POPULAR RHYMES OF SCOTLAND.

RHYMES ON PLACES.

Natural objects of a conspicuous kind, as mountains and rivers, attract the attention of the rudest people, and probably are the first which receive names in the infancy of a newly-settled country. There is a disposition in Scotland, and probably in other countries, to work up the names of such objects in verse, sometimes with associated circumstances, but often with little besides a bare enumeration or list. Thus arises a large class of what may be called Topographical Rhymes. In some instances the ideas introduced are of a striking and poetical nature; and it is worthy of remark, that, even where the names alone are given in the versified list, there is usually a euphony in the structure of the verse, which makes it tell on the simple ear like a strain of one of our pastoral melodies. In other instances, these rhymes are curious on account of the grotesque words which they introduce to notice. It would almost appear as if the composers of such verses had addressed themselves on some occasions to select a set of the most whimsical names of places and men in their vicinity, for the amusement of strangers.

Another section of our topographical rhymes contain allusions to events of a public or private nature, or predictions of events expected yet to come. Others relate to things for which the places were remarkable.

BERWICKSHIRE.

TWEED AND TILL.

THE Tweed is, in general, a broad, shallow, clear, and rapid river, not ill-provided with fords. Its English tributary, the Till, is, on the contrary, narrow, deep, and slow, with few or no fords. The comparatively greater danger of the Till to those attempting to cross it is expressed in the following lines, which, when I first heard them pronounced by the deep voice of Sir Walter Scott, seemed to me to possess a solemnity approaching to poetry:—

Tweed said to Till,
'What gars ye rin sae still?'
Till said to Tweed,
'Though ye rin wi' speed,
And I rin slaw,
Yet where ye droun ae man,
I droun twa!'

EYEMOUTH FORT, &c.

Near the sea-side village of Eyemouth, in Berwickshire, is a promontory marked with a succession of grassy mounds, the remains of a fort built there in the regency of Mary of Lorraine. In the following rhyme, a number of places are represented (by poetical license) as visible from the fort:—

I stood upon Eyemouth fort,
And guess ye what I saw?
Fairnieside and Flemington,
Newhouses and Cocklaw;
The fairy fouk o' Fosterland,
The witches o' Edincraw,
The rye-riggs o' Reston—
But Dunse dings a'!

There is a variation on the two last lines—

The bogle-bo o' Billy Myre,
Wha kills our bairns a'.

Fairnieside, Flemington, and Cocklaw, are farm-places in Ayton parish; Fosterland is a similar place in that of Bunkle, once remarkable for the visits of fairies. Edincraw, properly Auchencraw, a small decayed village in the

parish of Coldingham, was equally noted in the seventeenth century for another class of supernaturalities.

In Edincraw,
Where the witches bide a',

was a common saying of obloquy respecting it. 'It has been supposed that the greater number of the seven or eight unfortunate women whom Home of Renton, sheriff of Berwickshire, some time previous to the Revolution, caused to be burnt for witchcraft at Coldingham, belonged to this village. In the session records of Chirnside, it is found that, in May 1700, Thomas Cook, servant in Blackburn, was indicted for scoring a woman in Auchencraw above the breath [that is, drawing a gash across her brow], in order to the cure of a disease that he laboured under.' The Billy Myre, a morass between Auchencraw and Chirnside, was long infested by a ghost, the bogle-bo of the rhyme, and which bore the cognomen of *Jock o' the Myre*.*

ST ABB'S CHURCH, &c.

St Abb, St Helen, and St Bey,
They a' built kirks which to be nearest the sea—
St Abb's, upon the nabs;
St Helen's, on the lea;
St Ann's, upon Dunbar sands,
Stands nearest to the sea.

St Abb, St Helen, and St Ann were, according to the country tradition, three princesses, the daughters and heiresses of a king of Northumberland. Being very pious, and taking a disgust at the world, they resolved to employ their dowries in the erection of churches, and the rest of their lives in devotion. They all tried which should find a situation for their buildings nearest to the sea, and St Ann succeeded—her church being built upon a level space close to the water-mark, while St Abb placed her structure upon the points, or *nabs*, of a high rock overhanging the German Ocean; and St Helen pitched hers upon a plain near, but not exactly bordering upon the shore. Probably this is one of those stories which take their rise in an effort of the imagination to account for a fact. St Abb was certainly a Northumbrian princess of the seventh century; but the

* History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, pp. 123–148.

two other persons, one of whom undergoes a change of name in the rhyme, may have been imaginary.

Some low grassy mounds, which may still be traced on the top of St Abb's promontory, are all that remain of her church. Of St Helen's, some part of the walls yet stands. The church of St Ann, becoming a parochial place of worship for the burgh of Dunbar, to which it is contiguous, existed till a recent period, when a new fane was erected on the same spot.

PARISH OF GORDON AND VICINITY.

Huntly Wood—the wa's is down,
Bassendean and Barrastown,
Heckspeth wi' the yellow hair,
Gordon gowks for evermair.*

The parish of Gordon, in Berwickshire, was the original seat of the family of the same name, which has for so many centuries been conspicuous in the north. Huntly and Huntly Wood are the names of farms in this parish; and it would appear that, when the Gordon family went northward, they transferred that of Huntly to their new settlement, where it now marks a considerable town, and gives a title to the representative of the family. The above rhyme is little more than an unusually euphonious list of places in the parish of Gordon, inclusive of Huntly Wood. The appellation bestowed in it upon the people of Gordon probably took its origin in the extreme simplicity which characterised their manners and modes of life till a recent period. Bassendean is the name of a suppressed parish now connected with Gordon.

PLACES AROUND COLDSTREAM.

Bought-rig and Belchester,
Hatchet-knows and Darnchester,
Leetholm and the Peel;
If ye dinna get a wife in ane o' thae places,
Ye'll ne'er do weel.

The places enumerated in this rhyme are all within a few miles of Coldstream. A local writer suggests that the rhyme should be widely disseminated, for the especial benefit of all bachelors and widowers.

* Gowk—the cuckoo, a term for a foolish person.

PLACES IN THE PARISHES OF BUNKLE AND CHIRNSIDE.

Little Billy, Billy Mill,
Billy Mains, and Billy Hill,
Ashfield and Auchencraw,
Bullerhead and Pefferlaw,
There's bonny lasses in them a'.

This seems equally worthy of an extensive publicity; but, alas! five of these little *farm towns* no longer exist, their lands being now included in larger possessions.

PLACES IN HUTTON PARISH.

Hutton for auld wives,
Broadmeadows for swine;
Paxton for drunken wives,
And salmon sae fine.

Crossrig for lint and woo',
Spittal for kail;
Sunwick for cakes and cheese,
And lasses for sale.

LAMBDEN BURN.

The hooks and crooks of Lambden Burn,
Fill the bowie and fill the kirn.

Referring to the abundance of cheese and butter produced on the verdant banks of a little stream which joins the Leet, a tributary of the Tweed.

FOGO.

Fogo is a small, and now almost extinct village in the Merse. It is locally famous for a certain succession of coopers of old times, whereof the second was so decided an improvement upon the first, that he gave rise to a proverb, 'Father's better, the cooper of Fogo.' A rhyme expresses the particulars—

He's father's better, cooper o' Fogo,
At girding a barrel, and making a cogie,
Tooming a stoup, or kissing a rogueie.

This proverb is equivalent to an English one—Filling a father's shoes; or, as we more energetically express it in Scotland, Riving his bonnet.

RHYMES OF TRUE THOMAS.

The common people throughout the whole of Scotland look back with veneration to a seer of old times, whom they variously designate *True Thomas*, and *Thomas the Rhymer*. They preserve a great number of prophetic sayings of this person, chiefly expressed in rhyme; and few remarkable events take place, of the kind which most affect the popular mind, as the death of a king or a 'dear year,' without some appropriate saying of Thomas coming into notice on the occasion.

Scott, in his Border Minstrelsy, has assembled a number of authentic particulars regarding this personage. He appears to have been a gentleman of consideration in Berwickshire in the latter part of the thirteenth century. In the chartulary of the Trinity House of Soltra, under 1299, occurs an entry of the resignation by Thomas of Ercildoun, son and heir of Thomas Rymour de Ercildoun, of a tenement of land belonging to him in that village. This Thomas Rymour was probably the person whom invariable tradition at Earlstoun represents as the prophet True Thomas. If such be the case, he must have deceased at some period not long prior to 1299. The people of Earlstoun further represent his real name as Thomas Learmont. They point to a ruined tower near the village, which they say was his property and residence, and to a spot in the parish churchyard, with which his connection is denoted by an inscription on the church wall—

> Auld Rhymer's race
> Lies in this place.

It is also to be observed that Barbour, in his Life of Bruce, written about 1370, speaks of Thomas of Ercildoun's prophecies; and that Fordun, who wrote not long after Barbour, also alludes to him. From Fordun, Archbishop Spottiswood derives the following story respecting Thomas:—

On the day before the death of Alexander III. (1285), 'he [Thomas] did foretell the same to the Earl of March, saying, "that before the next day at noon, such a tempest should blow as Scotland had not felt for many years before." The next morning, the day being clear, and no change appearing in the air, the nobleman did challenge Thomas of his

saying, calling him an impostor. He replied that noon was not yet past; about which time a post came to advertise the earl of the king his sudden death. "Then," said Thomas, "this is the tempest I foretold; and so it shall prove to Scotland." Whence or how he had this knowledge,' adds the sagacious historian, 'can hardly be affirmed; but sure it is that he did divine and answer truly of many things to come.'

During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, to fabricate a prophecy in the name of Thomas the Rhymer appears to have been found a good stroke of policy on many occasions. Thus was his authority employed to countenance the views of Edward III. against Scottish independence, to favour the ambitious views of the Duke of Albany in the minority of James V., and to sustain the spirits of the nation under the harassing invasions of Henry VIII. A small volume, containing a collection of the rhymes thus put into circulation, was published by Andro Hart at Edinburgh in 1615.

The common tradition respecting Thomas is, that he was carried off in early life to Fairyland, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. There is an old ballad which describes him as meeting the Queen of Faëry on Huntly Bank, a spot near Melrose, which Scott, with his peculiar enthusiasm, purchased at probably fifty per cent. above its real value, in order to include it in his estate of Abbotsford. Thomas is described in some grand verses as accompanying her fantastic majesty to that country:—

Oh they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring o' the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude aboon the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth,
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

At the end of seven years, Thomas returned to Earlstoun, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers. His favourite place of vaticination was at the Eildon Tree, an elevated spot on the opposite bank of the

Tweed. At length, as he was one day making merry with his friends at a house in Earlstoun, a person came running in and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The Rhymer instantly rose, with the declaration that he had been long enough there, and following the animals to the wild, was never more seen. It is alleged that he was now reclaimed by the fairy queen, in virtue of a contract entered into during his former visit to her dominions. It is highly probable that both the first and the second disappearances of Thomas were natural incidents, to which popular tradition has given an obscure and supernatural character.*

The only other circumstance I am called upon here to

* It happens that this conjecture derives force from a particular circumstance connected with the history of the Rhymer. Scott concludes his account of Thomas in the Border Minstrelsy by mentioning that 'the veneration paid to his dwelling-place even attached itself to a person who, within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of the Rhymer's tower. The name of this person was Murray, a kind of herbalist, who, by dint of some knowledge of simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymer, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard.' This account, which the author seems to have taken up from popular hearsay, refers to Mr Patrick Murray, an enlightened and respectable medical practitioner, of good family connexions, talents, and education, as is sufficiently proved by the fact of his having been on intimate terms with the elegant Earl of Marchmont. With other property, this gentleman possessed the tower of Thomas of Ercildoun, which was then a comfortable mansion, and where he pursued various studies of a philosophical kind, not very common in Scotland during the eighteenth century. He was the author of an account of a case of 'Uncommon Tumour of the Belly and a Dropsy Cured,' in the *Medical Essays and Observations, by a Society in Edinburgh*, 1747. Mr Murray had made a considerable collection of natural objects, among which was an alligator, and being fond of mechanical contrivances, in which he was himself an adept, he had not only a musical clock and an electrical machine, but a piece of mechanism connected with a weathercock, by which he could tell the direction of the wind without leaving his chamber. This, with the aid of his barometer, enabled him to guess at the weather as he sat in company, and no doubt served to impress the ignorant with an idea of his possessing supernatural powers. Such, I have been assured by a relative of Mr Murray, was the real person whom the editor of the Border Minstrelsy—meaning, of course, no harm, but relying upon popular tradition—has described in such different terms. When we find a single age, and that the latest and most enlightened, so strangely distort and mystify the character of a philosophical country surgeon, can we doubt that five hundred years have played still stranger tricks with the history and character of Thomas the Rhymer?

notice, is the claim which has been put forward by Sir Walter Scott for Thomas of Ercildoun as the author of the metrical romance of 'Sir Tristrem.' I must admit that Mr Park has shown very strong reasons for doubting the title of the Rhymer to this honour.

Those rhymes of True Thomas which bear most appearance of being genuine (that is, really uttered by him), are generally of a melancholy and desponding cast, such as might well be expected to proceed from a man of a fine turn of mind, who felt himself and his country on the verge of great calamities. One of these melancholy sayings referred to the prospects of his own household—

> The hare shall kittle on my hearthstane,
> And there never will be a Laird Learmont again.

This emphatic image of desolation is said by the people of Earlstoun to have been realised within the memory of man, and at a period long subsequent to the termination of the race of Learmont. It is remarkable, as showing the idea to be no new one, that the first line occurs, though incorrectly, in an old manuscript of Scottish political prophecies in the Harleian Library—'When hare kendles o' the her'stane;' and it is in like manner inaccurately quoted in Andro Hart's volume—

> 'This is a true saying that Thomas of tells,
> The hare shall hirple on the hard stane.'

Another relates to a place in his immediate neighbourhood—

> A horse shall gang on Carrolside brae,
> Till the girth gaw his side.

We have here, apparently, a foreboding of some terrible famine which he apprehended as likely to arise from the war of the disputed succession. He said also—

> The burn of Breid
> Sall rin fu' reid;

a mysterious allusion to the bloodshed at Bannockburn—bannock being the chief bread of Scotland in those days.

One of the more terrible predictions of the Rhymer is as follows:—

> At Threeburn Grange, on an after day,
> There shall be a lang and bloody fray;

Where a three-thumbed wight, by the reins, shall hald
Three kings' horse, baith stout and bauld,
And the Three Burns three days will rin
Wi' the blude o' the slain that fa' therein.

Threeburn Grange (properly Grains) is a place a little above the Press, Berwickshire, where three small rills meet, and form the water of Ale. 'Thirty years ago, this rhyme was very popular in the east end of Berwickshire; and about the time of the French Revolution, a person of the name of Douglas being born in Coldingham parish with an excrescence on one of his hands, which bore some resemblance to a third thumb, the superstitious believed that this was to be the identical 'three-thumbed wight' of the Rhymer, and nothing was looked for but a fearful accomplishment of the prophecy.'*

The following is perhaps not ancient, but it expresses that gloomy fear of coming evil which marks so many of Learmont's rhymes:—

When the white ox comes to the corse,
Every man may tak his horse.

Similar in spirit is—

Atween Craik-cross and Eildon-tree,
Is a' the safety there shall be.

Varied in Galloway—

A' the safety there shall be,
Shall be atween Criffel and the sea.

The first space is one of about thirty miles; the second, much narrower. Sir Walter Scott relates that the first of these rhymes was often repeated in the Border counties during the early years of the French revolutionary war, when the less enlightened class of people in rural districts laboured under the most agonizing apprehensions of invasion. In the south of Scotland, this prophecy then obtained universal credence; and the tract of country alluded to was well surveyed, and considered by many wealthy persons, anxious to save their goods and lives, as the place to which they would probably fly for refuge 'in case of the French coming!' The danger of invasion having long passed away like an unburst storm-cloud, leaving serenity and

* History of Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, p. 147.

sunshine behind, it is now almost impossible for the youth of the present generation to imagine the state of the public mind at the time referred to; yet in a time of peace and prosperity, it may not be unseasonable to remind the aged, and to inform the young, of a period when Wealth, holding bank-notes as the dust of the earth, busied himself in collecting and concealing well-marked crown and half-crown pieces—when Old Age prayed that he might be permitted to resign his breath in peace, ere he met death in a more dreadful form—and when Maternal Affection clasped her infant to her breast with more than ordinary solicitude, and thought how, by sacrificing herself, she might purchase safety to her beloved charge.

The following refers to the tree from beneath the shade of which the Rhymer delivered his predictions:—

> At Eildon-tree, if you shall be,
> A brig owre Tweed you there may see.

'This rhyme seems to have been founded in that insight into futurity possessed by most men of a sound and combining judgment. The spot in question commands an extensive prospect of the course of the river; and it was easy to see that, when the country became in the least degree improved, a bridge would be somewhere thrown over the stream. In fact you now see no fewer than three bridges from the same elevated situation.'—*Minst. Scot. Bord.* iii. p. 210.

Another verse, referring to the future improvements of the country, may be taken as even a more curious specimen of the same sort of wisdom. Learmont had the sagacity to discover that the ground would be more generally cultivated at some future period than it was in his own time; but also knowing that population and luxury would increase in proportion, he was enabled to assure the posterity of the poor that their food would not consequently increase in quantity. His words were—

> The waters shall wax, the woods shall wene,
> Hill and moss shall be torn in;
> But the bannock will ne'er be braider.

Of rhymes foreboding evil, one of the most remarkable is a malediction against the old persecuting family of Home

of Cowdenknowes—a place in the immediate neighbourhood of Thomas's castle—

> Vengeance, vengeance! When, and where?
> Upon the house of Cowdenknowes, now and evermair!

This anathema, awful as the cry of blood, is said to have been realised in the extinction of a *persecuting* family, and the transference of their property to other hands. But some doubt seems to hang on the matter, as the present Earl of Home—'a prosperous gentleman'—is the lineal descendant of the Cowdenknowes branch of the family, which acceded to the title in the reign of Charles I., though, it must be admitted, the estate has long been alienated.

A rhyme to the effect that—

> Between Seton and the sea,
> Mony a man shall die that day,

is introduced into Patten's account of the Duke of Somerset's expedition, printed in 1548. 'This battell and felde,' says the writer, alluding to Pinkie, 'the Scottes and we are not yet agreed how it shall be named. We cal it Muskelborough felde, because that is the best towne (and yet bad inough) nigh the place of our meeting. Sum of them call it Seton felde (a towne thear nie too), by means of a blynde prophecy of theirs, which is this or sum suche toye —*Betwene Seton and the sey, many a man shall dye that dey.*'* The rhyme is also incorporated in the long, irregular, and mystical poems which were published as the prophecies of Thomas in 1615. It may be said, without much stretch of the record, to have been fulfilled by the battle of Preston, in September 1745. To compensate, however, for this lucky shot, it is certain that many rhymes professedly by our hero were promulgated *in consequence* of particular events. Of this character is—

> There shall a stone wi' Leader come,
> That'll make a rich father, but a poor son;

* Birrel, in his *Diary*, narrating events which happened in Edinburgh in the reigns of Mary and James VI., tells that on the day when the Castle of Edinburgh was surrendered to Cockburn of Skirling for the queen, the weathercock of St Giles's church was blown away, fulfilling an old prophecy—

> 'Quhen Skirlin shall be captain,
> The cock shall lose his tail.'

an allusion to the supposed limited advantage of the process of liming. The Highlanders have also found, since the recent changes of tenantry in their country, that Thomas predicted

That the teeth of the sheep shall lay the plough on the shelf.

I have been assured that the name of Thomas the Rhymer is as well known at this day among the common people in the Highlands, nay, even in the remoter of the Western Islands, as it is in Berwickshire. His notoriety in the sixteenth century is shown in a curious allusion in a witch trial of that age; namely, that of Andro Man, which took place at Aberdeen in 1598. In his Dittay, Andro is charged with having been assured in his boyhood by the Queen of Elphin, 'that thow suld knaw all thingis, and suld help and cuir all sort of seikness, except stand deid, and that thow suld be wiell intertenit, but *wald seik thy meit or thow deit, as Thomas Rymour did*—[that is, be a beggar].' Also, 'Thow affermis that the Quene of Elphen hes a grip of all the craft, but Christsondy [the devil] is the guidman, and hes all power vnder God, and that thow kennis sindrie deid men in thair cumpanie, and that *the kyng that deit in Flowdoun and Thomas Rymour is their*.'—*Spalding Club Miscellany*, i. p. 119–121.

The common people at Banff and its neighbourhood preserve the following specimen of the more terrible class of the Rhymer's prophecies:—

At two full times, and three half times,
Or threescore years and ten,
The ravens shall sit on the Stanes o' St Brandon,
And drink o' the blood o' the slain!

The Stones of St Brandon were standing erect a few years ago in an extensive level field about a mile to the westward of Banff, and immediately adjacent to the Brandon How, which forms the boundary of the town in that direction. The field is supposed to have been the scene of one of the early battles between the Scots and Danes, and fragments of weapons and bones of men have been dug from it.

An Aberdeenshire tradition represents that the walls of Fyvie Castle had stood for seven years and a day, *wall-wide*, waiting for the arrival of True Tammas, as he is called in

that district. At length he suddenly appeared before the fair building, accompanied by a violent storm of wind and rain, which stripped the surrounding trees of their leaves, and shut the castle gates with a loud clash. But while this tempest was raging on all sides, it was observed that, close by the spot where Thomas stood, there was not wind enough to shake a pile of grass, or move a hair of his beard. He denounced his wrath in the following lines:—

Fyvie, Fyvie, thou'se never thrive,
As lang's there's in thee stanes three:
There's ane intill the highest tower,
There's ane intill the ladye's bower,
There's ane aneath the water-yett,
And thir three stanes ye'se never get.

The usual prose comment states that two of these stones have been found, but that the third, beneath the gate leading to the Ythan, or water-gate, has hitherto baffled all search.

There are other curious traditionary notices of the Rhymer in Aberdeenshire; one thus introduced in a *View of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, written about 1732. 'On Aiky brae here [in Old Deer parish] are certain stones called the *Cummin's Craig*, where 'tis said one of the Cummins, Earls of Buchan, by a fall from his horse at hunting, dashed out his brains. The prediction goes that this earl (who lived under Alexander III.) had called Thomas the Rhymer by the name of Thomas the Lyar, to show how much he slighted his predictions, whereupon that famous fortune-teller denounced his impending fate in these words, which, 'tis added, were all literally fulfilled:—

Tho' Thomas the Lyar thou call'st me,
A sooth tale I shall tell to thee:
By Aikyside
Thy horse shall ride,
He shall stumble, and thou shalt fa',
Thy neck bane shall break in twa,
And dogs shall thy banes gnaw,
And, maugre all thy kin and thee,
Thy own belt thy bier shall be.'

It is said that Thomas visited Inverugie, which, in latter times, was a seat of the Marischal family, and there, from a

high stone, poured forth a vaticination to the following effect:—

Inverugie, by the sea,
Lordless shall thy lands be;
And underneath thy hearthstane
The tod shall bring her birds hame.

This is introduced in the manuscript before quoted, at which time the prophecy might be said to be realised in the banishment and forfeiture of the last Earl Marischal for his share in the insurrection of 1715. The stone on which the seer sat was removed to build the church in 1763; but the field in which it lay is still called *Tammas's Stane*.

One of Thomas's supposed prophecies referring to this district appears as a mere deceptive jingle—

When Dee and Don shall run in one,
And Tweed shall run in Tay,
The bonnie water o' Urie
Shall bear the Bass away.

The Bass is a conical mount, of remarkable appearance, and about forty feet high, rising from the bank of the Urie, in the angle formed by it at its junction with the Don. The rhyme appears in the manuscript collections of Sir James Balfour, which establishes for it an antiquity of fully two hundred years. It is very evident that the author, whoever he was, only meant to play off a trick upon simple imaginations, by setting one (assumed) impossibility against another. The joke, however, is sometimes turned against such persons. It is pointed out very justly that the Dee and Don have been joined in a manner by the Aberdeenshire Canal. Nor, when we consider the actual origin of the Bass, is its demolition by the Urie an event so much out of nature's reckoning as a rustic wit might suppose. This mount undoubtedly belongs to a class of such objects—of which the Dunipace Mounts are other examples—which are to be regarded as the remains of alluvial plateaux, once filling the valley to the same height, but all the rest of which has been borne away by the river during the uprise of the land. Little did the conceiver of this quatrain think by what a narrow chance the Bass had escaped being carried away in the early age when the valley took its present form.

A native of Edinburgh, who in 1825 was seventy-two years of age, informed me that, when he was a boy, the following prophetic rhyme, ascribed to True Thomas, was in vogue:—

> York was, London is, and Edinburgh will be,
> The biggest o' the three.

In my informant's early days, Edinburgh consisted only of what is now called the Old Town; and the New Town, though projected, was not then expected ever to reach the extent and splendour which it has since attained. Consequently it can scarcely be said that the prophecy has been put into circulation after its fulfilment had become a matter of hope or imaginable possibility.

It is to be remarked, however, that there is a similar rhyme popular in England. Stukely, in his *Itinerarium Curiosum*, after expatiating upon the original size and population of Lincoln, quotes as an old adage—

> Lincoln *was*, London *is*, and York *shall be*,
> The fairest city of the three.

One of the rhymes most popular at Earlstoun referred to an old thorn-tree which stood near the village. It ran thus—

> This Thorn-tree, as lang as it stands,
> Earlstoun shall possess a' her lands.

Now, the lands originally belonging to the community of Earlstoun have been, in the course of time, alienated piecemeal, till there is scarcely an acre left. The tree fell during the night, in a great storm which took place in spring 1821; and what gave additional weight to the prophecy was, that the principal shopkeepers in the town happened to be then, on account of a series of unfortunate circumstances, in a state of bankruptcy.

The Rhymer is supposed to have attested the infallibility of his predictions by a couplet to the following effect:—

> When the saut gaes abune the meal,
> Believe nae mair o' Tammie's tale.

This seems to mean, in plain English, that it is just as impossible for the price of the small quantity of salt used in the preparation of porridge to exceed the value of the larger

quantity of meal required for the same purpose, as for his prophecies to become untrue.

The following legend, which appeared in the notes to the uniform edition of the Waverley Novels, may, it is hoped, allowably be introduced at this place :—

'Now, it chanced many years since, that there lived on the Borders a jolly, rattling horse-cowper, who was remarkable for a reckless and fearless temper, which made him much admired, and a little dreaded, amongst his neighbours. One moonlight night, as he rode over Bowden Moor, on the west side of the Eildon Hills, the scene of Thomas the Rhymer's prophecies, and often mentioned in his story, having a brace of horses along with him which he had not been able to dispose of, he met a man of venerable appearance and singularly-antique dress, who, to his great surprise, asked the price of his horses, and began to chaffer with him on the subject. To Canobie Dick, for so shall we call our Border dealer, a chap was a chap, and he would have sold a horse to the devil himself, without minding his cloven hoof, and would have probably cheated Old Nick into the bargain. The stranger paid the price they agreed on, and all that puzzled Dick in the transaction was, that the gold which he received was in unicorns, bonnet-pieces, and other ancient coins, which would have been invaluable to collectors, but were rather troublesome in modern currency. It was gold, however, and therefore Dick contrived to get better value for the coin than he perhaps gave to his customer. By the command of so good a merchant, he brought horses to the same spot more than once; the purchaser only stipulating that he should always come by night, and alone. I do not know whether it was from mere curiosity, or whether some hope of gain mixed with it; but after Dick had sold several horses in this way, he began to complain that dry bargains were unlucky, and to hint, that since his chap must live in the neighbourhood, he ought, in the courtesy of dealing, to treat him to half a mutchkin.

"You may see my dwelling if you will," said the stranger; "but if you lose courage at what you see there, you will rue it all your life."

'Dick, however, laughed the warning to scorn; and having alighted to secure his horse, he followed the stranger

up a narrow footpath, which led them up the hills to the singular eminence stuck betwixt the most southern and the centre peaks, and called, from its resemblance to such an animal in its form, the Lucken Hare. At the foot of this eminence, which is almost as famous for witch-meetings as the neighbouring windmill of Kippilaw, Dick was somewhat startled to observe that his conductor entered the hill-side by a passage or cavern, of which he himself, though well acquainted with the spot, had never seen or heard.

"You may still return," said his guide, looking ominously back upon him; but Dick scorned to show the white feather, and on they went. They entered a very long range of stables; in every stall stood a coal-black horse; by every horse lay a knight in coal-black armour, with a drawn sword in his hand; but all were as silent, hoof and limb, as if they had been cut out of marble. A great number of torches lent a gloomy lustre to the hall, which, like those of the Caliph Vathek, was of large dimensions. At the upper end, however, they at length arrived, where a sword and horn lay on an antique table.

"He that shall sound that horn and draw that sword," said the stranger, who now intimated that he was the famous Thomas of Ercildoun, "shall, if his heart fail him not, be king over all broad Britain. So speaks the tongue that cannot lie. But all depends on courage, and much on your taking the sword or the horn first."

'Dick was much disposed to take the sword, but his bold spirit was quailed by the supernatural terrors of the hall, and he thought to unsheath the sword first might be construed into defiance, and give offence to the powers of the mountain. He took the bugle with a trembling hand, and blew a feeble note, but loud enough to produce a terrible answer. Thunder rolled in stunning peals through the immense hall; horses and men started to life; the steeds snorted, stamped, grinded their bits, and tossed on high their heads; the warriors sprung to their feet, clashed their armour, and brandished their swords. Dick's terror was extreme at seeing the whole army, which had been so lately silent as the grave, in uproar, and about to rush on him. He dropped the horn, and made a feeble attempt to seize the enchanted sword; but at the same moment a voice pronounced aloud the mysterious words—

" Wo to the coward, that ever he was born,
Who did not draw the sword before he blew the horn!"

'At the same time a whirlwind of irresistible fury howled through the long hall, bore the unfortunate horse-jockey clear out of the mouth of the cavern, and precipitated him over a steep bank of loose stones, where the shepherds found him the next morning, with just breath sufficient to tell his fearful tale, after concluding which, he expired.

'This legend, with several variations, is found in many parts of Scotland and England; the scene is sometimes laid in some favourite glen of the Highlands, sometimes in the deep coal-mines of Northumberland and Cumberland, which run so far beneath the ocean. It is also to be found in Reginald Scott's book on Witchcraft, which was written in the sixteenth century. It would be in vain to ask what was the original of the tradition. The choice between the horn and sword may, perhaps, include as a moral, that it is foolhardy to awaken danger before we have arms in our hands to resist it.'

ROXBURGHSHIRE.

LILLIARD'S EDGE.

At Lilliard's Edge, a mile and a half north from the village of Ancrum, was fought, in 1545, the battle of Ancrum Moor, between the Scots, under the Earl of Angus, and an English invading party, led by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Bryan Latoun. The contest arose out of the rough diplomacy connected with the proposed marriage of the son of Henry VIII. to the young Queen of Scots. It had, however, the form of a defence of soil and property on the part of the Scots, as the two English knights were endeavouring to realise a grant of the Merse and Teviotdale, which their master had conferred upon them. Hence the expression of Angus—'If they come to take seisin in my lands, I shall bear them witness to it, and perhaps write them an investiture in sharp pens and red ink.'

In this fight there was, according to tradition, a female warrior on the Scotch side named Lilliard, who, when covered with wounds, and cruelly shortened by the swords

of her enemies, continued to fight in the manner of Squire Widdrington. Buried on the field of victory, she was commemorated to future ages by her name being given to the spot, and a stone being erected, on which was the following inscription:—

Fair Maiden Lilliard lies under this stane,
Little was her stature, but great was her fame;
Upon the English loons she laid mony thumps,
And when her legs were cuttit off, she fought upon her stumps.

BILHOPE BRAES, &c.

Bilhope braes for bucks and raes,
Carit-rigs for swine,
And Tarras for a guid bull-trout,
If it be ta'en in time.

This is an old rhyme, commemorating the places in Liddisdale and Eskdale remarkable for game. The bull-trout of the Tarras has alone survived to modern times.

ANNAN, TWEED, AND CLYDE.

Annan, Tweed, and Clyde,
Rise a' out o' ae hill-side;
Tweed ran, Annan wan,
Clyde fell, and brak its neck owre Corra Linn.

These three chief rivers of the south of Scotland, though flowing into different seas, have their sources in one mass of mountain ground, occupying the upper parts of the counties of Peebles, Lanark, and Dumfries. The fact has always been a subject of popular remark in Scotland; yet what is it to that which has been observed regarding two of the principal rivers of America—the Missouri and Mackenzie—respectively disemboguing into the Gulf of Georgia and the Polar Sea, after a course of thousands of miles, there being branches of these great streams which approach within three hundred yards of each other in the Rocky Mountains!

In the rhyme, the Annan, having the shortest course, is said to win the race; while popular fancy represents the Clyde as breaking its neck at the Corra fall near Lanark.

RIVERS, CHIEFLY IN ROXBURGHSHIRE.

The Ettrick and the Slitterick,
The Leader and the Feeder,
The Fala and the Gala,
The Ale and the Kale,
The Yod and the Jed,
The Blackater, the Whittater,
The Teviot and the Tweed.

SELKIRKSHIRE.

ETTRICK HALL.

'ETTRICK House, near the head of Ettrick Water, is a very ancient tower. Around it was a considerable village in former days; and as late as the Revolution, it contained no fewer than fifty-three fine houses. A more inhospitable place for a population so numerous can hardly be conceived. A Mr James Anderson, one of the Tushilaw family, turned out the remnant of these poor and small tenants and subtenants about the year 1700, and the numbers were then very considerable. He built a splendid house on the property, all of which he took into his own hands. A small prophetic rhyme was about that period made on it, nobody knows by whom, and though extremely tame, has been most wonderfully verified —

Ettrick Hall stands on yon plain,
Right sore exposed to wind and rain;
And on it the sun shines never at morn,
Because it was built in the widow's corn;
And its foundations can never be sure,
Because it was built on the ruin of the poor.
And or [ere] an age is come and gane,
Or the trees o'er the chimly-taps grow green,
We winna ken where the house has been.

There is not a vestige of this grand mansion left, nor has there been any for these many years. Its site can only be known by the avenue and lanes of trees, garden, &c.; while many clay cottages that were built previously are standing in state and form. As an instance, the lowly stone and clay cottage in which the Ettrick Shepherd was born was

used by the laird as an occasional stable, and the house is as good as it was that day the foundation of his mansion was laid among the widow's corn.'—*From a communication by the late James Hogg in* 1826.

PEEBLESSHIRE.

VALE OF MANOR.

There stand three mills on Manor Water,
A fourth at Posso Cleugh:
Gin heather-bells were corn and bere,
They wad get grist eneugh.

In the pastoral vale of Manor there were formerly no fewer than four mills, each belonging to a distinct *laird*, who bound all his tenants to take their grain thither, according to an oppressive and absurd old practice, known by the phrase *thirlage*. Since one mill now serves to grind all the grain produced in Manor, even in the present advanced state of agriculture, some idea may be formed of the state of things in regard to the trade of grinding, when there were four rival professors of that useful art to be supported out of an inferior amount of produce. The people felt, saw, and satirised the thing, in a style highly characteristic, by the above sneering rhyme, which is still popular, though the occasion has long since passed away. The vale of Manor is remarkable for having been the residence of David Ritchie, a deformed and eccentric pauper, whose character and appearance formed the groundwork of the tale entitled 'The Black Dwarf.'

POWBATE.

Powbate is a large, deep well, on the top of a high hill at Eddlestone, near Peebles, considered a sort of phenomenon by the country people, who believe that it fills and occupies the whole mountain with its vast magazine of waters. The mouth, at the top of the hill, called *Powbate Ee*, is covered over by a grate, to prevent the sheep from falling into it; and it is supposed that if a willow-wand is thrown in, it will be found some time after *peeled*, at the *Water-laugh*, a small lake at the base of the hill, supposed

to communicate with Powbate. The hill is expected to break some day, like a bottle, and do a great deal of mischief. A prophecy, said to be by Thomas the Rhymer, and bearing some marks of his style, is cited to support the supposition—

Powbate, an ye break,
Tak the Moorfoot in your gate—
Moorfoot and Mauldslie,
Huntlycote, a' three,
Five kirks and an abbacie!

Moorfoot, Mauldslie, and Huntlycote, are farms in the immediate neighbourhood of the hill. The *kirks* are understood to have been those of Temple, Carrington, Borthwick, Cockpen, and Dalkeith; and the *abbacy* was that of Newbottle, the destruction of which, however, has been anticipated by another enemy.

TWEED AND POWSAIL.

The rivulet of Powsail falls into the Tweed a little below a small eminence called Merlin's Grave, near Drumelzier. Whether the prophet or wizard Merlin was buried here or not, Dr Penicuik, who notices both the grave and the rhyme, cannot certify. The following popular version of the rhyme is better than that which he has printed, and, I fear, *improved*:—

When Tweed and Powsail meet at Merlin's grave,
Scotland and England that day ae king shall have.

Accordingly, it is said that, on the day of King James's coronation as monarch of Great Britain, there was such a flood in both the Tweed and the Powsail, that their waters met at Merlin's Grave. An ingenious friend remarks, though I cannot entirely go along with him, that the lines might be originally intended to attest the improbability of the two hostile kingdoms ever being united under one sovereign, and as a means of keeping alive, at least in Scotland, the spirit of disunion. It will appear to modern scepticism that the rhyme was made after the event.

FARMS IN THE WEST OF PEEBLESSHIRE.

Glenkirk and Glencotha,
The Mains o' Kilbucho,

Blendewan and the Raw,
Mitchellhill and the Shaw;
There's a hole abune the Threipland
Would haud them a'!

The 'hole abune the Threipland' is a hollow in the side of a hill, shaped like a basin, and which stands in rainy weather nearly half full of water. On the upper side of the hollow there is a cave penetrating the hill, and nearly blocked up with stones and shrubs. This is said to be of considerable extent; and, as tradition reports, gave shelter in the *persecuting times* to the inhabitants of the farms enumerated in the rhyme. Both the hole and the cave are evidently artificial; but it is probable that the latter was formed at a much later period than the other, from the circumstance of there being many such hollows in the hill-sides of the neighbourhood, without the corresponding cave. Indeed these hollows are supposed to have been used at a much earlier period of warfare and danger than the *persecuting times*—namely, in the days of Wallace and Bruce. They might be places of military vigil, as the soldiers stationed in them could survey an extensive tract of country, without being themselves seen by the enemy whose motions they watched. Threipland is near Boghall, where the immortal Wallace is said by Blair to have fought a bloody but successful battle with the English, and where, according to tradition, various skirmishes of lesser consequence also took place.

FARMS NEAR PEEBLES.

Bonnington lakes,
And Cruikston cakes,
Kademuir, and the Wrae;
And hungry, hungry Hundelshope,
And skawed Bell's Brae.

The farm of Bonnington, once full of mossy flows and wells, called lakes, is now, under the magical influence of draining, a smiling and highly-cultivated farm, the property of Sir Adam Hay of Hayston, Bart. Kademuir is a rough mountain farm, belonging to about three hundred of the inhabitants of Peebles, to whose predecessors it is said to have been a grant from a Scottish king. Connected with this farm is a curious, and, I believe, nearly unique

relic of a disestablished religious system: there is an official called the *Vicar of Peebles*, usually the precentor of the parish church, who collects a small tax from the proprietors, amounting in all to about £15. Within the memory of old people living a few years ago, this functionary had the appointed duty of saying a service over the dead. I have seen a small manuscript volume containing the vicar's accounts for 1733. Hundelshope is a farm near Kademuir, formerly remarkable for the wetness and heaviness of its soil, as is indicated by an anecdote told of a former laird, who had not been one of the greatest of saints, and who groaned out, on his deathbed, that for a further lease of life he would be glad to 'plough Hundelshope all the year round up to the knees in *glaar*.'

DUMFRIESSHIRE AND GALLOWAY.

TARRAS.

The river Tarras, rising in the parish of Ewes, traverses a great morass—the Tarras Flow, which was formerly a noted haunt of the predatory clans of Liddisdale in times of danger, being completely inaccessible to persons unacquainted with the district. The course of the river is as remarkable for its broken and rugged character, as the neighbouring ground is for bleakness and desolation. The Borderers expressed its features in their own poetical style—

Was ne'er ane drowned in Tarras,
Nor yet in doubt,
For ere the head wins down,
The harns are out.

That is to say, no one was ever drowned in Tarras, nor yet in danger of being so, for, ere any one falling into it could be submerged, his brains must have been dashed out upon the rocks.

REPENTANCE TOWER.

Repentance Tower stands on a hill,
The like you'll see nowhere,
Except the ane that's neist to it,
Fouks ca' it Woodcockaire.

Repentance Tower stands upon a beautiful hill in the vale of the Annan. Tradition states that it was built by a cruel lord, who came to a sense of the evil of his ways before he died, and placed over the door of this building the figures of a dove and a serpent, with the word 'Repentance' between. Woodcockaire is a hill contiguous to that on which the tower stands. In remote times, it formed part of the large domains of the Carlyles, Lords of Torthorwald; and it is known to have afforded excellent fodder to the horses belonging to the garrison of Lochmaben.

DRYFESDALE KIRK.

This unfortunate kirk was for many centuries threatened with the following prediction:—

> Let spades and shools do what they may,
> Dryfe shall tak Dryfesdale Kirk away.

The Dryfe is one of the most rattling, roaring, rapid mountain-streams in the south of Scotland; a river of very equivocal character, uncertain size, and unsettled habits; never content for a week at a time with the same channel; now little, now large—now here, now there; insatiable in the articles of lint, corn, and hay, vast quantities of which it carries away every autumn; and, what is worst of all, a river of a sacrilegious disposition, seeing that it has made a vow of perpetual enmity to the church and churchyard of Dryfesdale, of both of which it promises soon to destroy every vestige. It may well be said that the last trait in its character, which, before the year 1559, would have been enough to draw down upon it the terrors of excommunication, is the most strongly-marked; for whatever circuitous channels, whatever new tracts it may be pleased to pursue in its way down the vale, it is always sure, before coming to the church, to resume that single and constant route, which there enables it to sweep impetuously round the bank on which the sacred edifice stands, and gradually undermine its foundations.

These remorseless aggressions on the part of the Dryfe, which neither bribery, in the shape of a new and more pleasant channel, nor resistance, in the shape of embanking, can withstand, have at last compelled the parishioners to remove their place of worship to the village of Lockerbie,

which, being thus rendered the kirk-town, has taken away and appropriated all the prosperity of the former kirk-town of Dryfesdale. The stream of Dryfe is, therefore, left to work out the purpose of the prophecy at its leisure; and I was some time ago informed that it seems on the point of accomplishing its will, part of the walls of the ruined church actually overhanging the water. The sepulchral vault of the ancient family of Johnston of Lockerbie, which contains some old monuments, must thus also be destroyed; and as for the churchyard, against which the wrath of the Dryfe seems to have been as fully directed as it was at the church, only a small portion is now left.

There is a saying in this district of Dumfriesshire, that 'a Dryfesdale man once buried a wife and married a wife in ae day.' However strange this may appear, it is perfectly true; but the whole wonder is to be attributed to the incalculable Dryfe. In its advances towards the church, the stream has of course made away with all the intervening part of the burying-ground. At every flood a portion has been carried off, together with the relics of mortality contained therein, as well as the gravestones, some of which lie in the channel of the stream a good way down. On account of the attachment of the peasantry to their respective places of sepulture, the aggressions of the Dryfe, however threatening, have scarcely ever deterred the people from depositing their dead even close by the bank, and where there could be no probability of their being permitted to remain till decayed. A man having once buried his wife under these circumstances, the Dryfe soon succeeded in detaching the coffin; but expeditious as it was in this feat, no less expeditious was the widower in wooing a new bride; and it so happened, that on the very day when he was leading the new lady to church in order to marry her, the stream, being at flood, carried off the coffin of his former spouse. In going along the water-side, the bridal company were met, full in the face, by the coffin, which, as the country people tell the story, 'came houdin' down the water in great haste.' The poor bride took a hysteric, as became her, while the alarmed bridegroom and his friends proceeded to re-inter her predecessor; and after hastily concluding this ceremony, they went on with the more blithesome affair of the bridal!

It is perhaps worthy of remark, that Dryfesdale churchyard was one of those honoured by the attentions of Old Mortality; and that that celebrated personage was found expiring upon the road near the burying-ground, while his old white horse, scarcely less interesting than himself, was discovered grazing among the tombstones, which it had been so long its master's delight to keep in repair.

DRUMLANRIG CASTLE.

This splendid old mansion, formerly belonging to the Queensberry family, now to the Duke of Buccleuch, is popularly called the House o' the Hassock. Sixty years ago, the following rhyme, of which I cannot pretend to make any sense, was current in its neighbourhood:—

When the Park burn ran
Where never man saw,
The House o' the Hassock
Was near a fa'.

LOCHAR MOSS.

'This moss is nearly a dead level of from two to three miles in breadth, and ten miles in length, stretching from the shore of the Solway Frith into the interior of the country. There is a tradition that this barren waste was at some remote period covered with wood, and that afterwards it was inundated by the sea, which, upon receding, left behind it the decaying vegetable matter in which the moss originated. This tradition has been embodied by the peasantry in the following couplet:—

First a wood, and then a sea,
Now a moss, and ever will be.

And its truth is corroborated by the fact, that the moss rests upon a deep stratum of sea-sand, out of which not only are shells and other marine deposits frequently dug, but fragments of ancient vessels, of no very inconsiderable size, together with several iron grapples or anchors. Some ancient canoes or boats have also been found, and in particular one formed out of the trunk of a large oak, hollowed apparently by fire. Between the surface of the moss and the sea-sand, immense trunks of trees are found. These, which are principally fir, invariably lie with their tops

towards the north-east; from which it would appear, that the roots having been previously loosened by the inundation of the sea, they had been levelled by the fury of the south-western blast.'—*New Stat. Account of Scotland—Par. of Dumfries.*

The bed of Lochar Moss was unquestionably, in a former age, the bed of a sub-estuary of the Solway. There are also powerful reasons for believing that it was in this condition at a period subsequent to the peopling of our island.

LETTERED CRAGS.

In certain remote districts large stones are found, with rude, though not antique inscriptions, apparently the work of idle or ingenious shepherds. They abound in Galloway. Upon the farm of Knockiebay, in this district, there is a stone, on the upper side of which are cut the words—

Lift me up, and I'll tell you more.

Obeying this injunction, many simple people have, at various periods, exerted their strength, in order to discover the expected treasure below, where they only found carved the remaining member of the couplet—

Lay me down, as I was before.

It would appear that this is no new joke. 'Thair is ane greit quhinne stane in Striveling Castell that has bene writtin upon, that is vncertane be what natioun, Scottis, Britones, Pichtis, or Romanis. The stane is neirly round; upon the ane syde is writtin, Verte et invenies. On the nather syde of it is writtin, Ab initio nequam.'—*Roslin Additions to the Chronicle of Scone (written in the sixteenth century). Published by Abbotsford Club*, 1842.

HILLS IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF SCOTLAND.

Cairnsmuir o' Fleet,
Cairnsmuir o' Dee,
And Cairnsmuir o' Carsphairn,
The biggest o' the three.

AYRSHIRE.

HILLS NEAR LOCH DOON.

The Sloke, Milnwharcher, and Craigneen,
The Breska, and Sligna,
They are the five best Crocklet hills
The auld wives ever saw.

CARRICK, KYLE, CUNNINGHAM, AND GALLOWAY.

Carrick for a man,
Kyle for a cow,
Cunningham for corn and bere,
And Galloway for woo'.

THIS old rhyme points out what each of the three districts of Ayrshire, and the neighbouring territory of Galloway, were remarkable for producing in greatest perfection. The mountainous province of Carrick produced robust men; the rich plains of Kyle reared the famous breed of cattle now generally termed the Ayrshire breed; and Cunningham was a good arable district. The hills of Galloway afford pasture to an abundance of sheep.

DUNDONALD—MONEY-DIGGING RHYMES.

In Ayrshire, the following rhyme is prevalent, and is probably very old:—

Donald Din
Built his house without a pin;

alluding to Dundonald Castle, the ancient seat of King Robert II.,* and now the last remaining property in Ayr-

* 'Dundonald Castle, the scene of King Robert's early attachment and nuptials with the fair Elizabeth (Mure), is situated in Kyle-Stewart, of which, from the remotest period, it appears to have been the chief messuage, about six miles south-west of Rowallan, and approaching within about a mile of the Firth of Clyde. Its situation, on the summit of a beautiful round hill, in the close vicinity of Dundonald church, is singularly noble and baronial. Although evidently of considerable antiquity, yet certainly another of still greatly more remote origin to the present castle of Dundonald once occupied the same site. To the more remote building may allude the following rude rhyme, if it be not altogether a piece of rustic wit of recent times:—

"There stands a castle in the west,
They ca' it Donald Din;
There's no a nail in a' its proof,
Nor yet a wooden pin."'

History of the House of Rowallan, p. 50.

King Robert died at Dundonald Castle *anno* 1390. Dr Johnson and Mr

shire of the noble family who take their title from it. According to tradition, it was built by a hero named Donald Din, or Din Donald, and constructed entirely of stone, without the use of wood—a supposition countenanced by the appearance of the building, which consists of three distinct storeys, arched over with strong stone-work, the roof of one forming the floor of another. Donald, the builder, was originally a poor man, but had the faculty of dreaming lucky dreams. Upon one occasion he dreamed, thrice in one night, that if he were to go to London Bridge, he would become a wealthy man. He went accordingly, saw a man looking over the parapet of the bridge, whom he accosted courteously, and, after a little conversation, intrusted with the secret of the occasion of his visiting London Bridge. The stranger told him that he had made a very foolish errand, for he himself had once had a similar vision, which directed him to go to a certain spot in Ayrshire, in Scotland, where he would find a vast treasure, and, for his part, he had never once thought of obeying the injunction. From his description of the spot, the sly Scotsman at once perceived that the treasure in question must be concealed in no other place than his own humble *kail-yard* at home, to which he immediately repaired, in full expectation of finding it. Nor was he disappointed; for, after destroying many good and promising cabbages, and completely cracking credit with his wife, who esteemed him mad, he found a large potful of gold coin, with the proceeds of which he built a stout castle for himself, and became the founder of a flourishing family. This absurd story is localised in almost every district of Scotland, always referring to London Bridge, for the fame of Queen Maude's singular erection seems to have reached this remote country at an early period. Mr Hogg has wrought up the fiction in a very amusing manner in one of his *Winter Evening Tales*, substituting the bridge of Kelso for that of London. Other tales of money-diggers and treasure-seekers abound in Scotland. I venture to record the following, on account of their accompanying rhymes:—

It is supposed by the people who live in the neighbour-

Boswell visited the ruins on their return from the Hebrides; and the former laughed outright at the idea of a Scottish monarch being accommodated with his court, in so narrow a mansion.

hood of Largo Law in Fife, that there is a very rich mine of gold under and near the mountain, which has never yet been properly searched for. So convinced are they of the verity of this, that whenever they see the wool of a sheep's side tinged with yellow, they think it has acquired that colour from having lain above the gold of the mine.* A great many years ago, a ghost made its appearance upon the spot, supposed to be laden with the secret of the mine; but as it of course required to be *spoken to* before it would condescend to *speak*, the question was, who should take it upon himself to go up and accost it. At length a shepherd, inspired by the all-powerful love of gold, took courage, and demanded the cause of its thus 'revisiting,' &c. The ghost proved very affable, and requested a meeting on a particular night, at eight o'clock, when, said the spirit—

'If Auchindownie cock disna craw,
And Balmain horn disna blaw,
I'll tell ye where the gowd mine is in Largo Law.'

The shepherd took what he conceived to be effectual measures for preventing any obstacles being thrown in the way of his becoming custodier of the important secret, for not a cock, old, young, or middle-aged, was left alive at the farm of Auchindownie; while the man who, at that of Balmain, was in the habit of blowing the horn for the housing of the cows, was strictly enjoined to dispense with that duty on the night in question. The hour was come, and the ghost, true to its promise, appeared, ready to divulge the secret; when Tammie Norrie, the cowherd of Balmain, either through obstinacy or forgetfulness, 'blew a blast both loud and dread,' and I may add, 'were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of wo,' for, to the shepherd's mortal disappointment, the ghost vanished, after exclaiming—

'Wo to the man that blew the horn,
For out of the spot he shall ne'er be borne.'

* There is a popular belief that the Eildon Hills contain a mine of gold, from the teeth of the sheep becoming yellow after feeding upon them. The same notion is entertained respecting Dunideer Hill in Aberdeenshire, as we learn from Hector Boece and Lesley; and in some other places in Scotland; and Mr Buckingham tells us that the sheep which feed on Pisgah, from which Moses saw the 'promised land,' are believed to have their teeth actually converted into silver, by feeding on a particular plant which grows there.

In fulfilment of this denunciation, the unfortunate horn-blower was struck dead upon the spot; and it being found impossible to remove his body, which seemed, as it were, pinned to the earth, a cairn of stones was raised over it, which, now grown into a green hillock, is still denominated *Norrie's Law*, and regarded as *uncanny* by the common people. This place is situated upon the farm of Fairyfield, which was formerly the patrimonial property of the celebrated Dr Archibald Pitcairn.

In the south of Scotland, it is the popular belief that vast treasures are concealed beneath the ruins of Hermitage Castle; but being in the keeping of the Evil One, they are considered beyond redemption. It is true some hardy persons have, at different times, made the attempt to dig for them; but somehow the elements always on such occasions contrived to produce an immense storm of thunder and lightning, and deterred the adventurers from proceeding, otherwise, of course, the money would have long ago been found. It is ever thus that supernatural obstacles come in the way of these interesting discoveries. An honest man in Perthshire, named Finlay Robertson, about fifty years ago, went, with some stout-hearted companions, to seek the treasures which were supposed to be concealed in the darksome cave of a deceased Highland robber; but just as they had commenced operations with their mattocks, the whole party were instantaneously struck, as by an electric shock, which sent them home with fear and trembling, and they were ever after remarked as silent, mysterious men, very apt to take offence when allusion was made to their unsuccessful enterprise.

In the *south country*, it is also believed that there is concealed at Tamleuchar Cross, in Selkirkshire, a valuable treasure, of which the situation is thus vaguely described by a popular rhyme:—

> Atween the wat grund and the dry,
> The gowd o' Tamleuchar doth lie.

The following is another southern traditionary tale of money-digging:—A shepherd once dreamed (as usual), three times in one night, that there was a potful of gold in his cabbage-garden. Upon digging, he found a pot, but, alas! it contained nothing. He was much disappointed, but,

rather than lose all, turned over the empty vessel to the care of his wife, that it might be appropriated to domestic uses. About eighteen years thereafter, when the shepherd had almost forgot his delusive dream, the vessel was hanging one day over the fire, in the respectable capacity of a *kail-pot*, when a pedlar came in, with his professional *drouth* [that is, *hunger*], and was treated by the guidwife to a basin of broth. While devouring his mess by the fireside, his eye caught some strange characters encircling the rim of the pot, which he forthwith proceeded to inspect, and found to form a Latin sentence. Being acquainted with that language, he was able to explain the meaning in English to the honest couple, who affected to know nothing particular about the pot, and expressed but little curiosity respecting the meaning of the legend, which was to the following effect:—

Beneath this pot you will find another.

The pedlar wondered what could be meant by this, and the proprietors of the pot wondered as much as he, though well they knew what was implied. After the stranger had taken his leave, they went to the garden, dug at the spot where they found the first pot, and accordingly discovered another, which was quite full of gold, and made them comfortable for life.

A story somewhat similar to one of the preceding is very well known in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock. It is popularly believed that, for many ages past, a pot of gold has lain *perdu* at the bottom of a pool beneath a fall of the rivulet underneath Craufurdland Bridge, about three miles from Kilmarnock. Many attempts have been made to recover this treasure, but something always occurred to prevent a successful issue. The last was about a century ago, by the Laird of Craufurdland himself, at the head of a party of his domestics, who first dammed up the water, then emptied the pool of its contents, and had just heard their instruments clink on the kettle, when a brownie called out of a bush—

'Pow, pow!
Craufurdland tower's a' in a low!'

Whereupon the laird left the scene, followed by his servants, and ran home to save what he could. Of course there was

no fire whatever at the house, and when they came back to resume their operations, they found the water falling over the linn in full force. Being now convinced that a power above that of mortals was opposed to their researches, the laird and his people gave up the attempt. Such is the traditionary story; whether founded in any actual occurrence, or a mere fiction of the peasants' brain, cannot be ascertained; but it is curious that a later and perfectly well-authenticated effort to recover the treasure was interrupted by a natural occurrence in some respects similar. It was about the beginning of the present century that one of the existing tenants of the estate, then a lad, agreed with a companion to go at midnight, on a summer's eve, and endeavour to recover the treasure. They had formed a dam, baled out the water, and were about to dig for the kettle, when a voice of distress, high overhead, called aloud for one to assist with a cart of hay which had been overturned. They left their work, and ran up to the road, where they found that such an accident had actually taken place. After giving their assistance, they returned, and found the dam gone, and the rivulet pouring into the linn as usual, thus impressing their minds, as in the former instance, with a conviction that all attempts to regain the treasure would be vain.

The anecdotes of money-digging may be concluded with a story highly characteristic of Scottish cunning and Irish simplicity. On the farm of Clerkston, in the parish of Lesmahagow, there had existed since creation an immense stone, which, being deeply bedded in the middle of a good field, at a great distance from any other rocks, was productive of infinite inconvenience to the husbandman, and defrauded the proprietor of a considerable portion of territory. Beneath this stone, it was believed by the country people of the last generation that there was secreted a vast treasure, in the shape of 'a kettleful, a bootful, and a bull-hideful' of gold, all which got the ordinary name of 'Katie Neevie's hoord.' The credibility of this tradition was attested by a rhyme to the following effect:—

Between Dillerhill and Crossfoord,
There lies Katie Neevie's hoord.

Many efforts had been made, according to the gossips, to

remove the stone and get at the treasure; but all were baffled by the bodily appearance of the Enemy of mankind, who, by breathing intolerable flame in the faces of those making the attempt, obliged them to desist. Thus well guarded, the legacy of Mrs Katherine Niven lay for centuries as snug as if it had been deposited in Chancery; and it was not till at least a hundred years after the last despairing effort had been made, that the charm was at length broken. Mr James Prentice, the farmer of Clerkston, had the address to convince several Irishmen, who had served him during the harvest, of the truth of the said rhyme, and, by expatiating upon the supposed immensity of the treasure, wrought up their curiosity and their cupidity to such a pitch, that they resolved, with his permission, to break the stone in pieces, and make themselves masters of whatever might be found below. On the day after *the kirn*, therefore, the poor fellows provided themselves with a well-loaded gun, for the protection of their persons from all evil agencies, and fell to work, with punches and mallets, to blow up and utterly destroy the huge stone which alone intervened between them and everlasting affluence. They laboured the whole day, without provoking any visit from Satan, and at last succeeded in fairly eradicating the stone from the field which it had so long incumbered, when they became at once convinced of the fallacy of the rhyme, of the craft of Mr Prentice, and of their own deluded credulity.

MONASTERY OF FAILL.

This was a small establishment near Mauchline: hardly a fragment of its walls now remains. The following is a traditionary saying respecting the inmates, which used to be often called up when a complaint of either hard eggs or thin broth was made:—

The friars of Faill
Gat never owre hard eggs or owre thin kail;
For they made their eggs thin wi' butter,
And their kail thick wi' bread.
And the friars of Faill, they made guid kail,
On Fridays when they fasted;
They never wanted gear eneuch,
As lang as their neighbours' lasted.

PLACES IN FENWICK PARISH.

Floak and Bloak, and black Drumbog,
Hungry Gree, and greedy Glashogh;
Dirty doors in Wannockhead,
Moully* siller in Wylieland,
Taupy† wives in Bruntland,
Witch wives in Midland.

SUNDRUM, &c.

Sundrum shall sink,
Auchincruive shall fa',
And the name o' Cathcart
Shall in time wear awa'!

This rhyme threatens the prosperity, and predicts the ultimate extermination, of the ancient family represented by Earl Cathcart. Sundrum and Auchincruive were formerly the property of this family, but, long since alienated, now respectively belong to families named Hamilton and Oswald. Sundrum, which in bygone times was the chief residence of the family of Cathcart, is situated about four miles eastward from Ayr, upon the banks of the water of Coyl, and being placed upon the top of a high brae of very ill-compacted material, has really an insecure appearance. But perhaps the sinking with which it is threatened is only a figurative allusion to the ruin of those who formerly possessed it. Many such prophecies are attached to the strongholds and names of families remarkable in feudal times for their power or their oppressive disposition.

LANARKSHIRE.

TINTOCK AND COULTERFELL.

The height atween Tintock-Tap and Coulterfell
Is just three quarters o' an ell.

THESE hills are the most conspicuous objects in a district of Lanarkshire which is in general rather flat, and the rhyme seems intended to denote that they are nearly of the same height.

* Mouldy. † Drabbish.

TINTOCK.

On Tintock-Tap there is a mist,
And in that mist there is a kist,
And in the kist there is a caup,
And in the caup there is a drap;
Tak up the caup, drink aff the drap,
And set the caup on Tintock-Tap.

Tintock may be called a very *popular* mountain; and this chiefly arises from its standing almost alone in the midst of a country generally level. On the summit is an immense accumulation of stones, said to have been brought thither at different times from the vale (distance three Scotch miles) by the country people, upon whom the task was enjoined as a penance by the priests of St John's Kirk, which was situated in a little glen at the north-east skirt of the mountain, though no vestige of its existence now remains except the burying-ground. The summit of Tintock is often enveloped in mist; and the 'kist' mentioned in the rhyme was perhaps a large stone, remarkable over the rest of the heap for having a hole in its upper side, which the country people say was formed by the grasp of Sir William Wallace's thumb, on the evening previous to his defeating the English at Boghall, in the neighbourhood. The hole is generally full of water, on account of the drizzling nature of the atmosphere; but if it is meant by the 'caup' mentioned, we must suppose that the whole is intended as a mockery of human strength; for it is certainly impossible to lift the stone and drink off the contents of the hollow.

PLACES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF WHITBURN.

The lang Flints o' Whitburn,
And Tennants i' the Inch;
John Maccall o' Bathgate
Sits upon his bench.
Tarryauban, Tarrybane,
Tarbane hills and sca't yauds,
Easter Whitburn's assy pets,*
And Wester Whitburn's braw lads.
The Duke i' the Head,
The Drake o' the Reeve,
The Laird o' Craigmalloch and Birnieton ha',

* Ashy peats.

Hen-nest and Hare-nest,
Cockhill and Cripplerest,
Belstane and the Belstane byres,
Bickleton ha' and the Guttermyres.

PLACES BETWEEN LANARK AND HAMILTON.

Gill Mill,
Canner-water and Whitehill,
Everwood and Doosdale,
Canner and Canner Mill,
Cannerside and Rawhill,
The Riccarton, the Rabberton,
The Raploch and the Ross,
The Merrytown, the Skellytown,
Cornsilloch and Dalserf.

PLACES ON DOUGLAS WATER.

Crimp, Cramp, and the Grange,
Midlock and the Castle Mains,
Camp-seed, and Cow Hill,
Blackens, and the Norman Gill.

BIGGAR.

Edinburgh's big,
But Biggar's bigger.

EDINBURGHSHIRE.

ROSLIN.

In the old church at Roslin, there is a tombstone in the pavement bearing the outline of a knightly figure, said to have been Sir William Sinclair of Roslin, a contemporary of Bruce. Under his feet, according to a common custom of the age, appears the figure of a dog. This circumstance has given rise to a *myth*, which the peasant-folk who show the church never fail to narrate to strangers. Sir William, they say, in a hunting-match with King Robert, wagered his head that a white deer which they started would be pulled down by his dogs before it could cross the March Burn. The animal being on the point of crossing the brook untouched, Sir William, according to popular story, shouted out—

'Help!—haud an ye may,
Or Roslin will lose his head this day.'

His best dog Help, thus encouraged, made a spring and seized the deer in time to save its master, who, the story runs, immediately set his foot upon its neck and killed it, that it might never lead him again into temptation. In proof of the story, which the object has generated, behold the object itself!—the knight on the tomb, with the dog at his feet.

MUSSELBURGH.

Musselbrogh was a brogh
When Edinbrogh was nane;
And Musselbrogh 'ill be a brogh,
When Edinbrogh is gane.

This is a pun or quibble. *Brogh* is a term for a mussel bed, one of which exists at the mouth of the Esk, and gives name to the burgh. It is of course undeniable that the *mussel-brogh* of the Esk, depending on natural circumstances of a permanent character, existed before, and will exist after, the neighbouring capital.

EDINBURGH.

Edinburgh castle, toune, and tower,
God grant thou sink for sinne,
And that even for the black dinoure
Erle Douglas gat therein.

This emphatic malediction is cited by Hume of Godscroft, in his History of the House of Douglas, as referring to the death of William, sixth earl of Douglas, a youth of eighteen, who, having been inveigled by Chancellor Crichton into the Castle of Edinburgh, was there basely put to death, *anno* 1440. The young earl was in the course of being entertained at dinner, when a bull's head was brought in, the signal of death; and he was instantly hurried out, subjected to a mock trial, and beheaded 'in the back court of the Castle that lieth to the west.' Hume, speaking of this transaction, says, with becoming indignation, 'It is sure the people did abhorre it—execrating the very place where it was done, in detestation of the fact—of which the memory remaineth yet to our dayes in these words.'

FARMS NEAR EDINBURGH.

In Littlecoats a bow o' groats,
In Luckenhouses guid flesh boats;

Nine lasses in Carsewell,
And not a lad among them all!

These are farmsteads upon the south side of the Pentland Hills, about nine miles from Edinburgh. Between Littlecoats and Luckenhouses runs a rivulet called the *Deadman's Grain*, which received its name from a remarkable circumstance. One of the Covenanters, flying from Rullion Green, mounted the horse of a slain dragoon a little way from the field of battle, but was immediately and closely pursued. In this extremity he took one of the pistols from the holster before him, and, by a Parthian manœuvre, fired it beneath his left arm at his enemies; but was thus so unfortunate as to destroy his only chance of escape, by wounding his own horse in the flank, whereupon he was caught and slain. In commemoration of this event, the place was called the Deadman's Grain, the latter word signifying the place of junction of two small mountain-rills which happen to meet in a forked manner. The nine lasses of Carsewell, whose situation must have been none of the most cheering, belonged, says tradition, to one farmer's family, named Henry.

LINLITHGOWSHIRE.

GILBURN.

It is a common story that an unfortunate lady, whose first name was *Ailie* (Anglicè, *Alice*), lived with a Duke of Hamilton, a great number of years ago, at Kinneil House. She is said to have put an end to her existence by throwing herself from the walls of the castle into the deep ravine below, through which the Gilburn descends. Her spirit is supposed to haunt this glen; and it is customary for the children of Linlithgowshire, on dark and stormy nights, to say—

Lady, Lady Lilburn,
Hunts in the Gilburn.

It is more likely that Lady Lilburn was the wife of the celebrated Cromwellian colonel, who for a time occupied Kinneil House.

STIRLINGSHIRE.

THE LINKS OF FORTH.

'Oh, is it the Links o' Forth?' she cried,
'Or is it the Crooks o' Dee?
Or the bonnie woods o' Warrockhead,
That I sae fain wad see?'—*Guy Mannering.*

THE numerous windings of the Forth, called *Links*, form a great number of beautiful peninsulas, which, being of a very luxuriant and fertile soil, gave rise to the following old rhyme:—

A crook o' the Forth
Is worth an earldom o' the north.

In Fountainhall's Decisions, under May 1683, occurs an allusion to public business connected with Stirling Castle; after which is added—'It being a strong pass between the Highlands and the Lowlands, according to the old motto about the arms of Stirling anent the bridge—

I am a pass, as travellers dae ken,
To Scotish, British, and to English men.

It standing with many hills about it, which made the abbots and monks of Cambuskenneth, and King James VI. (who, and many of his predecessors, were bred there in their infancy), to observe that the wind and wet met once a-day at the Cross of Stirling. Forth there has many crooks, Alloa being twenty-four miles by water from Stirling, and only four by land. So that it is a byword in Scotland,

The crooks of land within the Forth,
Are worth ane earldom in the north.'

PERTHSHIRE.

BRIDGE OF TEATH.

IN 1530, Robert Spittel, who designated himself 'tailzour to the maist honorabill Princes Margaret, queen to James the Feird,' and who seems to have made a large fortune by his trade, founded the bridge of Teath, immediately above Doune Castle, for the convenience of his fellow-lieges, who,

before that period, had no means of crossing the river excepting by an old, ill-constructed wooden bridge at Callander, some miles distant. Though this goodly edifice was a work of charity, and intended exclusively for their convenience, the common people could not help regarding it with the suspicion and dislike which they too often entertain respecting attempts at improvement, comfort, or decoration. While they took advantage of the expensive work erected for their service, they could not help thinking, with affectionate admiration, of the good old bridge of Callander; and this sentiment seems to have extended itself into a comparison between the old and the new bridges, much to the disadvantage of the latter. The rhyme in which this sentiment was embodied has been preserved by tradition, though the object of its flattery is supposed not to have been in existence since the time of the Reformation.

The new brig o' Doune, and the auld brig o' Callander—
Four-and-twenty bows in the auld brig o' Callander!

This may be supposed to allude to the circumstance of there having been no fewer than the extraordinary number of twenty-four arches in the ancient bridge, a peculiarity of structure which would by no means recommend it to a committee of modern architects, whatever might have been thought of its magnificence in former times. The reader will remark the curious coincidence between what is above recorded and the subject matter of Burns's poem, *The Twa Brigs*, where the popular opinions respecting bridges, ancient and modern, are brought into contrast in a style singularly happy and fanciful.

ROMAN FORT AT ARDOCH.

Between the camp at Ardoch and the Greenan-Hill o' Keir,
Lie seven kings' ransoms for seven hunder year.

This is the present popular version of a rhyme otherwise given by Mr Gordon in his *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, as follows:—

From the Fort of Ardoch
To the Grinnan-Hill of Keir,
Are nine kings' rents
For nine hundred year.

The *camp* at Ardoch is supposed to be the most complete

Roman fortification now existing in Britain. It lies in the parish of Muthill, Perthshire, upon a rising ground close by the Knaic Water, and at a short distance from a Roman causeway, which runs in a north and north-east direction from a part of the wall of Antoninus, near Falkirk, past Stirling, and so on towards Brechin. The area of the camp was 140 by 125 yards within the lines; and beyond the scope of this measurement, a great deal of ground is occupied by the remains of numerous walls and trenches. The *prætentura*, or general's quarter, rises above the level of the camp, but is not in the centre. It is a regular square, each side being exactly twenty yards. At present, it exhibits evident marks of having been enclosed by a stone wall, and contains the foundations of a house ten yards by seven.

At the distance of half a mile from the camp at Ardoch stands the Grinnan-Hill (that is, Sunny Hill) of Keir, another Roman fortification of inferior importance, supposed to communicate with the former by a subterranean passage. This is not a popular tradition only, but a probable fact, countenanced by the opinions of antiquaries, and by the following circumstance:—Till the year 1720, there existed, about six paces to the eastward of the prætentura, the aperture of a passage which went in a sloping direction downwards and towards the hill of Keir. This, according to the rhyme, was supposed to contain vast treasures; and there is a tradition that this supposition received something like confirmation about two centuries ago. In order to ascertain the fact, a man who had been condemned by the baron-court of a neighbouring lord was proffered his life, on condition that he would descend into the hole, and try what he could do in the way of treasure-finding. Being let down by a rope to a great depth, and then in a short time drawn up again to the surface, he brought with him some Roman helmets, spears, fragments of bridles, and other articles. On being let down a second time, he was killed by foul air; and though it was believed that, if he had lived, great discoveries would have been made, no one after that thought it prudent to make the attempt. The mouth of the hole was covered up with a millstone by an old gentleman who lived at the house of Ardoch while the family were in Russia, about the year 1720, to prevent hares from running into it when pursued by his dogs; and as

earth to a considerable depth was laid over the millstone, the spot cannot now be found.

Sir James Balfour, in his Geographical Notes (MSS. Advocates' Library), speaks of Ardoch as 'a statione of the Roman soldears, or Spanish stipendiars, under the command of the proconsull Hostorius Scapula, in his march from the River Bodotria (Forth) against the Otholinians, quhen as he thought to have surprised the Pictish king in his castell of Baen-Artee.'

GLENLYON.

Glenlyon, in Perthshire, is remarkable for the great number of remains of aboriginal works scattered through it, in the shape of circular castles built entirely of dry stones. The common people believe these structures to have belonged to their mythic hero Fion, or Fingal, and have a verse to that effect—

Bha da chaisteal dheug aig Fionn
Ann an Crom-ghleann-nan clach.

That is, *Fion had twelve castles in the Crooked Glen of Stones* (such being an old name for Glenlyon).

The common Highlanders have a very magnificent notion of Fion's palace, which stood at Cruach Narachan, near Loch Aik, in Argyleshire. Ailean Buidhe, a bard who lived about a century ago, said of it—

Bha dusan tigh 's an talla ud,
Anns gach rùm dà aingeal deug,
'Sb'e 'n cùntas 'nam an garaidh,
Mu gach aingeal fear a's ceud.

Anglicè—

Twelve halls were in that palace;
Twelve hearths in every hall;
The number of those who warmed themselves
round each hearth, a hundred and one men.

COLLACE.

Grace and peace cam by Collace,
And by the doors o' Dron;
But the caup and stoup o' Abernyte
Mak mony a merry man.

Collace is a village under the slope of famed Dunsinnan hill;

Dron, a parish to the south of Perth; and Abernyte, a parish in the Carse of Gowrie.

PERTH.

This beautiful city suffered from a nocturnal inundation of the Tay, *anno* 1210;* and it is predicted that yet once again it will be destroyed in a similar manner. The Gaelic prophecy is couched in the following lines:—

Tatha mhor na'an tonn
Bheir l' scriob lom
Air Peairt.

Literally in English—

Great Tay of the waves
Shall sweep Perth bare.

The town lies so little above the level of the river, that such an event does not seem improbable. There is also a Lowland rhyme equally threatening—

Says the Shochie to the Ordie,
'Where shall we meet?'
'At the Cross of Perth,
When a' men are fast asleep!'

These are two streams which fall into the Tay about five miles above the town. It is said that, on the building of the old bridge, the cross of Bertha was taken down, and built into the central arch, with a view to fulfil, without harm, the intentions of the Shochie and Ordie, and permit the men of Perth to sleep secure in their beds.

THE EWES OF GOWRIE.

When the Yowes o' Gowrie come to land,
The day o' judgment's near at hand.

A prophecy prevalent in the Carse of Gowrie and in Forfarshire. The Ewes of Gowrie are two large blocks of stone, situated within high-water mark, on the northern shore of the Firth of Tay, at the small village of Invergowrie. The prophecy obtains universal credit among the country people. In consequence of the deposition of silt on

* So, according to Boece and others, though historians of the Dalrymple cast deny the event altogether.

that shore of the Firth, the stones are gradually approaching the land, and there is no doubt will ultimately be beyond flood-mark. It is the popular belief that they move an inch nearer to the shore every year. The expected fulfilment of the prophecy has deprived many an old woman of her sleep; and it is a common practice among the weavers and bonnet-makers of Dundee to walk out to Invergowrie on Sunday afternoons, simply to see what progress *the Yowes* are making!

PROPHECY REGARDING THE TAY.

St Johnston ere long in the Highlands will be,
And the salt water scarcely will reach to Dundee;
Sea-covered Drumly will then be dry land,
And the Bell Rock as high as the Ailsa will stand.

St Johnston is an old name for Perth—St John, to whom the great church was dedicated, having been considered as the patron saint of the burgh. It is still a familiar appellation for the 'fair city:' thus, for example, to quote a common saying—'The sun and the moon *may* go wrong; but the clock o' St Johnston never goes wrong.' 'A St Johnston's tippet' was also an elegant equivoque for the rope used at the gallows. Drumly is the name of a great sandbank near the opening of the Firth of Tay. The above rhyme was probably suggested by the appearances which exist of the space now occupied by the Carse of Gowrie having formerly been filled by an estuary, giving rise to a presumption that the sea has receded. Supposing a still greater recession, the effect would certainly be as stated in the rhyme. Geologists, however, have been for some time of opinion that what appear recessions of the sea, have been brought about, in most instances, by an upheaval of the land: the sea is now determined to be the steadier element of the two. Messrs Lyell and Buckland will therefore deem it probable that, if Drumly is to become dry land, and Inchcape Rock to take the appearance of Ailsa Craig, it must be by means of the 'gradually-elevating forces.'

CLACKMANNANSHIRE.

PLACES IN GLENDEVON.

There's Alva, and Dollar, and Tillicoultrie,
But the bonnie braes o' Menstrie bear awa the gree.

THAT is, excel all the rest. The vale of Glendevon is throughout a fine one; but the slopes of Menstrie, in the lower part of it, are generally acknowledged to be the most beautiful portion of the district, from being so well clothed with wood.

There is a various version of the rhyme. The wife of a miller at Menstrie, being very handsome, engaged the affections of some of the 'good neighbours,' or fairies, and was, in consequence, stolen away by them. The unfortunate husband was much distressed, more particularly when he heard his lost spouse singing from the air the following verse:—

Oh Alva woods are bonnie,
Tillicoultrie hills are fair;
But when I think o' the bonnie braes o' Menstrie,
It maks my heart aye sair.

This ditty she chanted every day within his hearing, in a tone of the greatest affection. At length, as he was one day riddling some stuff near the door of his mill, he chanced to use a magical posture—the spell that held his wife in captivity was instantly dissolved—and she dropped down from the air at his feet.

FIFE AND KINROSS.

RIVERS OF FIFESHIRE.

Lochtie, Lothrie, Leven, and Ore,
Rin a' through Cameron Brig bore.

OF these four Fife streams, the Leven is the principal. It absorbs the waters and names of all the rest, before passing under the bridge of Cameron, near the seaport village of Wemyss. Ore is next in point of importance, and, running for a considerable way parallel to the Leven,

joins it a little above the bridge. Each receives a tributary stream—the Leven the Lothrie, and Ore the Lochtie.

THE ORE.

Colquhally and the Sillertoun,
Pitcairn and Bowhill,
Should clear their haughs ere Lammas spaets
The Ore begin to fill.

A very salutary caution, as these four farms lie along the Ore immediately after its junction with the Fittie, and on a low alluvial tract, which is very easily flooded. 'Clearing the haughs' alludes, it may be presumed, to the carrying off the meadow hay, the only crop at that time grown upon these flats.

HILL OF BENARTY.

Happy the man who belongs to no party,
But sits in his ain house, and looks at Benarty.

Sir Michael Malcolm of Loch Ore, an eccentric baronet, pronounced this oracular couplet in his old age, when troubled with the talk about the French Revolution. As a picture of meditative serenity and neutrality in an old Scotch country gentleman, it seems worthy of preservation.

On the top of Benarty, which rises above the former bed of Loch Ore (for the lake is now drained, and its site converted into arable land), there were formerly held games, which all the shepherds of Fife and other neighbouring counties attended. They brought their wives, daughters, and sweethearts, and having a plentiful stock of victuals, kept up the fête for a few days, bivouacking upon the ground during the night. The chief games were the golf, the football, and the *wads;** and what with howling, singing, and drinking, after the manner of an Irish *patron*, they contrived to spend the time very merrily. The top of Benarty is flat, and sufficiently extensive for their purpose. This custom is now disused, the number of shepherds being much diminished, and the profession not being of such importance in the country as formerly, on account of the increased number of fences.

* Wad, a pledge or hostage.

FARMS IN THE WEST OF FIFE.

Witches in the Watergate,
Fairies in the Mill;
Brosy taids o' Niviston
Can never get their fill.
Sma' drink in the Punful,
Crowdie in the kirk;
Gray meal in Boreland,
Waur than ony dirt.
Bread and cheese in the Easter Mains,
Cauld sowens in the Waster Mains,
Hard heads in Hardiston,
Quakers in the Pow;
The braw lasses o' A'die
Canna spin their ain tow.

EAST COAST OF FIFE.

'Tween the Isle o' May
And the Links o' Tay,
Mony a ship's been cast away.

A sad truth, briefly stated.

FARMS IN THE EAST OF FIFE.

Ladeddie, Radernie, Lathockar, and Lathone,
Ye may saw wi' gloves off, and shear wi' gloves on.

These farms lie on very high ground, the highest in the eastern district of Fife; and the rhyme implies that it is summer there before the crop can be sown, and winter before it can be reaped.

PITMILLY.

Blaw the wind as it likes,
There's beild about Pitmilly dikes.

The road from Crail to St Andrews makes an unusually sharp turn at Pitmilly: the country people remark that there is always shelter at one part of it or another, as there are walls presented to each of the cardinal points.

PLACES IN KINROSS-SHIRE.

Lochornie and Lochornie Moss,
The Loutenstane and Dodgell's Cross,
Craigencat and Craigencrow,
Craigaveril, King's Seat, and Drumglow.

All of these places but one (the last) are upon the Blair-

Adam estate. The late venerable chief commissioner tells, in a pleasant private volume regarding the improvements of his property, that this quatrain was a particular favourite with his friend Scott, who, in their rambles there, often made him repeat it.

FORFARSHIRE AND KINCARDINESHIRE.

PITTEMPTON.

I was temptit at Pittempton,
Draiglit at Baldragon,
Stricken at Strike-Martin,
And killed at Martin's Stane.

TRADITION connects this rhyme with the following story, which is often related by the country people living near the places referred to:—

At a remote period, when Scotland was in a very small degree reclaimed from its original state, and when it was yet infested by beasts of prey, a peasant, who resided at a place called Pittempton, about three miles from Dundee, along with his nine daughters, all famed for their beauty and virtue, one day desired the eldest to bring a pitcher of water from the well, which lay at a short distance from the house. It was near sunset; and as the girl stayed unusually long, one of her sisters was sent out to learn the occasion of her delay. *She* likewise failed to return at the time expected; and another was then despatched, with an angry message to the former two, commanding them instantly home, under pain of their father's severe displeasure. The third was, in her turn, also delayed; and it was not till the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth had been successively despatched in the same manner, and when he observed night fast approaching, that the father became seriously alarmed for their personal safety. He then seized his fish-spear and ran to the well, where he discovered a monstrous serpent, or dragon, lying besmeared with blood, apparently having killed and devoured all the nine unfortunate maidens. Unable to cope single-handed with so formidable a foe, the poor man retreated in dismay; but having quickly collected several hundreds of his neighbours, he soon returned to the place, and prepared to attack

the monster, which had thus deprived him of all earthly comfort.

The dragon (for so it is styled by the country people, though meant for one of those serpents of whose devastations so many traditionary stories are told in different places), finding himself hotly pressed on all sides, endeavoured to escape, and maintained a sort of running fight with the little army of rustics, each individual of which seemed anxious to signalise himself by killing so extraordinary a reptile. Among these, a youth named Martin, the lover of one of the hapless maidens, and a person, it would appear, of great bravery and strength, was determined either to revenge the death of his mistress, or die in the attempt. The serpent at first took a northerly route, and was sorely beset and roughly handled at a place called Baldragon, distant about a quarter of a mile in that direction from Pittempton, and which, though now drained, was then a moss; whence the line in the rhyme, 'draiglit (that is, *wetted*) at Baldragon.' Still continuing his flight northwards for about two miles, he was again surrounded by his enemies; and here Martin entered upon single combat with his scaly foe. With a blow of his massy club he restrained the progress of the monster, which was about to revenge the stroke by darting upon him, when the rustics, coming up at this moment, exclaimed, 'Strike, Martin!' and Martin then let fall his club a second time, with prodigious effect, and to the almost complete discomfiture of the dragon, which now crawled heavily away. The scene of the achievement was thence called *Strike-Martin*. The dragon now continued his retreat about half a mile still farther north, when it was again hemmed in by the rustics, and finally slain by the heroic Martin. A stone, bearing the outlined figure of a serpent, and the above rhyme, in very rude and ancient characters, still marks the spot, and is always called *Martin's Stane*. It is also worth narrating, as a confirmation of the circumstances related, that the well is still called *The Nine Maidens' Well*, being known by no other name.

PROSIN, ESK, AND CARITY.

Prosin, Esk, and Carity,
Meet a' at the birken buss o' Inverarity.

The Prosin and Carity are two small streams which join the Esk at Inverquharity or Inverarity, the ancient seat of the Ogilvies of Inverquharity, near Forfar.

MONTROSE, DUNDEE, FORFAR, AND BRECHIN.

Bonny Munross will be a moss,*
Dundee will be dung doun:
Forfar will be Forfar still;
And Brechin a braw burrows' toun.

PLACES IN FORFARSHIRE.

The beggars o' Benshie,
The cairds o' Lour,
The souters o' Forfar,
The weavers o' Kirriemuir.

FARMS IN KINCARDINESHIRE.

Bleary, Buckie, Backie, Jackie,
The East Town, the West Town,
The Quithill and Pitdwathie;
Annamuck and Elfhill,
The Gowans and the Tannachie.

This rhyme may be considered as a good example of those which consist only of an enumeration of grotesque names of places. It refers to a cluster of farms in the Brae of Glenbervie. The four first words are the familiar abbreviations of Blearerno, Buckie's Mill, Backhill, and Jacksbank.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

DON AND DEE.

A mile of Don's worth two of Dee,
Except for salmon, stone, and tree.

'THE banks of the Dee consist of a thin, dry soil, abounding with wood and stone, and overgrown frequently with heath;' whereas those of Don consist of a soil more deep and fat, affording good corn-fields. Some even go so far as to affirm that not only the corn, but also the men and

* *Variation*—

Aberdeen shall be a green.

beasts, are taller and plumper on Don than on Dee.'—*View of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, 1732.*

HILL OF BENNOCHIE.

The Grole o' the Geerie [Garioch],
The bowmen o' Mar ;†
Upon the hill o' Bennochie
The Grole wan the war.

This seems to refer to some early local contention, settled at the hill of Bennochie. The meaning of 'Grole' has not been ascertained. It ought to be remarked that the issue of the fight is equivocal, the last word being liable to be interpreted as *waur*, or the worse.

HILLS IN ABERDEENSHIRE.

The four great landmarks on the sea,
Are Mount-Mar, Lochnagar, Clochnaben, and Bennochie.

'Clochnaben, or the White Stone Hill, is remarkable for a protuberance of solid rock on its summit, about one hundred feet in perpendicular height, appearing from the sea like a watch-tower, and forming an excellent landmark for coasting vessels.'—*Fullarton's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

'The chief hill here [in Garioch] is that of Bennochie. It has seven heads, the chief of which, being a round peak, is called *The Top;* which being seen afar off, and also affording a wide prospect to one who stands upon it, has given occasion to the name; for Bin-na-chie signifies *The Hill of Light* (though others expound it *The Hill of the Pap*, because of the resemblance The Top bears to a nipple); and accordingly there is an old verse which says,

There are two landmarks off at sea,
Clochnabin and Bennachie.'
View of the Diocese of Aberdeen, 1732.

BRIDGE OF DON.

'The brig of Don, near the *auld town* of Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black, deep, salmon-stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish de-

* See Collections printed for the Spalding Club, 1843.

† A rhyme alluding to 'the brave bowmen of Mar,' is mentioned in a View of the Diocese of Aberdeen above referred to.

light, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying, as recollected by me, was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age—

Brig of Balgownie, black's your wa';
Wi' a wife's ae son, and a mear's ae foal,
Down ye shall fa' !'

BYRON—*Note to Don Juan.*

It is said that a recent Earl of Aberdeen, who was the sole son of his mother, used to dismount from his horse and walk along the bridge of Don, causing the animal to be brought after him by another person.

THE RIVER AVEN.

The river Aven, in Aberdeenshire, issues in a large stream from its lake, and flows with so great pellucidity through its deep, dark glen, that many accidents have occurred to strangers by its appearing fordable in places which proved to be of fatal depth. This quality is marked by an old doggrel proverb—

The water of Aven runs so clear,
'Twould beguile a man of a hundred year.

Fullarton's Gazetteer.

THE BRIDGE OF TURREFF.

The brig o' Turry
'S half-way between Aberdeen and Elgin in Murray.

The village of Turreff was the scene of a skirmish between the north country loyalists and the Covenanters, May 14, 1639, when the latter were surprised and driven from the place with some loss. The affair got a nickname, and '*Weary fa' the Trot o' Turry!*' was long a proverbial saying.

BANFFSHIRE.

CORNCAIRN.

A' the wives o' Corncairn,
Drilling up their harn yarn ;
They ha'e corn, they ha'e kye,
They ha'e webs o' claith forbye.

'CORNCAIRN is an extensive and fertile district in the

parish of Ordiquhill, Banffshire, lying adjacent to Cornhill, where the well-known Cornhill markets are held. It was long noted for the industry of its inhabitants and the thrift of its women, which no doubt gave rise to the above saying.'—*Correspondent.*

WESTERN ISLANDS.

IONA.

THE inhabitants of Iona entertain a belief that the desolate shrine of St Columba shall yet be restored to its primitive glory and sanctity; and, in support of the notion, quote no less credible authority than that of Columba himself, expressed in the following lines:—

An I, mo chridhe! I mo ghraidh!
An aite guth mhanach bidh geum ba;
Ach mun tig an saoghal gu crich
Bithidh I mar a bha!

Thus literally translated—

In Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,
Instead of the voice of monks, shall be lowing of cattle;
But ere the world come to an end,
Iona shall be as it was.

Implying, says Paterson, author of the *Legend of Iona*, that the island, after ages of ruin and neglect, shall again be the retreat of piety and learning. This sentiment seems to have struck Dr Johnson, without any knowledge of Columba's prophecy. 'Perhaps in the revolutions of the world, Iona may be some time again the instructress of the western regions.'—*Jour. to West. Islands.*

In illustration of the above rhyme, it is necessary to state that *I* (pronounced *Ee*) is the popular local appellation of Iona. The inscriptions on some of the tombstones among the ruins of the monastery, of a very ancient date, designate it *Hi* or *Hij*. *I* signifies island, and is synonymous with *inch*. Icolmkill, the name given to the island in honour of its celebrated resident, literally interpreted, signifies *The Island of Columba of Cells.* Iona, which may be called the

classical appellation of the island, since it was adopted by Dr Johnson, signifies in Gaelic, *The Island of Waves*—what must appear a most appropriate etymology to all who have seen the massy and frequent waves of the Atlantic break upon its shore.

Another prophecy, still more flattering to Iona than the above, affirms that 'seven years before the end of the world, the sea at one tide shall cover the Western Islands, and the green-headed Isla, while the Island of Columba shall swim,' or continue afloat:—

Seachd bliadhna roimh'n bhra a
Thig muir thar Eirinn re aon tra'
'S thar ile ghuirm ghlais
Ach snamhaidh I cholum chleirich!

Dr Smith of Campbeltown has translated this prophecy, with peculiar elegance, though with latitudinarian freedom, in two English ballad verses:—

Seven years before that awful day,
When time shall be no more,
A dreadful deluge shall o'ersweep
Hibernia's mossy shore.

The green-clad Isla, too, shall sink;
While, with the great and good,
Columba's happier isle shall rear
Her towers above the flood.

'Eirinn,' the word in the Gaelic rhyme for 'Hibernia's mossy shore' in Dr Smith's version, signified, anciently, the Western Islands in general, Ireland included, though now the popular and poetical name of the *sister island* alone. In its more extended ancient sense, there is good reason for believing that it also included that part of the mainland of Scotland—namely, Argyleshire and its adjacent territory—which was certainly peopled from Ireland at an early period by the tribes whose sovereign eventually extirpated the Picts, extended his dominion over the Lowlands, and was the founder of the Scottish monarchy.

The island of Iona is separated from Mull by a strait about a mile broad. An islet close to the Mull shore, immediately opposite to the ruins of Iona, is called *Eilean nam ban;* that is, *The Women's Island.* The name gives some countenance to a tradition of Columba, that he would

not allow a woman or a cow to remain on his own island. The reason said to have been assigned by him for this ungracious command, is characteristic of his well-known sanctity; and, as is generally the case with remarkable sayings preserved by tradition, it is couched in a distich—

Far am bi bo bidh bean
'S far am bi bean bidh mallachadh.

Literally signifying—

Where there is a cow,
There will be a woman;
And where there is a woman,
There will be mischief.

The saying has settled into a proverb, and is generally repeated as a good-humoured satire on the fair sex.