ May that Selby's right hand wither and rot,  
 That fails with flowers their bed to strew!  
 May a foreign grave be his who doth rend  
 Away the shade of the holly bough!—  
 But let them sleep by the gentle river,  
 And waken in love that shall last for ever.”

From the varied and humorous character of the volumes, and their being so descriptive of ancient usages and stirring events in both countries, especially in Scotland, many of the former having entirely passed away, they speedily obtained an extensive circulation, and produced a suitable remuneration to the author in pocket and in fame. This stimulated him the more for new endeavours in “fresh fields and pastures new.” While thus engaged in the preparation and publication of his works he still wrote steadily for the monthly periodicals, sometimes attempting higher flights than he had previously ventured on, assuming the position of a critic, as if feeling his way for another description of literary effort which was looming in the distance.

As the following clever essay on Burns and Byron



is almost unknown, we give it *in extenso* from the *London Magazine* of August, 1824:—

“ROBERT BURNS AND LORD BYRON.

“I have seen Robert Burns laid in his grave, and I have seen George Gordon Byron borne to his. Of both I wish to speak, and my words shall be spoken with honesty and freedom. They were great, though not equal, heirs of fame. The fortunes of their birth were widely dissimilar; yet in their passions and in their genius they approached to a closer resemblance. Their careers were short and glorious, and they both perished in the summer of life, and in all the splendour of a reputation more likely to increase than diminish. One was a peasant, and the other was a peer; but Nature is a great leveller, and makes amends for the injuries of fortune by the richness of her benefactions. The genius of Burns raised him to a level with the nobles of the land; by nature, if not by birth, he was the peer of Byron. I knew one, and I have seen both. I have hearkened to words from their lips, and admired the labours of their pens, and I am now, and likely to remain, under the influence of their magic songs. They rose by the force of their genius, and they fell by the strength of their passions. One wrote from a love, and the other from a scorn of mankind; and they both sang of the emotions of their own hearts with a vehemence and an originality which few have equalled, and none surely have surpassed. But it is less my wish to draw the characters of those extraordinary men than to write what I remember of them; and I will say nothing that I know not to be true, and little but what I saw myself.

“The first time I ever saw Burns was in Nithsdale. I was then a child, but his looks and his voice cannot well be

forgotten; and while I write this I behold him as distinctly as I did when I stood at my father's knee, and heard the bard repeat his 'Tam o' Shanter.' He was tall and of a manly make, his brow broad and high, and his voice varied with the character of his inimitable tale; yet through all its variations it was melody itself. He was of great personal strength, and proud too of displaying it; and I have seen him lift a load with ease which few ordinary men would have willingly undertaken.

"The first time I ever saw Byron was in the House of Lords, soon after the publication of 'Childe Harold.' He stood up in his place on the Opposition side, and made a speech on the subject of Catholic freedom. His voice was low, and I heard him but by fits; and when I say he was witty and sarcastic, I judge as much from the involuntary mirth of the benches as from what I heard with my own ears. His voice had not the full and manly melody of the voice of Burns; nor had he equal vigour of frame, nor the same open expanse of forehead. But his face was finely formed, and was impressed with a more delicate vigour than that of the peasant poet. He had a singular conformation of ear; the lower lobe, instead of being pendulous, grew down and united itself to the cheek, and resembled no other ear I ever saw save that of the Duke of Wellington. His bust by Thorvaldsen is feeble and mean; the painting of Phillips is more noble and much more like. Of Burns I have never seen aught but a very uninspired resemblance; and I regret it the more because he had a look worthy of the happiest effort of art—a look beaming with poetry and eloquence.

"The last time I saw Burns in life was on his return from the Brow-well of Solway. He had been ailing all spring, and summer had come without bringing health with it; he had gone away very ill and he returned worse. He was

brought back, I think, in a covered spring cart, and when he alighted at the foot of the street in which he lived, he could scarce stand upright. He reached his own door with difficulty. He stooped much, and there was a visible change in his looks. Some may think it not unimportant to know, that he was at that time dressed in a blue coat, with the undress nankeen pantaloons of the volunteers, and that his neck, which was inclining to be short, caused his hat to turn up behind, in the manner of the shovel hats of the Episcopal clergy. Truth obliges me to add, that he was not fastidious about his dress; and that an officer, curious in the personal appearance and equipments of his company, might have questioned the military nicety of the poet's clothes and arms. But his colonel was a maker of rhyme, and the poet had to display more charity for his commander's verse than the other had to exercise when he inspected the clothing and arms of the careless bard.

“From the day of his return home till the hour of his untimely death, Dumfries was like a besieged palace. It was known he was dying, and the anxiety, not of the rich and the learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns and of him alone; they spoke of his history—of his person—of his works—of his family—of his fame, and of his untimely and approaching fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endear Dumfries to my remembrance. All that he said or was saying—the opinions of the physicians (and Maxwell was a kind and a skilful one), were eagerly caught up and reported from street to street, and from house to house.

“His good humour was unruffled, and his wit never forsook him. He looked to one of his fellow-volunteers with a smile, as he stood by the bedside with his eyes wet, and

said, 'John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me.' He was aware that death was dealing with him. He asked a lady who visited him, more in sincerity than in mirth, what commands she had for the other world. He repressed with a smile the hopes of his friends, and told them he had lived long enough. As his life drew near a close, the eager yet decorous solicitude of his fellow-townsmen increased. He was an exciseman, it is true—a name odious, from many associations, to his countrymen—but he did his duty meekly and kindly, and repressed rather than encouraged the desire of some of his companions to push the law with severity. He was therefore much beloved, and the passion of the Scotch for poetry made them regard him as little lower than a spirit inspired. It is the practice of the young men of Dumfries to meet in the street during the hours of remission from labour, and by these means I had an opportunity of witnessing the general solicitude of all ranks and of all ages. His differences with them in some important points of human speculation and religious hope were forgotten and forgiven; they thought only of his genius—of the delight his compositions had diffused—and they talked of him with the same awe as of some departing spirit, whose voice was to gladden them no more. His last moments have never been described. He had laid his head quietly on the pillow, awaiting dissolution, when his attendant reminded him of his medicine, and held the cup to his lip. He started suddenly up, drained the cup at a gulp, threw his hands before him like a man about to swim, and sprang from head to foot of the bed—fell with his face down, and expired with a groan.

“Of the dying moments of Byron we have no minute nor very distinct account. He perished in a foreign land among barbarians or aliens, and he seems to have been without the aid of a determined physician, whose firmness or persuasion



might have vanquished his obstinacy. His aversion to bleeding was an infirmity which he shared with many better regulated minds; for it is no uncommon belief that the first touch of the lancet will charm away the approach of death, and those who believe this are willing to reserve so decisive a spell for a more momentous occasion. He had parted with his native land in no ordinary bitterness of spirit; and his domestic infelicity had rendered his future peace of mind hopeless. This was aggravated from time to time by the tales or the intrusion of travellers, by reports injurious to his character, and by the eager and vulgar avidity with which idle stories were circulated, which exhibited him in weakness or in folly. But there is every reason to believe that long before his untimely death his native land was as bright as ever in his fancy, and that his anger conceived against the many for the sins of the few had subsided, or was subsiding.

“Of Scotland, and of his Scottish origin, he has boasted in more than one place of his poetry; he is proud to remember the land of his mother, and to sing that he is half a Scot by birth, and a whole one in his heart. Of his great rival in popularity, Sir Walter Scott, he speaks with kindness; and the compliment he has paid him has been earned by the unchangeable admiration of the other. Scott has ever spoken of Byron as he has lately written, and all those who know him will feel that this consistency is characteristic. I must, however, confess his forgiveness of Mr. Jeffrey was an unlooked-for and unexpected piece of humility and loving-kindness, and, as a Scotchman, I am rather willing to regard it as a presage of early death, and to conclude that the poet was ‘fey,’ and forgave his arch enemy in the spirit of the dying Highlander—‘Weel, weel, I forgive him; but God confound you, my twa sons, Duncan and Gilbert, if you



forgive him.' The criticism with which the *Edinburgh Review* welcomed the first flight which Byron's Muse took would have crushed and broken any spirit less dauntless than his own; and for a long while he entertained the horror of a reviewer which a bird of song feels for the presence of the raven. But they smoothed his spirit down, first by submission and then by idolatry, and his pride must have been equal to that which made the angels fall, if it had refused to be soothed by the obeisance of a reviewer.

"One never forgets, if he should happen to forgive, an insult or an injury offered in youth—it grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength, and I may reasonably doubt the truth of the poet's song when he sings of his dear Jeffrey. The news of his death came upon London like an earthquake; and the common multitude are ignorant of literature, and destitute of feeling for the higher flights of poetry, yet they consented to feel by faith, and believed that one of the brightest lights in the firmament of poesy was extinguished for ever. With literary men a sense of the public misfortune was mingled, perhaps, with a sense that a giant was removed from their way; and that they had room now to break a lance with an equal, without the fear of being overthrown by fiery impetuosity and colossal strength. The world of literature is now resigned to lower, but, perhaps, not less presumptuous poetic spirits. But among those who feared him, or envied him, or loved him, there are none who sorrow not for the national loss, and grieve not that Byron fell so soon, and on a foreign shore.

"When Burns died I was then young, but I was not insensible that a mind of no common strength had passed from among us. He had caught my fancy and touched my heart with his songs and his poems. I went to see him laid

out for the grave; several elderly people were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face, and on the bed, and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—the dying pang was visible in the lower part, but his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his sable hair lay in masses, slightly touched with gray, and inclining more to a wave than a curl. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—there was no jostling and crushing, though the crowd was great—man followed man as patiently and orderly as if all had been a matter of mutual understanding—not a question was asked—not a whisper was heard. This was several days after his death. It is the custom of Scotland to 'wake' the body—not with wild howlings and wilder songs, and much waste of strong drink, like our mercurial neighbours, but in silence or in prayer—superstition says it is unsonsie to leave a corpse alone; and it is never left. I know not who watched by the body of Burns—much it was my wish to share in the honour—but my extreme youth would have made such a request seem foolish, and its rejection would have been sure.

“I am to speak the feelings of another people, and of the customs of a higher rank, when I speak of laying out the body of Byron for the grave. It was announced from time

to time that he was to be exhibited in state, and the progress of the embellishments of the poet's bier was recorded in the pages of a hundred publications. They were at length completed, and to separate the curiosity of the poor from the admiration of the rich, the latter were indulged with tickets of admission, and a day was set apart for them to go and wonder over the decked room and the emblazoned bier. Peers and peeresses, priests, poets, and politicians, came in gilded chariots and in hired hacks to gaze upon the splendour of the funeral preparations, and to see in how rich and how vain a shroud the body of the immortal had been hid. Those idle trappings in which rank seeks to mark its altitude above the vulgar belonged to the state of the peer rather than to the state of the poet; genius required no such attractions; and all this magnificence served only to divide our regard with the man whose inspired tongue was now silenced for ever. Who cared for Lord Byron the peer, and the Privy Councillor, with his coronet, and his long descent from princes on one side, and from heroes on both—and who did not care for George Gordon Byron the poet, who has charmed us, and will charm our descendants, with his deep and impassioned verse! The homage was rendered to genius, not surely to rank—for lord can be stamped on any clay, but inspiration can only be impressed on the finest metal.

“Of the day on which the multitude were admitted I know not in what terms to speak—I never surely saw so strange a mixture of silent sorrow and of fierce and intractable curiosity. If one looked on the poet's splendid coffin with deep awe, and thought of the gifted spirit which had lately animated the cold remains, others regarded the whole as a pageant or a show, got up for the amusement of the idle and the careless, and criticized the arrangements in the spirit

of those who wish to be rewarded for their time, and who consider that all they condescend to visit should be according to their own taste. There was a crushing, a trampling, and an impatience, as rude and as fierce as ever I witnessed at a theatre; and words of incivility were bandied about, and questions asked with such determination to be answered, that the very mutes, whose business was silence and repose, were obliged to interfere with tongue and hand between the visitors and the dust of the poet. In contemplation of such a scene, some of the trappings which were there on the first day were removed on the second, and this suspicion of the good sense and decorum of the multitude called forth many expressions of displeasure, as remarkable for their warmth as their propriety of language. By five o'clock the people were all ejected—man and woman—and the rich coffin bore tokens of the touch of hundreds of eager fingers, many of which had not been overclean.

“The multitude who accompanied Burns to the grave went step by step with the chief mourners; they might amount to ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard; and, though all could not be near, and many could not see, when the earth closed on their darling poet for ever, there was no rude impatience shown, no fierce disappointment expressed. It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks and persuasions and opinions mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sang of their loves, and joys, and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have seen equalled. I could, indeed, have wished the military part of the procession away—for he was buried with military honours—because I am one of those who love simplicity in all that regards genius. The scarlet and gold—the banners displayed—the



measured step, and the military array, with the sound of martial instruments of music, had no share in increasing the solemnity of the burial scene; and I had no connexion with the poet. I looked on it then, and I consider it now, as an idle ostentation, a piece of superfluous state, which might have been spared, more especially, as his neglected, and traduced, and insulted spirit had experienced no kindness in the body from those lofty people who are now proud of being numbered as his coevals and countrymen.

His fate has been a reproach to Scotland. But the reproach comes with an ill grace from England. When we can forget Butler's fate—Otway's loaf—Dryden's old age, and Chatterton's poison-cup, we may think that we stand alone in the iniquity of neglecting pre-eminent genius. I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend for ever—there was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on his coffin-lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers justified the fears of their comrade by three ragged and straggling volleys. The earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the multitude stood gazing on the grave for some minutes' space, and then melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sky was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this—not from my concurrence in the common superstition—that 'happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,' but to confute a pious fraud of a religious magazine, which made heaven express its wrath at the interment of a profane poet in thunder, in lightning, and in rain. I know not who wrote the story, and I wish not to know; but its utter falsehood thousands attest. It is one proof out of many, how divine wrath



is found by dishonest zeal in a common commotion of the elements, and that men, whose profession is godliness and truth, will look in the face of heaven and tell a deliberate lie.

“A few select friends and admirers followed Lord Byron to his grave—his coronet was borne before him, and there were many indications of his rank; but, save the assembled multitude, no indications of his genius. In conformity to a singular practice of the great, a long train of their empty carriages followed the mourning coaches—mocking the dead with idle state, and impeding the honester sympathy of the crowd with barren pageantry. Where were the owners of those machines of sloth and luxury—where were the men of rank among whose dark pedigrees Lord Byron threw the light of his genius, and lent the brows of nobility a halo to which they were strangers? Where were the great Whigs? Where were the illustrious Tories? Could a mere difference in matters of human belief keep those fastidious persons away? But, above all, where were the friends with whom wedlock had united him? On his desolate corpse no wife looked, and no child shed a tear. I have no wish to set myself up as a judge in domestic infelicities, and I am willing to believe they were separated in such a way as rendered reconciliation hopeless; but who could stand and look on his pale manly face, and his dark locks which early sorrows were making thin and grey, without feeling that, gifted as he was, with a soul above the mark of other men, his domestic misfortunes called for our pity as surely as his genius called for our admiration. When the career of Burns was closed, I saw another sight—a weeping widow and four helpless sons; they came into the streets in their mournings, and public sympathy was awakened afresh. I shall never forget the looks of his boys, and the compassion which they excited. The poet’s life had not been without errors, and

such errors, too, as a wife is slow in forgiving; but he was honoured then, and is honoured now, by the unalienable affection of his wife, and the world repays her prudence and her love by its regard and esteem.

“Burns, with all his errors in faith and in practice, was laid in hallowed earth, in the churchyard of the town where he resided. No one thought of closing the church gates against his body because of the freedom of his poetry and the carelessness of his life. And why was not Byron laid among the illustrious men of England in Westminster Abbey? Is there a poet in all the Poet's Corner who has better right to that distinction? Why was the door closed against him, and opened to the carcasses of thousands without merit and without name? Look round the walls, and on the floor over which you tread, and behold them encumbered and inscribed with memorials of the mean, and the sordid, and the impure, as well as of the virtuous and the great. Why did the Dean of Westminster refuse admission to such an heir of fame as Byron? If he had no claim to lie within the consecrated precincts of the Abbey, he has no right to lie in consecrated ground at all. There is no doubt that the pious fee for sepulture would have been paid—and it is not a small one. Hail! to the Church of England, if her piety is stronger than her avarice.”

Well written, Allan Cunningham! though probably a little too democratic in your estimate of the two poets; but your admiration of the peasant bard was certainly natural, as belonging to your own dear land, and it might, perhaps, be said in this case, as said in others, that “the light which led astray was light from heaven.”