

DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

BIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS.

BURNS AS A DOMESTIC LETTER-WRITER.

SCOTCH people, as a rule, are frigid in their correspondence with their friends—that is, with their relations; and the nearer the relationship is, the less ostentation the most affectionate among them make of the love they cherish in their hearts. Passionate or cordial enough letters they can at any time indite, where love and manly brotherhood alone are the foundation of correspondence; but when consanguinity intrudes, the fervour of their diction at once abates and their reserve increases, until letters between the nearest relatives, especially of the men, look like formal business communications with “compliments” and “kind regards,” when the truest and warmest love in reality is at bottom. They have an inward dread of being caught with sentimentalisms of affection on their tongue, much more of committing in appropriate terms such sentiments to paper; not because they less purely or profoundly entertain and cherish such affections, but because they universally hold them to be too sacred for utterance, and their expression therefore superfluous or profane. As between relations of opposite sexes—as of brother to sister, or of son to mother—they allow themselves occasionally, or dutifully, a little more license in the use of endearing terms; but as between father and son, or brother and brother, the slightest approach to mere tenderness, or

abandon of love in any way, would be a moral misdemeanour or breach of the tacit family compact of unspoken attachment, of which only a fool or scoundrel in their estimation would be guilty. It is with the utmost difficulty a father among them can address his son in writing, unless a mere boy, as “My dearest ——;” and a son, in addressing his father, if he be a genuine Scot, will cast about for days, or for minutes at least, beforehand, to get the truest relative forms—the least and yet the most expressive of what he inwardly feels—and will conclude at last by adopting the most formal, reverential, commonplace, distant, inexpressive, or absurd of all. Brothers, in like manner, are equally perplexed in corresponding with brothers, and subside by a sort of mutual convention into the plainest stereotype and the briefest forms. The more distant a Scotchman’s relative is by blood, if he be worth writing to in reality at all, the greater show of cordiality he enjoys; but still with a certain amount of reserve infused—sufficient to remind him of the family bond, and to give zest to the freedom which is lawful under it, at such a remote degree.

Where a Scotchman, if he *pleases*, may indulge himself without reproach of weakness as a family correspondent, is in writing to a wife or a daughter. Nothing but want of language in such cases can

interfere with, or prevent, the truest tenderness or the sweetest endearment of expression; where the best he can say in the way of love, or the handsomest in the way of compliment, cannot possibly expose him to the charge of fraud or folly. Even in such cases, however, the habitual reserve of his nature predominates, and very few letters by Scotchmen to their wives or daughters, we suspect, are all, in point of elegance or endearment, what their authors would like, and intend them to be. It is marvellous and beautiful to see a man like John Knox in this predicament.

In these respects, Burns was as much a Scotchman as his brethren; would not, could not, did not surmount the native reserve, or dissolve by his own stronger passion the domestic restraints of his people. His domestic correspondence, properly so called, is of necessity limited; but all that remains of it (if much more ever existed) is entirely characteristic of his constitution as a Scotchman. Readers of another kindred—warmer or more demonstrative—on comparing these scanty fragments of unimpassioned letter-writing to relatives, with the glowing eloquence and inspiration of his correspondence with strangers, may be disposed to question to some extent the depth or reality of his affections. His filial reverence has the look of awe, his fraternal hints the awkward formality of a semi-tutorial lecture; he begins stiffly, he writes unequally, carelessly, abruptly; he concludes formally with “compliments” and “respects,” &c.; so unlike the man who addressed Mrs. Dunlop, Miss Chalmers, and Clarinda—or Thomson, and Ainslie, and Muir, and Cunningham, and Nicol, or even Hamilton, and Ballantine, and Dr. Moore. Can this be Burns, the son and the brother? some gushing Southern, or impulsive, excitable Western reader will exclaim. Be not offended, O gushing or impulsive Reader! It is Burns—Burns the Scotchman; but with the solemnity and reserve of Scottish domestic life in him, qualifying, almost extinguishing, the fire of passion and the flame of poetry.

To his cousin, as behoves, and as a sense of propriety and gratitude at the time, as well as the highest personal esteem required, he is a little more lavish of loving terms, and a little, or rather a good deal, more unrestrained in his confidences.

A real sense of obligation there, and of fraternal kindnesses received, or offered, and at last entertained, enforces the appropriate terms. But even here, the curious alternations between “Sir,” and “Dear Sir,” and “My Dear Sir;” “Dear Cousin,” and “My Dear Cousin,” and “Your most affectionate Cousin,”—sometimes in the same letter; and then “O James!” in an agony of pain and shame, betraying the latent love, and appealing to the latent sympathy—reveal more plainly than any remarks of ours could, not only the man, but the Scotchman as a correspondent. Such confession must, in fact, be extorted from him. The whole of this series, indeed, is very beautiful, and most characteristic, both of the individual writer and of his fellow-countrymen. To nearer kindred, with whom he corresponded less frequently, but whose blood was his very own, and who were bound, therefore, at once to comprehend and sympathise with him, no unnecessary word, or term of endearment is vouchsafed. Deeds alone, in their case, must answer for his love.

Addressed to his wife, only two short, significant fragments are to be found; one of these, in rich and loving confidence at their marriage, when he was still corresponding in high-flown questionable terms with Clarinda, has just been recovered, and appears in this edition for the first time. Along with which, although not to her, another about her wedding-dress, and dresses for his sisters, is now also for the first time made public; and, by beautiful juxtaposition of time and circumstances, sets forth the lover, and the brother, and the bridegroom in such a light, that one would not, upon any consideration, lose it. The remaining letter to Jean, before his own return to die, and the letter to his father-in-law about her, in his prospect of immediate death, which is the last known to have been addressed by him to any earthly correspondent, require no commentary by us. He had no surviving daughter to whom he could have written had he lived; but if such relationship, or possibility of such correspondence had been permitted by heaven, the letters of Robert Burns to his child Elizabeth would certainly have been the most precious and beautiful of their sort ever indited by a Scotchman.

FAC-SIMILE OF FAMILY REGISTER IN POET'S BIBLE.

[ENGRAVED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.]

Robert Burns was born at Alloway in
the Parish of Ayr—Jan. 25th 1759—
Jean Armour his wife was born at Mauchline
Feb. 27th 1767—
Sept. 3, 1786 were born to them twins, Robert, their
eldest ~~son~~, at a quarter past Noon of Jean, since
dead at fourteen months old. — March 3, 1788, were born
to them twins again, two daughters, who died within a
few days after their birth. — August 18th 1789 was
born to them Francis, Wallace; so named after
M^r. Dunlop of Dunlop: he was born a quarter-
before seven, forenoon. — April 9th 1791, between
three & four in the morning, was born to them
William, Nicol; so named after Will^m. Nicol of the
High School, Edin.^d — November 21st 1792, at
a quarter past Noon, was born to them Elizabeth, Riddel,
so named after M^{rs}. Robt. Riddel of Gylesridel. —
James Glencairn born 12th Augst
1794 named after the late Earl of
Glencairn

Maxwell. Born 26th July 1796 the day of his
Father's Funeral. So named after Dr. Maxwell
the Physician who attended the Poet in his last illness
Inserted by W. N. Burns 9th April 1867

CORRESPONDENCE.

[THE Domestic Correspondence, as here arranged, will be found to include one or two letters by friends or relatives to the Author, as well as those addressed to relatives by him; two concerning strictly domestic matters, but to persons not of his own household; and two in particular to Mr. A. Lawrie, so beautifully domestic in their tone, as being addressed to a correspondent much younger than himself, that they would have been lost or at least misplaced in any other connection.]

To William Burness.

Irvine, Dec. 27, 1781.

HONORED SIR,

I HAVE purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-Year's-day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable, employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

"The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have

given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-Year's-day, I shall conclude. I am, honored Sir, your dutiful son,

ROBERT BURNESS.

P.S. My meal is nearly out, but I am going to borrow till I get more.

[Burns, during his residence at Irvine, was remarkable chiefly for long continued fits of melancholy depression.—Mr. Carruthers is strongly of opinion that this letter should be dated 1782—but there seem to be arguments against that.]

(1.) To Mr. James Burness,

WRITER, MONTROSE.

Lochlea, 21st June, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

MY father received your favour of the 10th current, and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is in his own opinion (and, indeed, in almost every body's else) in a dying condition, he has only, with great difficulty, written a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him, to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high—oatmeal 17d. and 18d. per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere, but that resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort,

Heaven only knows.* This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of silk, lawn, and carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our landholders, full of ideas of farming gathered from the English and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what in the event we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, and Co.'s bank, which no doubt you have heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fopperies, has ruined as many more.† There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favours, is generally even with them at the last; and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese; 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs. Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and my mother and the rest of the family desire to inclose their kind compliments to you, Mrs. Burness, and the rest of your family, along with those of, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Cousin,

R. B.

[The estimable relative to whom this series of letters is addressed, called by the writer 'cousin,' was, in fact, a cousin once removed—his *father* and Robert Burns's *grandfather* only being brothers. The propinquity, however, was as affectionately acknowledged on both sides as if it had been much nearer. The Montrose branch, indeed, ultimately incorporated by pretence (as *Heralds* say) the well-known armorial device of the Ayrshire Poet with their own, to testify the honour and the love in which they held it.—See also note on letter (6).]

* [The extraordinary famine here recorded prevailed also on the eastern coast of the Island, and the inhabitants of certain districts bordering on the Frith of Forth were saved from impending destruction by the very same means—the

arrival of two or three ships at Grangemouth with cargoes of white peas from Holland. The cause of this dreadful scarcity, if we mistake not, was a storm of frost and snow in the month of June or July preceding: during which all fruit germs were destroyed, and the hopes of a harvest annihilated.]

† [Compare reflection in "The Twa Dogs."]

(2.) TO MR. JAMES BURNESS,
MONTROSE.

*Lochlea, 17th Feb., 1784.**

DEAR COUSIN,

I WOULD have returned you my thanks for your kind favour of the 13th of December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event, which, for some time past, we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though, to be sure, we have had long warning of the impending stroke; still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connexion in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure—with pride, acknowledge my connexion with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honour and revere.

I expect, therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblige,

My dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

R. B.

* [In November, 1783, to provide against any painful contingency of debt or difficulty at Lochlea, the farm of Mossiel, at Mauchline, was taken; but the family did not remove from Lochlea till March, 1784. During this interval, Burns and his brother Gilbert might have occasion now and then to visit Mossiel, to make the necessary preliminary arrangements for their intended settlement there. Compare *Memoir of the Poet* by Gilbert Burns—Appendix, p. xv.: also, for death and funeral of William Burness, *Biography*, p. x.]

(3.) TO JAMES BURNESS,
MONTROSE.

Mossiel, August, 1784.

WE have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this half century. We have had a party of [the] Presbytery [of] Relief, as they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago, a Mrs. Buchan from Glasgow came and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and, in a short time, made many converts; and, among

others, their preacher, Mr. Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he and their spiritual mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till, in spring last, the populace rose and mobbed Mrs. Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their doors behind them; one left a washing on the green, another a cow bellowing at the crib without food, or any body to mind her, and after several stages, they are fixed at present in the neighbourhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent. They have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above mentioned are facts.*

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many instances of the folly of leaving the guidance of sound reason and common sense in matters of religion.

Whenever we neglect or despise these sacred monitors, the whimsical notions of a perturbed brain are taken for the immediate influences of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the most inconstant absurdities, will meet with abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought, that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous the fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the sacred name of religion, the unhappy mistaken votaries are the more firmly glued to them.

R. B.

* [The miserable fanatical delusion, above described, came, as might be expected, "to nought, and all, as many as obeyed it, were scattered." The last remaining representative of the sect, a tall melancholy personage, with a reddish white beard, and a peculiar hat and coat, we can remember in our own boyhood, forty years ago, to have seen wandering in silence about the streets of this city.]

(4.) TO MR. JAMES BURNESSE,
MONTROSE.

Mossgiel, Tuesday noon, Sept. 26, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I THIS moment receive yours—receive it with the honest hospitable warmth of a friend's welcome. Whatever comes from you wakens always up the better blood about my heart, which your kind little recollections of my parental friends carries as far as it will go. 'Tis there that man is blest! 'Tis there, my friend, man feels a consciousness of something within him above the trodden clod! The grateful reverence

to the hoary (earthly) author of his being—the burning glow when he clasps the woman of his soul to his bosom—the tender yearnings of heart for the little angels to whom he has given existence—these nature has poured in milky streams about the human heart; and the man who never rouses them to action, by the inspiring influences of their proper objects, loses by far the most pleasurable part of his existence.

My departure is uncertain, but I do not think it will be till after harvest. I will be on very short allowance of time indeed, if I do not comply with your friendly invitation. When it will be, I don't know; but if I can make my wish good, I will endeavour to drop you a line some time before. My best compliments to Mrs —; I should [be] equally mortified should I drop in when she is abroad, but of that I suppose there is little chance.

What I have wrote, heaven knows; I have not time to review it; so accept of it in the beaten way of friendship. With the ordinary phrase—perhaps rather more than the ordinary sincerity—I am, dear Sir,

Ever yours,

R. B.

[Written evidently in prospect of his departure for the West Indies.]

(5.) TO MR. JAMES BURNESSE.

Ellisland, 9th Feb., 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHY I did not write to you long ago is what, even on the rack, I could not answer. If you can in your mind form an idea of indolence, dissipation, hurry, cares, change of country, entering on untried scenes of life, all combined, you will save me the trouble of a blushing apology. It could not be want of regard for a man for whom I had a high esteem before I knew him—an esteem which has much increased since I did know him; and this caveat entered, I shall plead guilty to any other indictment with which you shall please to charge me.

After I parted from you, for many months my life was one continued scene of dissipation. Here at last I am become stationary, and have taken a farm and—a wife.

The farm is beautifully situated on the Nith, a large river that runs by Dumfries, and falls into the Solway frith. I have gotten a lease of my farm as long as I pleased; but how it may turn out is just a guess, and it is yet to improve and enclose, &c.; however, I have good hopes of my bargain on the whole.

My wife is my Jean, with whose story you are partly acquainted. I found I had a much-loved fellow creature's happiness or misery among my hands, and I durst not trifle with so sacred a deposit. Indeed I have not any reason to repent the step I have taken, as I have attached myself to a very good wife, and have shaken myself loose of a very bad failing.

I have found my book a very profitable business, and with the profits of it I have begun life pretty decently. Should fortune not favour me in farming, as I have no great faith in her fickle ladyship, I have provided myself in another resource, which, however some folks may affect to despise it, is still a comfortable shift in the day of misfortune. In the hey-day of my fame, a gentleman, whose name at least I dare say you know, as his estate lies somewhere near Dundee, Mr. Graham, of Fintray, one of the Commissioners of Excise, offered me the commission of an Excise officer. I thought it prudent to accept the offer; and accordingly I took my instructions, and have my commission by me. Whether I may ever do duty, or be a penny the better for it, is what I do not know; but I have the comfortable assurance, that come whatever ill fate will, I can, on my simple petition to the Excise-board, get into employ.

We have lost poor uncle Robert this winter. He has long been very weak, and with very little alteration on him; he expired 3d January.

His son William has been with me this winter, and goes in May to be an apprentice to a mason. His other son, the eldest, John, comes to me I expect in summer. They are both remarkably stout young fellows, and promise to do well. His only daughter, Fanny, has been with me ever since her father's death, and I purpose keeping her in my family till she be quite woman-grown, and fit for better service. She is one of the cleverest girls, and has one of the most amiable dispositions I have ever seen.

All friends in this country and Ayrshire are well. Remember me to all friends in the north. My wife joins me in compliments to Mrs. B. and family.

I am ever, my dear Cousin,

Yours sincerely,

R. B.

*[The Fanny here mentioned, we are informed by Cunningham, was subsequently married to James Armour, a brother of Mrs. Burns's. She settled with her husband at Mauchline, where they had a numerous family.]

(6.) TO MR. JAMES BURNES,
WRITER, MONTROSE.

Dumfries, [Brow,] 12th July [1796.]

MY DEAR COUSIN,

WHEN you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O James! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas! I am not used to beg! The worst of it is, my health was coming about finely. You know, and my physician assured me, that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease; guess then my horrors since this business began. If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use the language to you, O do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curst command.

I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up; but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [require] your advice.

Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post;—save me from the horrors of a jail!

My compliments to my friend James, and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible I dare not look it over again.

Farewell!

R. B.

[The painful request of this letter, our readers are no doubt aware, was promptly and affectionately complied with. George Thomson at the same time sent £5. Compare letter (57) to him. The account in question, for which summary proceedings were apprehended, amounted only to £7, 9s. It was rendered officially through an agent, at a dissolution of co-partnership, and not with any immediate design, it may be hoped, of annoying the distinguished sufferer. At all events, his own nervous irritation undoubtedly magnified the evil.

The painful expression, indeed, employed by himself in this very letter with respect to his brother's affairs, and which was undoubtedly used by him to screen the humiliation of his own position by showing to his cousin James that he had a claim upon others, implied as much severity on his own part as that of which he was complaining towards himself—howbeit such sort of work was far from him, neither entered it into his mind. It was but sorrowful rhetoric with him; it was a legal application in the other case, to be sure, but might not after all have been much more. For a proof of his generosity in such circumstances, and how far he was from "cutting up" anybody, see letter (3) to J. Clarke, just sixteen days before—p. 193; also letter (3) to Gilbert himself, on this very subject.

The "James" referred to in conclusion was a son of Mr. Burnes.—He was then a lad of sixteen or seventeen; married in 1800 a daughter of Provost Glegg, Montrose, and became the father of Sir Alexander Burnes, the distinguished scholar, diplomatist, and explorer of Hindostan, who, with his brother Charles, was cut to pieces by the insurgents at the beginning of the Afghan war,—November, 1841. James, who in turn became Provost of Montrose, was a man of the highest respectability. He died 1852, having seen his children's glory, and suffered so dreadful a calamity in their loss.]

To Mr. Archibald Lawrie.

Mossiel, 13th Nov., 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE along with this sent the two volumes of Ossian, with the remaining volume of the Songs. Ossian I am not in such a hurry about; but I wish the Songs, with the volume of the Scotch Poets, returned as soon as they can conveniently be despatched. If they are left at Mr. Wilson, the Book-seller's shop, in Kilmarnock, they will easily reach me.

My most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie; and a Poet's warmest wishes for their happiness to the young ladies; particularly the fair musician, whom I think much better qualified than ever David was, or could be, to charm an evil spirit out of a Saul.

Indeed, it needs not the feelings of a poet to be interested in the welfare of one of the sweetest scenes of domestic peace and kindred love that ever I saw; as I think the peaceful unity of St. Margaret's Hill can only be excelled by the harmonious concord of the Apocalyptic Zion.

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

ROBT. BURNES.

[There seem to be two editions of this letter, which vary to the extent of three words—the one having, and the other omitting, the word *returned* after Poets, and *a* before Saul.]

(2) MONSR. MONSR. ARCHIBALD LAWRIE.

COLLINE DE ST. MARGARETE.

Mauchline, 15th November, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

If convenient, please return me by Connel, the bearer, the two volumes of songs I left last time I was at St. Margaret's Hill.

My best compliments to all the good family.

A Dieu je vous commende.

ROBT. BURNS.

(3) TO [MR. ARCHIBALD LAWRIE.]

Edinburgh, 14th August, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

HERE am I—that is all I can tell you of that unaccountable being myself. What I am doing, no mortal can tell; what I am thinking, I myself cannot tell; what I am usually saying, is not worth telling. The clock is just striking one, two, three, four, —, —, —, —, —, —, —, —, twelve, forenoon; and here I sit, in the attic story, *alias* the garret, with a friend on the right hand of my standish—a friend whose kindness I shall largely experience at the close of this line—there—thank you—a friend, my dear Mr. Lawrie, whose kindness often makes me blush; a friend who has more of the milk of *human* kindness than all the human race put together, and what is highly to his honour, peculiarly a friend to the friendless as often as they come in his way; in short, Sir, he is, without the least alloy, a universal philanthropist; and his much-beloved name is—a bottle of good old Port! In a week, if whim and weather serve, I shall set out for the north—a tour to the Highlands.

I ate some Newhaven broth, in other words, boiled mussels, with Mr. Farquhar's family, t'other day. Now I see you prick up your ears. They are all well, and Mademoiselle is particularly well. She begs her respects to you all; along with which please present those of your humble servant. I can no more. I have so high a veneration, or rather idolatrisation, for the cleric character, that even a little *futurum esse vel fuisse Priestling*, in his *Penna pennae pennae*, &c., throws an awe over my mind in his presence, and shortens my sentences into single ideas.

Farewell, and believe me to be ever, my dear Sir, yours,

ROBERT BURNS.

[First published in *Glasgow Citizen*, April 8, 1854.]

[The young gentleman to whom these letters were addressed became subsequently minister of Loudoun, in succession to his father, Rev. George Lawrie—see letter to him; and married the only sister of our Author's friend, Dr. James M'Kittrick Adair, husband of Charlotte Hamilton.]

(1.) To Mr. Gilbert Burns.

Edinburgh, 17th September, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ARRIVED here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and druidical circles of stones, to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole, thence across Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the Duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his Grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music; Badenoch, &c., till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth; there I saw the identical bed, in which tradition says king Duncan was murdered; lastly, from fort George to Inverness.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen, thence to Stonehive, where James Burness, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women. John Caird, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can: they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow; but further particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing; warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing-towns or fertile carses? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day, with the Duke, Duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty and many compliments from the north to my mother; and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a berth for William, but am not likely to be successful. Farewell.

R. B.

[Compare notes on Northern Tour, at dates—Appendix.]

(2.) TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, 11th January, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I MEAN to take advantage of the frank, though I have not, in my present frame of mind, much appetite for exertion in writing. My nerves are in a cursed state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul.

This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go to hell! I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have got a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-Year's-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city,
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Tho', by the bye, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home, &c.

I can no more.—If once I was clear of this cursed farm, I should respire more at ease.

R. B.

(3.) TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

[Sunday,] 10th July, 1796.

DEAR BROTHER,

IT will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. I have been a week at sea-bathing, and I will continue there, or in a friend's house in the country, all the summer. God keep my wife and children: if I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months, partly from too much thoughtlessness as to expense, when I came to town, that will cut in too much on the little I leave them in your hands. Remember me to my mother.

Yours,

R. B.

[Gilbert Burns, next brother to the Poet, was born at Alloway, 1760; died at Grant's Braes, Lethington, 27th April, 1827, and was buried in Bolton churchyard; where his mother and several of his family, who predeceased or followed him, repose. He was a man in every relation of life—as son, brother, husband, and father—most exemplary and estimable. He removed from Mossiel first to Dinning in Dumfriesshire, as a farmer, then to Morham Mains, near Haddington, as manager of that farm for a son of Mrs. Dunlop's, whose property it was, and subsequently became factor to Lady Blantyre, on her ladyship's estate of Lethington, in East Lothian. In these migrations his mother accompanied him; and with him she resided till her death—which occurred in 1820.

Gilbert, in the opinion of those who knew him best, was more a theoretical, than a practical farmer, and a great speculator in agricultural systems. On the other hand, he had gifts like his brother's, though not of poetry, that with proper cultivation would have made him a distinguished man in the world of letters—as his contributions to Dr. Currie's life of the Poet, partially quoted in our own edition, prove. In consequence of some dissatisfaction, expressed by him and other friends, with the manner in which Dr. Currie had edited the Poet's works or written his life, he was induced to undertake an edition himself, which appeared in 1820—but was not so successful as expected. For this he received from the publishers, Cadell and Davies, the sum of £250—out of which he discharged to the widow and family of the Poet the debt of £180 still due to them by him. Of this sum, however, it appears Mrs. Burns, with much generosity, did not personally avail herself, but applied it to relieve another member of the family.

Gilbert had a family of six sons and five daughters.—Of these, Jane and John predeceased their father at short intervals—dying in succession of fever, of which he also died—the three being interred in the same churchyard within a space of as many months. James, his second son, died some eighteen or twenty years ago at Erskine, where he was factor to Lord Blantyre; and Robert, the fourth son, died at Buenos Ayres, sometime before that. Thomas, the third son, formerly the esteemed minister of Monkton, Ayrshire, and whose fatherly affectionate bearing we shall long remember, is now spiritual head of the Free Church Colony of Scotchmen in Otago, New Zealand; William, the eldest, and present representative of the family, is still alive in Dublin; and Gilbert, of Knockmaroon Lodge, the youngest, resides also in the neighbourhood of that city. For most of these particulars we are indebted to an esteemed friend and correspondent, a relative of the family.]

(1.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Isle, 2d March, 1789.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I ARRIVED from Edinburgh only the night before last, so could not answer your epistle sooner. I congratulate you on the prospect of employ; and I am indebted to you for one of the best letters that has been written by any mechanic-lad in Nithsdale, or Annandale, or any dale on either side of the Border, this twelvemonth. Not that I would have you always affect the stately stilts of studied composition, but surely writing a handsome letter is an accomplishment worth courting; and, with attention and practice, I can promise you that it will soon be an accomplishment of yours. If my advice can serve you—that is to say, if you can resolve to accustom yourself not only in reviewing your own deportment, manners, &c., but also in carrying your consequent resolutions of amending the faulty parts into practice—my small knowledge and experience of the world is heartily at your service. I intended to have given you a sheetful of counsels, but some business has prevented me. In a word, learn taciturnity; let that be your motto. Though you had the wisdom of Newton, or the wit of Swift, garrulousness would lower you in the eyes of your fellow-creatures. I'll probably write you next week.—I am, your brother,

ROBERT BURNS.

[Original in possession of Miss Begg.]

(2.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Isle, March 25th, 1789.

I HAVE stolen from my corn-sowing this minute to write a line to accompany your shirt and hat, for I can no more. Your sister Maria arrived yesternight, and begs to be remembered to you. Write me every opportunity—never mind postage. My head, too, is as addle as an egg this morning with dining abroad yesterday. I received yours by the mason. Forgive me this foolish-looking scrawl of an epistle. I am ever, my dear William, yours,

R. B.

P. S.—If you are not then gone from Longtown, I'll write you a long letter by this day se'ennight. If you should not succeed in your tramps, don't be dejected, or take any rash step—return to us in that case, and we will court Fortune's better humour. Remember this, I charge you.

(3.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS,
SADDLER,
CARE OF MR. WRIGHT, CARRIER, LONGTOWN.

Isle, 15th April, 1789.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I AM extremely sorry at the misfortune of your legs; I beg you will never let any worldly concern interfere with the more serious matter, the safety of your life and limbs. I have not time in these hurried days to write you anything other than a mere how d'ye letter. I will only repeat my favourite quotation:—

“What proves the hero truly great
Is never, never to despair.”

My house shall be your welcome home; and as I know your prudence (would to God you had *resolution* equal to your *prudence*!) if, anywhere at a distance from friends, you should need money, you know my direction by post.

The enclosed is from Gilbert, brought by your sister Nanny. It was unluckily forgot. Yours to Gilbert goes by post.—I heard from them yesterday, they are all well.

Adieu,

R. B.

(4.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Ellisland, 5th May, 1789.

MY DEAR WILLM.,

I AM happy to hear by yours from Newcastle, that you are getting some employ. Remember

“On Reason build Resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.”

I had a visit of your old landlord. In the midst of a drunken frolic in Dumfries, he took it into his head to come and see me; and I took all the pains in my power to please and entertain the old veteran. He is high in your praises, and I would advise you to cultivate his friendship, as he is, in his way, a worthy, and to you may be a useful man.

Anderson I hope will have your shoes ready to send by the waggon to-morrow. I forgot to mention the circumstance of making them pumps; but I suppose good calf shoes will be no great mistake. Wattie has paid me for the thongs.

What would you think of making a little inquiry how husbandry matters go, as you travel, and if one thing fail, you might perhaps try another?

Your falling in love is indeed a phenomenon.* To a fellow of your turn it cannot be hurtful. I am, you know, a veteran in these campaigns, so let me advise you always to pay your particular assiduities and try for intimacy as soon as you feel the first symptoms of the passion: this is not only best, as making the most of the little entertainment which the sportabilities of distant addresses always gives, but is the best preservative for one's peace. I need not caution you against guilty amours—they are bad and ruinous everywhere, but in England they are the very devil. I shall be in Ayrshire about a fortnight. Your sisters send their compliments. God bless you.

ROBERT BURNS.

Mr. William Burns, Saddler,
At the shop of Mr. Nicholson, Saddler,
Newgate Street,
Newcastle-on-Tyne.

* [Our Author seems not to have remembered his brother's youthful fancy for Nelly Miller at Mauchline—see *Reminiscences Original: Appendix*—or knew perhaps that it was not of a very serious character.

The above letter we print from *Newcastle Daily Journal*, to which it was contributed by Autograph Collector, March 19, 1868, with certain queries concerning William Burns, which will be found answered in the sequel.]

(5.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Ellisland, 14th August, 1789.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I RECEIVED your letter, and am very happy to hear that you have got settled for the winter. I enclose you the two guinea notes of the Bank of Scotland, which I hope will serve your need. It is, indeed, not quite so convenient for me to spare money as it once was, but I know your situation, and I will say it, in some respect your worth. I have no time to write at present, but I beg you will endeavour to pluck up a little more of the man than you used to have.

Remember my favourite quotation—

“On Reason build Resolve,
That column of true majesty in man;”

“What proves the hero truly great
Is never, never to despair.”

Your mother and sister beg their compliments.—*A Dieu je vous commende,*

ROBERT BURNS.

[From *Banffshire Journal*: Original given by Mrs. Begg, the Poet's sister, when residing at Tranent, to a certain Mr. F., who had shown her no little kindness; and now in possession of Mr. F.'s son, Badenoch.]

(6.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS.

Ellisland, 10th Nov., 1789.

DEAR WILLIAM,

I WOULD have written you sooner, but I am so hurried and fatigued with my Excise business, that I can scarcely pluck up resolution to go through the effort of a letter to anybody. Indeed you hardly deserve a letter from me, considering that you have spare hours in which you have nothing to do at all, and yet it was near three months between your two last letters.

I know not if you heard lately from Gilbert. I expect him here with me about the latter end of this week. * * * * My mother is returned, now that she has seen my little boy Francis fairly set to the world. I suppose Gilbert has informed you that you have got a new nephew. He is a fine thriving fellow, and promises to do honour to the name he bears. I have named him Francis Wallace, after my worthy friend, Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop.

The only Ayrshire news that I remember in which I think you will be interested, is that Mr. Ronald is bankrupt. You will easily guess, that from his insolent vanity in his sunshine of life, he will now feel a little retaliation from those who thought themselves eclipsed by him; for, poor fellow, I do not think he ever intentionally injured any one. I might, indeed, perhaps except his wife, whom he certainly has used very ill; but she is still fond of him to distraction, and bears up wonderfully—much superior to him—under this severe shock of fortune. Women have a kind of sturdy sufferance, which qualifies them to endure beyond, much beyond, the common run of men; but perhaps part of that fortitude is owing to their short-sightedness, for they are by no means famous for seeing remote consequences in all their real importance.

I am very glad at your resolution to live within your income, be that what it will. Had poor Ronald done so, he had not this day been a prey to the dreadful miseries of insolvency. You are at the time of life when those habitudes are begun which are to mark the character of the future man. Go on and persevere, and depend on less or more success. I am, dear William, your brother,

R. B.

(7.) TO MR. WILLIAM BURNS,
SADDLER, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.*Ellisland, 10th February, 1790.*

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Now that you are setting out for that place [London], put on manly resolve, and determine to persevere; and in that case you will less or more be sure of success. One or two things allow me to particularise to you. London swarms with worthless wretches, who prey on their fellow-creatures'

thoughtlessness or inexperience. Be cautious in forming connections with comrades and companions. You can be pretty good company to yourself, and you cannot be too shy of letting anybody know you further than to know you as a saddler. Another caution. . . . It is an impulse the hardest to be restrained; but if once a man accustoms himself to gratifications of that impulse, it is then nearly or altogether impossible to restrain it. . . .

I have gotten the Excise division, in the middle of which I live. Poor little Frank is this morning at the height of the small-pox. I got him inoculated, and I hope he is in a good way.

Write me before you leave Newcastle, and as soon as you reach London. In a word, if ever you be, as perhaps you may be, in a strait for a little ready cash, you know my direction. I shall not see you beat while you fight like a man.—Farewell! God bless you.

ROBT. BURNS.

[The history and progress, somewhat sorrowful, of this younger brother, of whom our Author seems to have taken a sort of paternal care, is sufficiently manifest from the series of letters addressed to him and now for the first time completed and arranged. For an account of his premature and melancholy death, the reader is referred to Mr. Murdoch's letter at the close of this correspondence.]

To Mr. Samuel Brown.

*Mossiel, 4th May, 1788.**

DEAR UNCLE,

THIS, I hope, will find you and your conjugal yoke-fellow in your good old way; I am impatient to know if the Ailsa fowling† be commenced for this season yet, as I want three or four stones of feathers, and I hope you will bespeak them for me. It would be a vain attempt for me to enumerate the various transactions I have been engaged in since I saw you last, but this know,—I am engaged in a *smuggling trade*, and God knows if ever any poor man experienced better returns, two for one; but as freight and delivery have turned out so dear, I am thinking of taking out a licence and beginning in fair trade. I have taken a farm on the borders of the Nith, and in imitation of the old Patriarchs, get men-servants and maid-servants, and flocks and herds, and beget sons and daughters. Your obedient Nephew,

R. B.

* [Incorrectly dated in some editions 1789.]

† [That is, of the Solan Geese and other wild fowl on the Craig, of which there used to be, and perhaps still is, an annual slaughter.]

[It was with the uncle to whom this letter is addressed, a brother of his mother's, our Author resided at Kirkoswald.]

JEAN'S MARRIAGE DRESS
AND
JEAN'S HOME-COMING.

To Mr. Robert M'Indoe,
MERCHANT, GLASGOW.

Mauchline, 5th Aug., 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AM vexed for nothing more that I have not been at Glasgow, than not meeting with you. I have seldom found my friend Andrew M'Culloch wrong in his ideas of mankind; but respecting your worship, he was true as Holy Writ. This is the night of our Fair, and I, as you see, cannot keep well *in a line*: but if you will send me by the bearer, John Ronald, carrier between Glasgow and Mauchline, fifteen yards of black silk, the same kind as that of which I bought a gown and petticoat from you formerly—Lutestring, I think, is its name—I shall send you the money and a more coherent letter, when he goes again to your good town. To be brief, send me fifteen yds. black Lutestring silk, such as they used to make gowns and petticoats of, and I shall chuse some sober morning before breakfast, and write you a sober answer, with the sober sum which will then be due you from,

Dear Sir, fu' or fasting, yours sincerely,

ROBT. BURNS.

Memorandum attached to letter—"Order complied with: price of silk from 5s. 6d. to 5s. 9d.—Ordered to be sent to Cross's, Trongate, before one o'clock at latest, with price stated.—R. M'I. Addressed to Mr. Peter Buchanan. 7th Sept., 1788."

[From original in possession of John Reid, Esq., Kingston Place, Glasgow. By the memorandum affixed to this letter, it would appear that the merchant to whom the order had been intrusted was Mr. Buchanan. The previous order of the same material must either have been for an earlier present to Jean, or stuff for the dresses to his sisters with which the Poet complimented them on his first return from Edinburgh—see Mrs. Begg's statement in *Chambers*, vol. II., p. 92—where the material is said to have been of "*mode silk*, sufficient to make a bonnet and cloak to each, and a gown besides to his mother and youngest sister." In the present instance, there can be no doubt, from the letter which follows, that the gift was for Jean—that this in fact was the order for Jean's MARRIAGE DRESS. In any view, the light which shines on the man's existence, through this piece of drapery, with the "baiveridge" of a kiss to follow, is exquisite. The reader may compare also song "The Bonnie Lad that's far awa," stanza iv.—Poetical Works, p. 176.]

(1.) To Mrs. Burns.

Ellisland, Friday, 12th Sept., 1788.

MY DEAR LOVE,

I RECEIVED your kind letter with a pleasure which no letter but one from you could have given me. I dreamed of you the whole night last; but, alas! I fear it will be three weeks yet, ere I can hope for the happiness of seeing you—My harvest is going on. I have some to cut down still, but I put in two stacks to day, so I [am] as tired as a dog.—

[You mig]ht get one of Gilbert's sweet milk cheeses [] and send it to []. On second thoughts, I believe you had best get the half of Gilbert's web of table linen, and make it up; tho' I think it damnable dear, but it is no out-laid money to us, you know. I have just now consulted my old landlady about table linen, and she thinks I may have the best for two shillings per yard; so after all, let it alone until I return; and some day soon I will be in Dumfries and will ask the price there. I expect your new gowns will be very forward, or ready to make, against I be home to get the baiveridge. I have written my long-thought-on letter to Mr. Graham, the Commissioner of Excise; and have sent a sheetful [of Poe]etry besides. Now I talk of Poetry, I had [] strathspey among my hands to m[ake a song to] for Johnson's Collection which, I []

[The original of above is in possession of Andrew Nicolson, shoemaker, Dumfries. The loyalty of this man's devotion to the memory of Burns is an honour to Dumfries and his native country. His wife was a servant in Mrs. Burns's house, and received the remains of parlour furniture originally in Ellisland, as plenishing for her own house, when she married. This fragment of a letter and several other papers were accidentally among the stuff removed from Mrs. Burns's house at the time, and were long afterwards discovered. The present possessor of these has been repeatedly offered large sums of money for them in vain. Compare letter to Morison, p. 178, with note upon.

In other respects this letter is most interesting. It was at this very moment, as we see, when "tired as a dog," that the Author was inditing his epistle to Graham of Fintray; and still more, the two immortal lyrics dedicated to Jean—"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw," and "Were I on Parnassus Hill"—which, together with this letter, demonstrate the genuineness of his conjugal affection. The idea, too, of consulting her about "sheetfuls of Poetry," and "Strathspeys" to be fitted with songs, most likely in honour of herself, for "Johnson's Collection"—Bless the man! But the intermingling of such prosaic concerns as "cheese and table cloths," and the making of "new gowns"—*that*, by the bye, was *not* prosaic—with all this ecstatic woman-worship—is delightful in the extreme; and the appearance of old Nanse Kelly as housewife on the scene, with her discussions on the Bible, her prayers and her "armfuls of fitches,"—see Mrs. Burns's own Memoranda in Appendix—completes the picture. Mrs. Burns herself, however, was soon to arrive, and Nanse's administration would terminate.

Mr. George Combe's verdict, on phrenological principles alone, that Acquisitiveness was largely developed in our Author's constitution, was doubted by many, and reported with astonishment by Mr. Combe himself; but the above letter, which Mr. Combe could not by possibility have seen, confirms the truth of that verdict indisputably.

So precious a little fragment—precious in every way—of a great existence, revealing or illustrating the secrets of a lifetime, we have scarcely ever seen. On same subject the reader may compare Gossip, 12, Mrs. Muir of Tarbolton—Appendix.]

To Dr. Mundell,

DUMFRIES.

Ellisland, Tuesday Morning.

DEAR DOCTOR,

THE bearer, Janet Nievison, is a neighbour, and occasionally a laborer of mine.—She has got some complaint in her shoulder, and wants me to find her out a Doctor that will cure her, so I have sent her to you.—You will remember that she is just in the jaws of matrimony, so for heaven's sake, get her "hale and sound" as soon as possible. We are all pretty well; only the little boy's sore mouth has again inflamed Mrs. B——'s nipples. I am, yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

[From fac-simile of original obligingly supplied by Dr. Grierson of Thornhill.]

(2.) TO MRS. BURNS.

Brow, Thursday.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I DELAYED writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only thing I can taste. I am very happy to hear by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her, and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday.

Your affectionate husband,

R. B.

To Mr. James Armour,

(1.) MASON, MAUHLINE.

July 10th, [1796.]

FOR Heaven's sake, and as you value the wellfare of your daughter and my wife, do, my dearest Sir, write to Fife to Mrs. Armour to come if possible. My wife thinks she can yet reckon upon a fortnight. The medical people order me, as I value my existence, to fly to sea-bathing and country-quarters, so it is ten thousand chances to one that I shall not be within a dozen miles of her when her hour comes. What a situation for her, poor girl, without a single friend by her on such a serious moment.

I have now been a week at salt-water, and though I think I have got some good by it, yet I have some secret fears that this business will be dangerous, if not fatal.

Your most affectionate son,

R. B.

(2.) TO MR. JAMES ARMOUR,
MAUHLINE.*Dumfries, 18th July, 1796.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Do, for Heaven's sake, send Mrs. Armour here immediately. My wife is hourly expecting to be put to bed. Good God! what a situation for her to be in, poor girl,* without a friend! I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day, and my medical friends would almost persuade me that I am better; but I think and feel that my strength is so gone, that the disorder will prove fatal to me.

Your son-in-law,

R. B.

* [Mrs. Burns not yet thirty years of age.—“It was an affecting circumstance,” says Dr. Currie, “that on the morning of the day of her husband's funeral, Mrs. Burns was undergoing the pains of labour, and that during the solemn service we have just been describing [funeral service] the posthumous son of our Poet was born.” Affecting and sorrowful it no doubt was, in the highest degree; but the beautiful dream she has personally described, like a revelation from Paradise, at that dreadful crisis, would soothe and cheer her.—See her own Memoranda—Appendix, p. xxv. This child, named Maxwell, in honour of Dr. Maxwell, died in infancy.]

AUTHOR'S ANXIETY

FOR THE EDUCATION AND WELFARE OF HIS CHILDREN.

[If there was one moral instinct by which ROBERT BURNS was more conspicuously distinguished than another, it was that of Parental Affection for his children; which in the concluding years of his life, when sorrow and difficulties began to accumulate, and the horizon of their prospects was darkened, became almost overwhelmingly intense. This feeling is nowhere more clearly or affectingly exhibited than in the well-known letter to Erskine of Mar, written under the most painful apprehensions on that engrossing subject, and which we therefore here introduce as the most appropriate conclusion we can find for his entire correspondence. The citizen, the father, and the man, are all legible here. The interesting letter by his Widow, which follows on the same subject, and is now for the first time published, forms a natural and satisfactory pendant to the whole.]

To John Francis Erskine, Esq.,

OF MAR.

Dumfries, 13th April, 1793.

SIR,

DEGENERATE as human nature is said to be—and in many instances worthless and unprincipled it is—still there are bright examples to the contrary; examples that, even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronize and befriend a distant, obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismissal from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintry, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want. Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismissal; but the little money I gained by my publication is, almost every guinea, embarked to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea!—That a CONSTITUTION which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory:—that, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of REFORM: But that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious CONSTITUTION; and which every patriotic Briton



From "Terry Miniature"

Engraved by Cooke

ROBERT,

Born Sep. 3rd 1786.

Eldest Son of the Poet Burns.

"Bagatelle"
1795.

David Wilson, Publisher, Glasgow.

must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these I stated in a letter to my generous patron, Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our supervisors-general, a Mr. Corbet, was intructed to enquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, *not to think*; and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent and obedient*."

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven: only, I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my COUNTRYMEN has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the POET I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the MAN. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and situated as I was, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hiring paragraphs—"Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfaronade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods. BURNS was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity: but I *will* say it! the sterling of his honest worth no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind, oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my country's welfare than the richest dukedom in it?—I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of SLAVES.—Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys—the little independent BRITONS, in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my full efforts can be of no service, and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concern of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals as I that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support and the eye of intelligence. The uninformed MOB may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng may be its feathered ornament; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect, yet low enough

to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court!—these are a nation's strength.

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you further—when you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. BURNS, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here in his native colours drawn *as he is*; but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor BARD for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy, as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your deeply indebted,

And ever devoted humble servant,

R. B.

[The gentleman to whom this letter is addressed was the then representative of the ancient but attainted House of Mar, and was ultimately restored to its honours. Having heard that Burns was in danger of dismissal from the Excise for his politics, he handsomely came forward to inaugurate a subscription on his behalf in the event of such a contingency occurring. Hence the above letter to him of self-vindication and thanks by our Author. The letter, it appears, was carefully engrossed in the Poet's memorandum book, and the most emphatic words underlined as here represented. There seems to be very little doubt, therefore, that the writer had experienced official hints which rendered his further employment uncertain, and clouded his life to that extent with anxiety and gloom.]

THE POET'S FAMILY.

Mrs. Burns to Mrs. Riddel.

Dumfries, * th, 1804.

MADAM,

MRS. SCOT was so good as call on me the other day, and informed me of your kind inquiry after my family, and that you wished to know what was become of Mr. Burns' children. We still live in the same house that you left us in, and William Nichol is the only child I have at home. Robert is at Glasgow College, and has been two winters; he was one in Edinur. It is reported, and I believe with truth, that he will be provided for in London by Mr. Addington, through the interest of Mr. Shaw the present Sheriff of London. Francis Wallace died last year—he was to have gone to the East Indies this spring had he lived: Mr. Shaw had got a cadet's place for him. James Glencairn is in the Bluecoat School in Newgate Street—he was also put there by Mr. Shaw. It is about 16 months since James M'Clure took him to London. He call'd with James on you at Mr. Banks, but you was in the country—He left his name and where James was to be found, but they had not told you. William is not settled yet—he is still at school. I return

you my sincere thanks for your good wishes to my family, and believe me, Madam,

Your obliged and sincere well-wisher,

JEAN BURNS.

P.S.—Maxwell died 2 years and 9 months after Mr. Burns.
J. B.

* [Letter has been sealed with a large wafer, which destroys the date.]

[The above interesting document, which we print from the original holograph in possession of T. C. S. Corry, Esq., M.D., of Belfast, contains a much simpler and more graphic account of the Poet's family, with their prospective destinations, than anything we could put in its place; and we allow it, therefore, to remain as it is, without further commentary. The Mr. Addington referred to, afterwards Lord Sidmouth, was Prime-Minister; and the Mr. Shaw referred to was an Ayrshire man, afterwards Sir James, and Lord-Mayor of London. Some quotations from his life may interest our readers: he was elected Alderman, 1798; Sheriff, 1803; Lord-Mayor, 1805; M.P. for the City of London, 1806; created Baronet, 1809; Chamberlain of City, 1831. Died Oct. 22, 1843, aged 79. Sir James was the first Scotchman who filled the office of Lord-Mayor of London. He was most affectionately attached to his native country, and his benefactions to Kilmarnock in particular, where he spent his earliest years, have been commemorated by a marble statue in his honour there.

The James M'Clure referred to, as James Glencairn's guide to London, was Burns's personal attendant on his death bed.

It is obvious from the commencement of the above letter that Mrs. Riddell must have been calling for the family after the Poet's death: compare history of "Kerry Miniature," also letter (10) to her. It may interest our readers, as a matter of pleasant curiosity, to know, that, by the phonetic orthography of the original of this letter, Jean's pronunciation must have been of the broadest Ayrshire dialect.]

LETTERS,

FROM RELATIVES AND FRIENDS,

TO THE AUTHOR, &c.

(1.) To Mr. Robert Burns.

Mossiel, 1st Jan., 1789.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE just finished my New-year's-day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes "through the dark postern of time long elapsed," I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the GOD OF SEASONS is to us, and that, however some clouds may seem to lower over the portion before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well.

Your mother and sisters, with Robert the Second, join me in the compliments of the season to you and Mrs. Burns, and beg you will remember us in the same manner to William the first time you see him. I am, dear Brother,

Yours,

GILBERT BURNS.

[From Chambers's Edition, 1856.]

(2.) TO MR. ROBERT BURNS.

Mossiel, 4th Sept., 1790.

DR. BROTHER,

I HAVE got only about the half of my hay drove, and would have been the better to have had your horse another week, but as you need him yourself I must try to do without him. I have been much distressed with the bad weather; it has destroyed and rendered unsaleable not less than 300 stones of hay to me, besides extra wages endeavouring to save it, and my crop, which is but light, is all as green as leeks; so that if the season is not uncommonly favourable, you will have to serve me in seed-corn; but in this respect a number of my neighbours are no better than myself, and I will hope for the best. I do, indeed, foresee many difficultys, and partly feel them, and would gladly make use of a tocher to ward them off, but the only one I am certain of having in my power would in a few years involve me in much greater difficultys.

Monday morn. Already has the frost begun to allarm us. I hope it has not yet done the oats any hurt, but we have much to fear, for the earliest of mine will take three weeks of the best weather. I have this morning weighed 18 stones 3 pounds of cheese for you; which, with 6 st. 14 lb. before, makes 25 st. 1 lb. Be sure to warn all your friends to keep them in a dry cool place and turn them frequently.

Acct. curt. betwixt G. Burns and Robt. Burns.
Gilbt. Burns Dr.

chestnut-coloured horse, . . .	£12 12
new saddle and bridle, . . .	3 19
	£16 11
balance due, 2 4 6, . . .	2 4 6
	£18 15 6

Per Contra Cr.

cash per Mrs. Burns, . . .	£9 9
25 st. 1 lb. sweet milk cheese at 6s 6d, . . .	8 2 10½
5 st. 2½ lb. scummed ditto at 4s, . . .	1 0 7½
cash paid school wages for William Burns,	3
	£18 15 6

The above is a state of accounts betwixt you and I, as far as I can recollect. The balance of £2 4s 6d I shall want, as I am scarce of money, and I hope when you have got in the price of the cheese it will be convenient for you to spare it. If you can give me a bed, I wish to spend a Sunday with you before I begin harvest, and I will write you that you may be disengaged, if I can possibly get away; but I am excessively hurried, and if the weather is bad it will not be in my power.

Samuel Ross wishes to know whether you will need his son, as he wishes him not to stay in your country if you do not need him, and will try to find a place for him in this. Tell Nanny that Bell is much better than she was once, but still

complains frequently of being out of order and want of digestion, and from the extreme delicacy of her nervous system is incapable of bearing any fatigue, either of body or mind. She wished to have wrote, but could not muster as much resolution. Farewell—wishing you guid furder, health and guid weather, I remain, dear Brother,

Yours, &c., G. BURNS.

[The letter is addressed to "Mr. Robert Burns, Ellisland, near Dumfries," and on the corner is marked, "Wt. 18 cheeses." The poet, at the date of the letter, had been settled about two years at Ellisland, and his prospects were at that time better than at any former part of his life, although, alas! few of them were destined to be realised.—*Elgin Courier*. Compare Account with D. Kelly—Appendix, p. xxvi.]

To Mr. Wallace,

(3.) WRITER, DUMFRIES.

Mossiel, 1st Jan., 1797.

MR. WALLACE,
SIR,

I INTENDED to have been in Dumfries about this time, to have paid off my brother's debts; but I find much difficulty in sparing as much money. I think of offering Captain Hamilton and Mr. Williamson the half of their accts., and begging a little time to pay the other half. If Mr. Clark pay up his bill, I hope to be able to pay off the smaller accts. I beg you will write me your opinion immediately on this subject. Will you have the goodness to mention this to them, which will save me some uneasiness when I come to Dumfries, which I think will be in two or three weeks, unless I have occasion to delay it till Dumfries fair? I beg that you will smooth the way to me in this business as much as you can. I do feel much hurt at it; but, as I suppose the delay can be no great inconvenience to the gentlemen, I hope they will be indulgent to me.

I am, Sir, your most obedt. humble sert.,

GILBERT BURNS.

[From Chambers's Edition, 1856.]

[Compare note on letter (1) to Captain Hamilton; also on letter to Gilbert Burns himself.]

To Mr. George Thomson,

(4.) TRUSTEES' OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

Dinning, 14th March, 1800.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your very acceptable present of your songs, which calls for my warmest thanks. If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly avail myself of your invitation, to call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed to me the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connection with the harmony of the moral feelings. I am unwilling, indeed, to believe that the motions of every one's heart are dark as Erebus, to whom Dame Nature has denied a good ear and musical

capacity, as her ladyship has been pleased to endow myself but scantily in these particulars; but "happy the swain who possesses it, happy his cot, and happy the sharer of it." To the sharer of yours, I beg you will present my most cordial congratulations. My sister-in-law begs me to present her best thanks to you for her copy, and to assure you that, however little she may have expressed it, she has a proper sense of the kind attention you have so kindly shown her.

I am, dear Sir, with the highest esteem,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GILBERT BURNS.

[From Chambers's Edition, 1856.]

To Messrs. Cadell and Dabies,

(5.) BOOKSELLERS, LONDON.

Grant's Braes, 19th February, 1820.

GENTLEMEN,

I RETURN you the proof of the "Feto Champetre," with such corrections as it appeared to me to require, and such notes as I think will make it understood. The Title-page will do, but supposing it not necessary, and willing to prevent additional postage, have not returned it. As the publication may now I suppose be soon expected, I shall be much obliged to you to put me in possession of the copies I am to get, as early as any copies can be ready for delivery in this country, as I intend some of them as presents to people I am under great obligations to, and the value will be increased by being put as early into their hands as any other person can receive the volumes.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your most obt. humble sert.,

GILBERT BURNS.

[The above letter, which refers to Gilbert's Edition of his Brother's Poems, we print from the original in possession of T. C. S. Corry, Esq., M.D., Belfast, to whom we are indebted for many similar obligations. The document enclosed a proof sheet, as stated; which, however, does not accompany the letter in our hands.]

To Mr. Robert Burns.

(1.)

Longtown, Feb. 15, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

AS I am now in a manner only entering into the world, I begin this our correspondence with a view of being a gainer by your advice, more than ever you can be by any thing I can write you of what I see, or what I hear, in the course of my wanderings. I know not how it happened, but you were more shy of your counsel than I could have wished the time I staid with you: whether it was because you thought it would disgust me to have my faults freely told me while I was dependant on you; or whether it was because you saw that by my indolent disposition, your instructions would have no effect, I cannot determine; but if it proceeded from any of the above causes, the reason of withholding your admonition is

now done away, for I now stand on my own bottom, and that indolence, which I am very conscious of, is something rubbed off, by being called to act in life whether I will or not; and my inexperience, which I daily feel, makes me wish for that advice which you are so able to give, and which I can only expect from you or Gilbert since the loss of the kindest and ablest of fathers.

The morning after I went from the Isle, I left Dumfries about five o'clock and came to Annan to breakfast, and staid about an hour; and I reached this place about two o'clock. I have got work here, and I intend to stay a month or six weeks, and then go forward, as I wish to be at York about the latter end of summer, where I propose to spend next winter, and go on for London in the spring.

I have the promise of seven shillings a week from Mr. Proctor while I stay here, and sixpence more if he succeeds himself, for he has only new begun trade here. I am to pay four shillings per week of board wages, so that my neat income here will be much the same as in Dumfries.

The inclosed you will send to Gilbert with the first opportunity. Please send me the first Wednesday after you receive this, by the Carlisle waggon, two of my coarse shirts, one of my best linen ones, my velveteen vest, and a neckcloth; write to me along with them, and direct to me, Saddler, in Longtown, and they will not miscarry, for I am boarded in the waggoner's house. You may either let them be given in to the waggon, or send them to Coulthard and Gellebourn's shop and they will forward them. Pray write me often while I stay here.—I wish you would send me a letter, though never so small, every week, for they will be no expense to me and but little trouble to you. Please to give my best wishes to my sister-in-law, and believe me to be your affectionate

And obliged Brother,

WILLIAM BURNS.

P.S.—The great-coat you gave me at parting did me singular service the day I came here, and merits my hearty thanks. From what has been said, the conclusion is this—that my hearty thanks and my best wishes are all that you and my sister must expect from

W. B.

(2.) TO MR. ROBERT BURNS.

Newcastle, 24th Jan., 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I WROTE you about six weeks ago, and I have expected to hear from you every post since, but I suppose your excise business, which you hinted at in your last, has prevented you from writing. By the bye, when and how have you got into the excise; and what division have you got about Dumfries? These questions please answer in your next, if more important matter do not occur. But in the mean time let me have the letter to John Murdoch, which Gilbert wrote me you meant to send; inclose it in your's to me, and let me have

them as soon as possible, for I intend to sail for London in a fortnight, or three weeks at farthest.

You promised me when I was intending to go to Edinburgh, to write me some instructions about behaviour in companies rather above my station, to which I might be eventually introduced. As I may be introduced into such companies at Murdoch's or on his account when I go to London, I wish you would write me some such instructions now; I never had more need of them, for having spent little of my time in company of any sort since I came to Newcastle, I have almost forgot the common civilities of life. To these instructions pray add some of a moral kind, for though (either through the strength of early impressions, or the frigidity of my constitution) I have hitherto withstood the temptation to those vices to which young fellows of my station and time of life are so much addicted, yet, I do not know if my virtue will be able to withstand the more powerful temptations of the metropolis; yet, through God's assistance and your instructions I hope to weather the storm.

Give the compliments of the season and my love to my sisters, and all the rest of your family. Tell Gilbert the first time you write him that I am well, and that I will write him either when I sail or when I arrive at London.

I am, &c.

W. B.

(3.) TO MR. ROBERT BURNS.

London, 21st March, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE been here three weeks come Tuesday, and would have written you sooner but was not settled in a place of work:—We were ten days on our passage from Shields; the weather being calm I was not sick, except one day when it blew pretty hard. I got into work the Friday after I came to town; I wrought there only eight days, their job being done. I got work again in a shop in the Strand, the next day after I left my former master. It is only a temporary place, but I expect to be settled soon in a shop to my mind, although it will be a harder task than I at first imagined, for there are such swarms of fresh hands just come from the country that the town is quite overstocked, and except one is a particularly good workman (which you know I am not, nor I am afraid ever will be), it is hard to get a place: However, I don't yet despair to bring up my lee-way, and shall endeavour if possible to sail within three or four points of the wind. The encouragement here is not what I expected, wages being very low in proportion to the expense of living, but yet, if I can only lay by the money that is spent by others in my situation in dissipation and riot, I expect soon to return you the money I borrowed of you and live comfortably besides.

In the mean time I wish you would send up all my best lincn shirts to London, which you may easily do by sending them to some of your Edinburgh friends, to be shipped from Leith. Some of them are too little; don't send any but what are good, and I wish one of my sisters could find as much

time as to trim my shirts at the breast, for there is no such thing to be seen here as a plain shirt, even for wearing, which is what I want these for. I mean to get one or two new shirts here for Sundays, but I assure you that linen here is a very expensive article. I am going to write to Gilbert to send me an Ayrshire cheese; if he can spare it he will send it to you, and you may send it with the shirts, but I expect to hear from you before that time. The cheese I could get here; but I will have a pride in eating Ayrshire cheese in London, and the expense of sending it will be little, as you are sending the shirts any how.

I write this by J. Stevenson, in his lodgings, while he is writing to Gilbert. He is well and hearty, which is a blessing to me as well as to him: We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon, to hear the *Calf* preach; he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever.* There is a whole colony of Kilmarnock people here, so we don't want for acquaintance.

Remember me to my sisters and all the family. I shall give you all the observations I have made on London in my next, when I shall have seen more of it.

I am, Dear Brother, yours, &c.,

W. B.

* [The Rev. James Steven: "The Calf"—Poetical Works, p. 24.]

From Mr. Murdoch to the Bard,

GIVING HIM AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER
WILLIAM.

*Hart Street, Bloomsbury Square, London,
September 14th, 1790.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOURS of the 16th of July I received on the 26th, in the afternoon, per favor of my friend Mr. Kennedy, and at the same time was informed that your brother was ill. Being engaged in business till late that evening, I set out next morning to see him, and had thought of three or four medical gentlemen of my acquaintance, to one or other of whom I might apply for advice, provided it should be necessary. But when I went to Mr. Barber's, to my great astonishment and heartfelt grief, I found that my young friend had, on Saturday, bid an everlasting farewell to all sublunary things.—It was about a fortnight before that he had found me out, by Mr. Stevenson's accidentally calling at my shop to buy something. We had only one interview, and that was highly entertaining to me in several respects. He mentioned some instruction I had given him when very young, to which he said he owed, in a great measure, the philanthropy he pos-

sessed.—He also took notice of my exhorting you all, when I wrote, about eight years ago, to the man who, of all mankind that I ever knew, stood highest in my esteem, "not to let go your integrity."—You may easily conceive that such conversation was both pleasing and encouraging to me: I anticipated a deal of rational happiness from future conversations.—Vain are our expectations and hopes. They are so almost always—Perhaps (nay, certainly) for our good. Were it not for disappointed hopes we could hardly spend a thought on another state of existence, or be in any degree reconciled to the quitting of this.

I know of no one source of consolation to those who have lost young relatives equal to that of their being of a good disposition, and of a promising character.

Be assured, my dear friend, that I cordially sympathize with you all, and particularly with Mrs. W. Burns, who is undoubtedly one of the most tender and affectionate mothers that ever lived. Remember me to her in the most friendly manner, when you see her, or write.—Please present my best compliments to Mrs. R. Burns, and to your brother and sisters.—There is no occasion for me to exhort you to filial duty, and to use your united endeavours in rendering the evening of life as comfortable as possible to a mother who has dedicated so great a part of it in promoting your temporal and spiritual welfare.

Your letter to Dr. Moore I delivered at his house, and shall most likely know your opinion of Zeluce the first time I meet with him. I wish and hope for a long letter. Be particular about your mother's health. I hope she is too much a Christian to be afflicted above measure, or to sorrow as those who have no hope.

One of the most pleasing hopes I have is to visit you all; but I am commonly disappointed in what I most ardently wish for.—I am, Dear Sir, yours sincerely,

JOHN MURDOCH.

To Mr. Robert Burns.

SIR,

I RECEIVED your favour of the 5th instant this day, containing a bill for the money expended in your deceased brother's sickness and funeral. Wishing you all health and happiness, I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

W. BARBER.

Strand, Oct. 8, 1790.

[Found among the Poet's papers, and now in possession of our friend Thomas Thorburn, Esq., Ryedale, Dumfries.]



To the following most obliging and esteemed Correspondents our best acknowledgments are due, for original documents or valuable information contributed by them to the foregoing portions of our work, and for some information also contained in our Appendix—as under:

AIKEN, P. F., Esq., Walleroft House, Durdham Park, Bristol;
Letter (4) to Aiken; also Letter by Miss Grace Aiken, with interesting information relative,.....Prose Works, p. 146—149.

ALLAN, Mr. JOHN, Farmer in Smeeston, Tarbolton, and son of "Tibbie Lass;"

Anecdote concerning heroine of that song; and also concerning "Death" in "Death and Dr. Hornbook,".....Poetical Works, p. 92 and 261.

BEGG, Miss, Niece of the Poet, Bridgehouse, Ayr;

Copy of Letter to William Burns, with much valuable information relative to Poet's life and history.

BROADFIELD, Mr. EDWARD, Glasgow;

Letter (1) to Aiken, revised *verbatim*;.....Prose Works, p. 145.
Inscription on blank leaf of Hannah More's Works, revised *verbatim*.

BURNS, Col. W. N., Son of the Poet, Cheltenham;

Register from Poet's Family Bible, photograph—see Illustration; also, Photographs from Nasmyth, &c.;

CARRUTHERS, ROBERT, Esq., *Inverness Courier*;

Supplementary Letters (1), (2), (3), to Johnson,.....Prose Works, p. 130.
Quotations from Manuscripts in British Museum,..... do. p. 206.

CLARK, C. G., Esq., Dumfriesshire; through Dr. Grierson, Thornhill;

Photograph Inscriptions on Young's Night Thoughts, to and by "Clarinda,".....Prose Works, p. 52.

CORRY, T. C. S., Esq., M.D., Belfast;

Letters (10), partly (12), to Mrs. Riddel,.....Prose Works, p. 61;
Letter by Mrs. Burns, widow, to Mrs. Riddel,..... do. p. 219;
Letter by Gilbert Burns to Cadell and Davies,..... do. p. 221.

CRUM, Mrs. JAMES, Busby;

Letter (3) to Aiken,..... do. p. 146.

CUTHBERT, THOMAS, Esq., Burnock Holms, Ochiltree;

Information concerning composition of certain poems, "Soldier's Return," "On Destruction of the Woods at Drumlanrig," &c.

DENNY, JOHN, Esq., Town-Clerk, Dumbarton;

Most courteous assistance in examining Burgh Records, anent Burns's Freedom of that town,.....Appendix, p. xxxviii.

EVERITT, Mrs. BURNS, Grand-daughter of the Poet, Ayr;

Impression of Poet's seal in her possession, attached to this series; also Anecdote of Poet's humanity,.....Appendix, p. xxxix.

GEMMELL, GAVIN, Esq., Banker, Ayr;

Various Readings, in "Vision" &c.; also most valuable and courteous assistance in obtaining original documents—as *infra*.

GEMMELL, THOS. M., Esq., *Ayr Advertiser*;

Courteous information concerning John Ballantine, Esq.

GILCHRIST, Dr. JAMES, Crichton Institute, Dumfries;

Courteous information concerning original manuscript of the "Whistle."

GLADSTONE, Mr. & Mrs. STEWART, Capenoch, Dumfriesshire;

Letter (2) to Samuel Clarke, Jun., Dumfries,.....Prose Works, p. 196.

GLADSTONE, Miss MARY SELINA, Fasque, Laurencekirk;

Letter to Blair, gunmaker, Birmingham; also, manuscript of "Lines Written in Friars-Carse Hermitage,".....Prose Works, p. 203.

GRIERSON, Mr. T. B., Surgeon, Thornhill;

Photograph of Letter to Dr. Mundell,.....Prose Works, p. 217;
Photograph of Excise Permit—see Illustration;
Fac-simile of "Jolly Beggars" from which our edition is printed; also Fac-simile of Poet's Assignment, in Appendix; so admirable a fac-simile as to be mistaken by us at the time for a duplicate original by the Poet—See Note in Appendix,.....p. xii.

HOGG, Rev. DAVID, Manse, Kirkmahoe, Dumfriesshire;

Original information concerning "Cutty Sark" in "Tam o' Shanter," [Poetical Works, p. 245;
Original information concerning "Winsome Willie" and the Tailor, [Appendix, p. xlii.

HUTCHINSON, Mrs. BURNS, Grand-daughter of the Poet, Cheltenham;

Much interesting and valuable information concerning his life, and certain of his poems.

JOHNSTON, Miss, Sanquhar, by G. Gemmell, Esq., Ayr;

Memorandum for Provost Edward Whigham,.....Prose Works, p. 188.

LOGAN, Miss, Bishopscleugh, by G. Gemmell, Esq., Ayr;

Letter (1) to John Logan, Esq., Knockshinnoch,.....Prose Works, p. 154;
Do. (2) do. do. revised *verbatim* from original, p. 154;
Kirk's Alarm, do. do. do. Poetical Works, p. 390.

MANNERS, GEORGE, Esq., F.S.A., Croydon;

Letter (21) to Mrs. Dunlop, with Psalmody,.....Prose Works, p. 18;
Do. (34) to Clarinda,..... do. p. 49;
Do. (13) to Mrs. Riddel,..... do. p. 61;
Do. (2) to Robert Cleghorn,..... do. p. 170;
Do. (1) to Captain Hamilton,..... do. p. 194;
* Do. to William Inglis, Esq., Inverness,..... do. p. 205.

N.B.—This last letter, we are requested by Mr. Manners to state, is from a copy obligingly afforded to him by a collector, and not in his own possession, as inadvertently stated by us. The original, we believe, is now the property of a gentleman in Glasgow.

M'DIARMID, WM. RITCHIE, Esq., *Dumfries Courier*;

Letter to Provost Staig, Dumfries,.....Prose Works, p. 199;
Memoranda by Mrs. Burns,.....Appendix, p. xxi;
Portrait of Mrs. Burns—*vide* Engraving.

M'DONALD, Mr. JAMES, Castle Street, Dundee;

Valuable information with respect to manuscript documents, Fasque Manuscript, &c.

NICOLSON, Mr. ANDREW, Shoemaker, Dumfries;

Letter (1) to Mrs. Burns,.....Prose Works, p. 217;
also, Information concerning Poet's Household Plenishing, &c.

PAGAN, GEORGE, Esq., Banker, New Cumnock, by G. Gemmell, Esq., Ayr.

Letter to Monsr. Thos. Campbell, Peneloc,.....Prose Works, p. 155.

REID, JOHN, Esq., Kingston Place, Glasgow;

Letter (4) to Muir,.....Prose Works, p. 143;
Do. (7) do. revised *verbatim* from original,..... do. p. 144;
Do. to Robert M'Indoe,..... do. p. 217;
Do. by Dr. George Grierson,..... do. p. 205;
Original Versions of Epigrams, &c.; also,
Important information concerning Burns's first visit to Glasgow—
See Appendix,.....p. xxxvii.

SIM, Sergeant JOHN, Bridge-end, Perth;

Curious and important information concerning authorship of poem incorrectly ascribed to Robert Burns—"To my Bed."

STUART-MENTETH, Sir JAMES, Bart., of Mansfield House, Ayrshire;

Three Documents relating to Contest for Whistle,....Poet. Works, p. 251;
Photograph of Nursing Chair—see Illustration;
Interesting information concerning Christy Flint; and
Valuable information concerning Poet's life, availed of in Biography.

THORBURN, THOMAS, Esq., Ryedale, Dumfries;

Inscription on Mason Apron—see letter to Charles Sharpe, Esq.—controversial,.....Prose Works, p. 117;
Notice of Clarinda—See Burns's Heroines.

WALLER'S, Mr. JOHN, Catalogue, of Fleet Street, London;

Letters (1), (5), (14), (15) to Mrs. Riddel,.....Prose Works, p. 59, *et seq.*

Besides the above original contributions in the form of Letters alone, amounting in all to upwards of fifty; all of less or more, and many of them of the greatest importance, there are also a few Letters included in the present edition from the columns of newspapers or other public documents, which do not require to be here specified. Other contributors, whose valuable assistance has been availed of chiefly, or exclusively, in the Appendix, will find their names acknowledged with thanks, at the conclusion of that department.