BURNS MANUSCRIPTS IN KILMARNOCK MONUMENT.

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Row BURNS

HOLOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS

IN THE

KILMARNOCK

MONUMENT MUSEUM,

WITH NOTES.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
DAVID SNEDDON.

TILMARNOCK:

PRINTED BY

D. BROWN & CO., (SUCCESSORS TO JAMES M'KIE),

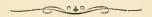
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.



THE following compositions of Robert Burns, which are reproductions in print, verbatim et literatim, of the holograph MSS. in the possession of the Burns Monument Museum Committee of Kilmarnock, are not submitted to the public as the best renderings of the text in existence, but simply as authoritative versions under the poet's own sign-manual, and, for that reason, of the greatest value for purposes of study and comparison. The first fifteen pieces formed the contents of the MS. volume referred to in the notes, which the poet began in the Autumn of 1785, as the first page informs us. This collection may therefore be taken as among the first that Burns ever made, prior to the MS. supplied for the first edition at Kilmarnock. Before purchase, the documents in every case were submitted to searching proof of their authenticity, and the history of each, so far as ascertained, will be found incorporated with the notes at the end of this volume. Every correction, variation, elision, and substitution has been faithfully set down, and the attention of the reader directed to it by italics and foot notes.

Where the text has been rendered incomplete by mutilations of the MSS. the ellipses have been supplied from Scott Douglas for the sake of continuity. All such additions are indicated by smaller type. The student of the works of our National Bard will thus readily discover for himself the distinguishing points of the Kilmarnock text, but for the benefit of the general reader we may indicate the chief of these.

For ease of reference, the MSS. are mounted in glass, on moveable frames of brass and wood. They may be examined in the order in which they appear in this volume by beginning at the left hand within the museum, and going round the room towards the right.

In the "Holy Fair," (No. 1) the variations in the names of the *dramatis personw* are referred to in the notes. In stanza 12, the line which appears

"Wi' tidin's o' salvation"

was afterwards, as is well known, changed to

"Wi' tidin's o' damnation"

on the suggestion of Dr. Blair. In Stanza 14, "Geordie begins" also reads "Smith opens out." In the portion of "Halloween" here preserved, there is no variation of importance from the generally-received version. In stanza 28, however, the third line reads more euphoniously—

[&]quot;An' unco tales and funny jokes."

The third line of the third stanza of the "Address tae the Diel" is usually printed

"An' tho' you lowin heugh's thy hame."

Both forms of stanza 11 are given, as also both of stanza 15, the deleted one in the latter containing his reference to Jean Armour before his rupture with her family. In "The Auld Farmer's Salutation"

"Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle,"

is usually substituted for the more obscure

"Hight may be war't thee," &c.,

in stanza 10 of the text. The concluding stanza, as here printed, is usually inserted next the opening one, as the poet evidently intended by the asterisks. Stanza 18 shows an important variation from the usual version, which runs:—

* * * * "I'll flit thy tether

Tae some hain'd rig,

There you may nobly rax your leather

Wi' sma' fatigue."

In "John Barleycorn," the opening lines of stanzas 3, 4, and 5, are thus varied:—

"But the cheerfu' Spring cam' kindly on."

* * * * * * * * *

"The sultry suns o' Summer came."

* * * * * * *

"The sober Autumn entered mild."

(vi.)

In "Scotch Drink" the usual reading of stanza 12 is :-

"Wae worth the name, Nae howdie gets a social night Or plack frae them."

The deletion of locality in stanza 3 of "Man was made to mourn," is referred to in the notes. The only other variation worthy of remark here is in stanza 8, the popular version being:

> "If I'm designed you lordling's slave— By Nature's law designed."—

In "The Twa Dogs," successive editors have altered lines 43-44, and 165-66 to

"Until wi' daffin' weary grown, Upon a knowe they sat them down.

"And clear the consequential sorrows, Love-gifts of Carnival signoras."

The variations in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," are nearly all verbal. In the last stanza—

* * "in great, unhappy Wallace' heart."

has been happily altered to

* * "thro' Wallace's undaunted heart."

The expunged stanza on "Sodger Hugh," in "The Author's Earnest Cry," appears here. The first stanza of the postscript usually runs

"Let half starved slaves in warmer skies See future wines, rich clusterin' rise."

The third stanza of the "Address to J. Smith," beginning—

"That auld, capricious carlin, Nature,"

does not appear in the Kilmarnock MS. The date, be it observed, is 1785, not 1782 as most editions bear. It would seem, however, that 1786 is the proper date, the MS. volume beginning, as we have said, in the autumn of 1785, and having been written straight on to 1786. The month mentioned being January, a slip of the pen is probable. In "Poor Mailie," line 47 is toned down in most editions, and "Our Bardie" substituted for "Poor Robin." The deleted stanza, in which appears the reference to "the Fairlie Lambs," is given in situ. "Holy Willie's Prayer" is treated of exhaustively in the notes; the verbal variations are easily noted. The seventh stanza of the "Epistle to a Young Friend," which is seldom printed, will be found in the text. The variations in "Tam o' Shanter," and the "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," are too slight for mention in such a sketch as this. The student, however, will not fail to note, as curiosities, the expunged lines in the former poem.

To facilitate investigation of the text of the works of Burns is the main purpose of this publication, and it is hoped that it may render substantial aid to every earnest student. If the extinction of our native Doric be one of the possible contingencies of the future, all such efforts must be regarded as national labours of love, apart altogether from the fame of Burns. He will never die, yet it behoves all patriotic Scotsmen to take surety, by handing down a text intact and pure, that in whatever tongue posterity may read it, his "thoughts that breathe" shall find most fitting expression in "words that burn" like unto the original.

DEAN COTTAGE, KILMARNOCK, FERRUARY, 1889.

SCOTCH POEMS

BY

ROBE BURNESS.

THE HOLY FAIR.

Composed in Autumn, 1785.

1

Upon a simmer Sunday morn
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn
An' snuff the callor air;
The rising sun o'er Galston muirs
Wi' glorious light was glentin,
The hares were hirplan down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin
Fu' sweet that day.

2

As lightsomely I glowr't abroad

To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies early at the road
Cam skelpin up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefn' black,
But ane wi' lyart linin.
The third, that gaed a wee a back,
Was in the fashion shinin
Fu' gay that day.

The TWA appear'd like sisters twin
In feature, form an' claes,
Their visage, wither't lang an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes;
The THIRD cam up, hap-step-an'-loup,
As light as ony lambie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop
As soon as e'er she saw me
Fu' kind that day.

4

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, sweet lass
I think ye seem to ken me,
I'm sure I've seen that bonie face
But yet I canna name ye:
Quo she, an' laughin as she spak,
An' taks me by the hands,
Ye for my sake hae gien the feck
O' a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

5

My name is FUN, your crony dear,
The nearest friend ye hae,
An' this is SUPERSTITION here,
An' that's HYPOCRISY;
I'm gawn to M——— HOLY FAIR
To spend an hour in daffin,
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkl't pair
We will get famous laughin
At them this day.

Quoth I, with a' my heart I'll do't,
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot,
Faith we'se hae fine remarkin'!
Then I gaed hame at crowdie time,
An' soon I made me ready,
For roads were clad frae side to side
Wi' mony a weary body
In droves that day.

7

Here farmers gash, in ridin graith,
Gaed hoddan bye their cottars;
Their swankies young, in braw braid claith,
Are springin o'er the gutters;
The lasses skelpan barefit, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter,
Wi' sweet-milk cheese in mony a whang,
An' farls bak't wi' butter
Fu' crump that day.

8

When bye the plate we set our nose,
Weel heapet up wi' hapence,
A greedy glowr BLACK BONNET throws
An' we maun draw our tipence;
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin,
Some carry in dails, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy bleth'rin
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs
An' screen our countra gentry,
Bet Barb—r there, an' twa three wh—'res,
Sit blinkan at the entry;
Here sits a raw o' tittlan jads
Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck,
An' there a batch o' wabster brauds
Blackguarding frae Kilm—rn—ck
For fun this day.

10

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes,
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays;
On this hand sits an elect swatch
Wi' screw't-up, grace-proud faces,
On that, a set o' chaps on watch
Thrang winkan at the lasses
To chairs that day.

11

O happy is that man an' blest,
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Whase ain dear lass that he likes best
Comes clinkan down beside him!
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back
He sweetly does compose him,
Which by degrees slips round her neck
An's loof upon her bosom
Unken't that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation,
For Sawnie speels the holy door
Wi' tidings o' salv—t—n,
Should HORNIE, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' g—d present him,
The very sight o' Sawnie's face
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

13

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin an' thumpin,
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin an' he's jumpin;
His lengthen'd chin, his turn't up snout,
His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
O how they fire the heart devout
Like Cantharidian plaisters
On sic a day!

14

But hark the tent has chang'd it's voice,
There's peace and rest nae langer,
For a' the real judges rise
They canna sit for anger,
Geordie begins his cauld harrangues
On practice and on morals,
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine
Of MORAL POWERS an' REASON,
His english style and gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season;
Like SOCRATES, or ANTONINE,
Or some auld wicked heathen,
The moral man he does define
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

16

In good time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum,
For sairie Willie-water-fitt
Ascends the holy rostrum;
See up he's got the word o' G—d
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
While COMMON SENSE has taen the road
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate
Fast, fast, that day.

17

Wee M——r niest the guard relieves
An Orthodoxy raibles,
Tho in his heart he weel believes
An' thinks it auld wives fables;
But faith the birkie wants a manse,
So cannily he hums them,
Altho his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now butt an' ben the change-house fills
Wi' yill-caup COMMENTATORS,
Here's cryin out for baiks an' gills,
An' there the pint stoup clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic an' wi' scripture,
They raise a din that in the end
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

(The next verse after the following ought to be in here).

20

Leeze me on drink it gies us mair Than either school or Colledge, It kindles wit, it wakens lear, It pangs us fu o' knowledge.

(The following, printed in smaller type, has been abstracted from the original M.S.)

Be't whisky-gill or penny-wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

19

The lads and lasses blythely bent
To mind baith saul an body,
Sit round the table, weel content,
And steer about the toddy.
On this anc's dress, an' that anc's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An forming assignations
To meet some day.

But now the L—'s ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin,
An' echoes back return the shouts;
Black R——Il is na sparin:
His piercin words like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow;
He talks o' H—Il, where devils dwell,
Our vera "Sauls does harrow"
Wi' fright that day.

22

A vast unbottom'd, boundless Pit, Fill'd fou o' lowan brunstane, Whase ragin flame and scorching heat, Wad melt the hardest whun-stane; The half asleep start up wi' fear An' think they hear it roarin, When presently it does appear, 'Twas but some neebor snorin Asleep that day.

23

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell,
How mony stories past
An' how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round in cogs an' caups
Amang the furms an' benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae womens laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

24

In comes a gawsy, gash Guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld Gudeman, about the grace
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays
An' gies them't like a tether
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithin!
O wives be mindfu' ance yoursel
How bonie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna, for a kebbuck heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

26

Then Robin Gib, wi' weary jow,
Begins to clink an croon;
Some swagger hame the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink
They'e a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

27

How many hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin nicht are gane
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' mony jobs that day begun
May end in Houghmagandie
Some ither day.

LE FIN.

HALLOWE'EN.

1

Upon that night when Fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or ower the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the rout is taen,
Beneath the Moon's pale beams;
There, up the cove to stray and rove
Amang the rocks an' streams
To sport that night.

9

Amang the bonie winding banks;
Where Doon rins wimplin clear,
Where BRUCE ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook his Carrick spear.
Some merry, friendly countra folks
Together did convene
To burn their nits an pon their stocks,
An' haud their Hallowe'en
Fu' blythe that night.

3

The lasses feat an' cleanly neat—
Mair braw than when they're fine—
Their faces blythe fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal an' warm an' kin':
The lads sac trig, wi' wooer—babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi gabs,
Gar lasses hearts gang startin
Whyles fast that night.

1

Then first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
Their stocks mann a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' grape an' wale
For muckle ancs an' straught ancs.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the Bow-Kail,
An' pu't, for want o' better shift
A runt was like a Sow-tail
Sae bow't that night.

Then, stranght or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throw'ther;
The vera wee-things toddlin rin
Wi' stocks out ower their shouther:
An gif the custock's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely aboon the door
Wi' cannie care they've placed them
To lie that night.

6

The lasses staw frae mang them a',
To pou their stalks o' Corn;
But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
Behint the muckle thoru;
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast,
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost
When kiutlin' in the Fause-house,
Wi' him that night.

7

The auld Gudewife's weel-hoordit nits
Are round and round divided;
An' mony lads an' lasses fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthic, side by side,
An' burn thegither trinly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out ower the chindla,
Fu' high that night.

8

Jean slips in twa wi' tentic e'e;
Wha 'twas she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, an' this is me,
She says in to hersel:
He bleez'd owre her, an she owre him,
As they wad never mair part,
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow'd kail runt, Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie; An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt To be compared to Willie: Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling, An' her ain fit, it brunt it; But Willie lap, an' swoor by jing, 'Twas jist the way he wanted To be that night.

10

Nell had the Fause-house in her mind,
She pits hersel an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweekly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin:
Nell's heart was dancin at the view;
She whiser'd Rob to leuk for't:
Rob stowlins pried her bonie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't
Unseen that night.

11

But Merran sat behind their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
An' slips out by hersel:
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' for the kiln she goes then,
An darklins graupet for the bawks,
An in the blue-clue throws then,
Right fear't that night.

12

An ay she win't, an' ay swat,

I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the pat;
Gude L—d! but she was quakin!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bawk-en'
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin,
To speir that night.

Wee Jenny to her Graunie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, Graunie?
"I'll eat the apple at the glass,
"I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron,
Out thro' that night.

14

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
"I daur you try sic sportin,
"As seek the foul Thief ony place,
"For him to spae your fortune:
"Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
"Great cause ye hae to fear it;
"For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
"An lived an' deed delecrit
"Thro' sic a night.

15

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
"I mind't as weel's yestreen,
"I was a gilpie then, I'm sure
"I was na past fyfteen:
"The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
"An' stuff was unco green;
"An' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
"An' just on Hallowe'en
"It fell that night.

16

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
"A clever sturdy fallow;
"His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
"That liv'd in Achmacalla;
"He gat hemp-seed, I mind it weel,
"An' he made unco light o't;
"But mony a day was by himsel,
"He was sae sairly frighted
"That vera night,"

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck, An' he swoor by his conscience,

(The transcript from the original holograph M.S. is here resumed).

That he could saw Hemp Seed a peck
For it was a' but nonsense,
The auld guidman raught doon the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him,
An' bade him steal frae mang the folk
Some time when nae ane see'd him
An' try't that night.

18

He marches thro amang the stacks
Tho he was something sturtan,
The graip he for a harrow taks
An' harls at his curpan,
An' ev'ry now an' then he says,
"Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass
Come after me an' draw thee
As fast this night."

19

He whisl't up lord Lennox' march
To keep his courage cheary,
Although his hair began to arch
He was sae fley't an' eerie;
Till presently he hear's a squeek,
An' then a grane an' gruntle,
He bye his shouther gae a keek
An' tumbl't wi' a wintle
Out owre that night.

He roar't a horrid murder shout,
In dreadfu' desperation,
An' young an' auld cam rinnin out
An' hear the sad narration;
He swoor'twas hilchan JEAN M'CRAW,
Or crouchie MERRAN HUMPHIE
Till stop—she trottet thro them a'
An' wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night.

21

Meg fain wad to the barn gane
To winn three wecht o' naethin,
But for to meet the deil her lane
She pat but little faith in.
She gied the herd a pickle nitts
An' twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets
In hopes to see TAM HIPPLES
That yera night.

22

She turns the key wi' canie thraw
An' o'er the threshold ventures,
But first on SAWNIE gies a ca'
Then bauldly in she enters;
A ratton rappl't up the wa'
An' she crie't l—d preserve her,
An' ran thro midden hole an' a',
An' pray't wi' zeal an' fervor
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't out Will wi' fair advice,
They hecht him some fine braw ane,
It chanc't the stack he faddom't thrice
Was timmer-propt for thrawin;
He taks a swirlie auld moss-oak
For some black, groosome carlin,
An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam harlin
Aff's nieves that night.

24

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As cantie as a kittlen,
But Och that night amang the shaws
She gat a fearfu' settlin!
She thro the whins, an' bye the cairn,
An' o'er the hill gaed scirvan,
Whaure three lairds lands met at a burn
To dip her left sark slieve in
Was bent that night.

25

Whyles o'er a linn the burnie plays
As through the glen it wimpl't
Whiles round a rocky scar it strays,
Whyles in a weal it dimpl't,
Whyles glitter't to the nightly rays
Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle,
Whyles cookit underneath the braes
Below the spreadin hazle
Unseen that night.

(17)

26

Amang the brachens on the brae
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outlier quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon;
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool,
Near lav'rock height she jumpet,
But mist a fitt, an' in the pool,
Out owre the lugs she plumpet
Wi' a plunge that night.

27

In order on the clean hearth stane
The luggies three are ranged,
An' ev'ry time great care is taen
To see them duly changed;
Auld uncle John wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's Year did desire
Because he gat the toom dish thrice
He heav'd them on the fire
In wrath that night.

28

Wi' merry sangs and friendly cracks
I wat they didna weary,
An' mony funny tales an' jokes,
Their sports were cheap an' cheary;
Till butter't so'ens wi' fragrant lunt
Set a their gabs a steerin,
Syne wi' a social glass o' strunt
They parted aff careerin
Fu' blythe that night.

NOTES ON THE PRECEEDING POEM.

- CASSILIS DOWNANS—certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the seat of the Earls of Cassilis, famous in country-story for being the haunt of Fairies.
- COLEAN-COVE—a noted cavern near Colean called the Cove of Colean said to be a kind of head-quarters of the Fairies, particuarly on Hallow'een, which is allowed on all hands, to be the anniversary meeting of these aerial people.
- BRUCE—the famous family of that name the ancestors of ROBERT the great Deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.
- STOCKS—the first ceremony of Halloween is pulling, each, a plant, or stock of kail—they go out with eyes shut, hand in hand, pull the first they meet with, according as it big or little, straight or crooked, so is the size or shape of the grand object in question—the Husband or wife, the taste of the heart of the stem, or as it is called, the custock, indicates the disposition, and lastly the stems or runts are placed over the head of the door, and the names of the people whom chance brings into the house, according to the priority of placing the runts, are the NAMES in question.
- STALKS O' CORN—they go to the barn yard and pull, each, three corn stalks; if they want the top-grain or pickle the party in question wants the maidenhead.
- FAUSE HOUSE—a large hole the stack-builder makes in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind, if the corn is in a doubtful state for greeness or wetness.

- BURNING THE NUTS—this is a favorite charm: they name the lad and lass to each particular nut, and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.
- BLUE CLEW—they go, all alone and throw into the pot, or bottom of the kiln a clue of blue yarn, they keep the end of the thread in their hand and wind the yarn in a new clue, off the old one which is in the pot, something will hold the thread towards the latter end—ask "Wha hauds?" answer is returned by naming the person in question.
- EAT THE APPLE—they take a candle, and go to a looking-glass, and eat an apple, looking in the glass, the face of the husband or wife to be, is seen in the glass as if peeping over your shoulder.
- HEMP-SEED—take hemp-seed, steal out unperciev'd, sow it, harrow it, and repeat the words "hemp seed I saw thee, hemp seed I saw thee, and him (or her) who is to be my true-love come after me and pow thee," then look over your left shoulder and you will see the exact figure of the person desired, in the attitude of pulling hemp.
- THREE WECHT O' NAETHING—go out, all alone, to the barn, open both the doors, take them off the hinges, otherwise the aerial being about to appear may shut the doors and do some mischief to you,—take a wecht and go thro all attitudes of letting down eorn against the wind,—do this three times, the third time, a being will pass thro the barn, in at the windy door and out at the other, it will have the figure in question, with the dress and retinue marking the station of life.

- FATHOM THE STACK—go out and fathom three times round a bear stack, your last fathom, the third time, the desired object will be in your arms.
- DIPPING THE SHIRT SLIEVE—go out, one or more, to a south-running spring or burn, where, three Laird's lands meet, dip your left shirt slieve, go to bed that night in view of a fire, hang your wet slieve over a stool before the fire to dry, lye awake and sometime in the night the object in question will come and turn the shirt before the fire as if to dry the other side of the slieve.
- LUGGIES THREE—take three dishes, put foul water in one, clean water in another, and the third empty, blindfold a person and lead him to the hearth where the dishes must be placed, he (or she) dips a hand, if in the clean water, the husband or wife to be is a maid, if the foul, a widow, if the empty dish, it foretells no marriage at all,—it is repeated three times.
- BUTTER'D SO'ENS—sowens, with butter instead of milk to them is always the Halloween Supper.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O thou, whatever title suit thee!
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in you cavern grim an' sooty,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie
To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor d—mned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' comfort it can gie,
Even to a deil,
To skelp, an' scaud poor dogs like me
An hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame,
Far-kend an' noted is thy name,
An' tho yon howe, het hole's thy hame
Thou travels far;
An faith thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scar.

Whiles, ranging like a roaring lion
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whiles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin
Tirlin the kirks;
Whiles in the human bosom pryin
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my rev'rend Granie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray,
Or where auld ruin'd castles, grey,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
With eldritch croon.

When twilight did my granie summon
To say her pray'rs, douse, honest woman,
Aft yout the dyke she's heard you bummin
With eerie drone,
Or rustling thro the boortries comin
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, dowie winter-night,
The stars shot down wi' sklenting light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright
Ayont the lough,
Ye like a rash-buss stood in sight
Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Ilk bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When with an eldritch, stoor quaick, quaick,
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whislin wings.

Let warlock's grim, an' wither'd hags
Tell, how wi' you on ragweed nags
They skim the moors an' dizzie craigs
With wicked speed,
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howket dead.

Thence, countra wives wi' toil an' pain
May plunge, an' plunge the kirn in vain,
For Och! the yellow treasure's ta'en
By wicket (* cantraip) skill;
An' dautiet, twal-pint Haukie's gane
As yell's the bill.

† Thence, knots are coosten, spells contriv'd,
An' the brisk bridegroom, newly wiv'd
Just at the kittle point arriv'd,
Fond, keen, an' croose,
Is by some spitefu' jad depriv'd
O's warklum's use.

When thowes dissolve the snawie hoord,
An' float the jinglin, icy boord,
Then WATER-KELPIES haunt (* ply) the foord
By your direction,
An' nightly trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing SPUNKIES
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is,
The dancin, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is
Ne'er mair to rise.

When Mason's mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock, or cat, your rage maun stop
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whup
Aff straught to H—ll.

† Langsyne, in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' (*Adam's)Edie's days were green,
An' Eve was like my bonie Jean
My dearest part,
A dancin, sweet, young, handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart:

Then you, ye auld snick-drawin dog,
Ye came to paradise incog,
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
Black be your fa',
An' gied the infant warl a shog,
Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz, Wi' reiket duds, an' reestet gizz, Ye did present your ugly phiz

Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the Man of Uzz

Your spitefu' joke.

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hal,
While scabs an' botches did him gall
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lous'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked scaul,
Was warst of a'.

But a' your doins to rehearse, Your wily snares an' fighting fierce, Sin that day Michael a did you pierce Down to this time, Wad ding a' Lallan tongue or Erse, In prose or rhyme.

a V. Milton Book 6th

An' now auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
That Robin's rantin, swearin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour'll send him linkin
To your black pit;
But faith he'll turn a corner jinkin
An' cheat you yet.

But fare-you-weel, auld Nickie-ben,
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
—Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den
Even for your sake.

Le fin.

Langsyne in Eden's bonie yard
Where youthfu' Lover's first were pair'd
An' all the Soul of Love they shar'd
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry swaird
In a shady bow'r.

a Vide Milton

Thence mystic knots breed great abuse
To young guidmen, fond, keen & croose;
When the best warklum i' the house,
By cantaip wit,
Is made as useless as a louse,
Just at the bit.

^{*} The Words set in *Italic* and within parenthesis, have been struck out by the poet in his M.S.

[†] These verses set in *Italic* are struck out by the poet and those at the end substituted apparently at a later date and at different times, the latter coming before the former, and written with different pens and ink.

THE AULD FARMER'S New year morning salutation to his auld Meere, on givin her the accustom'd ripp o' corn to hansel in the New year

A guid New year I wish you Maggie,
Hae there's a ripp to thy auld baggie,
Tho thou's howe-backet now, an' knaggie,
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie
Out ower the lay.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A fillie buirdy, stieve, an' swank,
An' set weel dow a shapely shank
As e'er tread yird,
An' could hae flown (* gane) out owre a stank
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine an' twenty year
Sin thou was my guidfather meere;
He gied me thee o' tocher clear
An' fifty mark,
It was but sma', but weel-win gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny
Ye then was trottin wi' your minny,
Tho ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie,
But ham'ly tawie, quiet, an' canie
An' unco sonsie.

That day ye pranc'd wi' meikle pride
When ye buir hame my bonie Bride;
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could bragged wide
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte an' hobble,
An' wintle like a saumont coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble
For heels an' win',
An' ran them till they a' did waubble
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young an' skiegh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' scriegh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran an' stood abiegh,
An' ca'd thee mad.

When thou was corn't an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At BROOSES thou had ne'er a fellow
For pith an' speed,
But ev'ry tail thou pay'd them hollow
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droot-rumpl't hunter-cattle
Hight may be wart thee for a brattle,
But sax Scotch mile, thou try't their mettle,
An' gart them whaizle;
Nae whup nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble Fittie-lan
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn;
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn't five rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

Thou never BRAING'T, an' FETCH'T, an' flisket,
But thy auld tail thou would hae whisket,
An' spread abreed thy weel-filled brisket
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till sprittie knowes wad rair't an' risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten't labor back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I ken't my Maggie wadna sleep
For that or simmer.

In cart, or car, thou never reestet,
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, an' breastet,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee-thing hastet,
An' snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a;
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Foreby sax mae I've sell'd awa
That thou has nurst:
They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
The yera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl fought!
An' monie an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!

But (*Vet) here to weary age we're brough

But (*Yet) here to weary age we're brought Wi' somethin yet.

An' think na, my auld, trusty servan,
That now perhaps, thou's less deservin
An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
For my last fow,
A heapet stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years wi' ither,
We'll toyte about, wi' ane anither,
Wi' tenty care I'll flit thy tether,
An' clap thy back,
An' mind the days we've haen the gither,

Le fin.

An' ca' the crack.

The new thou's dowie stiff an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide as white's a daizie;
I've seen thee dappel't sleek an' glaizic,
A bonie grey;
He should been tight that daur't to raise thee
Ance in a day.

JOHN BARLEYCORN.—A BALLAD.

There is an old Scotch song known by that name whose first two verses begin the following, and the general idea of it runs thro the whole.

1

There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great an' high,
An' they hae sworn a solemn oath
JOHN BARLEYCORN should die.

2

They've taen a plough an' plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
An' they hae sworn a solemn oath
JOHN BARLEYCORN was dead.

3

The Spring-time came with kindly warmth, An' show'rs began to fall, JOHN BARLEYCORN got up again An' sore surpris'd them all.

4

The Summer came with sultry heat,
An' he grew thick an' strong,
His head well arm'd with pointed spears
That no one should him wrong.

The Autumn came with fresh'ning breeze, An' he grew wan an' pale; His bending joints, an' drooping head, Show'd he began to fail.

6

His color sicken'd more an' more, He faded into age, An' then his ennemies began To show their deadly rage.

7

They took a weapon long an' sharp An' cut him by the knee; They ty'd him fast upon a cart Like a rogue for forgery.

8

They laid him down upon his back, An' cudgel'd him full sore; They hung him up before the storm, An' turn'd him o'er and o'er.

9

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heaved in JOHN BARLEYCORN,
There let him sink or swim.

10

They laid him out upon the floor
To work him farther woe;
And still as signs of life appear'd
They tost him to and fro.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a Miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.

12

And they have ta'en his very heart's-blood And drank it round and round; And still the more and more they drank Their joy did more abound.

13

JOHN BARLEYCORN was a HERO bold, Of noble enterprize; For if you do but taste his blood 'Twill make your courage rise.

14

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy;
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing
Tho the tear were in her eye.

15

Then let us toast JOHN BARLEYCORN
Each one a glass in hand;
And may HIS GREAT POSTERITY
NE'ER FAIL IN OLD SCOTLAND.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Gie him strong drink until he wink
Wha's sinking in DESPAIR;
An' liquor guid, to fire his bluid,
Wha's prest wi' grief an' (* or) care:
There let (*them) him bowse, an', (*wi') deep carouse,
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er;
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more.

Solomon. Proverbs 31 ch 6, 7.

Let ither Poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines an' wines an' druken bacchus;
An' crabbed names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice SCOTCH BEAR can mak us
In glass or jug.

O thou my Muse, guid, auld SCOTCH DRINK!
Whither thro wimplin worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink
In glorious faem,
Inspire me till I lisp an' wink
To sing thy name!

Let husky WHEAT the hanghs adorn,
And AITS set up their awnie horn,
An' PEASE an' BEANS at een or morn
Perfume the plain,
Leeze mc on thee JOHN BARLEYCORN,
Thou King o' grain!

On thee, aft Scotland chows her cood,
In soople scones, the wale o' food;
Or tumbling in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy STRONG HEART'S-BLOOD,
There thou shines CHIEF.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin,
But life's a gift no worth receivin
When heavy-dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin;
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill scrievin,
Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited LEAR,
Thou chears the heart o' drooping CARE,
Thou strings the nerves o' LABOR SAIR
At's weary toil,
Thou even brightens dark DESPAIR
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy siller-weed
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet, humbly kind, in time o' need
The poor man's wine,
His wee-drap pirratch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' PUBLIC HAUNTS,
But thee, what were our fairs an' rants,
Even godly meetings o' the saunts
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents
Are doubly fir'd.

That MERRY NIGHT, we get the corn in,
O sweetly, then, thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin on a NEW YEAR MORNIN
In cog or bicker,
An' just a weep-drap sp'ritual burnin,
An' gusty sucker!

When VULCAN gies his bellys breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith;
O rare, to see thee fizz an' fraeth
I' th' lugget cap!
Then BURNEWIN comes on like death
At ev'ry chap.

Nae merey, then, for airn or steel;
The brawny, banie ploughman-chiel,
Brings hard owerhip, wi' sturdy wheel
The strong forehammer,
Till BLOCK an' STUDDIE ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin coofs their dearies slight,
Wae worth them for't!
While healths gae round to him wha, tight,
Gies famous sport.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wood as wood can be,
How easy can the BARLEY-BREE
Cement the quarrel;
It's ay the cheapest LAWYER'S FEE
To taste the barrel.

Alake, that e'er my MUSE has reason
To wyte her country men wi' treason!
But mony daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly in a winter season
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that BRANDY, burnin trash!
Fell source o' mony a pain an' brash!
Twins mony a poor, doil't druken hash
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots wha wish auld Scotland well.
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor, plackless devils like mysel,
It sets you ill
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May GRAVELS round his blather wrench,
An' GOUTS torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' WHISKY PUNCH
Wi' honest men.

O WHISKY! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a BARDIE'S gratefu' thanks;
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes, they rattle in their ranks
At ither's a—ses.

Thee Ferintosh, O sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic-grips an' barkin hoast
May kill us a',
For loyal FORBES' CHARTER'D BOAST
I ta'en awa!

* A verse wanting.

A verse forgot in Scotch Drink.

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whiskie stills their prize!
Haud up they haun deil—ance, twice, thrice;
There, seize the blinkers,
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor, damn'd drinkers.

Fortune, if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whisky-gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

Le fin.

These words in Italic are in the Poet's writing on the Margin of the MS. The verse alluded to is found in a blank space at the end of "John Barleycorn," but is here, for convenience in reading, properly placed, with the note also in Italic, as written over it by Burns.

A BALLAD.

1

When chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Aire
I spy'd a man whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care,
His face was furrow'd o'er with years
And hoary was his hair.

9

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou, Began the rev'rend sage,
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage;
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth with me to mourn
The miseries of MAN.

Yon sun that hangs o'er CARRICK MOORS
That spread so far and wide,
Where hundreds labor to support
The lordly Cassilis pride;
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return,
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That Man was made to Mourn.

4

Oh man, while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mispending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway,
Licentious passions burn,
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That Man was made to Mourn.

5

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhoods active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life
With cares and labors worn,
Then age and want—O ill-match'd pair!
Show Man was made to Mourn.

A few seem favorites of fate,
In fortune's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest:
But O! what crouds in ev'ry land
All wretched and forlorn,
Thro weary life this lesson learn
That Man was made to Mourn!

7

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame;
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse and shame:
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of LOVE adorn,
Man's inhumanity to Man
Makes countless thousands Mourn.

7

See, yonder poor, o'er labor'd wight So abject, mean and vile, Who begs a brother of the earth To give him leave to toil; And see his lordly fellow-worm The poor petition spurn, Unmindful tho a weeping wife And helpless offspring mourn,

If I am doom'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's hand design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has man the will, or pow'r,
To make his fellow Mourn?

9

Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of HUMAN KIND
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born
Had there not been some recompence
To comfort those that Mourn.

10

O Death, the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest, and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasures torn;
But Oh! a blest relief for those
That, weary-laden mourn!

Le fin.

THE TWA DOGS: A TALE.

Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle
That bears the name of auld King Coil,
Upon a bonie day in June
When wearing thro the afternoon,
Twa Dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Foregather't ance upon a time.

The first I'll name, they ca't him CESAR, Was keepet for His Honor's pleasure: His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs, Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's Dogs. But whelpet some place far abroad Where Sailors gang to fish for cod. His locket, letter't, braw brass-collar. Show'd him the gentleman an' scholar; But, tho he was o' high degree. The fient a pride na pride had he, But wad hae spent an hour caressin Even wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messan: At KIRK or MARKET, MILL or SMIDDIE, Nae tawtiet tyke, tho e'er sae dudie, But he wad stan't, as glad to see him, An' stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie, A rhymin, rantin, ravin-billie, Wha for his friend an' comrade had him, And in his freaks had LUATH ca'd him: After some dog in HIGHLAN SANG *
Was made lang-syne l—d knows how lang.
He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke!
His honest, sonsie, bawsen't face
Ay gat him friends in ilka place:
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaussie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung owre his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick the gither;
Wi' social nose, whyles snuff't an' snowcket;
Whyles mice an' modeworks they howket;
Whyles scow'r't awa, in lang excursion,
An' worry't ither for diversion;
'Till tir'd at last wi' monie a farce
They set them down upon their a—se,
An' there began a lang digression
About the LORDS o' the CREATION.

CESAR.

I've aften wonder't, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.
Our Laird gets in his racket rents,
His coals, his kaen an' a' his stents;
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell.
He ca's his coach; he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonie, silken purse
As lang's my tail, where thro the steeks

The yellow, letter't Geordie keeks:
Frae morn to een it's nought but toilin
At bakin, roastin, fryin, boilin;
An' tho the Gentry first are steghin,
Yet even the ha'-folk fill their peghin
Wi' sauce, ragouts, an' sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie:
Our whipperin, wee, blasted wouner,
Poor worthless elf it eats a dinner
Better than onie TENANT-MAN
His HONOR has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk put their painch in
I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth Cesar, whiles their fash'd eneugh; A Cotter howkin in a sheugh, Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke, Bairin a quarry, an' sic like; Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains. A smytrie o' wee, dudie weans, An' nought but his han-daurk to keep Them right an' tight in thack an' raep. An' when they meet wi' sair disasters Like loss o' health, or want o' masters, Ye maist wad think,—a wee touch langer, Au' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger: But how it comes, I never kent yet, They're maistly wonderfu' contented: An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CESAR.

But then to see how ye're negleket, How huff't an' cuff't an' disrespeket; L-d man, our gentry care as little For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle, They gang as saucy by poor folk As I would by a stinkin brock. I've notic'd on our LAIRD'S COURT-DAY, An' mony a time my heart's been wae; Poor Tenant-bodies, scant o' cash, How they maun thole a Factor's snash; He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear, He'll apprehend them-poind their gear, While they maun stand wi' aspect humble, An' hear it a' an' fear an' tremble. I see how folk live that hae riches. But surely poor folk maun be wretches.

LUATH.

There no sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho constantly on poortith's brink,
They're sae accustom't wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.
Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided;
An' tho fatigu't wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.
The dearest comfort o' their lives
Their grushie weans, an' faithfu' wives,

The prattling things are just their pride That sweetens a' their fire-side. An whyles, twalpennie-worth o' nappy Can mak the bodies unco happy; They lay aside their private cares An' mind the kirk an' state affairs. Foretell what new taxation's comin. An' wonder at the folk in Lon'on. As bleak-fac'd Hallowmas returns, They get the jovial, rantin Kirns, When rural-life, in ev'ry station, Unites in common recreation: Love blinks, wit slaps, an' social MIRTH Forgets there's care upon the earth. That merry day the year begins, They barr the the door on frosty win's; The nappy reeks, wi' mantling ream, An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam; The luntin pipe, the snishin mill, Are handed round wi' right good-will: The cantie auld folk crackin crouse, The young anes rantin thro the house-My heart has been sae fain to see them That I for joy hae barket was them. Still it's owre true that ye hae said, Sic game is now owre aften play'd; There's mony a creditable stock O' decent, honest, fawson't folk Are riven out baith root an' branch Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench; Wha thinks to knit himsel' the faster In favour wi' some gentle master, Wha' aiblins, thrang a parliamenting For Britain's good his saul indenting-

CESAR.

-Haith lad ye little ken about it, For BRITAIN'S GUID! guid faith I doubt it. Say rather, gaun as PREMIERS lead him, An' saying aye, or noe's they bid him: At Operas an' Plays parading, Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading; Or may be, in a frolic daft, To Hague or Calais takes a waft To make a tour an' take a whirl, To learn bon-ton an' see the worl. There, at Vienna, or Versailles. He rives his father's auld entails: Or by Madrid he takes the rout, To play Guittares an' fight wi' nowt; Or down Italian Vista startles, Whore-hunting amang groves o' myrtles: Then bowzes drumlie German water To make himsel look fair an' fatter, An' purge the bitter ga's an' cankers O' curst Venetian bores an' shankers. For BRITAIN'S GUID! for her destruction, Wi' dissipation feud an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear Sirs! is that the gate They spend sae mony a braw estate! Are we sae foughten an' harrass't For gear to gan that way at last! O! would they stay aback frae Courts An' please themsels wi' countra sports, It would for ev'ry ane be better, The laird, the tenant, an' the cotter; For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies, Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows; Except for breakin o' their timmer, Or speakin lightly o' their limmer, Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock, The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor-folk. But will ye tell me, Master Cesar, Sure great-folk's life's a life o' pleasure; Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them, The vera thought o't need na fear them.

CESAR.

L—d man, were ye but whyles where I am, The Gentles ye wad ne'er envy them. It's true, they need na starve or sweat Thro winter's cauld, or summer's heat: They've nae sair wark to craze their banes. An' fill auld age wi' grips an' graens; But human-bodies are sic fools, For a' their Colledges an' Schools, That when nae real ills perplex them, They make enow themsels to vex them: An' ay the less they hae to sturt them, In like proportion, less will hurt them. A countra fallow at his pleugh, His ACRE'S till'd, (*done) he's right eneugh; A countra lassie at her wheel, Her DIZZEN'S done, she's unco weel; But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst, Wi' even-down WANT O' WARK they're curst. They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy; Tho deil-haet ails them, they're uneasy;

Their days insipit, dull, an' tasteless; Their nights unquiet, lang an' restless. An' even their sports, like Balls an' races, An' galloping thro public-places, Ther's sic parade, sic pomp an' art, The joy can scarcely reach the heart. The Men cast out in party-matches, Then sowther a' in deep debauches; Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' whoring, Niest day their life is past enduring. The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters. As great an' gracious a' as sisters; But hear their absent thoughts of ither, They're a' run-diels an' jads the gither. Whyles owre the wee bit cup an' platie They sip the scandal-potion pretty; Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbed lenks, Pore owre the devil's pictur't beuks; Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard, An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard. There's some exceptions, man an' woman, But this is gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker glomin brought the night:
The BUM-CLOCK hum'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin in the loan;
When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na men but dogs;
An' each took aff his sev'ral way,
Resolv'd to meet another day.

Le fin.

* THE COTTER'S SATURDAY-NIGHT.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the *Poor*.
GRAY'S ELEGY.

* This Title and Verse from Gray's Elegy are, in the MS., inserted in a space close after "The Twa Dogs," then on the next page the following transcript of

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY-TEEN.

Inscribed to MR ROBERT AITKEN, AYR.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the Poor.

GRAY.

1

My Lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend,
No mercenary Bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways,
What Aitken in a Cottage would have been;
Ah! tho his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

November chill blaws loud with angry sugh,

The short'ning winter-day is near a close,
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,
The black'ning flocks o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend;
And weary o'er the moor his course does hameward bend.

3

At length his lonely Cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree:
The expectant wee-things, tottlin, stacher thro
To meet their dad wi' flichterin noise an' glee,
His wee-bit ingle, blinking bonilie,
His clean heart-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh an' care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor an' his toil.

4

Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentic rin
A canie errand to a neebor toun:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin in her e'c,
Comes hame perhaps to show a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won pennie-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers an' sisters meet,
And each for other's welfare kindly spiers;
The social hours, swift-wing'd unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees an' hears.
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years,
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, with her needle an' her sheers,
Maks auld claes leuk amaist as weel's the new:
The father mixes a' with admonition due.

6

Their master's and their misstress's command,

The youngkers a' are warned to obey;

And mind their labor with an eydent hand,

And ne'er tho out o sight, to jauk an' play.

"And O, be sure to fear the Lord alway!

"And mind your duty duely, morn an' night;

"Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,

"Implore His counsel, an' asisting might:

"They never sought in vain, wha sought the Lord aright!"

7

But hark, a rap comes gently to the door,
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor
To do some errands, an' convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, an' flush her cheek,
With heart-struck, anxious care enquires his name,
While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak;
Weel-pleased the Mother hears, its nae wild, worthless rake.

With kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin youth, he takes the mother's eye:
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs an' kye:
The youngster's witless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

9

O happy love! where suchen love is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced long this weary mortal-round,
And sage Experience bids me this declare,
If Heaven a draught of Heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn, that scents the ev'ning gale.

10

Is there in human form that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to LOVE and TRUTH!

That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?

Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are Virtue, Conscience, Honor, all exil'd?

Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the Parents fondling o'er their child!

Then paints the ruind maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome porritch, chief of Scotia's food;
The soupe their only Hawkie does afford,
That yout the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell;
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it good,
The frugal wifie, garrulous 'll tell
How 'twas a towmond and, sin lint was i' the bell.

12

The chearfu' supper done, with serious face,

They round the ingle form a circle wide;

The Sire turns o'er, wi' Patriarchal grace,

The big ha'-bible, ance his father's pride:

His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,

His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare,

Those strains that once did sweet in ZION glide,

He wales a portion with judicious care;

And "LET US WORSHIP GOD" he says with solemn air.

13

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plantive Martyrs, worthy of the name,
Or noble Elgin beets the Heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame,
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise,
Nae unison hae they with our CREATOR'S praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on' high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lye
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other Holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

15

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How Guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on Earth "whereon to lay His head:"
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

16

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,

The saint, the father, and the husband prays;

Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,

That thus they all shall meet in future days;

There, ever bask in uncreated rays,

No more to sigh, nor shed the bitter tear;

Together hymning their Creator's praise,

In such Society yet still more dear;

While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor religion's pride
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!
The POW'R incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacredotal stole,
But haply in some Cottage far apart
May hear, well-pleas'd the language of the soul,
And in his book of life, the inmates poor enroll.

18

Then homeward each take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling Cottagers retire to rest;
The Parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way HIS WISDOM sees the best,
For them, and for their little-ones provide;
But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

19

From scenes like these old SCOTIA'S grandeur springs
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad;
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noble work of God,"
And certes, in fair VIRTUE'S heavenly road,
The Cottage leaves the Palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd.

O SCOTIA! my dear, my native soil!

For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent!

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil

Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content.

And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent

From luxury's contagion, weak and vile;

Then howe'er erowns, and coronets be rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,

And stand a wall of fire around their much lov'd isle.

21

O thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That streamed in great, unhappy Wallace' heart;
Wha dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part;
(The Patriot's God, peculiarly THOU art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian and reward;)
O never, never SCOTIA'S realm desert,
But still the Patriot, and the Patriot-Bard,
In bright succession raise her ornament and guard.

Le fin.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER TO THE RT. HONBLE AND HONBLE THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best! How art thou lost!—
Milton.

Ye Irish lords, ye knights and squires,
Wha represent our BURGHS an' SHIRES,
An' dousely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you, a simple BARDIE'S pray'rs
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roopet Muse is hearse!

Your HONOR'S hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce
To see her sittiin on her a—se,

Low i' the dust,

An' schriechin out prosaic verse,

An' like to brust!

Tell them who has chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction
E'er sin they laid that curst restriction
On Aqua-vitae;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth an' tell yon Premier Youth
The honest, open, naked truth;
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His Servants humble;
The muckle devil blaw you south
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom,
Speak out an' never fash your thumb;
Let posts an' pensions sink or swoom
Wi' them wha grant them;
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want them.

At gath'ring votes ye wasna slack,
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back
An' hum an' haw,
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack,
Before them a'.

Paint SCOTLAND greetin owre her thrisle!
Her mutchkin-stoup as toom's a whisle;
An'd—mn'd Excise-men in a busle
Siezin a Still,
Triumphant, crushin't like a mussle
Or laimpit shell!

Then on the tither hand present her,

A blackguard Smuggler right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow a chuffic Vinter

Colleaguin join,
Pickin her pouch as bare as winter,

Of a' kind coin.

Is there that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's-blood rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves.

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod in the mire out o' sight;
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswel,
There's some sark-necks I would draw tight,
And tye some hose well.

God bless your HONORS, can ye see't,
The kind auld cantie carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot heat
Ye winna bear it.

Some o' you nicely ken the laws
To round the period an' pause,
An' with rhetoric clause on clause
To make harangues;
Then echoe thro Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true-blue Scot I'se warran,
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran,
An' that glib-gabbet Highlan Baron,
The Laird o' Graham,
And ane, a chap that's d—mn'd auld farran,
Dundass his name.

Erskine, a spunkie norlan-billie,
True Campbels, Frederic an' Illay,
An' Livistone, the bauld Sir Willie,
An' mony ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

* This verse expung'd.

Thee Sodger Hugh—my watchman stented,
If Bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that your sword were wanted
Ye'd lend your hand,
But when there's ought to say anent it,
Ye'er at a stand.

Rouse up my boys, exert your mettle,
To get (*your mither) auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you wi' a reekin whittle
Anither sang.

This whyle She's been in crankous mood,
Her lost Militia fir'd her blood,
(Deil nor they never mair do good
Play'd her that pliskie;)
An' now she's like to rin red-wood
About her whiskie.

An' l—d if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt
I' the first she meets.

^{*} These words in Italic are in the Poet's writing on the margin of the MS., and the verse alluded to follows in Italic.

For g—d sake Sirs, then speak her fair,
An' straik her canie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive wi' a' your wit an' lear
To get remead.

You ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks,
E'en cowe the cadie;
An' send him to his dicin box,
An' sportin lady.

Tell yon good-blood of auld Boconnock's,
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme like tea an winnocks
Would kindly seek.

Could he some Commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in good braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach,
Nor erudition,
You mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she sud be strung,
She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen five an' forty,
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, though a Minister grow dorty
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your HONORS, a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail, an' brats o' claese,
In spite of a' the thievish kaes
That haunt St. Jamies,
Your humble Bardie sings an' prays,
While Rab his name is:

POST-SCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies, See Vines, an' wines, an' olives rise, Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies, But blythe an' friskie, She eyes her free-born, martial boys Tak aff their whiskie.

What tho their Phebus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms, an' beauty charms,
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves;
Or hounded forth, dishonor arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' pouther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'rin swither
To stand, or rin;
Till skelp,—a shot, they're aff a throuther,
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotch-man frae his hill, Clap in his cheek a highlan gill, Say, such is royal George's will,

An' there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill

Twa, at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings teaze him;
Death comes, with fearless eye he sees him;
With bloody hand a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek
In clime an' season;
But tell me whiskie's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected Mither,
Tho whyles ye moistify your leather,
Till whaure ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam,
Freedom an' whisky gang the gither,
Tak aff your dram.

ADDRESS TO J. SMITH.

Friendship! mysterious cement of &c.

DEAR SMITH, the sleest pawkie thief
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warloc-brief
Owre human hearts,
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

*A verse wanting here.

*Vide last page of the book.

*For me, I swear by sun and moon,
An' ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon,
Just gaun to see you;
An' ev'ry ither pair that's doon
Mair taen I'm wi' you.

^{*} This is the verse alluded to as being on the last page of the Poet's MS. Book, but placed in its proper order for convenience in reading.

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's workin prime,
My Fancy yerked up sublime,
Wi' hasty summon;
Hae ye a leisure moment's (*Will ye lay-bye a wee
whyles) time
An' hear what's comin.

†See last page.

†Some rhyme because they like to clash,
An' gie a neebor's name a lash;
An' some (vain thought) for needfu' cash;
An' some for fame;
For me, I string my dogg-rel trash
For fun at hame.

†Some rhyme, a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the kintra clash,
An raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash,
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat,
But in requit,
Has blest me with a random shot
O' countra wit.

This whyle my notion's ta'en a sklent
To try my fate in guid black prent,
But still the mair I'm that way bent
Something cries, "hoolie,
"I red you honest man tak tent,
Ye'll show your folly.

There's ither POETS, much your betters;
Far-seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless......
Their unknown pages.

Then farewel hopes o' laurel boughs
To garland my poetic brows;
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' tell the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on with tentless heed,
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me wi' th' inglorious dead,
Forgot an' gone

But why o' Death begin a tale,
Just now I'm livin, sound an' heal;
Then top, an' main-top (*hoist) croud the sail
(*All hands aloft) Heave Care owre side:
An' large before enjoyment's gale
Let's (*send adrift) take the tide.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' inchanted fairy-land,
An' pleasure is the magic-wand,
That wielded right,
Mak's hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield, I'or ance that five an' forty's speel'd, See crazy, weary joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
('omes hostin, hirplin o'er the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the glomin,
Then farewel vacant, careless roamin,
An' farewel chearfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise;
An' farewel dear bewitching woman,
The joy of joys.

O life! how pleasant is thy morning, Young fancy's rays the hill adorning; Cold-pausing, caution's lessons scorning,
We frisk away,
Like School-boys at th' expected warning
To joy an' play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
An' tho the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some lucky find a flow'ry spat
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet, an' eat the fat,
Butt care or pain,
And eye the barren, hungry hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chace,
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace,
Thro fair, thro foul they urge the race,
An' sieze the prey,
Then cozie in some canie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan,
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin,
To right or left eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on;
Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining;
Is fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang;
Beneath what light she has remaining
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
An' kneel, ye Pow'rs, an' warm implore,
Tho I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay routh o' rhymes.

Gie dreepin roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claese, to fine life-guards,
An' Maids of Honor;
An' yill an' whiskie gie to cairds
Until they sconner.

A Title, Dempster merits it;

(*Honor, gie that tae Willie Pit)

A Garter gie tae Willie Pit;

(*If he goes on to merit it;)

Gie wealth to some beledger'd cit,

In cent per cent;

But gie me real, sterling wit,

An' I'm content.

While you are pleas'd to keep me heal,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
Wi' chearfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows,
As weels I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, an' prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye guid folk wha live by rule,
Grave, tideless blooded, calm an' cool,
Compar'd wi' you——O fool, fool, fool,
How much unlike!
Your (* lives) hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dyke.

* Cancelled in the MS.

Nae hare-brain'd, sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces;
In arioso trills an' graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses,
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise,
Nae ferly tho ye do despise
The hairum-skairum, ram-stam boys,
The rantin squad;
I see ye upward cast your eyes,—
Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I,—but I shall haud me there—Wi' you I'll scarce gang onie where—Then Jamie I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang;
Content wi' you to make a pair
Whaure'er I gang.

WINTER, A DIRGE.—

Tune-McPherson,

(*Composed in Winter).

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw;
Wild (*While) tumbling, brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
While bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast the sky o'ercasta" a Dr Young.

The joyless winter day,

Let others fear, to me more dear

Than all the pride of May:

The tempest's howl, it soths my soul,

My griefs it seems to join;

The leafless trees, my fancy please,

Their fate resembles mine.

Thou Pow'r supreme! whose mighty scheme,
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest, they must be best,
Because they are THY WILL:
Then all I want, (O do Thou grant
This one request of mine;)
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
O! help me to resign.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

AN EPISTLE TO DAVY:

A BROTHER POET.

JAN:---1785.

While winds frae aff Bein-lowmond blaw;
An' barr the doors wi' drivin snaw,
An hing us owre the ingle;
I set me down, to pass the time,
An' spin a verse or twa o' rhyme
In hamely westlin' jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a we the Great-folks gift
That live sae bien an snug:
I tent less, an' want less,
Their roomy fireside;
But hanker, an' canker,
To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r

To keep, at times, frae being sow'r

To see how things are shar'd;

How best o' chiels are whyles in want,

While coofs on countless thousands rant,

An' kens na how to ware't;

But Davy lad, ne'er fash your head,

Tho we hae little gear,

Were fit to win our daily bread

As lang's we're hale an' feir;

Mair spier na, nor fear na,

Auld age ne'er mind a feg;

The last o't, the warst o't,

Is only but to beg.

3

To lye in kilns, an' barns, at een,
When banes are craz'd, an' blood is thin,
Is doubtless great distress;
Yet then Content could mak us blest,
E'en then, sometimes we'd snatch a taste
O' truest happiness:
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile,
An' mind still, ye'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma',
Nae mair then we'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'.

4

What tho like commoners of air

We wander out, we know not where,
Butt either house or hal,

Yet nature's charms, the hills an' woods,
The sweeping vales, an' foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.

In days when daizies deck the ground,
An' blackbirds whistle clear,

With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please then,
We'll sit an' sowthe a tune;
Syne rhyme till't we'll time till't,
An' sing't when we hae done.

5

It's no in titles, nor in rank,
It' no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace an' rest;
It's no in makin muckle mair,
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
To mak us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
An' center in the breast.
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blesst.
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could mak us happy lang:
The heart ay's the part ay,
That maks us right or wrang.

6

Think ye, that sic as you an' I,
Wha drudge an' drive thro wat an' dry
Wi' never-ceasing toil,
Think ye, are we lest blest than they,
Wha scarely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress;
Or else, neglecting a' that's good,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless an' fearless,
Of either Heaven or Hell,
Esteeming an' deeming
It a' an idle tale.

7

Then let us chearfu' acquiesce,
Nor mak our scanty pleasures less
Wi' pining at our state;
An' even, should misfortunes come,
I here wha sit (*Yet here I sit) has met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet:
They gie the wit o' age to youth,
They let us ken oursel,
They make us see the naked truth,
The real good an' ill.
Tho losses, an' crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

8

But tent me Davy, ace o' hearts, (To say ought less, wad wrang the cartes,

An' flatt'ry I detest;)

This life has joys for you an' I, An' joys that riches ne'er could buy,

An' joys the very best;

There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,

The Lover an' the Frien';

Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,

An' I, my darlin Jean.

It warms me, it charms me To mention but her name;

It heats me, an' beets me,
An' sets me a' on flame!

9

O all ye Powr's who rule above!

O Thou whose very self art Love!

Thou know'st my words sincere!

The life-blood streaming thro my heart,

Or my more dear Immortal part,

Is not more fondly dear!

When heart-corroding care an' grief, (*In a' my share of care an' grief)

(* Which fate has largely given,)

Deprive my soul of rest,

Her dear idea brings relief

(*My hope, my comfort an' relief,)

An' solace to my breast.

(*Are thoughts o' her an' Heaven.)

Thou Being All-seeing!

O hear my fervent pray'r!

Still take her an' make her

Thy most peculiar care.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

All-hail, ye tender feeling dear!
The smile of Love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend
In ev'ry care an' ill,
And oft, a more endearing band,
A tye more tender still,
It lightens an' brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, an' greet with
My Davy, or my Jean.

11

Le fin.

THE DEATH, AN' DYIN' WORDS O' POOR MAILIE — MY AIN PET YOWE — AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As Mailie, an' her lambs the gither,
Was ae day nibblin on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch
An' owre she warls't i' the ditch;
There, groanin, dyin she did lye,
When Hughock he cam doytan bye,
Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted hands,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stands;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes-my-heart! he could na mend it!
He gapet wide, but naething spak,
A length poor Mailie silence brak.——

O Thou, whase lamentable face Appears to mourn my woefu' case! My dyin words attentive hear, An' bear them to My master dear.

Tell him, if e'er again he keep As muckle gear as buy a sheep, O' bid him never tye them mair, Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair But ca' them out to park, or hill, An' let them wander at their will: So may his flock increase an' grow To scores o' lambs, an' packs of woo'.

Tell him, he was a Master kin', An' av was guid to me an' mine; An' now my dyin charge I gie him, My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him. O' bid him save their harmless lives Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butcher's knives! But gae them guid cow-milk their fill, Till they be fit to fen themsel; An' tent them duely, een an' morn, Wi' taets o' hay, an' rips o' corn. O! may they never the gaits Of ither vile, wunrestfu' pets! To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal, At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail; So may they, like their great forbears, For monie a year come thro' the sheers! So wives 'll gie them bits o' bread, An' bairns greet for them when they're dead!

My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir, O, bid him breed him up wi' care! An' if he live to be a beast, To pitt some havins in his breast, An' warn him ay, at ridin time, To stay content wi' yowes at hame; An' no to rin an' wear his cloots, Like ither menseless, graceless brutes.

An' neist my yowie, silly thing, Guid keep thee frae a tether string! O, may thou ne'er foregather up Wi' onie blastiet moorla toop:
But ay keep mind to moop an' mell Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel.

An' now my bairns, wi' my last breath, I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith; An' when ye think upo' your mither, Mind to be kind to ane anither.

Now honest Hughoc, dinna fail To tell my Master a' my tale; An' bid him burn this cursed tether, An' for thy pains, thou's get my blether. This said, Poor Mailie turn'd her head, An' clos'd her een amang the dead.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut-tears tricklin down your nose;
Poor Robin's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead!
The last, sad, cape-stane of his woes!
Poor Maile's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or gar poor Robin, dowie, wear
The mournin weed!
He's lost a frien' an' neebor dear
In Mailie dead!

(82)

Vide next page.

I wat she was a yowe o' sense,
An' could behave hersel wi' mense;
I'll say't, she never brack a fence
Thro thievish greed:
Now Robin, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin Mailie's dead!

*She was nae get o' runted rams,
Wi' woo' like gaits, an' legs like trams;
She was the flow'r o' Fairlie lambs,
A famous breed!
Now Robin, greetin, chows the hams
O' Mailie dead!

Wae-worth the man! wha first did shape
That wile, wunchancie thing, a raep!
It gars guid fellows girn an' gape
Wi' choakin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead!

O a' ye Bards on bonie Doon!
Or wha on Aire your chanters tune,
Come join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart'll never get aboon!
His Mailie's dead!

^{*} This verse in Italic is Cancelled in the MS.

He's lost a friend and neebor dear In Mailie dead.

Ay whare he gaed, she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry;.....
Wi' kindly bleat when she did spy him
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

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Sin Mailie's dead

At times he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating till him owre the knowe
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' Moorland tips,
Wi' tautiet ket an' hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships;
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips,
Than Mailie's dead.

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GLENCAIRN KIRK, THURSDAY EVEN:

MY DEAR SIR,

That Misconduct or Mischance may never put a weapon in the hands of Ill-luck to wound your peace, is the prayer of

ROBT. BURNS.

MR. WM. STEWART, Closeburn.

(a) A few words here completely erased from the MS.

LETTER TO DAVID STAIG, Esq., Dumfries.

I know, Sir, that anything which relates to the Burgh of Dumfries's interests will engage your readiest attention, so shall make no apology for this letter. I have been for some time turning my attention to a branch of your good town's revenue, where I think there is much to amend; I mean the "Twa pennies" on Ale. Brewers and Victuallers within the jurisdiction pay accurately; but three Common Brewers in the Bridgend whose consumpt is almost entirely in Dumfries, pay nothing; Annan Brewer, who daily sends in great quantities of ale, pays nothing; because in both cases, Ale Certificates are never asked for: and of all the English Ale, Porter, &c. scarcely any of it pays. For my part, I never recorded an Ale Certificate in Dumfries, and I know most of the other Officers are in the same predicament. It makes no part of our official duty, and besides, untill it is universally assessed, on all Dealers, it strikes me as injustice to assess one. I know that our Collector has a per centage on the Collection, but as it is no great object to him, he gives himself no concern about what is brought in to the town. The Supervisor would suit you better. He is an abler and a keener man, and, what is all-important in the business, such is his official influence over, and power among, his Offrs., that were he to signify that such was his wish, not a "pennie" would be left uncollected. It is by no means the case with the Collector. The Offrs, are not so immediately among his hands, and they would not pay the same attention to his mandates.

Your Brewers here, the Richardsons, one of whom, Gabriel, I survey, pay annually in "twa pennies," about thirty pounds; and they complain, with great justice, of the unfair balance against them, in their competition with the Bridgend, Annan, and English Traders. As they are respectable characters, both as Citizens and Men of Business, I am sure they will meet with every encouragement from the Magistracy of Dumfries. For their sakes partly I have interested myself in this business, but still much more on account of many obligations which I feel myself to lie under to Mr Staig's civility and goodness.

Could I be of the smallest service in any thing which he has at heart, it would give me great pleasure. I have been at some pains to accrtain what your annual loss on this business may be, and I have reason to think that it will amount fully to one third of what you at present receive.

These crude hints, Sir, are entirely for your private use. I have by no means any wish to take a sixpence from Mr Mitchel's income: nor do I wish to serve Mr Findlater: I wish to shew any attempt I can, to do any thing that might declare with what sincerity I have the honor to be,

Friday Noon, Sir, your obliged humble servt.,

P.S.—A variety of other methods might be pointed out, and will easily occur to your reflection on the subject.

LASSIE WI' THE LINTWHITE LOCKS.

Chorus

Lassie wi' the lintwhite locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my dearie O.

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearic O.

Lassie &c.

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn, The cuckoo on the milkwhite thorn, The wanton lambs at early morn Shall welcome thee my dearie O.

Lassie &c.

And when the welcome simmer shower Has chear'd each drooping little flower, We'll to the breathing woodbine bower At sultry noon my dearie O.

Lassie &c.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray, The weary shearer's hameward way, Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray And talk o' love my dearie O.

Lassie &c.

And when the howling wintry blast Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest, Enfaulded to my faithfu' breast,

I'll comfort thee my dearie O.

Lassie &c.

A BALLAD.

Last May a braw wooer cam doon the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said, there was neathing I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me.

He spake o' the darts in my bonic black een, And vow'd for my love he was dying; I said, he might die when he liked for Jean, The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying, The Lord &c.

A weel-stocked mailin, himsel for the laird,
And bridal off-hand, were his proffers;
I never loot on that I kend it or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought &c.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,

The deil tak his taste to gae near her!

He up the lang loan to my black cousin, Bess,

Guess ye how, the jade! I could bear her, could bear her,

Guess &c.

But a' the neist week as I petted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd &c.

But owre my left shoulder I gae him a blink, Lest neebours might say I was saucy; My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink, And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie, And &c.

I spierd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet, Gin she had recover'd her hearin, And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl'd feet, But Heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin, But &c.

He begged, for Gudesake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
So, e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him tomorrow, tomorrow,
I think I maun wed him tomorrow.

NOTE AS TO BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

The Letter was written by the Poet when he resided in Dumfries, and is addressed on the back to "David Staig, Esq. Provost of Dumfries," who was Agent for the Bank of Scotland in that Town. That Letter and the Manuscripts beginning "Lassie wi' the lint white locks," and "Last May a braw wooer cam doon the lang glen," were delivered by Mr David Staig, Butterant, Ireland, son of Provost Staig, to my deceased uncle, Edward Murray Dacre, Banker, Fermoy, Ireland, and by the latter bequeathed to me. Mr Dacre served his apprenticeship with Provost Staig.

WILLIAM D'ACRE ALDER.

TO MR ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.

WITH A COPY OF "THE CALF."

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MY FRIEND MY BROTHER.—Warm recollection of an absent Friend presses so hard on my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle, pleased with the thought that it will greet the Man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant Language of Friendship.

You will have heard that poor Armour has repaid my amorous mortgages double. A very fine boy and girl have awakened a thought and feelings that thrill, some with tender pressure, and some with foreboding anguish, thro' my soul.

The poem was nearly an extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr Hamilton that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time.

If you think it worth while, read it to Charles [Samson], and Mr Wm. Parker; and if they chuse a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come.

I believe all hopes of staying at home will be abortive, but more of this when, in the latter end of next week, you shall be troubled with a visit from—my Dr Sir, your most devoted,

Mossgiel, Friday Noon.

ROBT. BURNS.

TO MR ROBERT AINSLIE, EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, 30th June, 1788.

My dear Sir,—I just now rec'd your brief Epistle; and to take vengeance on your laziness, I have, you see, taken a long sheet of writing paper, and begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vexed at that affair of the girl, but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late Master and Friend's death. I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying; except he have been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life, that the welfare of the Poor or the Helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind, benevolent animal, but he is dropt into such a damn'd needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of Necessities, Appetites, Passions, and Desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food; that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others that he may look properly to himself. Every One, more or less, in the words of the old Scots Proverb "Has his cods in a cloven stick, and maun wyse them out the best way he can." You have been imposed upon in paying Mr Miers for the profile of a Mr Hamilton. I did not mention it in my letter to you, nor did I ever give Mr Miers any such order. I went once, indeed, with young Hamilton of B...., to shew him some profiles I was getting done for Mrs BLACKLOCK, and he sat to Miers of his own accord to send it as he said to a sweetheart; but for my own part, I would as soon think of ordering a Profile of Tibby Nairn or Julie Rutherford as of such a contemptible puppy as H——. I beg you will take the trouble to return the profile to Mr Miers: I have no objection to lose the money, but I won't have any such Profile in my possession. I desired the Carrier to pay you, but as I mentioned only 15sh. to him, I will rather inclose you a guinea note. I have it not indeed to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the Banknotes through the house like salt permits.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes by his silly, garrulous pruriency. I know it has been a fault of my own too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of Hell! Your Poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend forsooth to crack their jokes on Prudence; but 'tis a squalid Vagabond glorying in his rags. Still, Imprudence respecting money-matters is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice, in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same disengenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegritive

depravity of principle, in the hackneyed victims of Profusion, as in the unfeeling children of Parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much-talked-of world beyond the Grave, and I wish that which Piety believes, and Virtue deserves may be all matter of fact; but in things belonging to, and terminating in this present scene of Existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with Welcome in the distinguished elevation of Respect, or shrink from Contempt in the abject corner of Insignificance. Whether he shall wanton under the Tropic of Plenty, at least, enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy Convenience. or starve in the Arctic circle of dreary Poverty. Whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of Regret and Remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.—

You see how I preach. — You used occasionally to sermonize too; I wish you would, in charity, favor me with a sheet full in your own way. At any rate write me with your convenience, to let me know your direction. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bolingbroke writes to Dean Swift: "Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely; make an effort and love me with all mine!" Humble servt., and all that trumpery, is now such a perversion, such a Sodomy of Language, that Honest Friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple—Farewell!

P.S.—I am a subscriber to Ainslie's large map of Scotland, if you are in the shop, please ask after the progress; and when published, secure me one of the earliest Impressions of the Plate. Forgive me for all this trouble.—I seldom see a Newspaper, so do not know the state of Publications, the Stage, &c.

R. B.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

And Send the Godly in a pet to pray.—
Pope.

O Thou that in the heavens does dwell!

Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,

Sends ane to heaven and ten to h—ll,

A' for Thy glory;

And no for ony guid or ill

They've done before Thee!

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou has left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burning and a shining light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation?
I, who deserv'd most just damnation
For broken laws,
Sax thousand years ere my creation
Thro' Adam's cause.

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here, a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock;
A guide, a ruler and example
To a' Thy flock.

But yet, O L—d, confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
And sometimes too in warldly trust
Vile Self gets in:
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defi'd wi' sin.

O L—d—yestreen—Thou kens—wi' Meg—Thy pardon I sincerely beg:
O, may't ne'er be a livin plague,
To my dishonor!
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her!

Besides, I further maun avow,
Wi' Leezie's lass—three times—I trow—
But L—d, that Friday I was fou
When I cam near her;
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer her.

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn
Lest he owre proud and high should turn
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy hand maun e'en be borne
Untill Thou lift it.

L—d bless Thy Chosen in this place,
For here Thou has a Chosen race;
But G—d confound their stubborn face
And blast their name,
Wha bring their rulers to disgrace
And public shame.

L—d mind Gaun Hamilton's deserts;
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony taking arts
Wi' Great and Sma',
Frae G—d's ain Priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

And when we chasten'd him therefore
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
And set the warld in a roar
O' laughin at us:
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

L—d hear my earnest cry and pray'r
Against that Presbytry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, L—d mak it bare
Upo' their heads!
L—d visit them and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

O L—d, my G—d, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
To think how I sat, sweatin, shakin,
And pish'd wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin lip gaed sneakin
And hid his head.

L—d in Thy day o' vengeance try him!
L—d visit him wha did employ him!
And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their prayer,
But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
And dinna spare!

But L—d remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine;
That I for grace and gear may shine,
Excell'd by nane!
And a' the glory shall be Thine,

AMEN! AMEN!

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS, SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT-NIGHT, DECR. 4TH, 1793.—WRITTEN BY MR. BURNS.

DUMFRIES THEATRE.

STILL anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious sure, this night than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my Bill, thought I, if nothing better;
So, sought a Poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him, I came to feast my curious eyes;
Said, nothing like his works was ever printed,
And last, my Prologue-business, slily hinted.

Ma'am, let me tell you, quoth my Man of Rhymes, I know your bent—these are no laughing times; Can you, but Miss, I own I have my fears, Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears— With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence, Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentence; Paint Vengeance, as he takes his horrid stand, Waving on high the desolating brand, Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty Land!

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing, D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying? I'll laugh, that's pos—nay more, the world shall know it; And so, your servant, gloomy Master Poet.

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief, That Misery's another word for Grief:
I also think—so may I be a Bride!
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care, and ceaseless sigh, Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye; Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five; Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch! Say, you'll be merry—tho' you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
Measur'st, in desp'rate thought—a rope—thy neck—
Or, where the beetling cliffs o'erhang the deep
Peerest, to meditate the healing leap:
For shame! for shame! I tell thee, thou art no man:
This for a giddy, vain, capricious woman?
A creature, though I say't, you know, that should not;
Ridiculous with her idiot, "Would and Would not."
Wouldst thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf?
Laugh at her follies; laugh e'en at thyself:
Learn to despise those frowns, now so terrific;
And love a kinder—that's your grand specific!

To sum up all—be merry! I advise; And as we're merry, may we still be wise.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

Mossgiel, 15th May, 1786.

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae other end,
Than just a kind memento:
But how (*what) the subject-theme may gang,
Let time an' chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a Sang;
Perhaps, turn out a Sermon,

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
An' ANDREW dear believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
An' muckle they may grieve ye.
For care an' trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your view's attained;
An' a' your schemes may come to nought
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

Yet they wha fa' in Fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure;
For still th' IMPORTANT END o' Life
They equally may answer:
A man may hae an HONEST HEART,
Tho' Poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae CASH to spare him.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restric'ed:
But gen'rally, mankind are weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If Self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted.

Ay, free, aff-han', your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel,
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yersel as weel's ye can,
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed LOVE, Luxuriantly indulge it; But never tempt th' illicit rove, Tho' naething should divuldge it. I wave the quantum o' the sin; The hazard of concealing; But Och! it hardens a' within, And petrifies the feeling!

If ye hae made a step aside,
Some hap-mistake o'ertaen you,
Yet, still keep up a decent pride,
An' ne'er owre far demean you.
Time comes wi' kind, oblivious shade,
An' daily darker sets it;
An', if na-mae mistakes are made,
The world soon forgets it.

To eatch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
An' gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justifi'd by Honor.
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant,
But for the glorious priviledge
Of being independant.

The fear-o'-Hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order,
But where you feel your Honor grip.
Let that ay be your border.
The slighest touches,—instant pause—
Debar a' side-pretences,
An' resolutely keep its Laws,
Uncaring consequences.

The Great CREATOR to revere,
Must, sure, become the creature,
But still the preaching-cant forbear,
An' ev'n the rigid feature.
Yet ne'er with Wits prophane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

When ranting round in Pleasure's ring, Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a random-sting,
It may be little minded:
But when on Life we're tempest-driv'n,
A Conscience butt a canker—
A Correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n—
Is sure a noble anchor!

Fareweel! dear, amiable youth!
Your HEART can ne'er be wanting:
May Prudence, Fortitude an' Truth
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman-phrase "GOD send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser;
An' may ye better reck the rede,
Than ever did th' ADVISER!

ROBT. BURNS.

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

WHEN chapmen billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to take the gate;
While we sit bowsing at the nappy,
And getting fou, and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest TAM O' SHANTER, As he frae Ayr ac night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men, and bonic lasses.)

O TAM! hadst thou but been sae wise, As taen thy ain wife KATE'S advice! She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum; A blethrin, blusterin, drunken blellum: That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober:
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller:
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on:
That at the L—d's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that late or soon,
Thou wad be found, deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Aloway's auld, haunted Kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet, To think how mony counsels sweet, How mony lengthen'd, sage advices, The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: ae market night, TAM had got planted unco right; Fast by an ingle, bleezin finely, Wi' reaming swats that drank divinely: And at his elbow, Souter JOHNIE, His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony; Tam lo'ed him like a very brither, They had been fou for weeks thegither. The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter, And ay the ale was growing better: The landlady and TAM grew gracious, Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious: The Souter tauld his queerest stories; The landlord's laugh was ready chorus: The storm without might rair and rustle, Tam did na (*care) mind the storm a whistle.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

‡ Care, mad to see a man sae happy, ‡ E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy: As bees flee hame, (*laden wi') wi' lades o' treasure, (*llk) The minutes wing'd (*its) their way wi' pleasure Kings may be blest, but TAM was glorious, O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But Pleasures are like poppies spread.
You sieze the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow, falls in the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever;
Or like the Borealis' race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm:
Nae man can tether Time or Tide,
The hour approaches TAM maun ride;
That hour, o' Night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour TAM (*taks) mounts his beast in;
And sic a night (*Tam) he took the road in,
As ne'er poor Sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twould blawn its last,
The rattling showers rose on the blast,
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed.
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey meare, Meg, A better never lifted leg, Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire, Despising wind, and rain, and fire;

* Cancelled in the MS.

[!] These two lines are written on the margin of the MS.

Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet; Whiles crooning o'er an auld Scots sonnet; Whiles glowring round wi' anxious cares, Lest bogles catch him unawares: Kirk-Aloway was drawing nigh, Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford, Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd: And past the birks, and meikle stane, Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane: And thro' the whins, and by the cairn, Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn; And near the (*tree) thorn, aboon the well, Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel':-Before him Doon pours all his floods; The doubling storm roars thro' the woods; The lightnings flash frae pole to pole; Near, and more near, the thunders roll: When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees, KIRK-ALOWAY seem'd in a bleeze: Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing, And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn! What dangers thou canst make us scorn! Wi' tippeny, we fear nae evil; Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil! The swats sae ream'd in Tamme's noddle, Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle; But Maggy stood, right sair astonish'd, Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd, She ventured forward on the light, And, wow, Tam saw an unco sight!

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

Warlocks and witches in a dance. Nae cotillon brent new frae FRANCE, But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels, Put life and mettle in their heels. A winnock-bunker in the east, There sat auld Nick in shape o' beast: A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large, To gie them music was his charge: He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl, Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.— (*The torches climb around the wa', Infernal fires, blue-bleezing a';) "Coffins stood round, like open presses, "That shaw'd the Dead in their last dresses: ^aAnd (by some devilish cantraip slight,) "Each in its cauld hand held a light .-By which heroic TAM was able To note upon the halv table: A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns; Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns; A thief, new-cutted frae a rape, Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape; Five tomahawks wi' blude red-rusted; Five seymitars wi' murder crusted; (*Seven gallows pins; three hangman's whittles; A raw o' weel seal'd Doctors' bottles ;) A garter, which a babe had strangled; A knife a father's throat had mangled, Whom his ain son of life bereft, The gray-hairs yet stack to the heft: Wi' mair of horrible and awefu'. Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

a These four lines are on the margin of the MS, and were substituted by the Poet for his preceeding two lines in Italic.

* Cancelled in the MS.

Three Lawyers' tongues, turn'd inside out, Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout; Three Priests' hearts, rotten black as muck, Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.

As TAMMIE glowr'd, amazed, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The Piper (*quick and quicker) loud and louder blew,
The Dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka Carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies on the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now TAM! O TAM! had that been queans,
A' plump and strappin in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flainen,
Been snaw-white, seventeen-hunder linnen;
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush o' gude blue hair,
I wad hat gien them off my hurdies,
For at blink o' the bonie burdies!
But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Loupin an flingin on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But TAM kend what was what fu' brawlie;
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on CARRICK-shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept (held) the Country-side in fear:)

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

Her cutty-sark o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah, little thought thy reverend graunie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)
Should ever grac'd a dance o' witches!

But here, my Muse her wing maun cour, Sie flights are far beyond her power; To sing, how Nannie lap and flang, (A souple jad she was, and strang;) And how TAM stood, like ane bewitch'd, And thought his very een enrich'd; Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain, And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main: Till, first ac caper, syne anither, TAM lost his reason a' thegither, And roars out,—"Weel done, Cutty-sark!" And in an instant all was dark: And scarcely had he Maggie rallied, When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out, wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open Pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop, she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-croud,
When, "catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggy runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin! In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!

In vain, thy KATE awaits thy comin! Kate soon will be a woefu' woman! Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg, And win the key-stane o' the brig; There, at them thou thy tail may toss, A running stream they dare na cross: But ere the key-stane she could make, The fient a tail she had to shake! For Nannie, far before the rest. Hard upon noble Maggy prest, And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle, But little (kend) wist she Maggy's mettle ; Ae spring brought off her master hale, But left behind her ain gray tail: The Carlin claught her by the rump, And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this Tale o' truth shall read, Each Man and mother's son take heed: Whene'er to Drink you are inclin'd, Or Cutty-sarks rin in your mind, Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear, Remember Tam-o'-Shanter's meare.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

1

Now Nature hangs her mantle green,
On every (*spreading) blooming tree;
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white,
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phebus chears the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies,
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

2

Now laveroeks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bower,
Makes woodland echoes ring:
The mavis mild, wi' mony a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

* Cancelled in the MS.

3

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove these sweets amang,
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strong.

4

I was the Queen o' bonie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly rose I on the morn,
As blythe lay doon at e'en:
And I'm the Sovereign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

5

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my Fae,
Grim Vengeance yet shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae!
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th'balm that (*melts at) drops on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

^{*} Cancelled in the MS.

6

My son, My son, may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine!
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frac thy Mother's faces,
Or turn their hearts to thee!
And where thou meet'st thy Mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

7

O soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn;
Nae mair the winds of Autumn wave
Across the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house of Death
Let Winter round me rave;
And the next flowers that deck the spring,
Bloom o'er my peaceful grave!

Adriano, or, The first of June.

^{*}How gracefully Maria leads the dance. She's life itself. I never saw a foot So nimble and so cloquent.—It speaks, And the sweet whispering Poetry it makes Shames the musician.—

^{*} This verse in Italie, in the poet's holograph, from Professor Hurdis's "Adriano," follows immediately after this beautiful ballad; but whether the lines were meant as a compliment to Mrs. Graham of Fintry, Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, or Mrs. Riddell (whose name was Maria), to each of whom he sent copies of the "Lament," is not stated by the Editors.



CONTENTS.

						PAGE.	
PREFATORY REMARKS,			•••	•••		iii.	
	(1)				
THE HOLY FAIR,		•••			•••		1

"The Holy Fair was a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a Sacramental occasion."—Burns.

The scenc of this fine poem is the churchyard of Mauchline, it was composed in the Autumn of 1785, presumably, soon after the communion which was administered at Mauchline in those days but once a year, namely, on the second Sunday of August.

"The subject, handled so cleverly and sharply, is the laxity of manners visible in matters so solemn and terrible as the administration of the Sacrament."—Cunningham.

"This was, indeed, an extraordinary performance; no partizan of any sect could whisper that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, were held up to ridicule: it was acknowledged, amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet."—

Lockhart.

"It is no doubt, a reckless piece of satire, but is a clever one, and must have cut to the bone."—Hogg.

"Notwithstanding the daring levity of some of its allusions and incidents, the poet has strictly confined himself to the sayings and doings of the assembled multitude—the sacred rite itself is never once mentioned."—W. Gunnyon.

PERSONS AND PLACES MENTIONED IN THE POEM.

Galston.—The adjoining parish to Mauchline.

Black Bonnet.—"A colloqual appellation bestowed on the Church Elders or Deacons, who in the olden time generally wore black bonnets on Sundays, when they officiated at the "plate" in making the usual collection for the poor."—Motherwell.

Bet Barb—r.—In the printed editions styled "Racer Jess" she was Janet Gibson, daughter of "Poosie Nancie" of the "Jolly Beggars," was remarkable for her pedestrian feats, and died at Mauchline, February, 1813.

Sawnie.—Mr. Moodie, minister of Riccarton, an adjoining parish, and one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds." He was a never-failing assistant at the Mauchline Sacraments. His personal appearance and style of oratory were exactly as described by the poet. He dwelt chiefly on the terrors of the law. On one occasion he told the audience that they would find the text in John viii., 44, but it was so applicable to their case that there was no need of his reading it to them. The verse begins, "Ye are of your father the devil."

Geordie.—Mr. (afterwards Dr.) George Smith, minister of Galston.

Willie-Water-fitt.—Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Wm. Peebles minister of Newton-upon-Ayr, sometimes named, from its situation, the Water-fit.

Common Sense.—Dr. Mackenzie, then of Mauchline, afterwards of Irvine, had recently conducted a controversy under the title of "Common Sense." Local commentators are of opinion that he, and not the personified abstraction, is meant.

Cowgate.—A street which faces the church-yard in Mauchline.

Wee M——r.—The Rev. Mr. Miller, afterwards minister of Kilmaurs. This stanza is virtually the most depreciatory in the whole poem.

Black R——ll.—The Rev. John Russell, at this time minister of the chapel of ease, Kilmarnock, afterwards of Stirling—one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds." "He was," says a correspondent of Cunningham's, "the most tremendous man I ever saw. Black Hugh Macpherson was a beauty in comparison. His voice was like thunder, and his sentiments were such as must have shocked any class of hearers in the least more refined than those whom he usually addressed."

(2)

HALLOWE'EN, 10

"This poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is east, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own."—

The notes above alluded to are given in full on pages 18, 19 and 20, exactly as Burns wrote them.

"Hallowe'en is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands; particularly those ærial people, the fairies, are said, on that night, to hold a grand anniversary."—
Burns.

(3)

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL, 21

Composed at the farm of Mossgiel in the winter of 1784, apparently after having carefully read Milton's "Paradise Lost." His brother tells us concerning the composition of this poem—"The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage."

The obliteration of the fifteenth verse with the complimentary reference to "Bonnie Jean" was caused by the Poet's rupture with the Armour family.

"The beautiful and relenting spirit in which this fine poem finishes moved the heart of one of the coldest of our critics."—

A. Cunningham.

"Humour and tenderness are here so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which predominates."—Currie.

(4)

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MEERE, ON GIVING HER THE ACCUS-TOM'D RIPP O' CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW-YEAR,

26

The Ettrick Shepherd says in a note to this poem:—
"Burns must have been an exceedingly good and kind-hearted
being; for whenever he has occasion to address or mention
any subordinate being, however mean, even a mouse or a
flower, then there is a gentle pathos in his language that
awakens the finest feelings of the heart."

Allan Cunningham says:—"The Auld Farmer of Kyle has the spirit of a Knight-errant, and loves his mare according to the rules of chivalry; and well he might; she carried him safely homefrom markets, triumphantly from wedding-booses; she ploughed the stiffest land; faced the steepest brae, and, moreover, bore home his bonic bride with a consciousness of the loveliness of the load."

Professor Wilson, in his famed essay on Burns, declares that to his knowledge, the recital of this poem has brought tears of pleasure to the eyes, and "humanized the heart of a Gilmerton earter."

(5)

JOHN BARLEYCORN—A BALLAD, ... 30

This is an improvement of an early song of English origin, a copy of which was obtained by Mr. Robert Jameson from a black-letter sheet in the Pepy's Library, Cambridge, and first published in his "Ballads." David Laing has also given an authentic version in his very curious volume of "Metrical Tales."

Although this Ballad was written prior to 1785, the Poet did not print it in the collection of forty-four pieces which formed the Kilmarnock edition, published in July, 1786: but it appeared in the first Edinburgh edition in April, 1787.

The poet could never be induced to correct the defective grammar in the opening line, deeming, we suppose, with Shakespeare, that bad grammar is sometimes a positive beauty. James Hogg had the same feeling in regard to his favourite song, "When the kye comes hame."—Douglas.

(6)

This poem was composed early in 1786, and we find Burns sending a copy of it to Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, in a letter dated 20th March, of that year.

W. Gunnyon notes as follows:—"It was suggested by the withdrawal of an Act of Parliament empowering Duncan Forbes of Culloden to distil whisky on his barony of Ferintosh, free of duty, in return for services rendered to the Government. This privilege was a source of great revenue to the family;

38

and as Ferintosh whisky was cheaper than that produced elsewhere, it became very popular, and the name Ferintosh thus became something like a synonym for whisky over the country. Compensation for the loss of privilege, to the tune of £21,580, was awarded to the Forbes family by a jury. Attention was further drawn to the national beverage at this time by the vexatious and oppressive way in which the Excise laws were enforced at the Scotch distilleries. Many distillers abandoned the business; and as barley was beginning to fall in price in consequence, the county gentlemen supported the distillers, and an Act was passed relieving the trade from the obnoxious supervision. These circumstances gave the poet his cue; and the subject was one calculated to evoke his wildest humour."

(7)

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.—A BALLAD,

Gilbert Burns says:—"Several of the Poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the Authors. He used to remark to me that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the Elegy 'Man was made to Mourn,' was composed."

The origin of this fine poem is alluded to by Burns in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated Ellisland, 16th August, 1788:—"I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived awhile in her girlish years: the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man,' beginning thus:—

'Twas in the sixteenth hunder year
Of God and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie;
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah! man was made to moan!'

The third stanza shews a marked variation from the printed editions, and points to a locality (Carrick District of Ayrshire) well known to the poet in his early days.

(8)

THE TWA DOGS.—A TALE, 42

It appears that this tale was in an unfinished state when Burns was negotiating with John Wilson, the printer, about the publication of the Kilmarnock edition; and on the latter's suggestion, that it would be a suitable piece for the front of the volume, Burns completed the poem on his way home to the Mossgiel farm, and took it next day to the printer. This must have been early in the year 1786, as we find in a letter addressed to Mr. John Richmond, Edinburgh (a Manchline friend of the Poet's) dated 17th February, 1786 the fact thus stated:—"I have likewise completed my poem on the 'Dogs,' but have not shown it to the world."

Gilbert Burns says:—"Robert had a dog, which he called Luath, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person, the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow on his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the memory of a Quadruped friend:' but this plan was given up for the poem as it now stands. Cæsar was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite Luath."

In the autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, dated Manchline, 2nd August, 1787 the 'factor' of the poem is thus referred to:—''My father's generous master died! the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of 'The Twa Dogs' my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears."

(9)

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY 'T E'EN, ... 50

This "fine, devout and tranquil drama" was written in the beginning of the winter of 1785; and from the poet's brother Gilbert we have this accurate statement as to the origin of the poem:—

"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author, the world is indebted for 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons—those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community—and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth thrilled with peculiar ecstacy through my soul. The Cotter, in the 'Saturday Night,' is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion and exhortations; vet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us were 'at service out among the farmers roun'.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny-fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue; and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses."

The MS. copy of this poem, used by the printer of the Kilmarnock edition of his poems, is now at Irvine, the property of the Burns Club there, as well as "The Twa

Dogs," "Scotch Drink," "Earnest Cry and Prayer," "The Holy Fair," and the "Address to the Deil."

The printed editions all vary slightly from the words in our text.

(10)

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ... 58

Burns says:—"This Poem was written before the act anent the Scottish Distilleries, of Session 1786, for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks,"

The circumstances which gave rise to this poem are detailed in the notes to "Scotch Drink" (6).

The principal characters mentioned are:-

- "Montgomeries."—Colonel Hugh Montgomery, who served in the American War, and was then the Representative of Ayrshire.
- "Boswell."—James Boswell of Auchinleck, the biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson.
 - "Dempster."—George Dempster of Dunnichen, Forfarshire.
- "Kilkerran."—Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran, then member for Edinburgh.
- "Laird o' Graham."—The Marquis of Graham, afterwards Duke of Montrose.
 - "Dundass."—Henry Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville.
 - "Erskine."—Thomas Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine.
- "Campbels, Frederic an' Illay."—Lord Frederick Campbell, brother to the Duke of Argyle, and Hay Campbell, then Lord Advocate, afterwards Lord President.
- "Livistone."—Sir William Augustus Cunningham, Bart. of Livingston, M.P. for the county of Linlithgow.

"Sodger Hugh."—Colonel Hugh Montgomery, afterwards Earl of Eglinton, being member for Ayrshire, the poet speaks of him as his stented or van-guard watchman; but not being sure that Montgomery would think the compliment to his ready hand an excuse in full for the allusion to his imperfect elecution, expunged the verse.

"Her lost Militia."—Scotland was already exasperated at the refusal of a militia, for which she was a petitioner, and had begun to handle her claymore, and was perhaps only hindered from drawing it by the act mentioned by the poet.

"Boconnocks."—William Pitt was the grandson of Robert Pitt of Boconnock, in Cornwall.

"Nanse Tinnock."—A worthy old hostess of the author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studied politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch Drink.

The following note by Chambers is interesting:-"Nanse Tinnock is long deceased, and no one has caught up her mantle. She is described as having been a true ale-wife, in the proverbial sense of the word-close, discreet, civil, and no tale-bearer. When any neighbouring wife came, asking if her John was here, 'Oh no,' Nanse would reply, shaking money in her pocket as she spoke, 'he's no here,' implying to the querist that the husband was not in the house, while she meant to herself that he was not among her half-pencethus keeping the word of promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope. Her house was one of two stories, and had a front towards the street, by which Burns must have entered Manchline from Mossgiel. The date over the door is 1744. It is remembered however, that Nanse never could understand how the poet should have talked of enjoying himself in her house 'nine times a week.' 'The lad,' she said, 'hardly ever drank three half-mutchkins under her roof in his life.' Nance, probably, had never heard of the poetical licence.

At this day (1888) the house above referred to, is almost in the same condition as when Burns frequented it; and is occupied by a very worthy old couple, (Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Marshall) warm admirers of the Poet, who delight in entering into minute details of Robin's doings in and about Mauchline. "Teaan' Winnocks."—Pitt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had gained some credit by a measure introduced in 1784 for preventing snuggling of tea by reducing the duty, the revenue being compensated by a tax on windows.

"Five an' Forty."—The number of Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons.

"Coalition."—Lord North's administration was succeeded by that of the Marquis of Rockingham, March, 1782. At the death of the latter in the succeeding July, Lord Shelburne became Prime Minister, and Mr. Fox resigned his Secretaryship. Under his lordship, peace was restored, January, 1783. By the union of Lord North and Mr. Fox, Lord Shelburne was soon after forced to resign in favour of his rivals, the heads of the celebrated Coalition.

W. S. Douglas notes regarding the first line of this piece:—
"We of this generation are apt to wonder why, in the opening
line, he addresses 'Irish Lords' instead of those of our own
Scotland, when hailing the Scotch Representatives in the
House of Commons; but the eldest sons of Scottish Peers not
being eligible for election in Scotland seems to have been
felt by Burns as a national affront. We must, therefore,
regard the prominence here given to 'Irish Lords' as a pointed
stroke of satire. The question was tried by Lord Daer during
the poet's lifetime, both in the Court of Session and House of
Lords, and decided against him.

(11)

ADDRESS TO J. SMITH, 65

The following note is given by Allan Cunningham: "The James Smith to whom this epistle is addressed, was at that time a small shopkeeper in Mauchline, and the conrade or rather follower of the poet in all his merry expeditions with 'yill caup commentators.' He was present in Poosie Nansie's when the 'Jolly Beggars' first dawned on the fancy of Burns. Smith left Mauchline, and established a calico printing manufactory at Avon, near Linlithgow, where his friend found him to all appearance prosperous in

1788: he afterwards went to the West Indies, and died early. His wit was ready and his manners lively and unaffected."

The printed editions vary very little in this poem from the words in our text.

(12)

WINTER, A DIRGE, 72

This is one of the poet's earliest recorded compositions and was copied into his Commonplace Book, in April, 1784, prefaced with the following reflections:—"As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment which are in a manner peculiar to myself, or some here and there such out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

'Mighty tempest and the heavy waste, Abrupt, and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,'

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to everything great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me—something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed 'Winter, a Dirge.'"

PAGE.

(13)

AN EPISTLE TO DAVY: A BROTHER POET, ... 73

David Sillar, to whom this epistle is addressed, a native of Tarbolton, near Mauchline, was at that time a schoolmaster at Irvine, and was welcome to Burns, both as a scholar and a writer of verse. He published a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect, printed at Kilmarnock in 1789, to which he prefixed Burns' "Second Epistle to Davie," He loved to speak of his early comrade, and supplied Walker with some very valuable anecdotes; he was latterly one of the Magistrates of Irvine, and died there on the 2nd May, 1830, at the age of seventy. With reference to this epistle Gilbert Burns says:-"Among the earliest of his poems was the epistle to Davie. Robert often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in the summer of 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scottish poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that besides, there was certainly one novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging.-Robert seemed well pleased with my criticism."

The early date ascribed to this poem, and authenticated by the poet's holograph, in this valuable copy, from which our text is printed, seems to have puzzled nearly all his editors.

(14)

THE DEATH AN' DYIN' WORDS O' POOR MAILIE, 79

This tale is partly true and Lockhart has well said that the expiring animal's admonitions, touching the education of the "poor toop lamb," her son and heir, and the "yowie, silly thing," her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of sly, homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the "Twa Dogs," and perhaps to its utmost depth in his "Death and Doctor Hornbook."

Gilbert Burnssays:—"The circumstances of the poor sheep were pretty much as Robert has described them. He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Hughoc's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and Dying Words,' pretty much in the way they now stand."

Carlyle considers this the poet's happiest effort of its peculiar kind: he classes it with the "Address to a Mouse," and the "Auld Farmer's Mare," but holds that "this has even more of a sportive tenderness in it."

(15)

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY, 81

Hogg calls this a very elegant morsel, and Cunningham says that herein Burns intimates that he regards himself as a poet, when he calls on the bards of Ayr and Doon to join in the lament for Mailie.

This elegy was not in the Poet's Commonplace Book, and doubtless from the many changes, cancellings, and substituted verses, as well as from its position (the end) in this document, was amongst the last of his compositions before publishing the famous Kilmarnock edition. The cancelled stanza beginning

"She was nae get o' runted rams," (See page 82).

was replaced by the much improved one,

"She was nae get o' Moorland tips, &c."
(See page 83).

yet Currie and Douglas both regret the loss of the honour once intended for the *Fairlee lambs*: Fairlie being the first place in Ayrshire where the poet's father in early manhood obtained employment.

The preceding fifteen poems were bought by the Kilmarnock Monument Museum Committee at a Public Sale held at Sotheby's, London, on 20th March 1888, for the sum of £215 5s. They were previously the property of Geo. Wilson, Esq., of Dalmarnock, (grandson of Peter Hill, Bookseller, Edinburgh, the friend and correspondent of Burns) who bought them from Wm. Paterson, Publisher, Edinburgh, in June, 1879. Mr Paterson bought them from Messrs Henry Sothern & Co., Booksellers, London, only a few

weeks before he sold them to Mr Wilson. Messrs Sothern bought them from Mr Wm. Harrison, of Samlesbury Hall, Preston, Lancashire. It is also known that these valuable and interesting MSS, passed through the hands of other two London Booksellers,—Mr Harvey, St. James's Street, and Mr Toovey, Piccadilly:—

The following is Douglas's Description of the MSS. (extended to date) before they were framed and fixed up in the Kilmarnock Museum.

Towards the end of the year I785, the poet procured a blankpaper version book, containing twenty sheets or eighty folio pages in all; into which he transcribed in fair hand these fifteen poetical compositions, commencing with the Holy Fair at page 1 and ending with Poor Mailie's Elegy at page 65. The remaining fifteen pages are blank, except that on page 80 are two amended stanzas of the Address to James Smith.

There are indications which suggest that the last entries in the book were made shortly after the rupture between the author and the Armour family, about the month of March 1786. The numerous deletings and alterations in the Address to James Smith and in Poor Mailie's Elegy lead to the inference that these pieces were then freshly composed; while the others, from their cleaner penmanship, must have been transcribed from pre-existing manuscripts. The re-modelling of one of the stanzas in the Address to the Deil shows that, in view of sending his poems to the press, he desired to extinguish a fine compliment to Jean Armour contained in the original version.

It is believed that this document had been placed in the hands of Dr Currie, along with the other materials from which he compiled his edition of the Life and Works of Burns, and it remained a family inheritance, during a long series of years, in possession of the biographer's descendants. Eventually, along with the early Common-place Book, which was purchased by the late John Adam, of Greenock, it was sold by Auction in London: afterwards passing through the hands, amongst others, of the several gentlemen before mentioned.

The bringing of these MSS, to light settles the date of composition of "The Holy Fair," as in the Autumn of 1785, many of Burns' editors having supposed it to be among the latest of the pieces produced in the Kilmarnock edition 1786. The only other poem in the list to which the author has attached a date is the "Epistle to Davy," which is recorded as a production of "Jany. 1785." Let it be noted that this piece is placed near the close of the collection, and it may be presumed that the poet really meant "January 1786," for we cannot conceive that at an earlier date he had much or any acquaintance with Jean Armour. Lockhart distrusts Gilbert's account of the early date of the "Epistle to Davy" on the ground of its celebration of Jean; but says, "after all, she is celebrated in the concluding stanzas, which may have been added after the first draught." In the first seven stanzas there is no allusion to Jean, and had the poem closed there it would nevertheless have commanded the world's admiration. The references to Jean in the four concluding stanzas are so inwoven with the fabric of the composition, that when the poet extracted from "The Vision," and the "Address to the Deil," the beautiful allusions to Jean, he must have found it a hopeless matter to attempt as much with the "Epistle to Davy."

(16)

LETTER TO WM. STEWART, CLOSEBURN, ... 84

This characteristic letter, which has not been previously published, was bought at a public sale in Edinburgh, for the Monument Museum Committee, on the 3rd May, 1881, for the sum of ten pounds ten shillings.

(17)

LETTER TO DAVID STAIG, DUMFRIES, ... 85

"This letter, which manifests the writer's business talents, as well as the strong interest he took in the affairs

87

of his adopted town, was first printed in the *Dumfries Courier*, in 1858, and thereafter in connection with a pamphlet on the Established Churches of Dumfries, by Mr. Wm. R. M'Dairmid, in 1865.

Provost Staig obtained an opinion of council on the question started by Burns, which confirmed the poet's views. The matter was brought before the Town Council of the Burgh on 17th July, 1796, only four days before the poet's death. The impost was accordingly levied, and continued to be so till the Reform Bill of 1832 put an end to it."—S. Douglas.

(18)

LASSIE WI' THE LINTWHITE LOCKS, ...

"This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded."—B.

Cunningham has the following interesting note attached to this song:-"Those acquainted with the Poet's life and habits of study, will perceive much of both in the sweet song, 'Lassie wi' the lint-white locks.' Dumfries is a small town; a few steps carried Burns to green lanes, daisied brae-sides, and quiet stream banks. Men returning from labour were sure to meet him 'all under the light of the moon,' sauntering forth as if he had no aim; his hands behind his back, his hat turned up a little behind by the shortness of his neck, and noting all, yet seeming to note nothing. Those who got near enough to him without being seen, might hear him humming some old Scots air and fitting verses to it-the scene and the season supplying the imagery, and the Jeans, the Nancies, and Phillises of his admiration, furnishing bright eyes, white hands, and waving tresses, as the turn of the song required."

The MS. from which the words of our text is copied, appears to have been unknown to the editors previous to 1877, for at page 221, Vol. III. of Paterson's edition, we find Scott Douglas noting "no other MS. of the song but the one in the Thomson correspondence has ever been seen, so far as we are aware."

Currie, Thomson, Cunningham, and Chambers, for some unaccountable reason, all omitted the second stanza of our text, and it will be observed that the word "enfaulded" takes the place of "enclasped" in the closing stanza, which undoubtedly is a great improvement on any of the printed editions. Currie gives the following variation of the closing verse:—

"And should the howling wintry blast Disturb my lassie's midnight rest; I'll fauld thee to my faithfu' breast, And comfort thee, my dearie O."

"Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate: but somehow it does not make such a figure in poesie as that other species of the passion, where love is liberty, and nature, law. Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet, while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul."—Burns. Cunningham in referring to these remarks of the poet, says, "it must be owned that the bard could render very pretty reasons for his rapture about Jean Lorimer."

(19)

A BALLAD.—LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER CAM DOON THE LANG GLEN, 89

This is a "pearl of great price" among the songs of Burns, and has been a popular favourite ever since it made its appearance. The melody selected for it is in every way calculated to give effect to the humour and naiveté of the words. Thomson objected to the localities, "Gate-slack" and "Dalgarnock," and the poet explained that Gate-slack is a romantic pass among the Lowther Hills, on the confines of Dumfries-shire, and that Dalgarnock is an equally romantic spot near the Nith, where still are to be seen a ruined church and burial-ground. He at length yielded to an alteration of the former, thus:—

'He up the Gate-slack to my black cousin, Bess.' 'He up the lang loan to my black cousin, Bess.'

Dr Currie very properly observed on this point that "It is always a pity to throw out anything that gives locality to our poet's verses."

The following line, in the last verse but one, has been changed by popular usage, since Burns's days, in order to give it additional point, thus:—

'And how my auld shoon fitted her schachl't feet.'

This makes it correspond with a common proverbial expression: when a lover deserts one mistress for another, the latter is twitted with wearing the *old shoes* of her predecessor.

"The word 'petted,' in line first of verse fifth stands so in the MS., although in all printed copies we read 'fretted.'—S. Douglas.

The three preceding MSS. (Nos. 17, 18 & 19) were bought for the Monument Museum Committee on 10th May, 1881, from Mr W. D'Acre Alder, Dumfries, for the sum of thirty five pounds. See also Mr Alder's note on page 90.

(20)

LETTER TO ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK, ... 91

This letter, although not dated, was written in 1786, and clears up the doubtful language of all the printed editions, in the first sentence of the second paragraph.

... 95

Burns never tried to conceal either his joys or hissorrows: he sent copies of his favourite pieces, and intimations of much that befel him to his chief friends and comrades—this brief note was made to carry double.

This letter was presented to the Monument Committee by the family of the late David Rankin, Esq., Postmaster and Wine Merchant, Kilmarnock.

(21)

LETTER TO ROBERT AINSLIE, EDINBURGH, 92

(Cromek, 1808).

Purchased 29th January, 1884, for the Kilmarnock Monument Museum at the Auction Rooms of Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 13 Wellington Street, Strand, London, for the sum of thirteen pounds. It contains several lines omitted in all printed copies.

(22)

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, ...

Purchased, 16th January, 1884, for the Kilmarnock Monument Museum, at the Auction Rooms of Messrs Duncan Keith & Buchanan, Glasgow, for the sum of forty pounds.

Many of the words in our text are different from all the printed copies, and greatly assist the student of Burns' literature in understanding the Poet's allusions in this scathing satire.

"The origin of this terrible satire may be briefly told as follows:—Gavin Hamilton, the special friend of the poet, had been denied the benefit of the ordinances of the Church, following on a dispute about the poor-rate charged him, because he was alleged to have made a journey on the Sabbath, and to have made one of his servants take in some potatoes from the garden on another Sunday—hence the allusion to his 'kail and potatoes' in the poem. William Fisher, one of Mr Auld's elders, made himself somewhat conspicuous in the case. He was a great pretender to sanctity, and a punctilious stickler of outward observances. Poor man, he unfortunately merited the satire of the poet, as he was a drunkard, and latterly made too free with the Church-money in his hands. Returning drunk from Mauchline one night, he fell into a ditch and died from exposure.

The fearfully literal exposition of the doctrine of election in the first verse makes the flesh creep."—Gunnyon.

"Of this sarcastic and too daring poem many copies in manuscript were circulated while the poet lived, but though not unknown or unfelt by Currie, it continued unpublished till printed by Stewart with the Jolly Beggars, 1799-1801. Holy Willie was a small farmer, leading elder to Auld, a name well known to all lovers of Burns; austere in speech, scrupulous in all outward observances, and what is known by the name of a 'professing Christian.' He experienced, however, a 'sore fall;' he permitted himself to be 'filled fou', and in a moment when 'self got in' made free, it is said with the money of the poor of the parish. His name was William Fisher."—Cunningham.

"It is equally amusing and instructive to note how differently the respective biographers of the poet have expressed their sentiments regarding this powerful production. The Rev. Hamilton Paul and the Rev. Hateley Waddell, seem to invite the friends of religion to bless the memory of the poet who took such a judicious method of 'leading the liberal mind to a rational view of the nature of prayer.' Dr Waddell says that the poem 'implies no irreverence whatever on the writer's part; but, on the contrary, manifests his own profoundest detestation of, and contempt for, every variety of imposture in the name of religion.' His brother divine regards the poem as merely a 'metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves of the pure reformed Church of Scotland.' Motherwell, on the other hand, styles it 'by far the most reprehensible of

Burns pieces, and one which should never have been written.' Cunningham timidly shelters himself behind the words of Sir Walter Scott, by calling it a 'too daring poem,' and 'a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote.' Chambers describes it as 'a satire nominally aimed at *Holy Willie*, but in reality a burlesque of the extreme doctrinal views of the party to which that hypocrite belonged.' Many will agree with Sir Harris Nicolas in saying that 'the reverened admirers of the poem appear to have compounded with their conciences for being pleased with a piece showing little veneration for religion itself, because it ridicules the mistaken zeal of an opposite sect.'

The 'Argument,' or introduction, first printed in Paterson's 6 Vol. Edition, is from the bard's own pen. It is prefixed to the copy inserted in the Glenriddell volume at Liverpool.

"Argument,-Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering, which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline-a Mr Gavin Hamilton-Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best; owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr Robert Aitken, Mr Hamilton's counsel: but chiefly to Mr Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the county. On losing his process, the muse overheard him (Holy Willie) at his devotions." They were given to the world in the form of the now well known satire 'Holy Willie's Prayer.' This enables us with some certainty to decide that the early part of the year 1785 (instead of July of that year, according to Chambers) was the date of the composition. 'sessional process' referred to really commenced in August, 1784, just before the annual celebration of the Communion at Mauchline, when the name of Gavin Hamilton, friend and landlord of the poet, was included in a list of members who were threatened to be debarred from the communion table

for 'habitual neglect of church ordinances.' Hamilton, believing that he himself was the party chiefly aimed at, addressed an angry letter to the kirk session, telling them that they had no just grounds of offence against him, and that they must be conscious of proceeding purely on 'private pique and ill nature.' Hamilton finding the kirk session obstinate, and inclined to treat him still more offensively, appealed to the presbytery of Ayr for protection, and in January, 1785, he obtained a decree of that court ordering the erasure of the session minutes complained of. It was at this stage—as we apprehend—that the muse of Burns 'overheard Holy Willie at his devotions;' but that personage did not content himself with 'prayers' merely, for Auld and his confederates refused to obey the presbyterial order, and made appeal to the Synod. The process there did not close till July, 1785, when the affair was compromised by Hamilton's acceptance of a certificate from his kirk session granting him to be 'free from all ground of church censure.'

In the complete 'Prayer' there are seventeen stanzas; but the copy from which our text is printed contains only fifteen stanzas; the fourth and sixth stanzas being excluded in transcribing, perhaps because Burns felt them to be rather weak. These two stanzas are given thus in Paterson:—

4

'When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lakes,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.'

6

'O L—d, Thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
An singin' there, an' dancin' here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by Thy fear,
Free frae them a.'

"It is amusing to notice how the various editors have dealt with the text. The Rev. Hamilton Paul gives it pure and uncastrated, excluding only the sixth verse, of the existence of which he might not be aware. Cunningham omits verses sixth and eighth and corrupts the fifteenth. Motherwell gives all the seventeen verses, but his fifteenth stanza is the 'Dumfries version,' of which we shall presently speak. Chambers omits the sixth, eighth and ninth verses, besides repeating Cunningham's corruption of verse fifteenth. The Glenriddell MS, adopts what we have termed the Dumfries version' of the fifteenth stanza. The poet's friends in that county stumbled at the word 'snakin,' which, in the text has a meaning the very opposite of the English word sneaking. To please them he altered the structure and effect of the stanza, so that the word objected to has the ordinary meaning of the word 'sneaking,' but only pronounced as an Irishman might-'snakin'.'-S. Douglas.

The following is the stanza with the word snakin' meaning exulting and sneering, as given in some of the early versions, and which has quite a different meaning from the thirteenth stanza of our text.

15

'O Lord, my God! that glib tongu'd Aiken, My vera heart and flesh (saul) are quakin', To think how we stood sweatin', shakin', An' p——'d wi' dread, While he wi' hingin' lip an' snakin', Held up his head.'

(23)

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS, SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE, AT DUMFRIES THEATRE, ... 99

Purchased 29th January, 1884, for the Kilmarnock Monument Museum, at the Auction Rooms of Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 13 Wellington Street, Strand, London, for the sum of twenty-seven pounds.

"This second 'Address,' written by the Bard for his favourite actress, Miss Fontenelle, has been preserved to the public through the accident of its having been communicated in a letter from Burns to Mrs Dunlop. Dr Currie has been pleased to date that letter '15th Decr., 1795'; but from internal evidence it is proved to have been penned not later than 1793—the date we unhesitatingly assign to it. It was first published by Currie in 1800."—S. Douglas.

From the foregoing note it is evident that Scott Douglas did not know of the existence of the original MS., from which our text is printed, whereon, in the poet's holograph, the date is distinctly stated, 'Decr. 4th, 1793.' The four lines in the second last stanza, beginning 'For shame! for shame!' have not been previously published.

(24)

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND, 101

This epistle was addressed to Andrew Aiken, the son of the poet's old friend, Robert Aiken, writer, in Ayr. Andrew Aiken afterwards earned distinction in the service of his country.

In all the printed editions the *third* and *fourth* stanzas of our text are transposed; and of the *seventh* verse Chambers well remarks that "the admirable taste of the poet had doubtless observed this verse to be below the rest in terseness and point, and therefore caused him to omit it in printing."

The following interesting note is from Mr James Dickie, Town Clerk, Irvine (Hon. Sec. Irvine Burns Club).

"Between the family of Mr Aitken of Ayr, the friend of the poet, and that of Mr John Johnston, Silversmith and Watchmaker, Ayr, a friendship and intimacy existed, and it was through Mr Aitken that Mr Johnston became possessed of the MS. 'Epistle to young friend.' At Mr Johnston's death it passed into the hands of his eldest son, Mr George Johnston, who was for many years an Insurance Broker in Liverpool. After his death, the solicitor in charge of his affairs delivered the MS. to a neice of the deceased—Miss Johnston of Rosebank, Irvine, now Mrs Johnstone, The Manse, Leuchars. From her it was obtained by her uncle, Dr Peter Johnston, of Irvine. He died in October, 1877, and by instructions of his executor—Mr David Dickie, Goods Manager, Glasgow and South-Western Railway—I sold the MS. at Kilmarnock by public roup, on 9th Feby., 1878, when it was purchased for the Monument Committee, for the sum of twelve pounds ten shillings.

(25)

TAM O' SHANTER, A TALE, 105

Purchased for the Kilmarnock Monument Museum, from Messrs Kerr and Richardson, Queen Street, Glasgow, 2nd September, 1885, for the sum of two hundred and thirty five pounds. Mr Richardson bought the MS. at a sale in Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge's auction rooms, London, a short time previously, but the auctioneers declined to give the name of the seller. It was not known to have been publicly sold before: but a very fine photo-lithographic facsimile of this manuscript was published by Adams & Francis, 59 Fleet Street, London.

The following note by Gunnyon gives a very fair account of the origin of the "Tale."

"Captain Grose, in the introduction to his "Antiquities of Scotland," says "To my ingenious friend, Mr Robert Burns, I have been seriously obligated; he was not only at the pains of making out what was most worthy of notice in Ayrshire, the country honoured by his birth, but he also wrote, expressly for this work, the pretty tale annexed to

Alloway Church." This pretty tale was "Tam o' Shanter," certainly the most popular of all our poet's works. In a letter to Captain Grose, Burns gives the legend which formed the ground work of the poem :- "On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirkyard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred vards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning. Though he was terrified with the blaze streaming from the kirk, yet it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief,-he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirkyard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purposes of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, 'Weel luppen, Maggie wi' the short sark!' and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally-known fact that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of

lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets."

On the authority of Robert Chambers we learn that Douglas Grahame of Shanter, a farmer on the Carrick shore, who was in reality the drunken, careless being the poet depicts him, became the hero of the legend, and several ludicrous stories current about him were woven into it with admirable skill. It is reported of him that one market day being in Ayr he had tied his mare by the bridle to a ring at the door of a public house, and while he was making himself happy with some cronies inside, the idle boys of the neighbourhood pulled all the hair out of the mare's tail. This was not noticed until the following morning, when, becoming bewildered as to the cause of the accident, he could only refer it to the agency of witchcraft. It is further related of Grahame that when a debauch had been prolonged until the dread of the "sulky sullen dame" at home rose up before him, he would frequently continue drinking rather than face her, even although delay would add to the terrors of the inevitable home-going.

The poem was composed in one day in the winter of 1790. Mrs Burns informed Cromek that the poet had lingered longer by the river side than his wont, and that, taking the children with her, she went out to join him, but perceiving that her presence was an interruption to him, she lingered behind him: her attention was attracted by his wild gesticulations and ungovernable mirth, while he was reciting the passages of the poem as they arose in his mind."

Cunningham says "This is a West-country legend, embellished by genius. No other poem in our language displays such variety of power, in the same number of lines."

Scott says "In the inimitable tale of Tam o' Shanter, Burns has left us sufficient evidence of his ability to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."

(26)

LAMENT OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, ... 113

This poem was part of the purchase made from Messrs Kerr & Richardson, and was included in the sum paid for (No. 25) "Tam o' Shanter."

"The poet communicated this 'Lament' to his friend Dr Moore in February, 1791, but it was composed about the close of the preceding year, at the request of Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, of Terreagles, the last in direct descent of this noble and ancient house of Maxwell of Nithsdale. Burns expressed himself more than commonly pleased with this composition; nor was he unrewarded, for Lady Winifred gave him a valuable snuff-box, with the portrait of the unfortunate Mary on the lid. The bed still keeps its place in Terreagles, on which the queen slept as she was on her way to take refuge with her cruel and treacherous cousin, Elizabeth; and a letter from her no less unfortunate grandson, Charles the First, calling the Maxwells to arm in his cause, is preserved in the family archives."—Cunningham.

"On 25th April, 1791, as we learned from a hitherto inedited portion of a letter the poet then addressed to Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, he sent her a copy of this ballad. Allan Cunningham, in his reckless way of dealing out fictions for facts, states that the ballad was written at the request of that lady, and that she 'rewarded the poet with a valuable snuff-box, bearing on the lid a portrait of the unfortunate queen.' Now the facts are that the poet's letter just referred to is one of thanks to that lady for her elegant present, and he concludes with these words 'I enclose our

PAGE.

ladyship a poetic compliment I lately paid to the memory of our greatly injured, lovely Scottish Queen. I have the honour to be, &c.'"—S. Douglas.

In a letter to Mrs Graham of Fintry, enlosing a copy of "The Lament," the poet says:—"Whether it is the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not, but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my Muse for a good while past."

THE END.









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