# V. BACCHANALIAN AND SOCIAL.

**No. 226. The deil cam fiddlin thro' the town.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1792, No. *399*, entitled, *The deil's awa wi' the exciseman.* Enclosed in an undated letter addressed to J. Leven, General Supervisor of the Excise, and introduced as follows: 'Mr. Mitchell mentioned to you a ballad, which I composed and sung at one of his excise dinners: here it is—*The Deil's awa wi' the exciseman*, Tune *Madame Cossy*. If you honor my ballad by making it one of your charming *bon vivant* effusions, it will secure it undoubted celebrity.' Lockhart, in his *Life of Burns*, 1828, relates the origin of the song, which he received from an Excise officer, to the effect that Burns was left on the Solway shore to watch the movements of the crew of a stranded smuggler, while his companion went for assistance to board the vessel. Burns got tired tramping the wet sands, and exercised himself in writing *The deil's awa wi' the exciseman.*

The tune *Madam Cossy* I conjecture to be *The Quaker's Wife*, see No. *40*; or it may be another name for that here reprinted from the *Museum*, where the song was first published under Burns's direction. It is a good English melody entitled *The hemp-dresser* in Aird's *Airs*, ii. No. *105*, and without a title in the *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, *c.* 1756, viii. *21*. It is in every edition of Playford's *Dancing Master* from the first issue in 1651. In Durfey's *Pills*, 1719, i. *320*, it is set to a song *The sun had loos'd his weary team.*

**No. 227. Landlady, count the lawin.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1788, No. *170*, entitled, *Hey tutti, taiti.* The MS. is in the British Museum. An early Jacobite song of the beginning of the eighteenth century is on the same page of Johnson's *Museum*. This political song is written with considerable vigour, one of the stanzas being as follows:—

'When you hear the trumpet-sounds
Tuttie taitie to the drum;
Up your swords, and down your guns,
And to the louns again.

*Chos.* Fill up your bumpers high,
We'll drink a' your barrels dry,
Out upon them, fy! fy!
That winna do't again.'

The tune, slightly varied, is that for which Burns wrote *Scots wha hae*—see Song No. *255*.

**No. 228. A' the lads o' Thornie-bank.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1788, No. *156 b*, signed 'Z.' Tune *Ruffian's rant*. The MS. is in the British Museum. Buckie is an important fishing village between Castle Gordon and Cullen. Burns must have passed through Buckie on September 7, 1787, for he slept at Cullen the same night, and we know that he dined on that day with the Duke of Gordon. The song is probably a reminiscence of a call for refreshment at the Inn kept by 'Lady Onlie, honest lucky, who brew'd good ale at the shore o' Bucky.'

For the tune, see No. *239*.

**No. 229. I sing of a whistle, a whistle of worth.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1792, No. *314*, entitled *The Whistle.* Burns has described the origin of the contest for the whistle, and whether true or not there can be no doubt that our Scandinavian ancestors were deep drinkers. Poetry and song were the magic of Odin; beer was the ambrosial liquor. Regner Lodbrog, in his *Dying Ode*,

expresses his opinion of the juice of the malt, and in the last stanza says: 'Odin hath sent his godesses to conduct me to his palace. I am going to be placed in the highest seat, there to quaff goblets of beer with the gods.'

The whistle, according to Burns's 'authentic' history, was brought to Scotland by a gigantic Dane who followed Anne, Princess of Denmark, whom James VI married. The Dane challenged any one to drink with him, the condition being that the man who sat longest at the table should become the owner of the *Ca'* or whistle. The ancestor of Sir Robert Lowrie of Maxwelton won the trophy after a three days and nights' contest, and blew the whistle over the prostrate Scandinavian. A descendant of Sir Robert Lowrie lost the trophy, which passed into the possession of Walter Riddell of Glenriddell, and remained in the family. The contest celebrated by Burns took place on Friday October 16, 1789, between Robert Riddell brother of the holder, Sir Robert Lowrie of Maxwelton, and Alexander Ferguson of Craigdarroch, the latter-named gentleman carrying off the prize, and in a very peculiar way proving the survival of the fittest. It is very unlikely that Burns was present at the contest, although the penultimate stanza of the ballad makes it appear that he was. On the same day he had forwarded two letters to be franked by Sir Robert Lowrie, and said he would send a servant for them in the evening.

The ballad was printed in several newspapers before it appeared in the *Museum*. Stenhouse says that the tune is the composition of Robert Riddell, one of the competitors, and if so, it is his best tune. It is in the style of an Irish melody, but it is not in any collection prior to the *Museum*.

**No. 230. Ye sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie.** Cunningham's edition, 1834. Tune, *Over the water to Charlie*. Burns was admitted as an honorary member to the Kilmarnock Lodge of Kilwinning Freemasons, on October 26, 1786, when he recited the foregoing verses, and afterwards handed a copy of them to the chairman, Major William Parker.

The tune *Over the water to Charlie* was composed shortly after the rebellion of 1745, unless it had a previous unrecorded existence. Burns knew it as Irish under the name of Shawnboy; the earliest form is in Johnson's *Country Dances*, 1748, entitled *Pot-stick*. It is in Oswald's *Companion*, 1752, iv. 7, as *Over the water to Charlie*, and with the same title in Bremner's *Reels*, 1757, *16*; and the *Museum*, 1788, No. *187*. In Aird's *Airs*, 1782, i. No. *98*, it is entitled *Marquis of Granby-Shambuy*. It was also known by an Irish name *Legrum Cush*, and it may be the *Madam Cossy* referred to in No. *226*. For tune, see No. *294*.

**No. 231. It 's now the day is dawin.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1796, No. *442*. Stenhouse in *Illust.*, *393*, says: 'The four lines in the *Museum* were hastily penned by Burns at the request of the publisher, who was anxious to have the tune in that work, and the old words could not be discovered.' Burns admired the air and refers to it in a letter to Alex. Cunningham, May 4, 1789, when he thought of writing a song for the three Crochallan members Cruikshank, Dunbar and Cunningham: 'I have a good mind to write verses on you all to the tune *Three gude fellows ayont the glen*.' No verses are known except those in the text. This spirited and well constructed melody is neglected and almost unknown. It is in M^c^Gibbon's *Scots Tunes*, 1746, *18*; and Oswald's *Companion*, 1753, v. *1*.

**No. 232. Deluded swain, the pleasure.** *Scotish Airs*, 1798, *33*. Tune: *The Collier's bonie lassie*. Currie's *Works*, 1800, iv. *135*. The only information about this sentimental production is a line in the letter to Thomson enclosing the song: 'Then for *The Collier's dochter* take the following old bacchanal.' No one has discovered any previous song of the kind: the presumption is that Burns had no wish to father it. The tune is noted in songs Nos. *44* and *208*.

**No. 233. Should auld acquaintance be forgot?** (Johnson's set.) From a holograph copy in the *Interleaved Museum. Scots Musical Museum*, 1796, No. *413*, signed 'Z.' *Auld lang syne* is the best known and most widely spread social song in the Anglo-Saxon language. Without official aid such as has been given by religion to the *Old Hundredth*, or to *God save the King* by the State, *Auld lang syne* has steadily worked its way to the heart of all classes of the nation, and it stands pre-eminent as the most familiar secular song of the English-speaking people throughout the world. In Scotland it slowly supplanted and eventually obliterated *Good night, and joy be wi' you a'* which for a century and a half had been the dismissory song at festive meetings. It would be difficult to apportion the relative merit of the verse and the air which has contributed to the extraordinary popularity of *Auld lang syne*. Both are simple and directly emotional. Nine-tenths of the words are monosyllabic; the melody is a Scottish country dance tune, which in the course of half a century of continuous use was gradually divested of superfluous ornament, and was developed into the simplest musical phraseology of the original. A century of increasing fame has put *Auld lang syne* beyond criticism, and we might as well try to analyse the colour or aroma of a wild flower in order to direct the taste as to make an impression by dissecting the song. The description of Burns has been justified, and it illustrates the power of song so effectively expressed by Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653–1716) nearly two hundred years ago in the following words more often than otherwise quoted incorrectly: 'I said I knew a very wise man so much of Sir Chr—'s sentiment, that he believed if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation.' (*Account of a Conversation*; Edin. 1704.)

A brief and bare statement of the origin of the verse and air may be permitted here, as the history of both are obscure and disputed. As regards the verse Burns is responsible for leading the public astray, and his musical editor George Thomson obscured the source of the air. The words were originally published from the manuscript of Burns in Johnson's *Museum* at the close of the year 1796, or about six months after the poet died. It is not certain, but it is very probable, that Burns saw the engraved *Museum* copy of *Auld lang syne*.

In a letter to Johnson about October, 1793, he says 'as to our *Musical Museum*, I have better than a dozen songs by me for the fifth volume.' In the same month he asks Johnson why the tunes and verses which could not be made out were not sent to him, and he requests that they be forwarded without delay, for he and Clarke are laying out materials for the fifth volume. About February, 1794, he sent forty-one songs for the volume, and informed Johnson that he had a good parcel of scraps and fragments in his hands. In the middle of June, 1794, Johnson wrote to Burns stating that the fifth volume was actually begun; and in March, 1795, a packet of songs was returned to Johnson, obviously received by Burns for correction. Finally, a few months before his death a friend who was in Edinburgh was commissioned to bring any proofs that were ready. These references are given to show that Burns knew the contents of the posthumous fifth volume of the *Museum* of which *Auld lang syne* is the thirteenth number. The poet wrote at least four holograph copies of *Auld lang syne*. The first was part of a letter to Mrs. Dunlop on December 17, 1788, from which the following is an extract: 'Your meeting which you so well describe with your old schoolfellow and friend, was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world! they spoil these "social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the "men of the world" would have met with little more heart-workings than two old hacks worn out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase *Auld lang syne* exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs. I shall give you the verses on the other sheet . . . Light be the turf on the breast of the heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment! There is more of the fire of native genius in it than in half a dozen

of modern English Bacchanalians.' This Dunlop Manuscript, incomplete, is in the possession of Mrs. Pruyn of Albany, New York. The copy differs from the published versions, and it is obvious that Burns revised the song before sending it for publication. The first and fifth stanzas and chorus are as follows:—

First Stanza.
'Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon?
Lets hae a waught o' Malaga,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus.
For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne;
Lets hae a waught o' Malaga,
For auld lang syne.

Fifth Stanza.
'And there 's a han' my trusty fiere,
And gie 's a han' o' thine;
And we'll tak a right gudewilly waught,
For auld lang syne.'

The rest is substantially the same as that in Johnson's *Museum*. The manuscript of the Johnson copy has disappeared. The song having been written for the *Museum*, it may be assumed that Burns, soon after the Dunlop letter, sent his verses to Johnson, who however put them aside because the air for which they were written had already appeared with the verses of Allan Ramsay in the first volume of the *Museum* published in 1787. Johnson afterwards discovered the merit of the song which caused him eventually to publish it, and thus to take the unusual step of reprinting a tune which had already appeared in his collection. To Johnson therefore must be given the credit of the original publication of *Auld lang syne*.

Some years later—in September, 1793—Burns forwarded a third copy to George Thomson with the following note: 'One song more, and I have done, *Auld lang syne*. The air is but mediocre; but the following song—the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing—is enough to recommend any air.' In November 1794, or after a lapse of more than a year, Burns writes again to Thomson, apparently in answer to a reference the latter had previously made to the music. (Thomson had probably discovered from Clarke, the musical reviser of the *Museum*, that Johnson was in possession of a copy of *Auld lang syne*.) He says: 'The two songs you saw in Clarke's are neither of them worth your attention. The words of *Auld lang syne* are good, but the music is an old air, the rudiments of the modern tune of that name. *The other tune you may hear as a common Scots country dance*.' I have marked the last sentence in *italics* as I will refer to it in the Notes on Thomson's set following. The fourth copy of the verses unsuspected and unknown I have discovered in the *Interleaved Museum* which I have been permitted to examine. These four precious volumes have been hidden from the public for nearly one hundred years, and Cromek, who, in his *Reliques of Robert Burns*, 1808, pretended to have printed a verbatim copy of the Notes written by Burns, has misled the public in several ways as to the contents. In connexion with *Auld lang syne* he quotes what is not in the *Interleaved Museum*, and he omits what is there, which is: 'The original and by much the best set of the words of this song is as follows' as in our text. The Dunlop and *Interleaved Museum* copies definitely settle the disputed gude-willy controversy which need not have caused any controversy, as the term is Old English and occurs for example in the line 'A! faire lady! Welwilly found at al,' in John Lydgate's (*c.* 1375–1462) *Complaint of the black knight*. A 'gude-willy waught' means a deep drink of good fellowship.

It is necessary to explain what Burns meant by 'an old song.' Most of his numerous contributions to the *Museum* were original, but many were earlier fragments with his additions and corrections, and these he has described in the

*Law MS.* as 'Mr. Burns's old words.' To his correspondents in general he pretended that several were not his work at all, but merely verses that he had heard or been told, and Johnson had no particular information about them. A number of the songs in the *Museum* bear the signature *X* or *Z*. On one of these, *To the weaver's gin ye go*, Burns made the following note in the *Interleaved Museum*. 'The chorus of this is old; the rest of it is mine'; and then he goes on to make a general statement: 'Here, once for all, let me apologize for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together anything near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed, whose every performance is excellent.' A few examples from his Notes may serve to illustrate the subject. 'Go fetch to me a pint of wine' he described as old to Mrs. Dunlop, though he subsequently stated that he was the author of all but the first four lines. *Strathallan's lament* in the Museum is wholly original; in 'I'm o'er young to marry yet,' signed 'Z,' the chorus alone is old; while in *McPherson's Farewell* the legend alone is all that he borrowed, and there is scarcely anything in his verses to compare with the old ballad. Of 'John Anderson my jo,' only the first line or title is borrowed, the rest is the very antipodes of the early and now unprintable verses. Again, the whole of the *Gardener wi' his paidle* (signed *Z* in the *Museum*) except the title is original, and the same is the case with *Whistle o'er the lave o't.* How far Burns revised or amended the so-called 'old' version of *Auld lang syne* may be gathered from what follows; but it may be premised that no verses containing sentiments akin to those in Burns's song have ever been found, the only discovery being a ballad with the refrain 'On old lang syne, my jo' (quoted below) which from the context is the echo of another set of verses —or the reverse—at any rate, not at all in the spirit of Burns's world-wide 'Bacchanalian.'

The earliest mention of the precise vernacular phrase *Auld lang syne* is in that scurrilous work *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd*, London, 1694, *64*, where the author quotes the following from a sermon preached: 'Did you ever hear tell of a good God, and a cappet (pettish) prophet, Sirs? The good God said, Jonah, now billy Jonah, wilt thou go to Nineveh, for *Auld lang syne* (old kindness).' The italicized words in the original are probably the reminiscence of a popular song, in which case it takes us back to the late part of the seventeenth century; or it may be only a phrase. Jamieson, in his Scottish Dictionary, describes *syne* as follows: 'To a native of this country it is very expressive, and conveys a soothing idea to the mind, as recalling the memory of joys that are past.' This is precisely what the whole of the song of Burns does, and it is the central source of its immense popularity. The word is Old English; Robert de Brunne *c.* 1300, in a curious description of manners of the time, uses it thus:—

> 'The king said, as the knight gan ken
> Drinkhaille! smiland on Rowèn
> Rowen drank as her list,
> And gave the king: *sine* him kist.'

It occurs in the works of Barbour, Dunbar, Douglas, and many of the older Scottish poets in the sense of *then* or *since*.

The germ of the song lies in an anonymous ballad of eight double stanzas in the *Bannatyne MS.* 1568 (folio 80 *b*), entitled *Auld Kyndnes foryett*, which begins 'This warld is all bot fenyeit fair,' and is the soliloquy of one in straitened circumstances, who, having seen better days, laments the ingratitude of those who formerly professed themselves friends. The fifth stanza may be quoted as a specimen of the poetry of the early part of the sixteenth century, and as an example of the masculine strength of the Scots language:—

'Thay wald me hals with hude and hatt,
Quhyle I wes riche and had anewch,
About me friendis anew I gatt,
Rycht blythlie on me they lewch;
Bot now thay mak it wondir tewch,
And lattis me stand befoir the yett;
Thairfoir this warld is verry frewch,
And auld kyndnes is quyt foryett.'

A later ballad is the well-known two sets of verses attributed on slender authority by some to Sir Robert Aytoun (1570–1638), and on more imperfect evidence by others, to Francis Sempill of Belltrees (died *c.* 1683). It was first printed in a miscellaneous collection in Watson's *Scots Poems*, 1711, and begins as follows :—

'Should old acquaintance be forgot,
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone?
Is thy kind heart now grown so cold
In that loving breast of thine,
That thou canst never once reflect
On old-long-syne?'

In the Laing collection, now in the possession of Lord Rosebery, is a street song (referred to in the Centenary Burns) headed '*An excellent and proper new ballad, entitled "Old long syne". Newly corrected and amended with a large and new edition of several excellent love lines.*' The date of the issue of this broadside is about the end of the seventeenth century, and the chorus or refrain runs as follows :—

'On old long syne,
On old long syne, my jo,
On old long syne:
That thou canst never once reflect
On old long syne.'

It will be observed from the title that this ballad is the reprint of an earlier publication, and it is important to notice that the refrain contains (1) the same sentiment 'That thou canst never once reflect,' as that expressed in the song attributed to Aytoun, and (2) that the words 'my jo' are part of the title of the earliest copy of the tune, and also of Burns's chorus as printed in the *Museum*. Whether this popular song is anterior to that previously mentioned and ascribed to Aytoun is uncertain.

In *Scots Songs*, 1720, 77, Allan Ramsay published a song of five stanzas which has often been reprinted. The first lines are :—

'Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
Tho' they return with scars?
These are the noble hero's lot,
Obtain'd in glorious wars:
Welcome, my Varo, to my breast,
Thy arms about me twine.
And make me once again as blest,
As I was lang syne.'

And the poem goes on to describe, in the usual conventional style of the eighteenth century, the conjunction of Mars and Venus, and concludes happily with the words :—

'Where the good priest the couple blest,
And put them out of pine.'

There are, urther, several political or patriotic ballads, one of which modelled on the Watson set is against the union of the countries, and contains the following lines :—

'Is Scotsmen's blood now grown so cold,
The valour of their mind
That they can never once reflect
On old long sine?'

Another entitled *O Caledon, O Caledon*, is in the Laing collection, and published in the Lockhart papers, 1817. Lastly a Jacobite ballad of six double stanzas in the *True Loyalist*, 1779, entitled *Langsyne*, is supposed to be written by a skulker in the year 1746, beginning :—

> 'Should old gay mirth and cheerfulness
> Be dashed for evermore,
> Since late success in wickedness
> Made Whigs insult and roar.'

which is the nearest approach to the social sentiment of Burns's song, but, with the exception of the title, there is nothing in it or in any of the poems quoted which could either have inspired Burns, or served as a model for his verses.

We have thus to fall back upon his statement of the street ballad which had never been in print nor in writing. We know the transformation which Burns effected in all songs of this class, so it is not to be wondered that his contemporaries who could discover no song of the kind should be sceptical as to his account of their origin. Cromek, in *Scotish Songs*, 1810, ii. *128*, says: 'This ballad of *Auld lang syne* was also introduced in an ambiguous manner, though there exist proofs that the two best stanzas of it are indisputably his He delighted to imitate and muse on the customs and opinions of his ancestors . . all tended to confer on him that powerful gift of imitating the ancient ballads of his country with the ease and simplicity of his models.' Cromek was a warm admirer of Burns's genius, and scoured Ayrshire and the Southern counties of Scotland in collecting memorials of the poet which he afterwards published ; but he does not state what authority he had for saying that Burns wrote only two stanzas of the song. George Thomson was also sceptical about the old original; to enhance his collection, however, he printed at the head of *Auld Lang Syne* in *Scotish Airs*, the observation that it was 'from an old MS. in the Editor's possession,' without mentioning Burns at all. This statement was misleading, for the MS. was less than five years old and in the poet's handwriting. In the later editions the word 'old' was deleted, and the head note reads, 'from a MS. in the Editor's possession' with this remark—'The following exquisitely beautiful song was sent by Burns with information that it is an old song &c. . . . It is more than probable, however, that he said this in a playful humour, for the editor cannot help thinking that the song affords full evidence of Burns himself being the author.' By this time *Auld lang syne* had acquired considerable fame, and Thomson was obliged to correct his misleading note. We shall see, however, from the story of the modern melody that this is not the only instance of his having led the public astray.

The last writer who may be named on the subject is William Stenhouse, who affirms that Burns admitted to Johnson that three stanzas only were old, the other two being written by himself. This is a mere repetition of Cromek with the additional information that Burns told Johnson. The three supposed old stanzas are those relating to the *cup*, the *pint stoup* and the *gude-willy waught*. No trace of the 'old' song, if it ever existed in the particular of Burns, has been discovered ; and if according to his statement, that it never was in print, or even in manuscript, it never can be discovered: and further it is difficult to admit the assertion, unless he wrote the verses himself. After his warm eulogy on the song with the first copy to Mrs. Dunlop, he was bound to adhere to the anonymous origin, and as he continued to extol it he was not the man to open himself to ridicule by claiming it.

The air or tune of our text is that for which Burns wrote his song. It should be remembered that this tune was associated with every song or ballad of *Auld lang syne*, including that of Burns up to the year 1799, when it was displaced by the present well known air to be described in the next Number. The music has an historical record of exactly a hundred years. Doubtless it belongs to a considerable part of the seventeenth century, although the music

has not been found earlier than in Playford's *Original Scotch Tunes*, 1700, the first printed collection of Scottish music of any kind. The title of the tune there is *For old long Gine* (sic) *my jo*, which corresponds with the first line of the refrain of the seventeenth-century ballad cited above, *On old long syne, my jo*. In all later collections of music of the eighteenth century, except one, the title is invariably *Auld lang syne*. The tune is in *Sinkler's MS.*, 1710; *Orpheus Caledonius*, 1725, No. *31*; Ramsay's *Musick*, *c.* 1726; Watts's *Musical Miscellany*, 1730, iv. *46*; *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, 1751, iii. *21*; *Scots Musical Museum*, 1787, No. *25*, with Ramsay's words, and later in the same work with Burns's verses. The copies in these and other collections vary more or less from one another, but all of them except that in the *Museum* of 1796 close upon the fifth of the scale. This latter is the simplest form of the melody divested of superfluous notes. The exception to the invariable title is the copy in Thomson's *Scotish Airs*, 1799, *91*, where it bears the name of *The hopeless lover* set to the song of Burns 'Now Spring has clad the grove in green.' The music is an exact reprint of that in the *Museum*, 1796, and Thomson probably changed the name to conceal his indebtedness to the work which he styled a vulgar publication.

Variations in Johnson's *Museum*: verse 1, line 4, 'and auld lang syne'; chorus line 1, 'For auld lang syne,' &c.; v. 3, l. 3, 'fitt'; v. 4, l. 1, 'in'; l. 2, 'morning.'

**No. 234. Should auld acquaintance be forgot** (Thomson's set). *Scotish Airs*, 1799, *68*; 'From an old MS. in the editor's possession.' *Select Melodies*, 1822, ii. *19*; 'From a MS. in the editor's possession.' The difference in the description of the manuscripts in the two publications of Thomson has already been noticed. With one or two slight variations this is the version in Currie's *Burns*, 1800, iv. *123*. The principal variations from the *Museum* copy is the substitution of 'my dear' for 'my jo' in the chorus; and the second stanza in the *Museum* is the last in *Scotish Airs*. This latter is more often printed in modern collections although the *Museum* copy is more radiant and attractive, and the better of the two.

The present popular melody was first attached to the song in *Scotish Airs*, and, although Thomson is generally believed to be solely responsible for selecting it, there is reason for saying that Burns was consulted. That he was familiar with the air will be evident from what follows. Thomson obtained the music from the *Scots Musical Museum*, and of this there can be no doubt. On comparing the music in our text with that of song No. *144*, two passing notes in the first part of the tune are the only variations from *O can ye labor lea*,—the music of the chorus of *Auld lang syne* being a close copy of the other. It is important to point this out, which has not been done before, because Thomson made an ambiguous statement as to the source of his melody, which has led up to the unwarranted claim that William Shield composed the air. Neither Thomson, Stenhouse, Graham, Chappell, nor any other expert has said so, and Shield himself, who died in 1829, never claimed it. Stenhouse, simply repeating Thomson, says: 'Mr. Thomson got the words arranged to an air *introduced* by Shield in his overture to the opera of *Rosina*, 1783.' The word in italics or its equivalent has always been used by writers on the subject, but the meaning was overlooked and deflected by the public, and gradually the supposititious pretension of Shield was alleged as a fact; and Burns's editors, not knowing the merits of the case, have given it currency. Chappell, who wished it to be an English air, did not trouble himself to correct the uncritical, and chiefly relying on the ambiguous statement of Thomson he maintained what was not denied, that the air is in *Rosina*. He did not challenge the accuracy of the following paragraph by Stenhouse that 'Mr. Shield, however, borrowed this air, almost note for note, from the third and fourth strains of the *Scotish Strathspey* in Cumming's collection, under the title of *The Miller's Wedding*,' but he disputed the statement that Cumming's

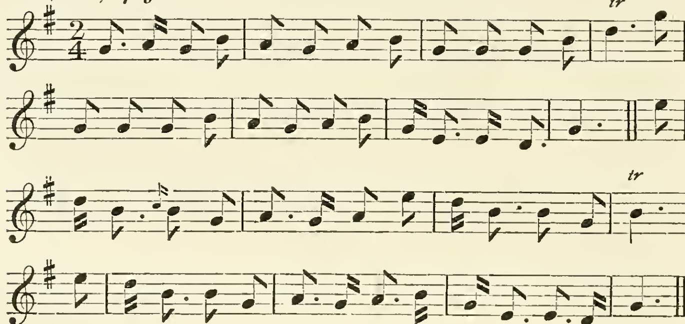
publication was issued as early as 1780. An edition, and perhaps not the earliest, of Cumming's *Strathspeys* containing the tune is dated Edinburgh 1780, which settles the priority so far as Shield is concerned. Why Thomson misled the public and did not acknowledge his obligation to the editor of the *Museum* has been already told. He regarded Johnson's collection as mean and inferior, and always spoke contemptuously of it. In the published correspondence of Burns he never once names it, although Burns repeatedly refers Thomson to the work in his letters. This appears to me to be the reason why Thomson made a far-off and unnecessary allusion to the *Rosina* music, which, compared with that in the *Museum*, varies considerably from his copy both as regards notes and accents. He apparently consulted Burns as to the tune. In the poet's letter to him speaking of the old tune as mediocre he accurately describes the air which was selected as 'the other tune you may hear as a common Scots country dance.' It is quite certain that Burns knew it well, for he contributed the verses 'I fee'd a man at Martinmas' for the tune, and for a variant of it 'Comin thro' the rye,' which in the *Gray MS.* he instructs to be set to 'Tune—*Miller's Wedding*, a Strathspey.' Thus the melodies of *Auld lang syne*, *O can you labor lea*, *Comin thro' the rye* and others in Scottish song books are all variants of the same air and derived from a Strathspey, originally published in Bremner's *Reels*, 1759. No tune was better known or more popular in Scotland during the last half of the eighteenth century, and it was published in numerous collections under many titles. It is not difficult to explain why a Scots country dance should be in Shield's opera. The English opera belongs to a class, the songs of which are not set to music expressly composed for them, but are written for existing tunes, principally those of old ballads and songs. The overtures are generally *pot-pourris* of popular melodies such as are performed by the orchestra of a modern pantomime. *The Beggars' Opera* is the first and best of the class, and was the most successful of its kind. It had no original music, all the songs are written for particular airs, many of which are Scottish. The overture was subsequently composed by Dr. Pepusch. The title page of *Rosina* announces that it is composed and *selected* by W. Shield. The overture is a mixture of portions of *The British grenadiers*, *Singleton's Slip*, some bars of *See the conquering hero comes*, an English country dance and other old airs strung together with a few bars of original music, the last movement being a variation and an adaptation of the Scots country dance, with orchestral accompaniment to imitate the music of the bagpipe. At least one-third of the airs in *Rosina* are selected from English, French, and Scottish songs. The opening song *See the rosy morn appearing* is the composition of John Garth, an organist of Durham and the English editor of 'Marcello's psalms.' Such is a sketch of *Rosina*, an English opera, after a cursory examination of the work. For his time William Shield was a good composer with a gift of melody. He was a native of Swalwell, a village in Durham on the borders of Northumberland, and was familiar with Scottish melodies from his youth. He harmonized the music of Napier's *Scots Songs*, 1792, and I believe that he selected and edited the tunes for Ritson's *Scotish Songs* in 1794. He was intimate with Robert Bremner, the leading publisher of Scottish music in London, and frequently visited his shop.

The leading phrase of the first part of *Auld lang syne* is the first movement of *The Duke of Buccleugh's Tune* in *Apollo's Banquet*, 1690. The tune itself was originally published under the title *The Miller's Wedding*, in Bremner's *Scots Reels*, 1759, *41*; and also in Cumming's *Strathspeys*, 1780, *17*; with the title of *The Miller's Daughter* in McGlashan's *Strathspey Reels*, 1780, *5*; as *The lasses of the ferry* in Stewart's *Reels*, 1762, *33*; in the *Overture* to *Rosina*, 1783; as *Sir Alex. Don* in Gow's *Strathspey Reels*, 1784; as *Roger's farewell* in Aird's *Airs*, 1788, iii. No. *528*; as *O can ye labor lea* in Johnson's *Museum*, 1792, No. *394*; as *Comin thro' the rye* in the same collection of the year 1796, No. *418*; and finally as *Auld lang syne* in *Scotish Airs*, as in the text. None

of the copies are exact reproductions. Every succeeding editor made alterations here and there, and Shield simply took his place in the development of the air. To show how he got it and how he left it I subjoin the air from Cumming's *Strathspeys*, 1780, and that from *Rosina*, 1783.

*Cumming*, 1780.

*Rosina*, 1783.



To complete the examination: these transcripts can be compared with the music of *O can ye labor lea* (No. *144*) and *Auld lang syne.* Shield certainly changed the character of the air by leaving out the dotted notes in the first portion of the air, and the conspicuous improvement he effected by some altered intervals was more than lost in weakening the accents by the use of equal notes. The editor of the 1792 copy in the *Museum* restored the original character, and improved Shield by raising the climax in the fourth bar by a full tone. Thomson, in *Auld lang syne*, completed the tune by more melodic steps in the third bar leading up to the climax; and also by a more gradual and easy descent in the fifth bar. The result of my investigation is that the air was *selected* by Shield as announced in the title-page of his opera, and that he was not the composer of *Auld lang syne* any more than the *restorer* of an edifice can be called the architect.

**No. 235. O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1790, No. *291*, entitled, *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut*; *Select Melodies*, 1825, vi. *37*. This convivial song is known almost as well as *Auld Lang Syne*. It

was written to commemorate a festive meeting which took place in the autumn of 1789. 'This air is Masterton's; the song mine. The occasion of it was this: Mr. William Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan, who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton, and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting, and Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business' (*Interleaved Museum*). The verses and music were forthwith sent to the *Museum*. Nicol died on April 21, 1797, and Masterton in 1799. Currie, in *Works*, 1800, lamented that the three honest fellows who took part in the festival, all men of uncommon talents, were now under the turf. Burns probably found the model of his song in *The fumbler's rant*, in the fourth volume of the *Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1740, the fifth stanza of which is as follows:—

'Here's a health to John Mackay we'll drink,
To Hughie, Andrew, Rob, and Tam;
We'll sit and drink, we'll nod and wink,
It is o'er soon for us to gang.
Foul fa' the cock, he's spilt the play,
And I do trow he's but a fool,
We'll sit awhile, 'tis lang to day,
For a' the cocks they rave at Yool.'

The Baroness Nairn, the authoress of *The land o' the leal*, projected a bowdlerized edition of Burns's songs, but fortunately abandoned the idea. She was the anonymous editor of *The Scottish Minstrel*, where many of her finest songs were first printed. The publisher on his own responsibility inserted *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut*, but Lady Nairn strongly disapproved of the selection, and it was suppressed in the next edition.

The Tune is a copy from the original in the *Scots Musical Museum*; words and music are also in Ritson's *Scotish Songs*, 1794, i. *259*, and Dale's *Scotch Songs*, 1794, iii. *152*. Use and selection have divested the melody of the original superfluous passing notes which the singers of last century considered graceful and artistic. It is improved in modern collections; written in the modern scale it is easily harmonized, and many composers with more or less success have made it into a three or four part song. Both verses and music are inspirations.

**No. 236. No churchman am I for to rail and to write.** *First Edinburgh edition*, 1787, *336*. Tune—*Prepare my dear brethren*, &c.; also *Scots Musical Museum*, 1803, No *587*: 'By R. Burns,' with music. This song is neither better nor worse than the average bacchanalian tol-de-rol ditty of the eighteenth century on which it is framed.

On October 1, 1781, Burns was made a Master in the Tarbolton Lodge of Freemasons, and the last stanza was specially written for the craft. The wrong tune *The lazy mist* is printed in the *Museum*. That in the text has long been popular with the Freemasons. It is entitled the *Freemasons' health* in Watts's *Musical Miscellany*, 1730, iii. 72, and begins, *Come, let us prepare we brothers that are*: while it is called *The freemasons' march* in Aird's *Airs*, 1782, i. No. *175*. It was well known in the West of Scotland, the children in the streets singing it to the rhyme:—

'Hey the merry Masons, and ho the merry Masons
Hey the merry Masons *goes* marching along,' &c., &c.

A humorous song, with the music, is printed in Durfey's *Pills*, 1719, ii. *230*, entitled, *On the Queen's progress to the Bath*. It is named *The enter'd apprentice's song* in a Masons' Song Book, 1790. For tune, see No. *329*.

**No. 237. O, rattlin, roarin Willie.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1788, No. *194*, signed 'Z,' with the music of *Rattlin, roarin Willie*. This is an old unprinted song with corrections and additions. 'The last stanza of this song is

mine, and out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan Corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments' (*Interleaved Museum*). The song has little merit, but there is a touch of human nature in the old lines where the *drouthy* gut-scraper resists the temptation to sell his fiddle for the liquor for which he thirsts. This hero is said to have been a border reiver.

In the *Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1724, the tune is marked with a sentimental song beginning 'O Mary, thy graces and glances'—an irrelevant combination. The music, as *Bonny, roaring Willie*, is in *Blackie's MS.*, 1692; entitled *Ranting, roving Willie* in Atkinson's *Northumberland MS.*, 1694; and printed in Oswald's *Companion*, *c.* 1755, vii. *9*. It is a bag-pipe melody of the class common to the South of Scotland, and North of England.

**No. 238. Here 's a bottle and an honest friend.** Cromek. *Reliques*, 1808, *440*, entitled '*Song*,' without name of tune. The following motto was attached to the title in Pickering's *Burns*, 1834:—

'There 's nane that 's blest of human kind
But the cheerful and the gay, man;
Fa, la, la, la, &c.'

The song books of the eighteenth century were loaded with bacchanalian ditties good and bad—chiefly the latter. This stanza of Burns is classical compared with the coarse materialistic rhymes of the collections.

**No. 239. In comin by the brig o' Dye.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1788, No. *156*, signed 'Z,' and with the tune, *Ruffian's rant*. The MS. is in the British Museum. The poet was at Stonehaven on September 10, 1787, just after a meeting at Aberdeen with Bishop Skinner, son of the author of *Tullochgorum*. Ten days before, he had spent a day with Niel Gow at Dunkeld. Close to Stonehaven is the river Dye, a tortuous stream which zigzags from the eastern spur of the Grampians, and falls into the Dee at Upper Banchory.

Who the Theniel Menzies, or Bonie Mary, or Charlie Grigor of the song were, is not known. The verses are doubtless a reminiscence of a night spent at the Inn of the Brig of Dye. The Tune *Ruffian's rant* is widely known as *Roy's wife*, from Mrs. Grant's sprightly song of the same name. It was originally a slow strathspey air, but the eclecticism of music in adapting itself to different moods by a change of time is exemplified here, as in *Scots, wha' hae*. A slow movement of *Ruffian's rant* is the tune of the following pathetic verses:—

'Though thou leave me now in sorrow,
Smiles may light our love to-morrow;
Doom'd to part, my faithful heart
A gleam of joy from hope shall borrow.'

The Tune is in Bremner's *Reels*, 1759, *43*; Cumming's *Strathspeys*, 1780, page *3*; and Aird's *Airs*, 1782, ii. No. *114*; also in *Mc Farlane's MS.*, *c.* 1740, entitled *Cog na scalan*. Burns wrote a conventional Anglo-Scottish song for the tune in reply to a whip of George Thomson—see Song No. *164*.

Three old songs for the melody are in the *Merry Muses*.

**No. 240. Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu.** *Kilmarnock edition*, 1786, *228*, entitled '*The farewell*, To the brethren of St. James's Lodge, Tarbolton. Tune *Good night and joy be wi' you a'*'; *Scots Musical Museum*, 1803, No. *600*. This, the last song in both publications, is supposed to have been sung at the meeting of the Freemasons' Lodge, Tarbolton, held in June, 1786. Until superseded by Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*, *Good night and joy be wi' you* was the parting song at all social meetings in Scotland. A number of the chief collections of Scottish Melodies close with the tune. The distinguished song-writers

of Scotland, Joanna Baillie, Susanna Blamire, and Sir Alexander Boswell, have each written verses for the tune. Burns had a high appreciation of the melody, and in a letter to George Thomson of April 7, 1793, in a burst of enthusiasm thus writes: 'Ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing *Sae merry as we a' hae been*, and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of Coila shall be *Good night and joy be wi' you a'*.'

The authority to insert the song in Johnson's *Museum* was conveyed in these words: 'Let this be your last song of all in the collection and set it to the old words; and after them insert my *Gude night and joy be wi' you a'* which you will find in my *Poems*. The old words are:—

'The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I maun awa;
There's no a friend or fae o' mine
But wishes that I were awa.

What I hae done, for lake o' wit,
I never, never can reca';
I trust ye're a' my friends as yet,
*Gude night and joy be wi' you a'*.'

Johnson followed strictly the instructions of Burns.

The tune is in the *Skene MS.*, *c.* 1630, entitled, *Good night, and God be with you*; in Playford's *Original Scotch Tunes*, 1700; in a *MS.* dated Glasgow, 1710; in the *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, 1752, iv. 32; and Aird's *Airs*, 1782, ii. No. *200*. The tune has been considerably altered since its first appearance in the *Skene MS.*

**No. 241. Up wi' the carls o' Dysart.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1792, No. *392*, to the tune *Hey ca' thro'*; *Edinburgh edition*, 1877, ii. *68*. On September 15, 1787, Burns slept at Kinross, and next day came through a cold barren country by Queensferry to Edinburgh. The four fishing villages named in the song are close to one another on the south coast of Fife. No version of the song was known until it appeared in the *Museum*. It has been accepted as the work of Burns on the authority of Stenhouse, but it is not among the Burns manuscripts in the British Museum.

The melody of a 'Boat song,' *Hey ca' thro'*, is a characteristic small pipe tune, in compound triple time, common to the Border. The music, which Burns is said to have communicated when he sent the verses, is not in any collection prior to the copy in the *Museum*.

**No. 242. Gane is the day, and mirk's the night.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1792, No. *313*, signed 'B,' entitled, *Then Gudewife, count the lawin*. The MS. is in the British Museum. In the *Interleaved Museum* is: 'The chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect:—

"Every day my wife tells me,
That ale and brandy will ruin me;
But if gude liquor be my dead,
This shall be written on my head,
O Gudewife, count the lawin," &c.'

Burns's song is worthy of Walter de Mapes, the sprightly monk of the twelfth century who wrote *Mihi est propositum in taberna mori*. According to Stenhouse, Burns obtained the tune from tradition and had it printed in the *Museum*. It is a bright and joyous melody, which ought to be better known.

The well-known obscure proverb, 'As drunk as a lord,' is evidently a corruption of the last line of the second stanza in this song, 'For ilka man that's drunk 's a lord,' which is quite a different phrase from the common saying.

**No. 243. Come, bumpers high! express your joy!** Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, 1829. Written for William Stewart, resident factor or bailiff of the estate of Closeburn in Dumfries, with whom Burns became acquainted in his business excursions. The sister of Stewart was landlady of Brownhill Inn, in

the neighbourhood of Thornhill on the Nith, where the poet sometimes stayed, and where he wrote the verses on a glass tumbler which is now in the library at Abbotsford.

The tune *Ye're welcome, Charlie Stewart* is referred to in Song No. *26*.

**No. 244. Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair.** Thomson's *Scotish Airs*, 1799, *65*, 'Written for this work by Robert Burns. Air, *Lumps o' pudding*.' The MS. is in the Thomson collection. Burns accepted Thomson's proposal to write a song for the tune about the middle of November, 1794. In May, 1795, Thomson had presented to Burns a painting of *The Cottar's Saturday night*, by David Allan, in which the poet figured. Burns, in thanking the donor, suggested that if a vignette were made the motto should be, *Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair*, 'in order that the portrait of my face and the picture of my mind may go down the stream of Time together.'

The tune known as *Lumps of Pudding* or *Sweet Pudding* is in the *Dancing Master*, 1701; *Sinkler's MS.*, 1710; and the *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, *c* 1755, vii. *4*. Verses and the music are in Durfey's *Pills*, 1720, *300*. In Herd's *Scottish Songs*, 1776, ii. *221*, a vernacular humorous song is marked for the tune, showing that this English melody was domesticated in Scotland. The subject is not an uncommon satire in Scottish song. The last stanza of the Herd fragment is:—

> 'As I gaed by the minister's yard,
> I spied the minister kissing his maid.
> Gin ye winna believe, cum here and see
> Sic a braw new coat the minister gied me.'

**No. 245. I had sax owsen in a pleugh.** *Scots Musical Museum*, 1803, No. *542*, 'Corrected by R. Burns.' 'This humorous drinking-song, with the exception of the chorus which is old, was written by Burns' (Stenhouse, *Illustrations*, p. *473*). Ale was the common beverage and even an article of food of the people of Scotland. Home-brewed small beer and oatmeal porridge were the diet of the peasantry within living memory.

The tune *The bottom of the punch-bowl* is in Oswald's *Companion*, 1743, i. *29*; McGibbon's *Scots Tunes*, 1742, *13*; and Aird's *Airs*, 1782, i. No. *93*.