

114

ESSAYS
ON THE
SUPERSTITIONS
OF THE
HIGHLANDERS OF SCOTLAND :

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GAELIC ;
AND
LETTERS CONNECTED WITH THOSE FORMERLY
PUBLISHED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM THE MOUNTAINS."

A land of apparitions—empty shades.—**YOUNG.**

I recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety, and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordained
Should best secure them, and promote them most—
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive.
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.—**COWPER.**

H. G.

VOL. II.

H. Ham

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ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ESSAY VIII.

Recapitulation.—Prophecy of Ercildown.—Stream of tradition continually enlarging.—Manners not to be studied in this period of Society, but general nature more obvious and distinctly seen, when advanced beyond barbarity, yet not arrived at refinement.—Love of the marvellous inherent in human nature.—Various illustrations.

“ And do they only stand by ignorance ?

“ Is that their happy state ;

“ The proof of their obedience and their love ? ” —MILT.

THE reflections and observations which I have hazarded in the foregoing essays will, I am sensible, appear to many paradoxical and visionary ; but the poetical records compared with existing tra-

ditions and manner, and the general habits of thought and motives of action still prevailing among the unsophisticated highlanders, form a body of evidence, which will in a great degree corroborate, if not establish the hypothesis I have ventured to advance. I have endeavoured to point out,

First, That a people accustomed to freedom, ably contending for it, and finally flying to the fastnesses of their country to secure it, must needs have carried with them high and independent feelings, such as cherish noble sentiments, and produce heroic actions: That common dangers and privations, the dread of a common foe, and sharing the common honours due to the utmost exertion of courage, patience, and fortitude, must have greatly endeared them to each other.

Second, That their conscious origin from one common stock, and that in their

apprehension [a noble one, must have mingled pride with that affection, which bound them to each other, and taught them to consider this common origin, and those warm affections which bound them to each other as the chief earthly good : As a dignity and privilege to be preserved at all hazards, and an abundant recompence for the severest privations.

Third, That the entire exclusion of science, and all the objects of interest and ambition, from the rocky abodes of these primitive hunters and graziers, left them free to the illusions of the imagination and the emotions of the heart. And that these circumstances, combined with the love of fame, derived from their past exploits, and only to be gratified in war or hunting, raised their minds to a highly sensitive and poetical state : That valour thus sublimed, affection thus concentrated, and imagination unchecked

by sober and cultivated reason, and fed by all the peculiarities of awful and gloomy scenery, sounds of horror, and sights of wonder, furnished abundant materials for the loftiest flights of the poet, and the darkest fears of the visionary.

Hence, poetry was earlier born, and sooner matured here than in any other country; and hence, the native poetry nourished superstition by kindling enthusiasm. The native superstition, in return, enriched poetry with images of unequalled tenderness and sublimity.

Poetry conducted the warrior to the field of battle, and from thence to the grave, with all the eulogies due to pre-eminent valour, patriotism, and generosity. For superstition, it remained to give a new theme to the poet, and open new sources of sorrow and tenderness to the fair mourner, who sat in solitude by some roaring stream, deploring her lost hero.

This dreary power brought the ghost of the departed, like a moon-beam, to the window of the bard's repose, to challenge the permanent reward of never-dying praise. On the blast of night, it brought the whispers of an unseen form, to warn the visionary maid of her speedy re-union with the "dweller of her secret soul;" and to furnish themes for dreams of mingled hope and terror.

The unbroken lineage, the unaltered language, the unconquered country, and the ties of affinity, daily renewed, and hourly strengthened and endeared preserved; unchanged, and undiminished, every tribute paid by affection, or by genius to departed worth or valour.

Those plants of fair renown, which, in a less genial climate of the heart, are nipped by chilling indifference, or which wither, like Jonah's gourd, before the too ardent beams of public exposure, were here perennial evergreens, che-

rished by those who felt a dear connection with the tombs they sheltered.

The state of society was so very different from any thing we have either seen or imagined, that no conclusions could be more erroneous than those which we should draw from our own experience and observation of life, when applied to their modes of thinking and acting. I do not speak now of the views which the light of science enables us to take, but of that fluctuation in modes of apparel, habits of civility, &c. which we insensibly acquire from our association with various nations, and which as insensibly draw us away, not only from the customs, but from the opinions of our forefathers. These, in diminishing our respect for their way of thinking and acting, diminishes our reverence for their memory, and unconsciously slackens those relative ties which derive their

main power from the cherished remembrance of a common ancestor.

That change is, in many respects, improvement, cannot be doubted: as little can it be denied, that at this price many of our improvements are purchased.

The case was directly contrary with our mountaineers. There came neither books nor strangers to diffuse knowledge among them. But if it was true, that nothing was acquired from extraneous sources, nothing was lost that was worth preserving, of the wisdom, the wit, or the ingenuity of their ancestors; of their poetry or their proverbs; of their history or their biography.

By thus directing every petty rill of intellect or intelligence into the common current of tradition, however scanty the sources might be, the stream gradually increased in force and magnitude. Nor can those accustomed to endless wells, and pipes, and reservoirs of far-fetched

intelligence, easily believe what salutary draughts of useful and pleasing knowledge were hence obtained.

All this knowledge, however, was, as to exterior circumstances, merely local. The facts related were those that happened within their own bounds, and were not of a nature to diminish, but rather to strengthen their pre-conceived prejudices.

In respect to general knowledge, useful arts, and profound or elegant science, this volume of tradition was very scanty, or entirely silent. Not so with regard to the heroic, the tender, the ludicrous, the moral, and the decorous : it is to the amplitude and accuracy of this volume upon such subjects, that much is owing of the intuitive observation, and inexplicable refinement of the highland character.

If, indeed,

“ The proper study of mankind is man,”

perhaps he cannot be studied to more advantage than in this period of society; when he knows enough to supply all necessary wants, and discern the great boundaries between good and evil—feels enough to be capable of attachment, not only fervid, but permanent, and to sacrifice individual gratification to the comfort or advantage of a beloved object;—and when he imagines enough to add vivid colouring and exalted grace to all that is beautiful, and give deeper gloom and greater expansion to all that is terrible.

Man, when thus far advanced above barbarity, and thus far short of mental culture, is certainly best adapted to afford a subject for the study of human nature in the abstract. Civilization must be much farther advanced before one discovers how high man is capable of rising, or into what baseness and degradation he may sink.

The endless shadings and varieties that afford matter for the "manners-painting muse," too, are best found in various and cultivated society. But I know not that one finds means to take a more distinct and pleasing view of our nature than in this early stage : especially when one class of society has not been so exalted as to depress and degrade the rest ; when language and sentiment has not been sifted, and the bran of words and thoughts thrown to the vulgar.

The stream of tradition, with all the sentences, adages, and observations that have floated down the current of time, from their wise, witty, and courteous ancestry, was open to all, like the sacred writings to our Scottish peasantry ; and the highland muses sung in the same language to the noblest chieftain and the meanest vassal.

Hence, though a certain chivalrous and romantic dignity, like that ascribed

to the courteous knight of La Mancha, more particularly attached to the high-descended, and though to them all the elegancies of life and appurtenances of wealth were supposed to belong exclusively ; yet the same sentiment, the same strain of poetry, and the same legendary and traditional knowledge, were common to the highest chieftain and the lowest retainer. .

The chief might know a little more of what related to foreign countries ; but in every thing that related to the history of his own, or to the history of mind, illustrated by pictures or examples from antiquity, the peasant nowise differed from his lord of equal capacity ; but by having less leisure to attend to the “ Sean Dana ;” and not having always at hand a kind of living library, in the bard and the seanachie, whose life was spent in acquiring and communicating such knowledge. Of the value of

this unwritten wisdom, and of the anecdotes, saws, and adages in which it was conveyed, the highly enlightened will be inclined to think very meanly. Yet, perhaps, a little examination and reflection will shew it to be of more value, and of much greater variety than we are aware of.

There is current in the highlands, a prophecy ascribed to the famous Thomas of Ercildown, which was in these terms :
 “ The time is coming, when all the wisdom
 “ of the world shall centre in the grey
 “ goose’s quill ; and the jawbone of the
 “ sheep cover the coultter of the plough
 “ with rust.” This I have heard from very old people, who had not a word of English.

Yet notwithstanding of these excellent authorities, I do not exactly believe that Thomas said so. Nor do I give implicit credit to his being buried under that romantic and singular eminence,

the *tomhan na heurich*, which rises in a fine plain near Inverness, and is pre-eminent among enchanted tomhans. Nor do I entirely trust to his promise of throwing off all that incumbent load of earth, to rise and attest the truth of his prophecies (in very good Gaelic,) when they are all fulfilled. Yet, from whatever source the prophecy sprung, the spirit and application of it indicate no common sagacity.

The obvious implication is, that trusting to written wisdom, while it increased the stock of acquired knowledge, would amongst them abate that eagerness for preserving traditionary lore, that constant and diligent exercise of memory, and that acute sagacity, which awakened curiosity, eager of knowledge, and deficient of the means to attain it, is apt to produce.

They thought, that when every man had a well at his door, the living springs

that gushed from their mountains with perpetual freshness, and melodious murmurs, would be neglected; and that from these new sources of intelligence, they would with the diffusive knowledge, drink of the languor and apathy of the land of strangers.

This goose-quill information was aptly coupled with the rusting of the plough-irons. Their petty agriculture, till superseded by extensive sheep-walks, being the means of keeping together the little cordial communities in which ancient knowledge and ancient manners were cherished and perpetuated.

It may be truly observed, that the possessors of this stock of local and traditional history and biography, could ill estimate the treasures to be acquired through the medium of the goose-quill, being too ignorant to form any conception of either abstruse or elegant science. It is equally true, that were the sayings

and actions of individuals to be recorded in the present day, excluding all that relates to general knowledge, science, and those materials for thought and action, which are furnished by an intercourse with the world at large, the aggregate could seldom be expected to afford much interest or instruction, because now cultivation has brought things to such a level. We all, under the same circumstances, act and think so much alike; we sit down like the Spartans, in their public halls, to one common table, where knowledge is dealt out in equal portions to all the members of the same community; and we all reason too much from the same premises, and are hurried along by the stream of custom, to act so much on the same principles, that we have by no means that originality either of thought or character, that can give great interest to what we think or say. That

is, unless we are called upon to act some distinguished part on the great stage of life, and then we merely derive interest and originality from having great motives to stimulate us, and great numbers agitated or influenced by the part we have to act.

Our governors, our laws, and established regulations, happily do so much for us, that little is left for ourselves, that calls for the exertion of superior acuteness, or superior energy: It is with our wisdom, as with our wealth; it is all laid up in public banks, from whence we get it, as we want it: Hence, there is no necessity for keeping a treasure that requires exertions to watch and guard it continually in our own possession.

With these ancient tribes, it was very different, there was nothing commonplace, nothing of daily occurrence with them. Theirs was not like the savage life, a constant series of exigencies, yet

these occurred often enough to keep up a constant exercise of the mental and corporeal faculties. It is the management of great affairs; the conduct of arduous enterprises, that give room for the display of a strong character, and form great men.

Where every valley was a petty sovereignty, and every hamlet was governed more by the wisdom and equity of its elders than by external regulations, there was a perpetual balancing of rights, and adjusting of claims. These gave room for the exercise of sagacity and the trial of probity, as well as of courage, fortitude, and patience.

Here, too, the love of reputation or of fame acted more powerfully, if possible, than on the large theatres of the world. What was the world to him, who thought all that was desirable in it existed within the rocky limits, and watery boundaries of his Alpine home. Here

was no equivocal fame, nor any thing that rested on pretensions, or was veiled by artifice.

The world at large, which sees a man as he chuses to shew himself, may be, for a while at least, imposed upon; but no man can assume a false character in his native district, where every action, with its motive and results is known. If he steps out of the common rank to exercise any faculty which he pre-eminently possesses, or imagines he possesses, whether it be the courage of the lion, —the sagacity of the fox,—the wisdom of the serpent,—or the gentleness of the dove, he can bear no ambiguous character, he must be admired or despised, beloved or detested.

How dear to a human being is the love and esteem, the respect or the admiration of that small concentrated circle, whom he has ever been accustom-

ed to regard with affection and interest, or with awe and reverence! How freely, how nobly does the song of genius or the blood of valour flow, when this community, so well known, and so much beloved, furnish the motive, and assign the reward for their exertions!

Every thing perishes but immortal mind; and to it all perishing things are subservient. It is, then, the display of its powers that gives dignity and consequence to the cause that elicits them. So far from deriving importance from space and numbers, the greatest efforts of courage, magnanimity, or wisdom, are often shewn in simple efforts, and in narrow bounds. The strait of Thermopylæ does not make the less figure in history, or occupy the less space in the mind, because it was a very narrow pass, defended by a very small number. We feel not the less deference for the wisdom of

them much too frequent, and considered as a venial trespass on good morals and good breeding : nay, the excess of it, under certain circumstances, was accounted a gallant exploit. Yet there is not upon record an instance of a highland Alexander's killing his Clytus, in the fury of intoxication.

There is an old significant adage in the Scotch language to this purpose :—
 “ You make laws, I make proverbs.”
 This collected wisdom of ages was certainly very effective in regulating the interior of the clans. It did not keep them from feuds and wars with other tribes, any more than folios of divinity, and heavy tomes of political wisdom, kept the different states of Europe from tearing each other to pieces ; yet the effect of this traditional wisdom in preserving peace and order, mutual confidence, and mutual kindness, among people living under one head, was beyond

what could be easily credited in those larger societies which are regulated on very different principles.

These maxims and opinions, by which so many societies were so calmly directed, without the operation of any coercive laws, and with a very moderate portion of religious knowledge, could not be drawn from scanty or mean sources. What, indeed, is all we read, and all we write, but the aggregate of what has been thought and said. We look into books for the knowledge of human character; and finding there the observations which sagacity has been made in the olden time, digested and arranged, we never dream of its existing in any other form.

It is inconceivable how much of what we meet with in books, either of sage remark, or invented story, is to be found in its elements, floating in the traditions of an acute and ingenious people, whose

unbroken series of descent preserved every thing, and whose mode of life perpetually called forth the exertions of mind, refined by poetry, and enlarged by patriotism.

Among these hunters, warriors, and graziers, who were continually varying their occupation, as well as occasionally changing their abode, a constant exertion of sagacity was required, both in those that governed and those who obeyed, from the mutability of outward circumstances, and the permanence of individual characters and motives. This last arose from the habit of acting in concert. No one was sure of doing exactly to-day what he did yesterday; but every one was pretty sure of having the same opinions and motives to stimulate or restrain him on the present, as on former occasions. A man, in fact, had few opinions or motives as an individual. Every thing was matter of con-

vention; and, therefore, every measure taken was the subject of discussion and serious argument before it was decided on.

Before they went to hunt, before they began to reap, to mow their hay, or remove to the shealings, or before a marriage or baptism, there was a serious and solemn consultation how or when it should be done. This gave all a reasoning and deliberative habit, and called forth no small degree of eloquence.

Savages, though not social, or addicted to conversation, are eloquent in public councils, and on national affairs, from the habit of being accustomed to act in concert, and to take an active part in general measures.

The mere hunter, however, is taciturn and self-dependent. In the infancy of agriculture, when it is in a manner subordinate to the pastoral state, the case is very different.

Till very lately, indeed, still where the reliques of ancient manners continue to exist, there is a perpetual subject of deliberation for the wise, and debate for the foolish, furnished by farms held in a kind of partnership, called in Scotland, running *rigs*; that is, ploughing alternate ridges with a common plough, which the peasants of one hamlet hold by turns, and to which each furnishes a horse. Their cattle, in the uninclosed grounds, are herded together, and as every measure, in this petty subdivision of a commonwealth, must be adjusted and debated together, it is inconceivable how much reasoning and acuteness is brought forth by their petty exigencies, or how much the art of conversation is cultivated in this close association, where there is no medium between being esteemed or despised.

In this small community, usually consisting of eight families, the music, poe-

try, anecdote, and information of each, becomes a common stock, from their constant intercourse with each other. It is with this kind of connection, as with marriage, in this primitive state.

If the people in the same bhalli are well disposed, and well principled, the necessary and politic habit of assisting and yielding to each other, polishes manners, and smoothes down asperities: It is a kind of convention, and ends in producing a general amenity and cordial attachment to each other, that lightens labour, and sweetens life, more than insulated self-dependent families can possibly conceive.

On the other hand, though it should happen, that people of discordant tempers, having no previous connection with each other, should be set down in the same bhalli, they will assuredly clash about their petty humours and interests; but, at length, finding that in all mat-

ters of importance, they mutually share every benefit and every injury derived from others, that the maxims of their ancestors, and general voice of the country, condemn strife among people thus connected, they have, even in this case, a strong fellow feeling for each other, will support each other's cause against every encroaching neighbour, and should he be sick or unfortunate, will share all their little comforts with the object of these smothered animosities.

Though his cow should cast her calf, he will never want milk; and though his arm should be disabled, his neighbours will cheerfully hold his plough, or cut his turf for him. The same good offices, in the day of calamity, will be done for him, as for a more valued associate. The chief difference lies in the spirit in which they are done. The alacrity of affection, eager for the power of obliging; and the sense of duty, and

· **awe of opinion, produce, in a very different manner, the same effects.**

Thus the highland peasant has been for ages, of all uninstructed beings, the most social, most accommodating, most reflecting, and deliberating.

It is the profound consultation, balanced opinions, quoted precedents, and cautious foresight of the morning councils, conjoined with the social ease, open-hearted gaiety, and stingless raillery that prevailed in the evening meetings, which form the character made up of harmonious discord, which so much puzzles strangers to comprehend. Hence that air of thoughtfulness, inclining to melancholy—the shrewd, discriminating glance,—the cautious and hesitating, or cold and evasive reply—and the total absence of that guardless simplicity which we so naturally look for among the secluded inhabitants of pastoral vales. Hence too lies hid under this cold exterior, the

gay, exuberant fancy, the active intellect, the quick perception of the ridiculous, the intuitive discernment, and the light-hearted hilarity, which flashes out in the mirth-inspiring song, or animates the sprightly dance, with peculiar grace and spirit.

Donald by no means thanks any one for investing him with the attributes of infantine innocence and pristine simplicity. He rather considers himself as a man of address and observation, skilled in affairs, versant in business, and rich in inherited experience. He loves to argue and deliberate; and gives importance to the merest trifles, to find scope for his address and sagacity. He likes to exercise his shrewdness and caution where there is little occasion for it, and will scarce "drink his *whey* without a "stratagem."

He perfectly comprehends, that we know many things of which he is igno-

· pant : but then he thinks, first, that in his situation, none of those things would make him better or happier, though he did know them ; and, next, that he possesses abilities to acquire all that is valuable in knowledge, if accident had thrown him in the way of culture.

Character has been always his undivided study ; and his progress in this difficult science is incredible. We in vain hope to dazzle him with our acquisitions ; and as vainly think to conceal from him the contempt with which learned ignorance regards plain good sense and untutored sagacity.

· They have not the least doubt, that, with our exterior helps, they could do all that we do. But they very well know, that were we set down in their bleak and barren country, with the same means of support, we should be of all beings the most helpless.

They understand the maxim of “ Nil :

“ admirari” as well as if they had studied Horace. They have no childish wonder, or vulgar admiration of finery. They appreciated elegance, and even magnificence, at its due rate ; and adorned their songs with descriptions, such as Homer gives of robes, and arms, and ivory seats : but then it was quite enough for a whole tribe, that their chief possessed these distinctions. The splendour of his costly arms, and the tapestry or paintings with which his castle was decorated, reflected lustre on the whole tribe ; and they no more thought of being dissatisfied with the want of such things, than of complaining because each had not some “ bright, particular star,” to illuminate his own dwelling.

The good Catholics in the dark ages had a treasury of the church, in which all supernumerary or super-ordinate good works were locked up, that the deficient might receive a dole out of these redun-

dant merits. Such was the treasury of wise and witty sayings, and the record of prudent or gallant actions laid up in the ample repositories of tradition. He who could not invent, could remember; and he who could not emulate the deeds of his ancestors, could recite them.

That even this very imperfect mode of intellectual cultivation produced considerable effect, is evident, from one decided proof of improvement, besides others less equivocal.

In no other country did a refined irony, a quick feeling of the ludicrous, and a keen, yet delicate stile of satire, precede the knowledge of letters. Nothing can be more gross and palpable than the jests of an uncivilized people. Wit and humour are the fruits of the garden and orchard: In the field, they are mere crabs. Witness the jests of Thersites and Antinous, the wit of the Iliad and Odyssey, the acerbity and roughness of

which cannot be smoothed down by all the melody of Pope's numbers.

Once more, I shall risk "the world's dread laugh," by asserting, that their peculiar superstition of the second sight, as it is modified among them, is a proof of advancement beyond the barbarity which we are wont to ascribe to an illiterate people. It is to be recollected, that this mode of anticipating futurity, is not, (like all other foresight, short of inspiration,) coupled with craft or profit. It is a shuddering impulse, a mental spasm that comes unsought, and often departs without leaving a trace behind, by which it may be connected with any future event.

No one wishes for these mysterious visions, nor can any one summon them at will. They are like, very like, "the stuff which dreams are made of," and in the same manner vanish sometimes like fleeting illusions, and at others pic-

ture on the brain the approaching events that are to produce fear, wonder, or sorrow. For gay visions seldom cheer the mind of the pensive visionary.

It is not, however, in the coarse and sluggish mind of apathy, that the imaginative faculty thus predominates. "When coming events cast their shadows before," it is the smooth and calm surface that arrests and reflects them. It is not the vain, the volatile, the turbulent, or artful who combine the habits of deep meditation and sensitive and fantastic feeling, which nourish this creative faculty. The ruddy cheek, the light wandering glance, or the important and self-satisfied air of egotism is not found combined with this disease of the imagination. The pale, pensive, and abstracted countenance marks the victim of those wild illusions. It in a great measure resembles that "fine frenzy of the poet's

“ eye,” which a poet has so well described.

But the imagination must be awakened, and the mind stored with images, on which to feed in deep and silent musing, before these shadows can occupy it. Thus, these airy creations or deceptions contribute to shew the process of intellect in that state of its progress when imagination becomes in minds peculiarly sensitive, the predominant faculty, another mark of progressive improvement is that easy playfulness of demeanour, that tone of softened raillery, with which, in old poems and tales, the superior class both of rank and mind are made to express themselves. The tone of easy frankness approaching to gaiety, with which the Knight of Snowdown and the Lady of the Lake address each other, is as perfectly in character, as if they had been drawn by a Highland bard. That characteristic of improved intelligence, which

never appears till the graces of improved conversation begin to be understood, was not wanting to persons of distinction among this unheard-of race.

Another circumstance, which tended to form the Scots character in general, and that of the highlands in particular, to address, caution, and foresight, was the universality of patronage. Besides the general claims which a clan had on its chief, and the relations of every gentleman on the head of his family, a custom prevailed similar to that of the Romans. Every patrician had a number of plebeian clients or dependents, whom he was particularly bound to protect from injury. According as the person was remarkable for benevolence, energy of character, talent, or influence in his own sphere, his adherents were more or fewer. He carried them perpetually in his thoughts, and courted with great assiduity the favour of any one who could do

the smallest service to any of his *linne na chris*, literally the children of his belt ; figuratively so called, I suppose, from clinging round him like his belt in time of danger. Should a neighbouring gentleman withhold a favour expected, or offer the smallest injury to one of them, the affront was not easily forgiven, and revenge in due time taken in some shape of the adherents of the offending party. The *linne na chris* were not ungrateful for this devoted attention to their concerns. There was no service so hard, or so dangerous, that a man might not demand from his *linne na chris*, and their zeal and fidelity were unequalled.

Much of the singular address and acuteness, for which the Highland gentlemen of the old regime were remarkable, was exerted in a perpetual kind of chess game, carried on with their next neighbours about the interests, alliances, and accommodations of their respective *linne*

na chris. This seldom broke out in to open hostility, the consequences of which were too well anticipated. But there was astonishing covert dexterity, and finesse made use of in this seemingly amicable contest.

Two gentlemen in Strathspey, of the lasty century, had great, though secret rivalry for influence, and at times attacked each other's *linne na chris*, yet were always politically well bred, and civil to each other. One of these gentlemen understood business as it was managed in the country extremely well; he had always the very best advice to give to the peasantry, and being a pious man and an elder, would pray by them when they were sick, yet was particularly fond of being treated with ceremonious respect.

The ritual of Highland good-breeding demands, that an inferior should never be covered in the presence of his supe-

rior, unless by that superior's desire; but then the courtesy of highland affability generally waves this prerogative. The rival of the above-mentioned gentleman was generous, frank, and manly, never solicited popularity, but by his wit and vivacity, and liberal kindness in the hour of need, made himself beloved, while his spirit and talents made him formidable to transgressors of all kinds.

A poor man once made some request with much humility, continuing uncovered. "D—l's in the fellow, put on your bonnet, I am not Glendower," for so we shall call his rival. It was observed, that after this sally, the adherents of the other sensibly decreased.

I grieve to say, that on some occasions these gentlemen, though men of probity themselves, had not all the requisite delicacy about the morals of their sworn adherents.

If they were but faithful to themselves,

they felt very qualmish about giving them up to the power of the law for petty offences. This same Glendower in one single instance, affected great ignorance as to the character of one of his adherents, which was a little suspected in the neighbourhood. His brother, who was a man of a most upright and candid spirit, told him, that it was a shame to shelter such a man in his bounds. "Be quiet Patrick, said he, the poor man is as honest as yourself." "No truly," replied Patrick, neither him or his protector is near as honest."

A far more striking instance of the singular power, which a man of talents had over his adherents occurred in the beginning of that century, a little farther up the country. In that district the gentlemen stood in some awe of their Maker, and had some respect and more attachment for their chiefs; but besides,

“ Created thing
“ Nought valued they; nor feared,”

and human laws least of all. They thought they had lived very comfortably under their old patriarchal rule, and wished for no other. Light, however, began to be let in on these regions, and the lord of the soil who lived at a distance, sent a highland gentleman pretty much of their own class, to superintend, administer justice, and uplift rents of lands which had been previously held by a kind of military tenure. This was not to be endured. Their equal to come and erect himself into a lord paramount, to tyrannize over them, was a thing not to be suffered with impunity: Many wise heads were laid together to revenge what they could not prevent.

A man of determined resolution who was the Cassius of the conspiracy, sent his *linne na chris* to take the life of the

intruder, which he thought he might do with a safe conscience, on the same principle that Hamlet excused himself for the death of Polonius, and was equally inclined to say,

“Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!”

The *linne* made no scruple of undertaking the business; and though the chief never felt any remorse at the meditated deed, he did not chuse to shock his family with the result; he sat down with two or three friends in a little tigh orda, or drinking house by the road, having given strict charges to the most determined of his followers, to bring him the head of the common enemy.

Towards morning, the band returned: The leader entering first, his patron cried, “Where is the head?” “The head is on the neck, and will yet speak loudly,” said the disappointed kerne.

They had surrounded the house and

set fire to it ; this adherent, as faithful to his lord, as they were to their master, though urged by his servants to make the best of his way, would not leave the flaming house, without returning for papers relative to his lord's business. Having on a plaid night-gown which he had thrown about him in haste, he put these papers for security within it, under his left arm : There they proved a shield to him, resisting both bullets and daggers, wounds which were aimed at his heart. He fought his way with determined bravery, and escaped severely wounded. He of course left the country, and I never heard that there was any inquisition made for the perpetrators of this outrage. Indeed it would not in the least have availed. Crimes of any magnitude were very rare ; and when they were committed, it was generally, as in this instance, in consequence of some misapplied or misunderstood principle.

Therefore, it was in vain to seek a proof; for a highlander could not, on pain of infamy to himself, and all his descendants, betray another.

It was not till after the spirit-breaking 1745, that any one ventured into the country to replace this victim of popular fury.

The dread of infamy, which in this instance stood in the way of the execution of the laws, was in other cases, a great support to them. This horror of disgrace, and the love of honourable distinction, which was equally strong, formed indeed a kind of substitute for the laws, and were fully more effectual in preventing all crimes, understood to be such.

The above is an instance how little guilt they saw in defending what they considered as their ancient rights and privileges.

Taking *spreaths* of cattle from their

hereditary enemies, the inhabitants of the low countries, or from adverse tribes, did not in the least disturb their conscience. Yet, when it was found necessary for the political regulations of a country they regarded as conquered, to make examples of cattle stealers, the ignominy of their punishment, soon affixed the stain of infamy to the crime, yet even under these circumstances, a highlander whose cattle had been plundered, and who risked his life to recover them, would rather die than inform against the thieves, even when truly such. I make this distinction with regard to professed thieves who, in a bold and desperate manner came down in small numbers from the heights of Lochaber, and the wilds of Glenroy to plunder their own friends and countrymen.

90 In the very centre of the Grampians, the mountains mid-way between the east and west sea, rise to their greatest height.

There the rivers, which run in different directions, have their sources ; and there the climate is so wet and stormy, the mountains so lofty and abrupt, and the glens so narrow, gloomy, and cut through with ravines and swelling waters, that one would wonder human beings able to remove should think of residing.

There was a set of thieves by profession, however, to whom these dreary and inaccessible fastnesses were a favourite residence. These "minions of the moon" were very little ashamed of their calling, and as little afraid of the laws. The shealings where the cattle of the neighbouring districts were grazed in summer, were, in the vicinity of Glenroy and Glenspean, their chosen refuge. The smallest mark of hostility to one of the confederacy, would be punished by merciless plunder of these defenceless herds.

There was, therefore, a kind of tacit convention between this horde of esta

blished professional thieves and their immediate neighbours. Therefore they brought their plunder from a greater distance, often from Strathspey and the lower end of Badenach.

It was the fashion, till within these last thirty years, to arm one's *linne na chris*, and pursue those thieves, though they should have taken away only three or four head of cattle : not for the value of that number, but because it was accounted most disgraceful not to fight for one's property. Not satisfied with resisting these plunderers, it was necessary for supporting a man's reputation that he should pursue them to their fastnesses, and attack them in their strong holds.

This was done, on one occasion, by a fine-spirited highland gentleman, then in the prime of life, allied to the writer of these anecdotes. He and his *linne na chris* ran for their arms to pursue some of the Glenroy thieves, who were driving

a few of their cattle. They traced them, entered their gloomy glen, and saw the thieves drive the cattle into some cow-house, where they hoped to conceal or defend them. They entered this building with them, attacked them, and met with a furious resistance.

The gentleman and his followers fought with equal rage in this darksome den ; and he was so hurried away by the heat and eagerness of the conflict, that it was not till he came out that he missed his left hand, which had been cut off with one stroke of a dirk. Yet I make no doubt that this brave injured man would much rather have lost his other hand, than to have been the means of bringing these culprits to an ignominious death.

Something was necessary to be done to avoid contumely, that might attach to one's family.

A gentleman of no small note in Strathpey, had a very remarkable animal sto-

len from him. It was a white ox; a colour rare in these northern countries.

Mungo was not accounted a man of desperate courage; but the white ox being a great favourite, there was in this case no common stimulus. Mungo, as may be supposed, had no numerous *linna chris*. He took, however, his servant with him, and went to the shealing of Drymen, at the foot of Corryarich, where he was credibly informed his white favourite might be found. He saw this conspicuous animal quietly grazing, unguarded and alone; but having thought better of the matter, or supposing the creature looked very happy where he was, he quietly returned without him. Being as deficient in true highland caution as in courage, he very innocently told when he came home, that he had seen his ox, and left it there.

The disgrace attending this failure was beyond the power of a lowland heart

to conceive. He was, all his life after, called Mungo of the White Ox ; and to this day, it is accounted very ill bred to mention an ox of that colour before any of his descendants.

It is but justice to the Lochaber horde to say, that whoever went unarmed among them was treated with great kindness ; and that they dealt their beef to all travellers with the most courteous hospitality.

I remember hearing of a circumstance which occurred in the seventeenth century, in one of those districts, with whose history I am most familiar, which bears strongly upon two points which I have endeavoured to establish : *First*, That the chiefs were not those despotic tyrants they are represented ; and, *second*, That fear of shame was the chief principle by which they were governed, and disgrace, consequently, the chief engine of punishment.

I must not say what clan it is; who, having been for ages governed by a series of chiefs singularly estimable, and highly beloved, in one instance provoked their leader to the extreme of indignation.

I should observe, that the transgression was partial, the culprits being the inhabitants of one single parish. These, in a hasty skirmish with a neighbouring clan, thought discretion the best part of valour, and sought safety in retreat. A cruel chief would have inflicted the worst of punishments—banishment from the bounds of his clan, which, indeed, fell little short of the curse of Kehama, forcing the fugitives to wander about, vainly seeking rest, and wishing in vain for death, as a refuge from calamity.

This good laird, however, set bounds to his wrath, yet made their punishment severe and exemplary. He appeared himself, with all the population of the

three adjacent parishes, at the parish church of the offenders, where they were all by order convened. After divine service, they were all marched three times round the church, in presence of their offended leader and his assembled clan. Each individual, on coming out of the church-door, was obliged to draw out his tongue with his fingers, and then cry audibly, "Sheit un blaether heich,"—"This is the poltroon who fled," and to repeat it at every corner of the church. After this procession of ignominy, no other punishment was inflicted, except that of being left to guard the district, when the rest were called out to battle.

It is credibly asserted, that no enemy has ever seen the back of one of that name since. And it is certain, that to this day, it is not safe for any person of another name to mention this circumstance in the presence of one of the affronted clan.

Having now endeavoured to illustrate, by these details, the position which I had laid down, that poetry, social intimacy, and social pursuits, with “generous shame,” or the honourable sensibility to reproach and disgrace, had a great share in softening the manners, and preserving the morals of the primitive and continuous race who form the subject of these discussions,—I shall now return once more to the primary object of these essays, which was, the history of highland superstitions, traced as far as possible up to its first causes; and, as far as is compatible with its obscurity, through its past and remaining effects.

When I venture to insinuate, that superstition such as theirs, in the twilight of knowledge, and in the almost total absence of co-ercive power and legal restriction, was a benefit rather than a disadvantage, I have no doubt of exciting astonishment and displeasure: Many,

and those very well-intentioned, will be ready to adopt the words of my motto—

“ And do they only stand by ignorance ?

“ Is that their happy state ?

“ The proof of their obedience and their love ?”

MILTON.

This plausible objection, and reflection on the manner in which the Author of our existence deals with his creatures, is put into the mouth of the enemy of mankind; and what he says of our first parents applies as closely to those to whom light is but partially revealed, and who can only give proof of their obedience and their faith by walking humbly in the path allotted to them, under a perpetual consciousness of the felt presence of the Divinity.

He, from whom the wide effulgence of light, enjoyed by all among us who do not wilfully exclude it, is in a great measure withheld, has little comparatively to account for. If his mind is pi-

ously turned—if the leading outlines of the doctrines revealed in the word of life have been distinctly traced upon it, —devout, though unregulated feeling, will prompt him, “in the visions of the “night, when deep sleep falleth upon “men,” to attribute the glimpses of felicity, or visions of terror that visit his slumbers, to some operation of the all-controlling Power which he awfully acknowledges in every good that is bestowed, and in every evil that is permitted—whose breath he feels propitious in the genial gale, and whose voice he hears terrific in the passing thunder.

In this progressive state, when knowledge begins to dawn upon the awakening mind, the cherished illusions that threw a glow-worm light across the gloom of ignorance are not soon or willingly relinquished: When the clouds begin to open, and the prospect of that futurity for which the soul feels an instinctive

longing, to clear up, still the heart vibrates to the wonted tones, still hears the mystic sounds, and sees the misty forms, that first inspired the holy horror that shudders on the confines of the world unseen.

All the native sensibilities of the heart keenly alive, without a forming hand to give them the proper direction, answer to the undefined breathings that thus call forth its impulses, as the æolian harp does to the passing breeze. From such slight and varying touches, no regular harmony can result; yet who but feels their thrilling influence?

“To the pure, all things are pure.” To well-intentioned ignorance, the humble trust, that voices are permitted to warn, and visions to cheer them in the hour of approaching calamity, can scarce be supposed more than a pardonable presumption, if we reason from analogy.

“Now, the times of this ignorance.

“ God winked at.” He, whose tender mercies are above all his other works, may be presumed to cast an eye of compassion on creatures disposed to feel after him, if haply they may find him; though, like the prophet Elijah, they should listen for him in the mighty wind, and look for him in the earthquake, and in the fire, before the “ small still voice” is heard, which speaks peace to their hearts.

Instead of regarding with illiberal and unchristian disdain those who were ever vigilant, with prayer and ejaculation, after their own manner, to repel evil spirits, and constantly trembled least by presumption they should offend Omnipotence, it becomes us to think who it was who said, in the infancy of the revelation of his will, “ He that is not against us, is for us.”

The cords of love by which unenlightened souls are drawn towards the Father

of their spirits are to us "Invisible, or dimly seen;" but of their existence and operation there is no room to doubt. Much is granted to us that was withheld from those who were but in the noviciate of instruction: And how can we be certain that the Fatherly compassion that watches over all, did not indulge them with some privileges withheld from us?

When the day-star arose with healing in his wings, the lights of prophecy were all extinguished among the chosen people; and even among worshipped idols,

"The oracles were dumb,"

"No voice or hideous hum

"Ran through the arched roof, with words deceiving."

We have no encouragement to attempt to be wise beyond what is written: nor have we any warrant to set limits to that wonder-working power which confounds the wisdom of the wise, by using the most unlikely means to

bring about the ends he has appointed, and fulfil his gracious purposes.

But without undervaluing any of the high privileges we enjoy, or the numberless discoveries by which life has been enriched and adorned ; our comforts multiplied ; our taste at once refined and gratified, and our views extended ; we may revere the equal dealing of that bounteous hand, that allots to every state peculiar privileges and enjoyments adapted to it.

We are not entitled by all our varied acquisitions to despise that state in which the finest emotions of the heart, and the most vigorous and vivid paintings of the fancy were felt and understood, and where generous sentiments, and regulated affections so improved the moral sense, that shame was punishment, and praise reward. Their gratifications, like their knowledge, lay within narrower bounds, but from their seldom occur-

rence had a more poignant relish. Their dangers, their stratagems, precautions, and exigencies, while they exercised invention, and sharpened sagacity, prevented the monotony of life, which is the disease of high civilization, that disease for which, so many vain fantastic remedies are sought, while change of place, the grand remedy, proves often only change of pain.

The very terror of visionary forms, and unearthly voices, had to them something soothing and elevating. It spoke to them audibly of an hereafter; and while it kept alive their sorrow for the departed, kept also awake those attachments, which meliorate and dignify the character capable of forming them.

Their devotional feelings were so habitually blended with these airy imaginations, and in some instances prompted by them, that on all occasions faith appeared to them the great anchor of the

soul, because it was only in their opinion, the most unlimited confidence in the Divine protection, that could evade the power of permitted agents of evil, or support their souls under the secret horrors which the dread of their visitations produced.

“ To the upright, light shall arise in “darkness;” and to the sincere and well-intentioned, light is shewn in a manner of which we can have no comprehension; in various instances of which we can only judge by the effects. It is a soothing reflection, considering how very few enjoy all the invaluable advantages of high mental culture, and deep and clear views on subjects the most important to a human being, that others less favoured, are not forsaken of mercy, nor entirely wretched.

It must be very pleasing to a benevolent, and very satisfactory to a pious mind, to find, that the onward path that

leads to mental improvement and high civilization, is not entirely dark and cheerless.

We regard with pleasure the sports of infancy, because they belong to that interesting age. We know that the house built of twigs and sticks at the side of the brook, will not afford warmth or shelter; and we should despise the grown person who should so employ himself. Yet the very operation which in an adult, would seem a proof of hopeless imbecility, we should consider as an indication of ingenious activity in a child.

As I observed before, all nations have their childhood; and till they arrive at the stage of adolescence, that blended effort of the affections and the imagination, which pursues the shades of the departed; or like a prisoned bird, beats with restless impatience the boundaries that confine it, and struggles with instinctive ardour for liberty to range the wilds of

space ; that blind eagerness to know more of the future and invisible, which surrenders up the powerful and ardent mind, to so many weak illusions in the state under consideration—is no more the subject of contemptuous ridicule, than these imitative sports of our children, from which we draw a pleasing presage of their future capacity. They have not strength or intelligence to work, yet we should be sorry to see them in a torpid and inactive state. We think the benefit they derive from mental and corporeal exercise, a full compensation for some of those errors in opinion, and some of those mischances in action which may be easily repaired, and produce no lasting effects; though parental affection renders it necessary for us in cases of obstinate continuance in error, or determined disobedience to a known command, to inflict correction where it may be required.

In the progressive state to which I allude, imagination becomes in many instances the predominant faculty. This, while it must needs be productive of many delusions, is a spring of energy, perhaps required in a state, where profound reflection, and deep disquisition could be of little use. The tree must blossom before it can produce fruit; and an abundance of blossom is a happy prognostic of its fertility.

The sports of imagination in this stage of progression, are the recreations of the intellect, that exercise its powers and indicate its approach towards maturity.

One of the most pleasing speculations in which the unhardened and unsophisticated mind can indulge, is that of tracing the bountiful and wise disposition of things, by which, in every state where intelligence is excited, and moral order in any measure preserved, there is a degree of happiness, at least enjoyment,

commensurate to the portion of knowledge acquired, or of mild affections cultivated. This is as equal to the full use of their capacities for enjoyment as all that science and refinement can afford for ours. I speak of them in a relative state, compared with other sentient beings; further, we are not warranted to explore.

We have many sources not of knowledge only, but of refined enjoyment to us, that are withheld not only from many other nations, but from by far the greatest number of individuals among ourselves. Doubtless, many of these individuals, and even some of these nations benefit in some measure by our discoveries and attainments; and it is equally certain, that now, when we have been enabled to create and supply so many new wants, we should be very miserably situated should these tastes and appetites continue, and the means of their gratification be withheld.

tion be withheld ; yet, the prevailing habit of considering all who are not arrived at a high state of culture, as wretched outcasts from the Divine favour, without intelligence or the capacity for enjoyment, will not, upon examination, be found very wise, or very pious.

He who manages a war-horse with grace and agility, is not often found to lament or despise his former self, at the period when he bestrode a stick with equal self-complacency, and indeed more lively delight. The gallant admiral, who sways the subject seas, and carries the British thunders farther than imagination once dared to wander, still loves, when reposing beneath his laurels, to recollect the little imitative model which he longed to launch in his father's pond, and which first waked in his mind the phantom of naval glory.

Why then should we collectively despise, and endeavour to degrade, what

not only to our own mind with a
 kind of ~~higher~~ ~~compassion~~ : The rea-
 son is ~~not~~ ~~not~~ The individual feels
~~himself~~ ~~in~~ ~~his~~ ~~former~~ ~~set~~, and has a
~~direct~~ ~~recognition~~ of the ~~defects~~ which
 the ~~unimpaired~~ ~~mind~~ finds in objects.
 with ~~higher~~ ~~intelligence~~ regards with
~~contempt~~ or indifference.

We can have no collective recollec-
 tion—we ~~we~~ with illiberal disdain the
 deficiency of those who are far short of
 us in the progress of improvement ; but
 we do not, cannot feel the peculiar en-
 joyments of such a state—the allevia-
 tions and compensations allotted to them,
 any more than we can feel the transport
 of a child at finding a bird's nest, or
 springing, for the first time, over a brook
 which had been the wonted boundary of
 his excursions.

Man is made to mourn ; but he is also
 made to find consolation : He is made
 to suffer ; but he is also made to enjoy.

To every stage, and to every mode of existence, something is given to make that existence tolerable, and, to a certain degree, desirable. Apathy, the most suitable allotment for his condition, is given to the roaming savage, sunk nearly to brutality. Those more advanced, find delight in the exertions by which they procure their precarious subsistence, as well as in the ingenious devices by which their ornaments, and a few comforts, are supplied.

That the chace, in which so much of their lives are passed, affords very high enjoyments to minds of a certain cast, is obvious, from the gust with which monarchs and nobles, who do not require to kill that they may eat, and to whom every source of refined pleasure is open, return to this primitive amusement.

To those who are become a social and intelligent people, who have sufficient

agriculture to fix them to a home, with all its endearing localities, and sufficient range of grazing to afford them much of the variety and leisure which belong to the pastoral state ; who have enough remaining of the chase to preserve the vigour, dexterity, and independence of the sylvan life ;—to those who, added to all this, feel the deep consciousness of immortality, the horror of secret guilt, and the excited power of imagination, derived from primitive superstition—the shadow of better things to come :—To such beings, I say, life was not that stagnant pool, that melancholy blank, which the pride of science is apt to suppose it. The dews of heaven fall as softly, and the rising sun shines as sweetly, on the budding branches of intellect, as on those bending under the richest fruits of improvement. The last, no doubt, are more to be valued ; but the contemplation of

is not less pleasing to the grateful intelligent soul, willing to trace and acknowledge the divine beneficence through every stage of progressive exist-

ESSAY IX.

Progress of the Faculties in the infancy of Knowledge.—Imagination first predominant, and latterly subdued.—Ravings of Absurdity not the natural effervescence of high-wrought Enthusiasm, but of an artificial attempt to dazzle with the Glaring, and astonish with the Marvellous.—Power of the Affections.—Danger of their evaporating in the heated atmosphere of general Society.—Danger and difficulty of pouring Light too suddenly on weak and unpractised organs; and of removing suddenly the aborigine of the Mountains to a kind of civic establishment.—Military propensities of the Highlanders.—Self-denial and Home feelings.—Singular fortitude of certain Victims to Principle.—Popularity of a lately deceased Chief, &c.

“ But know, that in the soul

“ Are many lesser faculties, that serve

“ Reason as chief: among these, Fancy next

“ Her office holds.”

I do not mean to infer from all that has been said, that the appearance of spirits actually was permitted in those dark ages.

By anti.

I would only suppose, that if those whom the light of revelation had not reached, or those among whom only a faint, imperfect glimmering of the truth had appeared;—if such, I say, actuated by the powerful enthusiasm I have described, originating in feelings only blameable in their excess, indulged that belief, nothing particularly impious or unscriptural could, under such circumstances, attach to such an opinion.

Great allowance seems to have been made for the errors of well-intentioned ignorance in early times.

The most remarkable event in the history of the human mind is the commencement of the reign of reason, which claims superiority by right of conquest over the combined powers of feeling and imagination, which long and stubbornly resist the despotism of this austere sovereign. When at length their united powers yield to his sole dominion, the conquest

is like that which a small number of well-armed and disciplined troops have so often achieved over numerous and splendid hosts of brave, but untaught barbarians ; where the victor, possessing much less power than the vanquished, derives his success from his superior skill in concentrating and wielding the force of which he is possessed.

Yet all power, however achieved, when stretched beyond its due bounds, becomes tyranny ; and all tyranny proves finally as fatal to the oppressor as to the oppressed. While feeling and imagination continue to be the lawful subjects of reason, like other subjects, they are sources of wealth and power to their ruler : but when they become slaves, they are, like other slaves, spiritless and impoverished, without energy or volition—useless or dangerous to their master in all emergencies. This revolution, at some time or other, takes place in every mind pos

essed of powers in any degree vigorous, and in any measure cultivated.

What happens to individuals also happens to nations; and it is because we do not “wink at the times of this ignorance,” and gradually and gently enlighten them, without pouring derision on their notions and manners, that we have so little success in our attempts to enlighten and improve.

How many uncivilized nations have either bowed to our yoke, or melted into helpless sloth and feebleness, from the influence of our enervating customs and contagious vices!

Our endeavour to root out their prejudices, and perhaps salutary habits, before any thing better has been planted in their stead, is one of many reasons why our instructions produce so little effect, even where we are actuated with a sincere desire to do good.

Far be it from us to suppose the state

I have been describing preferable to, or by any means so desirable as entire civilization. It is, however, most desirable, that some rule of life, some system of conduct, and motive of action, should be clearly explained, and fully established, before the dim lights and imperfect notions of moral order, without which no society could exist, shall be exploded. It would be most absurd to compare such a state with that of complete improvement. I would only truly observe, that in many instances it is not so wretched as the pride of science, and the fastidiousness of polished taste suppose it.

Since our gardens have been filled with exotics, many wholesome herbs have been expelled from them ; and since all our faculties have become subject to an elaborate and artificial cultivation, the luxuriance of some wild and vigorous shoots of mental energy have been subdued.

The light which these discussions throw upon the progress of mind raise them above the nature of mere idly curious speculation. True it is, and of verity, that mankind cannot be all at once enlightened and polished.

One must have known very much of the uninformed of other countries, and of the less instructed among ourselves, to know how much, and how little man can do in the more primitive state of society:—how far sagacity and habit can carry him, how justly he can feel, how nobly he can imagine, how quickly apprehend, and how vigorously act.

But it is equally difficult for us to conceive how difficult it is to lead the mind in this state through any process of abstract reasoning, or even to light it up with one of those many ideas which we have so long and often talked of, that they seem easy and familiar to us,

though in fact few of us have ever investigated them.

There is a long and dreary tract to be past over, through wide deserts of intellectual barrenness, before any collective body can reach "the green abodes" of enlightened science. Let us pity their tardy and unequal progress. Though the wells that refresh, and the carevan-saries which shelter them on their way be scanty and inadequate, let us not, in the abundance of our philosophical pride, fill up the one, or demolish the other, till we have supplied better resources in their stead.

To drop the metaphor, let us not abolish the customary powers of imagination and feeling, however grotesquely exerted, till we have established those of reason and religion. To come home to our own mountaineers, as they have been in the past ages, and, in some instances, still remain, an ignorant en-

thusiast must suffer great degradation by being sunk into an ignorant sensualist.

If we were to reason these ignorant, but well-meaning beings, out of the belief of those voices that echoed back the whispers of conscience, and these dim-seen forms that spoke of immortality. If we could do this, before their faculties were so improved as to be equal to the reception of abstracted truths, "while they yet saw men as trees walking," what would be the consequence? They would be robbed of that grateful and dusky dawn which precedes the rising sun, and left to wander in forlorn darkness, where they might lose their way, before any one took the trouble to lead them aright.

The mistake into which the teachers of civility, and in some instances, those of religion, have fallen, is a desire of gathering fruits before they are ripe.

ments. We can, when we become thus clear-sighted, only love what is highly excellent. That, however, from its very nature is more the object of respect and admiration than familiar fondness.

Cultivation, carried to the utmost, has furnished us with a microscope which shews too clearly the smallest blemish, even of those we love. With the aid of this dear-bought optical glass, we acquire the same unlucky accuracy of vision, which Gulliver found so adverse to admiration among the beauties of the court of Brobdignag. To borrow an expression of simple energy from the most energetic of poets, we cannot "love so kindly," * because we cannot "love so blindly," as before we were enlightened.

-
- * " Had we never loved so kindly,
 - " Had we never loved so blindly,
 - " Never met, or never parted,
 - " We had not been broken-hearted."

- Burns.

Enthusiasm, the rainbow of a cloudy state, vanishes with the mists which supported it; and we are scarcely grateful to the diffusive light which robs us of the fair illusion. Reason, now usurping the power of imagination without either its weakness or its strength, sallies forth on the cobweb wings of metaphysical research, into the future and invisible. Disdaining the aid of the eternal lamp of revelation, it vacillates between the dim and dreary regions of doubtful suspense, and the cloud-formed perspective of vain conjecture.

If we could suppose an individual advanced from total ignorance to that dawn of intelligence which most cherishes enthusiasm, could we suppose him from thence to rise in a gradual scale of progression to that self-deluding plenitude of intelligence, which should induce him to refuse all external aid, and rely entirely on his own powers for the disco-

very of truth, surely we humble believers are warranted to consider the last state of that man, as worse than the first.

We use a common metaphor to express a due exercise of the judgment, and commensurate application of the intellectual powers.

Such a one has a well-balanced mind. What is a well-balanced mind? Not surely that in which one predominating faculty utterly subdues, and entirely starves the rest. No, it must needs be that in which the controlling power sits paramount, yet leaves sufficient liberty and strength to his kindred subjects to perform the tasks originally assigned to them. The childhood of nations is long, and their advancement to maturity very slow indeed, when left to the common process. Yet man acts with vigour long before he argues with precision; and when he becomes wise beyond what is written, a mere sophist, his vigour de-

clines. He sees through his metaphysical glasses all things stript of the forms and colours which make them desirable objects of pursuit. He talks indeed of "fate, foreknowledge, and free-will," but he merely talks as old men grow garrulous, when they become feeble, and slothful. In this state of artificial senility, to which the mind attains by trusting too much to its own powers, nothing is so much despised, nay, detested, as the honest and harmless visions of the unenlightened. To those, thus "blasted with excess of light," ignorance appears so great a defect, or rather crime, that they seem totally unconscious of that portion of celestial fire, that spark of vital energy which slumbers in many an uncultured breast, and wants but a favouring breeze to blow it into flame. Their prejudice against prejudices is so strong, that they will allow no one, to

believe any thing without the evidence of his senses, but their own assertions. .

The antipathy with which the over-informed regard the under-informed, and the fear tinged with dislike with which the latter contemplate the former, in its nature and effects most resembles that mutual repulsion which subsists between those who have no claim to distinction, but the single one arising from the possession of wealth; and those whose claims are so many and so manifest, that they attain pre-eminence and consideration without it. Yet among the many witty, and many learned, who regard with supreme contempt

“ Those to whom the world unknown

“ With all its shadowy shapes is shewn.”

some may be found, who can accredit or create very strange voices and appearances of their own, when it happens to suit their system: Of these many instan-

ces might be given. The conclusion drawn from the inebriation of self-confident knowledge, tends pretty much to the same point with that inferred from the delusions of ignorance. For, of the world unseen, we know nothing but what we are told, and he who does not believe in the only intelligence afforded us must be equally ignorant, though not equally blameless. From all this it appears, that humble trust in the truths revealed to us and full confidence in the divine protection is the only certain remedy for the delusions of the imagination.

Infidelity is no protection. Those who slight or disbelieve revelation have not been exempted from meeting with things supernatural and as incomprehensible in their tendency, as the most vulgar visions of the most ignorant peasant. Witness the younger Lord Lyttleton's story of the mysterious hunter, or if the

letters ascribed to him, should be given up as apocryphal, still the vision by which his approaching death was announced, remains upon record uncontradicted.

Of the general belief which prevailed even in fashionable circles of this last apparition, I shall say little, either as to its existence, or its effects; because those who do, or do not believe in revealed religion, might be from different motives, equally concerned to establish or destroy the evidence of the fact.

But there is a most extraordinary claim on our credulity advanced by a contemporary nobleman whose literary reputation is better established than that of his orthodoxy, and who indeed mentions every subject of that nature with great levity, when he mentions it at all.

In his life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the most accomplished unbeliever of his day, he records a testimony against revelation of a very singular nature.

It seems this learned and gallant person " by observation, travel, and deep " thought," had discovered that the belief of revelation was merely a proof of the credulity of weak well-meaning people, and far below one who was at once an accomplished chevalier, a nobleman, and a philosopher.

He had at the time, the merit of originality, and his opinions were bright in all the gloss of novelty: Yet thinking probably that opinions pleasing and suitable to such exalted and informed persons as himself, might not be so perfectly convenient for the vulgar, who were accustomed to support themselves under hardships and privations with the belief which he had relinquished, his lordship appears to have felt some humane qualms about diminishing the few comforts of those whose hope is not of this world, by publishing his opinions. He prayed however for direction, what to do in this

very difficult case : A case which admitted of no alternative.

Either Lord Cherbury's sublime discovery must have rested with himself, and the applause due to such exalted wisdom and profound knowledge be lost, on a very great number of good well-meaning people, who were going quietly on as they thought in their heaven-ward path, must be plunged in doubt and darkness, and robbed of their best consolation. Now, who ever heard of so considerate and humane a sceptic as Lord Cherbury. He first hesitated between the gratifying his own vanity, as leader of a sect, and the consequences which might result from it to others, and then actually prayed for direction : Nay, more, he did not pray in vain, for his historian tells us, that a voice was distinctly heard, encouraging, and even authorizing him to proceed. The noble historian of the noble unbeliever relates this calmly, with

little or no comment, and does not by any means insinuate ridicule. Yet if Wickliffe, or Luther, or even John Knox, who certainly had all abundance of enthusiasm, and were not sparing of prayer and supplication, if any of these zealous reformers had set up a pretension to having prayed so efficaciously, the sneer of contempt, and the smile of ridicule, would never have had an end among "Wit's oracles."

It may be objected against what was formerly advanced of the powers of imagination drooping in the atmosphere of metaphysics, that the imagination of these learned sceptics was abundantly active: But this affords only an additional proof of the propensity we all have to grope in the dark, after the hidden things of futurity, whether light is withheld from us, or whether we close our eyes against it! Whether we find or make the darkness that surrounds us, still the

appetite for the wonderful and invisible continues, and still, if we have not attained, or have rejected the intelligence given to gratify this craving appetite of the soul, we walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet ourselves in vain, with wild illusions or fruitless enquiries.

The native operations of fancy are checked by the rigid sovereignty of reason in its approaches to supremacy. But when speculation wanders without compass or pilot on a voyage of discovery in the world of intellect, it is apt to arrive at that region first discovered by the arch-fiend,

“ Where nature breeds

“ Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things.”

Besides this wonder-working power of perverted imagination, when natural enthusiasm has been long extinguished; there is an exaggerated imitation, or rather caricature of it, by which poets and

orators endeavour to supply the defects of genius, and the want of judgment.

Nothing however can less resemble real enthusiasm, than this tawdry and inflated substitute. There is a certain degree of simplicity essential to real enthusiasm without which it cannot exist. Any one who sees things as they really are, is no enthusiast. It is the very nature of enthusiasm to throw its own bright hues on the object it contemplates, to exalt their properties, and enlarge their dimensions. But enthusiasm neither distorts nor is conscious of magnifying.

Ever willingly deceived, yet never willingly deceiving, its creations, evanescent as dreams, still bear proportion and resemblance to these realities which suggested them.

There is nothing so revolting to good taste, as affected or artificial enthusiasm, unless indeed it be studied attempts at

humour, or rather the imitation of what is in its very nature inimitable. Who does not loath imitations of Ossian, or imitations of Sterne? *and how successful*

Though such should be "passing fair" of their kind, they only serve to remind us "who passed that passing fair." We do not look with much complacence on a painted rainbow, nor can we suppose an attempt at representing the aurora borealis, could be attended with much success.

The real poet, in the most advanced state of society, unless his mind is corrupted by bad taste and the affectation of singularity, is still an enthusiast.

How then does this highly gifted being escape to the chilling contagion of the world, and preserve this charm of existence in its pristine freshness, in spite of the blasting influence of courts, colleges, and cotteries, not to mention all the public walks of men?

True genius is modest, careless, and simple. The man of genius lives in a world of his own, inhabited by the fair creation of his fancy.

Nature is the object of his silent adorations. She is the Egeria whom he seeks in the shades of privacy—whose counsels direct, and whose smiles delight him.

She is the protecting goddess, whose maternal care provides her offspring with an invulnerable shield, rich in a thousand sculptured forms of grace and beauty.

To speak without a metaphor, it is the simplicity of his character, and his high delight in natural feelings and natural objects—the privacy and silence in which he indulges his pursuits, and his total indifference, both to the glare and bustle of life, and the labour of abstruse speculation, that preserve that enthusiasm which only co-exists with simplicity.

Imagination, long deposed from its original station in the mind, can no doubt be awakened, and pressed into the service of talent ; but then it is merely for the purpose of gilding and making artificial flowers, thrown together in profusion, without freshness or fragrance,—a heap of glaring and elaborate ornaments, which soon fatigue the eye, and never gratify the unsophisticated taste.

The full lustre of the meridian sun scarce recompences us for the glittering dew-drops, that gave to every tree fresh beauty, and fragrance to every plant and flower, when his first beams broke through the grey veil of early dawn.

Thus we look back to the primitive poetry of early days with a complacency not easily accounted for, otherwise than from the light of enthusiasm, with which its imperfect form was invested. Except in the case of legendary tales, which it was the duty of bards to recite, and the

pride of chieftains to preserve, no poetry could be transmitted down among an illiterate people, but that which contained within itself this vivifying principle.

Much indifferent poetry must needs be born, where every one sung whatever grieved, delighted, or astonished him, without having the fear of criticism before his eyes. But the feebler offspring of the mind was not, as with us, cherished with peculiar fondness by the parent, but left to perish in infancy; like the other deformed and puny children of savages.

Hence there is a tone of peculiar vigour and animation in what remains of the ancient Gaelic poetry, calculated to nourish that enthusiasm, from which its existence was derived. There was also a kind of touching, though shadowy solemnity, which added to its power.

This was originally derived from the superstitions so dear to the untutored

fancy, and greatly heightened by the deep impression of immortality, sensibly conveyed to the mind by the imagined return of the departed, " whose song " was of other worlds."

The lofty visions that shew man imperishable, and still connected by links of tender recollection with those once loved or esteemed, have in them something, not only interesting, but aggrandizing.

Where the mind was deeply, though not clearly impressed with the sense of immortality, every thing connected with a being that ceased not to exist, assumed importance.

The image once dear and pleasing, became awful and impressive, when it was supposed, from the passing cloud or rapid whirlwind, to look with kindness on those who mourned its departure.

To those, then, who had no deep-felt apprehension of futurity, the path of the

departed was but as that of a meteor, hurrying past with transient brightness.

With the fond enthusiast, who listened for the whispers of the passing spirit, and caught short glimpses of the dim-seen form, it was far otherwise. They thought of the sacred dead as we do of a benignant planet, which, though beyond our reach, still sheds sweet influence over us.

One general result of the solemn reveries thus suggested, was, a familiarity with death, of which we can scarce form an idea.

We avoid speaking of the dead, to save our feelings. They speak of them intimately, to indulge theirs.

We consider it as shocking, coarse, and unfeeling, to speak to any one of his own death, or anticipate what shall be done, when that which necessarily happens to all men happens to him. On the contrary, the highlanders, to this

day, speak very frequently and familiarly of their own death, and that of friends. When I say *familiarly*, not mean to imply levity or carelessness. They speak with solemnity, but not horror. It does not seem to awaken gloomy images with them, but that a calm and chastened awe.

Indeed, in some instances, they speak of it cheerfully, yet usually avoiding exact term by which death is denoted in their language. It is always shrouded out under the terms of repose, conclusion, finishing, or some more circumlocutory mode of expression. But this belongs not to a wish to avoid the mention of death, but to the figurative idiom of speech common to all primitive languages, and almost invariably used in poetry in every language.

A highlander, in every other instance, singularly cautious of grating your ears, or alarming your fears, will

gravely ask you where you mean to be buried; or whether you would not prefer such a place of abode, as being nearer the cemen- tery of your ancestors.

This familiarity, as far as it is regarded merely as the mode in which sentient beings pass from one form of existence to another, is the result, partly of their rooted superstitions, and, in some measure, of their peculiarly warm affections.

They have been so habituated to believe, that no ties are broken by death, except that which holds together the undying spirit, and its perishing associate, that they feel the continued existence, not merely as an article of pious faith, or rational belief, but with that sensible conviction with which we think of the moon and stars, meteors and clouds, which, though out of our reach, are yet obvious to our senses.

That strong affection, and detachment from the hurrying varieties of the

busy world, led them to dwell with unwearied minuteness on all the sayings and actions of the departed, as we do on those of people that we neither love nor esteem, merely because they are bustling on the stage of life, or conspicuous in the ranks of fashion. Thus preserved by the ardent spirit of fond attachment, every thing that relates to the departed, instead of sinking into sudden oblivion, derives importance, and is in a manner hallowed to memory by their departure.

There, every man in the least distinguished for eloquence or ability, had his Boswells and his Thrules, who here treasured up his sentences, and, without the stimulus of vanity, transmitted his character whole and entire, only softened by the lenient hand of friendship.

They do not feel death entirely as “ a wrench from all we love—from all we are ;” conscious as they are, that

they will continue to live in the songs, the conversation, the dreams and meditations of all whom they loved on earth.

This seemingly close alliance between the living and the dead certainly cannot disarm futurity of its terrors to a guilty conscience; but physical terrors—the mere sinking and shuddering of the mind at death, considered as the privation of life, and final separation from all that made life desirable, are thus diminished.

This deep and sensible feeling of immortality—this intimate link by which imagination connected the dead with the living, accounts for the calmness with which a peculiarly sensitive and affectionate people speak of their own death, and that of those dearest to them while here.

It is this untamed, nay, exalted power of imagination, that so often summons the departed to visit their slumbers, “to

“ speak of other worlds,” and to advise and comfort them.

No people mourn more deeply over the temporary separation, as they apprehend it to be ; but then the fond and constant dwelling on the worth, the talents, the words, and even the looks of the deceased, mingles, in time, “ the joy “ of grief” with the sorrow, which is relieved by communication.

Here the mourning muse will always “ fit audience find,” and those not few ; the whole clan, listening with eager interest to the most minute anecdotes, and holding sacred all the *memorabilia* that grief and affection have preserved.

A man, well known to the writer of these pages, was remarkable for his filial affection, even among the sons and daughters of the mountains, so distinguished for that branch of piety.

His mother being a widow, and having a numerous family, who had all mar-

ried very early, he continued to live single, that he might the more sedulously attend to her comfort, and watched over her declining years with the tenderest care.

On her birth-day, he always collected his brothers and sisters, and all their families, to a sort of kindly feast, and, in conclusion, gave a toast, not easy to translate from this emphatic language without circumlocution : " An easy and decorous departure to my mother," comes nearest it.

This toast, which would shake the nerves of fashionable delicacy, was received with great applause : the old woman, remarking, that God had always been good to her, and she hoped she should die as decently as she had lived ; for it is here thought of the utmost consequence to die decently.

The ritual of decorous departure, and of behaviour to be observed by the friends

of the dying, on that solemn occasion being fully established, nothing is more common than to take a solemn leave of old people, as if they were going on a journey, and pretty much in the same terms.

People frequently send conditional messages to the departed : “ If you are permitted, tell my dear brother, that I have merely endured the world since he left it ; and that I have been very kind to every creature he used to cherish, for his sake.”

I have, indeed, heard a person of a very enlightened mind seriously give a message to an aged person, to deliver to a child he had lost not long before, which she as seriously promised to deliver, with the wonted salvo, if she was permitted.)

There is another very singular effect of the highland prejudice, or the custom of retaining the attachment to the de-

parted, and sensible consciousness, as it were, of their continued existence.

We all know how often the page of history is darkened with the crimes of ambitious guardians, who have pillaged, and otherwise injured minor princes, unable to resist the temptation which the temporary possession of power and wealth afforded.

The annals of private life, among the most civilized people, are also often stained with instances of this bad propensity, in human nature. So prevalent has it ever been found, that it has often been thought unsafe to trust the care of a minor entirely to that relation, who, in case of his death, would inherit his property.

To cite instances from history would be endless. But the pictures of life which the stage exhibits, and which novels often represent with equal vivacity and fidelity, may very well be depended

on, in many respects ; for though they are often accused of leading opinion, and, consequently, influencing action, they, in fact, rather follow it.

It is the time which gives *them* its form and pressure. Whatever changing hues the manners exhibit, are to be found in these mirrors ; heightened and exaggerated, perhaps, but still preserving a resemblance to the archetype.

How often is the false guardian, the cruel uncle, or the crafty and designing relation, the principal hinge on which the story turns !

From the Babes of the Wood, up to the usurping Richard, the ambitious Lancaster, and, nearer home, the despotic Duke of Albany, and the tyrannical regency of the Earl of Angus,—treachery, cruelty, ambition, and avarice, vary their forms indefinitely ; but still appear to take the most dangerous shape, to tempt him whom every tie of blood, of

honour, and of conscience, should most devote to the service of the monarch or the minor.

Not so the legends or better authenticated histories of the clans. Of the treachery of a relation, I remember only one recorded instance; and that was not the breach of a trust of this nature. It was the rebellion of a turbulent and ferocious younger brother, in times of general disturbance, and in a country where, for a time, habits of piracy and pillage had prevailed, to such a degree as to deaden the sense of morality.

Among a warlike people, often drawn out as partizans, and often engaged in petty hostilities, occasioned by family feuds, minorities must have been frequent. The chief was always the leader, and often the victim of these predatory wars; but this circumstance neither prejudiced the estate, nor kept back the education of the heir.

Unspotted with any instance of fraud or avarice in a guardian, the records of the highlands are brightened by the noblest instances of fidelity, courage, and conduct in the captains of clans; for so the nearest relation, who, in age or disability, represented the chief, was called.

The conduct of the Tuit-fhears, or guardian-uncles of the minor chiefs, is matter of eulogium in the poetry and history of every clan. The most renowned heroes and sages of the songs and legends of antiquity, have been Tuit-fhears. And in the later times, about the beginning of the last century, the Tuit-fhear of Appin, Captain Clan-Dhonnoul, or the captain of the Macdonalds, with the respective Tuit-fhears of Appin and Glengary, were sung and celebrated for their valour, justice, and temperance, in the administration of the trust reposed in them. For care and fidelity towards their wards, they were not prais-

ed, because it was not thought possible they should be otherwise than affectionate to such a charge.

But how a people so little instructed, to whom such small matters derived consequence from their poverty, and ignorance of the world at large—how should they resist temptations so prevalent among others, if there were not something peculiar in their mode of thinking, that tended to disarm ambition and avarice of their wonted power over the human mind?

The operation of principle varies, according to the degree of strength or purity in the mind it influences, or the degree of light and instruction it has received. But the operation of early habit, and deep-rooted prejudice, is uniform: to that, the valiant and the fearful, the weak and the strong, in various degrees, must submit.

Macbeth conquers the “compunctious

“ visitings” of his nature, sets hereafter at a distance, and wears with a fair semblance his borrowed royalty ; but a sight of the blood-boltered Banquo at once unmans him : before this spectre, his courage melts, his sinews relax, and all the horrors of guilt rise visibly before him. What this ghastly spectre was to Macbeth, the anticipation of such a situation was to these faithful guardians.

Had they once admitted a transient suggestion of the possibility of their committing a crime of this nature, the shades of their forefathers would have arisen in dread array to their terrified imagination, to forbid or avenge the deed.

He who walks in darkness, walks in fear, and continually apprehends stumbling or striking against some unseen obstacle.

In this dusky state of intellect, the limits that divide the material world

from that which is to be hereafter revealed, are not distinctly defined. A man conscious of a secret crime, fears meeting the invisible witnesses of it, with the same distinct and sensitive terror that a feeble nervous person feels at striking against chairs and tables in the dark.

The sacredness of orphan innocence, and the fidelity to all trust, over which the dead were supposed to watch with jealous vigilance, had a sensible and powerful effect in the cases already mentioned.

So far from the petty regency of a clan being a period of assumption and encroachment, one always finds, in tracing back the history of a tribe, that its greatest achievements, both in point of fame and property, took place during long minorities.

The Tuit-fhear, or captain of the clan, had been accustomed to live upon a

younger brother's slender allotment. The moment this charge devolved upon him, he considered himself as having the eyes of the whole world upon him; for clans to him were nations.

In the field of battle, and on public grand occasions, he represented the chief, in all the consequence of authority, and all the show of dress and armour.

But in his private life, it was very different. The chief always affected a certain state, supported by liberal hospitality, and a kind of rude magnificence, in the numerous retainers, bards, sennachies, &c.

This frequently impoverished the family; but for this evil a long minority was an infallible cure.

The affectation of splendour and liberality, to which the chieftain owed much of his consequence and influence, would not have been endured in the Tuit-fhear.:

When he took the charge of his nephew's affairs, he was considered as having taken vows of voluntary poverty: like the monks of certain orders, he lived parsimoniously; and, instead of profiting by his office, his own affairs were neglected, from his entire self-devotion to those of his charge.

Nay, there have been instances of men, who never were suspected of possessing talents, either for war or the conduct of affairs, who, from pure singleness of mind, and the entire devotion of the faculties to one object, have shone out with peculiar lustre, when called to this arduous trial of integrity and abilities. Of such importance is it to walk in fear of the public eye, and have the mind enlarged by high notions of public good, and the hope of just applause.

Before we dismiss this subject, it is worth while to remark, how the old and most true adage of honesty being the

best policy, was verified by the result of this customary fidelity; for the Tuithears devoted themselves, with self-denying frugality, to the care of the estate, and all that concerned their young kinsman.

The gratitude and generosity of the heir, when master of his fortune, and his conduct, does as much honour to the annals of those little nations as the fidelity so rewarded.

From the state of society, the frequent wars, to which the clans are called in aid as allies, and the long-continued feuds among themselves, in which the chief was foremost in every danger, those minorities were of very frequent occurrence.

It may safely be presumed, that this constant reciprocation of fidelity and attachment between the guardian and the guarded, had a great general effect in strengthening the ties of relationship.

and keeping alive that intimate connection between the head of the family and his remotest kinsmen, which so long preserved that patriarchal mode of life among those people, when every vestige of it had disappeared among their better instructed neighbours.

It is not to be inferred from what has been said of certain mental graces, cultivated by the long-descended and widespread taste for poetry, and certain social virtues, cherished by the pride and love of ancestry, and the prevailing reverence for the conjugal relation, that I would have my Celtæ regarded as models of perfection. On the contrary, in a collective capacity, they were often vindictive and ferocious.

In the latter ages, like all other northern people previous to the era of refinement, they were apt to drink to excess; not, indeed, habitually, but at feasts and meetings; and intoxication was with



them productive of its usual consequences,—licentious conduct, quarrels, and sometimes bloodshed. Yet during this bacchanalian 'disguise, certain ideas of decorum and manly firmness did not forsake them.

They sat very long, and talked much: there was a considerable interval of gay enthusiasm, before they rose in their wrath; and, by some strange perversion of opinion, though it was not considered as any great reflection for a man to rise in frantic rage, and strike down his fellow; yet if he drank till he could not stand firm, or speak plain, he was utterly disgraced.

Drink was tolerated, as increasing strength of mind, eloquence, and gaiety; and its excesses were tolerated, in consideration of those happy results: but if a man drank till he became feeble and stupid, he was considered as exposing the weakness of his mind and body.

A man was proud of drinking a great deal, without stuttering or sickening; but beyond that point all was contempt and disgrace.

The quantity of their country spirits which they could drink, and the time they sat together, was really beyond belief.

That their health was not materially affected by these occasional excesses, was owing to two circumstances. *First*, That they were not frequent. They live very temperately in the intermediate intervals; and then their custom, after such an indulgence, to lie in bed a day or two, living on water-gruel, which they drink in great quantities, to cool the fever of inebriation. After this abstinence, they rise seemingly free from every consequence of intemperance.

Enough has been said already, to evince their unsettled notions with regard to property, as far as the cattle of

enemies were concerned; and of many individuals, with regard to all but their own kindred and immediate neighbours.

When a man became the head of a family, he assumed a new character, but excess and undue licence were to be found among the young and intemperate, as in other countries, though carried to so great a length, not attended with such fatal consequences.

Their speeches can hardly be classed under the head of ordinary theft; it was a proof of a very confused and imperfect notion of morality, in this respect, that such inroads should be made on peaceable neighbours, when no actual hostility existed.

What was diminished of the honour excited by the depredation, by a certain air of daring gallantry, was, on the other side, aggravated by the fury and bloodshed which the exasperations occasioned.

As for the lesser thefts of the professional thieves, whom I formerly mentioned, they do not impeach the integrity of a whole people. Their existence as a fraternity is much owing to a kind of false humanity, which leaves them unpunished.

They are, or were at least, embodied, while our dishonesty is disseminated through all the different branches of society, and assumes so many forms, that we never can be aware of its approach, in time to prevent its effects.

It may be asked, Why are not the superior and well-educated members of a society so enthusiastic? so governed by high-toned feeling; and inheriting such generous sentiments? Why are not they more delicate, more spirited, more refined, in short, than others, when a superstructure of information and attainment is raised upon this foundation?

It is melancholy to trace the transition, especially if it be a sudden one, from the primitive state of those possessed of good notions and good feelings, when the system of life is entirely changed by the introduction of new customs, manners, and opinions.

All winged insects, before they leave their first habitation, to rise with buoyant powers, and sport in air, have a state helpless torpor to pass through.

Those whose mode of life has been much regulated by a kind of instinctive sagacity, readily accommodating itself to all exigencies,—to whom the venerated customs of their ancestors were as laws, and whose feelings were very much under the influence of their imagination, and only restrained by fixed habits of patience and fortitude:—When people of this description, whose pride is equal to their ignorance, and, indeed, greatly owing to it, and who have obstinate pre-

judices lurking under all their new attainments :—When such, I say, are suddenly illuminated, or at least brought to imagine they are so, we expect too much, forgetting by what very gradual degrees our own acquisitions have come on. We expect them, in half a life-time, to pass from their old habits, and acquire all to which successive generations, by slow and silent progress, have attained.

I shall have recourse to a very familiar illustration.—The person who first thought of drawing wool from a distaff, to make those threads which were afterwards to form the clothing of our ancestors, must have been most justly regarded as a prodigy of ingenuity, and the father of the most useful art.

People might shelter in caves, and feed on acorns ; but to invent a mode of procuring attire by the exertion of industrious dexterity, was an invaluable discovery.

Ages passed by ; and princesses, still satisfied with this simple implement, spun purple and fine linen, without wishing for a better.

Wheels were at length invented, to shorten labour in a country where more clothing was required. I speak of the large ones, upon which wool is spun.

These complicated machines, however, were at first regarded with aversion by the lovers of simplicity.

I myself knew of an old lady, not many years deceased, who would suffer no such complicated machines to enter her house ; but kept eight good old women in her house, spinning on as many orthodox distaffs, to the last ; and gave for a reason, what I believe is true, that the yarn, though more abundant, was never equally strong or even, when produced from a wheel, as that spun in the primitive mode.

With this intrepid opposer of innovation died the good old faith in distaffs :

but the smaller spinning-wheel, adapted to flax, had many enemies to encounter before it got a footing in the highlands ; which it never obtained till the country was disarmed ; and the good women used to speak most pathetically of the 46, as the sad era which introduced little-wheels and *red soldiers* into the country : *red soldiers* were so called, in contradistinction to the native-troops, who wore tartan.

Ages, in our civilized land, had intervened between the great and little-wheels ; and after other generations had been arrayed in the productions of the latter, a nearer advance to perfectibility produced the spinning jenny, so fatal to simplicity and to female industry.

Yet, perhaps, in the infancy of the arts, the distaff was as great a proof of genius as the jenny, in this age of calculation.

Every thing else has gone on in a si-

milar process. Yet we expect, that untutored man should, in the course of one generation, attain what we have inherited from so many.

He cannot gain a small part of what is so habitually familiar to us, without losing much which we cannot appreciate, as having never possessed it:—The light, elastic tread,—the firm, yet pliant limbs,—the quick, observant ear,—the darting glance of intuitive sagacity,—the numerous expedients, by which the want of our ingenious tools and endless conveniencies are supplied,—and much that cannot be told, or would scarce be believed, though it were of courtesy, and native grace, and vigorous fancy, and shrewd discernment.

When a people are taught to despise the modes of thinking, customs, and prejudices of their ancestors, and to consider as barbarism and vulgarity all that in their childhood they were accustom-

ed to regard as elegant and excellent,—the whole web of thought and feeling is unravelled, and cannot be readily or easily made up in a new form. Some of the worst materials of the old costume will often lurk under the new finery; and that will not be easily or readily adapted to the form of the wearer.

Refinement of mind is the very last result of high cultivation, and the usage of good society. It must needs be an intellect of a very superior order, that can break through all the obstacles that early habit throws in the way of improvement,—to pass through all the rudiments of civility, and attain to this point, which so many among ourselves, possessing every possible advantage, never arrive at.

Refinement of a different, and not very inferior kind, such persons as these might have formerly attained by very different means, as has been already

shewn. But the very first labour of the proud ignorance of civilization, is to inspire the novice with a barbarous contempt for that artless elegance, that genuine, though imperfect refinement, which he derived from the humane customs and humanizing muses of his native strath. This often ends in adding the vanity of borrowed, or at most superficial acquirements, to the rivetted pride of ancestry, and innate dislike to strangers.

A half-informed mountaineer, who falls into the common error of supposing, that because he knows much more than his cotemporaries, nothing remains unknown to him, must have a double spring of arrogance and self-opinion in his mind, if he be naturally so disposed.

First, From his early prejudices, he is inclined to regard "the sons of little men, the beings of yesterday," as a mixed breed, of late and dubious origin,

on whom he looks down with secret contempt from that proud eminence on which high birth and national antiquity have placed him.

In acquiring these new stores of knowledge, he loses much of that inherited refinement which has been so largely discussed. His mind is not sufficiently balanced or enlightened to appreciate justly either what he has lost or what he has acquired. He considers the former as the mere exuviae of the chrysalis form which he has recently forsaken; and while moving with confused and mingled sensations through a new atmosphere, he supposes his late-acquired wings will enable him to rise to a much greater height than he is capable of attaining.

From this fancied elevation he looks down with contempt on the ignorance and rusticity of his compatriots. He feels experimentally, that "a little know-

“ ledge is a dangerous thing.” He has lost all that is desirably peculiar in the manners, customs, home-bred science, and unrivalled sagacity of his ancestors, and is very far from having attained that ingrafted knowledge and elegance which we so laboriously cultivate.

Thus he despises both those he has joined and those he has left, though, in different senses, he is to both greatly inferior. He feels just so much consciousness of this twofold superiority as is sufficient to make him reserved and jealous among his new associates, and presuming and contemptuous among his old ones.

As Chesterfield said of Johnson, that “ he was a wit among lords, and a lord among wits,” this novice, building upon his ancestry, feels inclined, among the enlightened mushrooms of the lowlands, to be “ proud, melancholy, and gentlemanlike,” to vindicate his dig-

city. Amongst his unsophisticated kinsmen, again, he affects to laugh at apparitions, despise old customs, and display his new stock of taste, with industrious ostentation.

From beings in this imperfect and unfinished state, it is hard either to learn the customs, or judge the character of a people. Those that are further back are hid, in the obscurity of their language and situation, from the inspection of strangers.

Those who, by attentive care, and very early detachment from their native sports and inherited customs, have been duly cultivated and polished, form a very favourable specimen of what culture can perform, their abilities being very frequently above mediocrity. But when they become precisely that sort of being which good abilities, good education, and good company usually form everywhere, they are no longer qualified to illustrate

or exemplify the original character of their tribe or society.

If a highlander, driven prematurely into the ranks of polished society, ceases to be a favourable specimen of the mountain race, one of the lower class coming to mingle among the degraded vulgar of civilized countries, is still less fitted to afford means of judging what a spirited, intelligent being he is at home. In his noviciate, his own language is useless, unless to exchange the murmur of complaint with his fellow exiles. He is not, like his superiors under similar circumstances, supported by the pride of new acquirements. The powers of imagination, no longer exercised in their wonted manner, droop and fade: those of memory and sensibility live only to remind him of his exile, and to wound him with the inferiority of his present to his former self. With the peasantry he seldom mingles: that would not be

no sensible a descent. From the decent class of artisans his ignorance precludes him. He descends among the dregs of the people,—acquires, with their vulgar language, their low and narrow ideas,—and, shrinking in the ungenial clime of plebeian grossness, assumes an entire new character.

This metamorphosis is determined by the temperament of its subject. If that is of the cool and cautious nature which generally affords materials for a mountain sage, he is laborious, frugal, and indefatigable, in pursuit of those external advantages which he thinks will restore to him the ground he has lost by the change to which poverty forced him: His parsimonious and laborious habits soon extinguish his spirit, and destroy his originality.

If, on the contrary, his faculties are of the more vigorous description, such as imagination animates, and enthusi-

asm kindles, he who would have been the occasional poet and musician of his hamlet, and would have sought no higher distinction than the praise of his kinsmen, languishes, deprived of that gratification. The sad and sordid realities of life press hard upon him, no longer relieved by musical delight, or transient gleams of visionary bliss. He no longer sees any ghosts but those of departed enjoyments: he hears no voices but the rude accents of scorn and contumely, reproaching his uncouth attempts to do, for the first time, what others perform with all the ease of long habit.

Return is impossible: Every spot is occupied by peasants that cannot, and shepherds that will not, make room for him. He wanders, like a discontented shade, along the dividing stream; but does not long vainly search for the cup of oblivion: He finds it, filled with his

native cordial, aqua vitæ ; but requiring renewal so often, that the remedy becomes of itself a disease .

From forgetting his cares and his country, he goes on to forget himself? The highlands have lost, and the lowlands have not found him. If any thing recovers him from his hopeless apathy; it must be the "spirit-stirring fife," or the martial pipe of his ancestors, calling him to the field of honourable strife.

Here, if at all, the highlander resumes the energy of his character; and finds room to display once more the virtues of habit and of sentiment; for here he is generally associated with beings like himself. Here his enthusiasm finds an object : his honourable feelings, his love of distinction, his contempt for danger, and, what is of equal importance in the military life, his calm fortitude, stern hardihood, and patient endurance, all find scope for exercise. Here, too, min-

gled with his countrymen, he tells and hears the tales of other times,—beguiles the weary watch of night with the songs that echoed through the halls of his chief,—or repeats, on the toilsome march, the love-ditty inspired by the maiden that first charmed him with the smile of beauty, and the voice of melody in his native glen.

These recollections and associations preserve, in pristine vigour, the fairest trait in the highland character. Social and convivial as Donald's inclinations are, when others join the mirthful band, and share the cup of festivity, he retires to his barrack or his tent, and adds the hard-saved sixpence to the little hoard which the paymaster promises to remit home, to pay his father's arrear of rent, or purchase a cow to his widowed mother.

Poor Donald is no mechanic : he cannot, like other soldiers, work at a trade

when in quarters : Yet, day after day, with unwearied perseverance, he mounts guard for those who have this resource, to add a little to this fund, sacred to the dearest charities of life—the best feelings of humanity. This sobriety preserves alive the first impressions of principle,—the rectitude, the humble piety, and habitual self-denial, to which a camp life, or the unsettled wanderings that belong to it, are so averse.

There are instances, of very late occurrence, not of individuals only, but of whole regiments of highlanders, exercising this generous self-denial, to remit money to their poor relations at home, to an extent that would stagger credulity, were it particularized.

The officers of one of the regiments to which I allude, finding such sums remitted through their hands, and seeing their men constantly either on guard or at hard labour, began to fear that they

were living too low to support such perpetual exertion. Every day they visited the barracks, to be assured that their men made use of a proportion of animal food. They were first deceived by seeing pots on, with meat boiling in them as they thought; but, on a nearer inspection, found, that in many of them a great stalk of what we in Scotland call kail, was the only article contained in them. They brought long sticks with them afterwards, and sounded the pots, to make sure. This was, indeed,

“ Spare fast, which oft with gods doth diet.”

I should rather have kept this quotation to grace another instance of still nobler self-denial, which ought to be recorded in a more durable manner than this perishing page will admit of.

A highland regiment, commanded, I think, at the time, by General Macleod, were, during the wars with Tippoo Saib,

ged in an unfortunate rencontre, above 200 of them fell into the hands of that remorseless tyrant. They were treated with the most cruel indignities, and fed upon a very sparing portion of unwholesome rice, which operated as a slow poison; assisted by the burning heat of the sun by day, and the malarious dews of night, to which they were purposely exposed, to shake their constancy.

Very early some of their companions dropped before their eyes, and daily they were offered liberty and plenty, in exchange for this lingering torture, on condition of relinquishing their religion, and casting the turban: yet not one could be prevailed upon to purchase life on these terms.

These highlanders were from the Isles, entirely illiterate. Scarcely one of them could have told the name of any particular sect of Christians; and all the

idea they had of the Mahometan religion, was, that it was adverse to their own; and that, adopting it, they should renounce Him who had died that they might live, and who loved them, and could support them under all sufferings. The great outlines of their religion,—the peculiar tenets which distinguish it from every other,—were early and deeply impressed on their minds, and proved sufficient in the hour of trial.—

“ Rise, muses, rise ! add all your tuneful breaths—

“ These must not sleep in darkness and in death.”

Nor shall they : Saints and angels will bear witness to their humble triumph, when the trophies of the proud; and the monuments of the great, shall have mouldered into dust, or been swept away in the wreck of nature.

The self-devoted band at Thermopylae have had their fame : they expected, and they deserved it. These did not even

aspire to such distinction : far from their native land, without even the hope of having their graves beheld by the eyes of mournful regret, “ They passed away
 “ unseen, like the flower in the desert,
 “ when its head is heavy with the dews
 “ of night, and the sun arises in his
 “ strength, to scatter its leaves on the
 “ gale.”

The voice of applause,—the hope of future fame,—the sympathy of friendship,—all that the heart leans to in the last extremity,—was withheld from these victims of principle. It was not theirs to meet death in the field of honour, while the mind, wrought up to fervid eagerness, went forth in search of him. They saw his slow approach ; and, tho’ sunk into languid debility, such as quenches the fire of mere temperament, they never once hesitated at the alternative set before them. Their fortitude should at least be applauded, though

their faith, and the hope that supported them, were not taken into account.*

This well-known, though neglected instance of what may be expected from beings accustomed from the cradle to self-command and self-denial, affords additional proof of the importance of preserving, unmixed and undebased, a race so fit to encounter those perils and labours, worse than death, which the defence of our wide-extended empire demands.

The highlands is, in fact, only cultivated for the purpose of that mixed pastoral and agricultural life which

* There are still a few living witnesses of the triumph of this band of brothers. One, a brave general, honourably distinguished, lived twenty months in the hands of the enemy in captivity; and, with a few companions, survived, it was supposed, in consequence of being fed, instead of the usual rice which proved fatal to the rest, with a scanty allowance of seed, such as birds are usually fed with, by the natives.

the climate and habits of the people, and qualifies them, above all others, to fight the battles of their country, when called forth to such exertions.

Those that feel a slight degree of compunction at banishing them from their native hills and wonted occupations, need never "Lay the flattering unction to their souls," that they shall preserve the character, the energies, and the peculiar spirit of this distinct people, by building villages, and filling them with looms, and tools, &c.

Nature never meant Donald for a manufacturer: born to cultivate or defend his native soil, he droops and degenerates in any mechanical calling. He feels it as losing his cast; and when he begins to be a weaver, he ceases to be a highlander. Fixing a mountaineer on a loom, too much resembles yoking a deer in a plough, and will not in the end suit much better.

Surely man does not live by manufacturing alone ; and there are thousands and ten thousands, better qualified to weave, and less fitted for the endurance which is of more consequence in a distant or protracted war than even personal courage. There are a hundred that sink under fatigue, or murmur under privation, for one that actually recoils in the day of battle : and that soldier who spends every spare hour in learning to write, that he may convey information of his welfare to his friends or attain to the honourable distinction of a halbert,—he, too, who lays by every spare penny, to help his poor relations or to enable him to return to them,—is more likely to be faithful and steady in the discharge of his duties, than he who carrying the low-minded ideas and dissipated habits of the mob of manufacturers into the army, drowns in liquor every recollection of the cheerless past

and every anticipation of the hopeless future.

A sort of inverted benevolence seems to pervade every plan for the improvement of the highlands, with the exception of that truly generous and judicious one lately suggested, of teaching the natives to read the Scriptures in their own language. This, indeed, is bringing the treasures of life home to them, without sending them to the mines to dig for it. But every other scheme that has been suggested for the amelioration of their condition, has the ultimate consequence of extinguishing their high-toned enthusiasm, degrading their character, and effacing all the peculiar habits that enable so very many to exist in so small bounds, and, moreover, to live on less than we could imagine: this, too, without shewing any traces of the subdued spirit, the squalid and sordid appearance, or the gross depravity which extreme

poverty never fails to produce, when numbers herd together in other countries, without any mode of comfortable subsistence.

It is impossible to see poverty wear more mild and gracious form than in the little social highland hamlets: on the other hand, it nowhere appears more abject and disgusting than in a highland village; to which manifold causes contribute.

In the *first* place, These villagers are necessarily inhabited by tradesmen. Time may, and will, perhaps, too soon for their happiness, wear off their national prejudice against this mode of life; but, at present, a tradesman feels himself below a cultivator; and nothing sinks the character, or damps emulation, more than a felt and irremediable inferiority.

The cultivator has always before his eyes the care of his cattle, which here requires incessant vigilance and fore

thought. His mind is occupied, above all things, the whole year round, with the means of providing his rent. This, to him, is of the last importance. If his resources fail, he is driven out from the Eden of his imagination,—from the spot to which his affections must ever tenaciously adhere,—the home of his infancy,—the dwelling of his forefathers.—He must leave the spot where every cairn,—every little vestige of a decayed cottage,—and every larger stone, that marks the divided ridges,—tells some story of the past. He must leave it, to shelter in the detested village, or wander, an outcast, in the land of strangers.

What will not a highlander do or suffer, to shun this dreadful catastrophe? This sword of excision, hanging continually over his head, impels him to exertions almost incredible; and this perpetual vigilance of foresight forms habits of caution, self-denial, and frugali-

ry, that nothing less than the united force of such powerful motives could produce.

Suppose the dreaded sword to fall after some blighting spring, or drowning autumn, when this dividing asunder of soul and spirit takes place. We shall suppose the village, as the nearest refuge, obtains the preference. His little stock, after paying his arrears, affords the means of a scanty support for the first year or two, with the aid of a wretched shop, or the more wretched resource of secretly brewing, or openly selling whisky.

Donald is much too social and convivial for the inhabitant of a village: When dwelling in his dear-loved hamlet, his social propensities are innocently, therefore happily indulged, among the companions of his youth, in the winter evenings at home, or the summer days in the mountain shealings. His

convivial joys are only indulged at a Christmas revel, or on the glad occasion of a marriage or baptism in the hamlet.

His simple, frugal manners, exempt him from the temptation so fatal to the virtues of the poor. In the village, however, he finds every thing to seduce, and nothing to protect him. His wife, of course, becomes a gossip and tattler : his children, no longer endeared to him by sharing the numberless tasks that an uninclosed country demands, now lounge about his door, hungry, idle, and depraved, a hopeless and loveless incumbrance. The miserable, degraded husband and father, finds, in tattling and tippling, a short palliative for woes incurable. While his neighbour tradesman, unaccustomed to think for to-morrow, improvident and intemperate, is, with more resources, scarce less wretched.

O for a highland Crahbe, to paint, in true and dismal colours, the languor of

idleness, the rancour of malevolence, and the extremity of indigence, that pervade these Utopian villages ;—those seats of industry and abundance, which we are taught to consider as a sovereign remedy for the evil, I had almost said, the crime of depopulation ! All improvements, to be really such, must be gentle, gradual, and voluntary.

When a highland chief looked, from some eminence, into his subject Strath, and saw the blue smoke of twenty hamlets rise through the calm air of a bright summer morning,—when he viewed those quiet abodes of humble content with the perfect consciousness that there was no individual contained in them but what regarded him with fond and proud attachment, as his friend and protector, to save or serve whom he would cheerfully die,—what monarch could compare with him in genuine power, and heart-

felt consciousness of being loved and honoured beyond all other earthly beings?

How perverted is the taste that would induce a man to deprive himself of such faithful adherents, and drive them out to miserable exile, for all the poultry profits to be derived from the change! Their attachment to their modern masters could not be supposed equal to that which led them to such extremities of old.

Those who lived among them, and found their greatest pleasure in their families, and among their adherents, certainly had greater claims on the love of their people. Still, however, ancient faith lingers where it has been cherished by ancient courtesy and kindness. His native Strath still mourns the recent loss of a chief, who, with all the polish of the best modern manners, and all the meekness of the best Christian principles, retained as much of the affections.

of his people, and as entire controul over them, as was ever possessed by any patriarch or hero of antiquity, in the like circumstances. Gentleness and humanity were his distinguishing characteristics : yet his displeasure was as terrible to his people as that of the most ferocious leader of the ancient clans could have been to his followers.*

Banishment from the domains of such a paternal ruler was, in itself, most terrible : but here it was aggravated by disgrace ; as his well-known probity and lenity, warranted the inference, that it was no small misdemeanour that occasioned so heavy an infliction.

The community over which he presided was, like that of the Quakers, kept

* Whoever has heard of Strathspey, or the clan that inhabit it, can be no stranger to the virtues of this departed worthy, and their effects. To others, the detail might appear fabulous or exaggerated.

from degenerating by the expulsion of unworthy members.

I do not mark him by his title, though he possessed one. This good man, (to him a more appropriate and valued addition,) left so thick a population upon his property; and possessed so much of the despotism I have described in it, that he could, at any time, with the greatest ease, have called out a regiment from his domain, in addition to two which he had formerly raised within that territory.

It may be safely averred, that this revered name was never mentioned in the hearing of any of those willing vassals, without producing in his countenance a visible glow of grateful emotion.

How pleasing to trace the wide and deep effects of those quiet, unpretending virtues, more felt at home than heard of abroad, that made his people happy! How rich is the incense of praise that

rises round his grave, from sincere and sorrowful hearts! and how superfluous to add, "Peace be to his manes!"—

- "Farewell, pure spirit! vain the praise we give;
- "The praise you sought, from lips angelic flows.
- "Farewell, the virtues that deserve to live—
- "Deserve a nobler bliss than life bestows!"

It is painful to descend from the elevation of spirit produced by this "joy of grief," to trace the depressing and ruinous effects of a contrary conduct. Depressing to the vassals, and ruinous to the master.

To the vassals, banishment is not ruin in the worldly sense of the word, though it produces very great depression, both of spirit and character. They do but live and labour at home; and to live merely to labour, and labour merely to live, is the general fate of the very poor every where besides, though deprived of the solace of life,—robbed of ghosts, and dreams, and waking visions, and wai

derous voices, which are much too local to follow them beyond the Grampians.

Still they may eat,—perhaps, oftener, and drink, perhaps, more than formerly.* Their industry may be more productive, and more paths of adventure may, in time, open to them, though “dragging, “at each remove, a lengthening chain.”

It is in their feelings, chiefly, that they suffer. True, their feelings, in a degraded and exiled state, do become more obtuse; and it is well for them that it is so. The grass that is daily trampled on, had not need to be a sensitive plant.

Yet the aborigines I am speaking of, while growing in their native soil, have their feelings and perceptions, not alive.

* Highlanders, till very lately, never made more than two stated meals; one at 11 in the forenoon, the other early in the evening. The first was called, in their language, the *little meal*; and the last, the *great meal*.

only, but acute. Adapted as the scenery and their early modes of thinking are to exalt imagination, and cherish a kind of romantic tenderness, whoever rudely tears them from their birth-place, and the tombs of their fathers, may be compared to Æneas, when he tore up the myrtle plants from the grave of Polydore, and saw the roots drop blood, at parting from the parent earth.

O that the lord of his native home would but regard the anguish of the expatriated highlander with the compunctious horror which this phænomenon excited in the breast of the pious chief!

A highland laird must be Cæsar or nothing. He must have authority and consequence, such as mere wealth cannot give. In short, he must have honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, or he must degenerate from his ancestors, and shrink under that degeneracy.

The whole system of life is so differ-

ent in the highlands, and every attempt at sudden improvement so entirely deranges it, that it is vain to expect the common comforts and conveniences exactly as one finds them in other countries. They are different comforts, procured and enjoyed in a different manner.

Any person who, after depopulating a highland estate, should endeavour to have a house like a villa on the Thames, with the like appertinances and accommodations, would fall very short in his expectations. The object would never be attained. The romantic and chivalrous spirit, so consonant to the wild scenery around, would be entirely banished with the inhabitants; and the imperfect mimicry of polished life, dear bought with desolation, could only sadden the dreary and forlorn prospect still more by the force of contrast. Magnificence sinks to littleness amidst the great

sublime of nature: Even—“retired leisure, that in trim gardens takes his pleasure,” is not there in his proper element. All the petty arts of rural decoration are here out of place.

To avoid incongruity, any slight degree of embellishment admitted, must be severely simple.

The heathen hoped to conquer the chosen people on plain ground; because “the gods of Judah were gods of the hills, not of the vallies.” This may truly be said of the household gods of the highlanders;—they are “gods of the hills, not of the vallies:” nor can the modes of the vallies succeed under their auspices.

There are a thousand peculiarities belonging to that mode of life, which cannot be separated from it, without the extinction of all enjoyment.

To enumerate the causes of this difference would be endless, and would lead

into a train of minute particulars, through which few would have patience to follow me. Hearty plain hospitality,—a stile of baronial dignity, “disdaining little delicacies,”—liberal and splendid holidays,—and great simplicity of life in the interims:—A total exclusion of fastidious taste, and of *littleness* in all its forms, even the forms of minute decoration, and petty attentions to petty conveniences, (the sure bane of all that is liberal, noble, and manly, in opinions and conduct,) should characterise a mountain chief.

Let no one smile at this: One must have lived *in* and *out* of polished society, to know how much the mind shrinks and diminishes, under the influence of endless wants and necessary nothings. When people live in the luxurious and fashionable world, they must needs comply with its customs; and perhaps they ought. But it is well to have a sanctuary among

the everlasting hills, to which the lover of nature may fly, when satiated with form and finery.

It is the high privilege and distinction of the strong superior mind, to accommodate itself with ease to the varieties of exterior circumstances.

Hercules did not wear his lion's skin, while spinning with Omphale: But when he renounced the distaff for the club, he resumed, with alacrity, his former garb and habits.

Custom is, to common minds, like the old European dresses, which sat to the shape with adhesive tightness, and were put on or off with difficulty.

Those capable of higher aims, and engrossed by greater objects, wear the drapery of custom, without being restrained by it, like an eastern habit, of whose flowing folds, the wearer can easily divest himself, and as easily resume them.

Without entering into the detail of undescrivable minutiae, the mention of one leading feature of dissimilarity from other countries, with its obvious results, will illustrate my principle of the necessity of "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," to the daily wants and comforts of a resident proprietor. So shall the lovers of innovation, and promoters of depopulation, "mark how a plain tale shall put them down."

Though a highland gentleman could divest himself of all manner of patriotic and patriarchal feeling, still the rites necessary for the worship of that modern goddess, conveniency, cannot be duly performed, without the assistance of willing vassals.

If a gentleman, for instance, should throw his whole estate into the hands of three or four strangers, and come to live at home, with hopes of rural quiet and rural enjoyment, sad experience will soon

convince him of his mistake. Though he should not happen to have that taste for rural occupation, without which, life must languish in such a country, he cannot subsist for a single month, without keeping some of the domain in his hands as a farm. The country round being a silent waste, an entire grazing can afford him nothing but mutton and wool. The few inhabitants bring grain, with great difficulty, from a distance. A farm he must have, and must cultivate, for bread to his household, and corn to his carriage-horses, his plough horses, and those that he must necessarily keep to bring, from great distances, those luxuries which his acquired habits have converted into necessaries. His very servants must live in a manner accounted luxurious by the frugal highlander: And of these, he must keep thrice as many as the old stile living required, and support them at the expence.

This is easily explained. The people who cultivated, in common, very small spots of arable land, soon finished their harvest. Living as they did, three-fourths of the year on potatoes, little grain was needed. The gentleman on whom they depended, had a comparatively extensive farm under cultivation. Winter, among these mountains, stays so late, and comes so early, preceded by "wet October's torrent flood," that the period both for sowing and reaping is very limited indeed. Consequently, if a gentleman has tenants, their own sowing and reaping is so soon over, that it is no hardship to them to come the usual time, three days in spring, and three in harvest, to forward their master's work.

This, in a corn country, would be a serious hardship, but here it is a thing of course, considered as an adjunct to the rent. So far from conveying the idea of oppression, it is really an exhilarating

spectacle to see forty or fifty people going out socially and cheerfully together to the field, and while they rapidly clear its surface, making the neighbouring hills echo with songs of other times, the rural glee, and the loud laugh of careless hilarity.

Without this prompt and powerful aid, the lord of the soil will be under the necessity of keeping a number of servants, sufficient for the spring and harvest work. These must be nearly idle above half the year, and must eat all the year round. Thus the crop they raise, by no means supports them, and their necessary retinue of horses. They are consequently obliged, like the virtuous woman, to bring their food from afar; and this importation furnishes a most wearisome and unprofitable employment for them in the void spaces of unoccupied time.

Another insuperable inconveniency at-

tending the want of tenants, is the impossibility of obtaining, without their aid, a sufficient quantity of firing to serve the purposes of a large establishment. All-powerful wealth is here unavailable. Turf cannot be purchased; nor are the great man's household adequate to the purposes of cutting and drying fuel in the short time allotted for that purpose. If he has no tenants, or has them not in his vicinity, he cannot pass the winter in the country, though so inclined.

It was a common thing for a gentleman, of very moderate estate, to have a hundred people in his peat-moss, and a very merry and convivial meeting it was, enlivened by no little rustic sport and mirth, and considered somewhat in the nature of a Saturnalia, or rural feast. Their food was carried to them, and consumed on the spot. It was in greater quantity, and of better quality than usual; and there was a kind of custom-

ary licence for taunting and jeering on that occasion. One heard, the whole year after, of satirical wit, tales, anecdotes, and sarcastic sayings, that originated in the peat-moss. Any gentleman, whether possessing property or not, who was popular, and ready to assist the poor in their difficulties, might expect a day in the moss, as they were wont to term it, and could have them longer for payment.

But with those who banish their followers, this want cannot be supplied. The daily wants of a large establishment, at a very great distance from market, it is equally difficult to supply, where the country is one forlorn sheep-walk.

The laird's kindly tenants, in the older time, and still in many places, paid a part of their rent in what is called *kain*, consisting of a stated quantity of poultry and eggs, and, in some instances, lambs:

and wedders. This kept always a fullness in the house, and promoted a pleasing and popular intercourse.

When the good woman brought her kain, the lady of the mansion, not only ordered her to eat in her presence, but graciously inquired for her family and welfare; and found no mean satisfaction in listening to language, eloquent, respectful, and impressive. The kain was a due, yet received as a gift, and there was a constant intercourse of kindness. Powder, shot, snuff, and simple medicines, were bestowed with courteous liberality; and fish, game, kids, and lambs, in their season, came in as gifts from all quarters.

But how incomprehensible is this strife betwixt graciousness and gratitude, to those who have not witnessed the manners of past times; and how different was such a household, from the cold and hungry state, to which wealth cannot

give warmth or plenty. It is the total impossibility of procuring the very necessaries of life, without great expence, that drives the owner of depopulated districts, to the sad resource of an entire town-life.

The result, as I formerly expressed it, is ruinous. Any one, accustomed to that sort of dignity and consequence which a person of this description enjoys at home, can ill brook the want of distinction, where the walks of life are crowded with the opulent and well educated. He still pants for the pre-eminence, which he has thrown away at home, and cannot recover abroad. The wretched want he feels of his irrecoverable consequence, tempts him to seek the renewal of it, by a showy and expensive stile of living in the world. In this, after all his efforts, he may be exceeded by those whom he despises, for not having what he has voluntarily renounced.

The probable result of this estrangement from his first love are too obvious to need explaining. Meantime it is certain, born as all such are, to act and think for others, the father of a country is not to be the pupil of impulse, or, by any means, to let his feelings overweigh his judgment; far less to allow his sympathy for the temporary feelings of others overbalance his attention to their permanent comfort and interest.

In some instances, a sheltered glen or fertile strath, under an indulgent master, is over-peopled. The drain of armed levies, which carries off so many, and of emigrations, which takes away many more, do not together check population so much as the small pox. This destroying angel or spirit, was not to be offended, by expressing her ungracious name. She was always spoken of as *'m boiadch*, the

beauty. It was among children, that this disease generally made its ravages.*

Whether they revered this ideal personage, as particularly commissioned to remove the young and innocent from the evils of life, to early happiness; or whether they dreaded her as a permitted agent of evil, and feared to incense her, by mentioning her under the description of *breackk*, is difficult to decide. Perhaps the appellation was literally applied to denote the appearance of this imaginary being, who, I have been *credibly* informed, has been sometimes visible, leaning on the grey down, over the bed of dying infants, and wearing the form of a beautiful majestic woman, attired in green.

* The real name of this disease, in their language, is *Breackk*; which signifies a broken or variegated surface. They are on no ceremony with the inoculated small-pox, which they call boldly "*Breackk ri Leigh*,"—The Doctors' small-pox.

The genuine old highlander considers ignorance of any of those ancient superstitions with the same illiberal contempt with which we should regard a person who was ignorant of the name of the first performers on the stage, or the most distinguished leaders of fashion.

The *boiadch* was, among the ancient highlanders, like Marriataly in Kehamma, the goddess of the poor. But now that she is disarmed and dethroned, and that patients are no longer smothered with ill-judged care, the highland population would overflow without some sluice of emigration. It is a necessary evil which, properly conducted, may, like all other evils, be productive of good. The hive must swarm; but let it swarm regularly and collectively; and let some pains be taken to attend to its movements, and direct its flight; and let not, in the name of patriotism and humanity, the old hive be emptied.

That the highlanders should, in any foreign land, preserve the poetry and traditions which keep their ancient spirit alive, it were needless to expect.

Those local muses are like spirits that haunt old towers or manor houses. They are inseparably connected with the spot to which they belong,—have perpetual references to the scenes they celebrate,—and become unintelligible elsewhere. Yet, though the volatile spirit should evaporate, much remains, that, when they remove in a body together, may be transmitted beyond the Atlantic, and take root in a new soil. Hardihood, patience, contempt for dangers and difficulties, habitual dexterity in hunting and fishing, and an alacrity in meeting exigencies:—All these, with the additional advantage of being accustomed, in a rude and artless manner, to form their own buildings, tools, and utensils, particularly qualify them for the sylvan

life, peculiar to new settlers. Of the necessity of a social removal for their future welfare, they seem themselves abundantly sensible.

In various instances, a set of illiterate peasants have, when forced to remove, gone about it in a most systematical manner. They have themselves chartered a ship, and engaged it to come for them, to one of their highland ports, and a whole cluster of kindred, of all ages, from four weeks to four score years, have gone in mournful procession to the shore. The bagpipes meanwhile playing before them a sad funereal air, and all their neighbours and relations accompanying them on board to bid a last farewell.

Those kindred groupes have gone on with the same union and constancy beyond the Atlantic. Far different from the single adventurers that yearly emigrate to the states, they usually keep within the bounds of British America,

and prefer going very far into the interior, where they may get as much land as will accommodate them all, to separating for a more pleasant or advantageous settlement.

How desirable that those associate bands of brothers, who carry with them such a principle of union, and such a desire of preserving the sacred fire of their first principles and attachments—how desirable, I say, would it be, that they should be encouraged to preserve, as much as is compatible with removal, their former character and opinions. They cannot afford any inducement to prevail on a clergyman, or even a schoolmaster to accompany them: Yet what a divine charity would it be, to send out a missionary with a small salary, to preach to them in their own language, and support their souls in the wilderness, with the bread of life.

The want of such instruction, and of

such a bond of union is severely felt by those poor exiles in Upper Canada. In some instances they have, for want of this and other mental indulgences, given themselves up almost entirely to the chase, and relapsed into a state little better than savages.

There are some who have, in many respects, adopted nearly the same mode of living with their neighbours the American Indians; going, in winter, many days' journey into the pathless forests, to pursue the bear, the beaver, and the buffalo; lying for nights together in the snow; and adopting, with other habits of savages, their reserve and taciturnity.

Still, however, the love of their ancient home, and their original principles, continue unalterable.

Last year, there was a person at Montreal, I know not whether a regular clergyman or a mere itinerant, who

preached Gaelic, and, I think I was told, administered the sacraments in the same language.

Multitudes came from all the parts of Upper Canada, to hear the glad tidings once more in their native language. I heard, indeed, of some that came five hundred miles for that purpose. It may appear a paradox to say, that those who went across the Atlantic without any knowledge of the English language, were less likely to acquire it there than among their native mountains: this is, nevertheless, strictly true. By means of the schools dispersed over all the highlands, the English spreads quickly. Youths and maidens, who go to serve in the bordering countries, also bring it home. But when a shipful of emigrants go together to settle in the remote wilds, they adhere so much to each other, and are so entirely detached from others, that they lose any little English they

carried out, and speak nothing but Gaelic.

Emigrations have been going on these fifty years and upwards; and there are numbers of people born in America, who never spoke a word of English in their lives. Not only so; but where they have grown wealthy, and been enabled to purchase slaves, they have taught them their own language. I myself have seen negroes, born in such families, who could not speak a word of English.

Music, poetry, and, indeed, imagination, do not seem to bear transplanting. The language remains; but its delicacies and its spirit evaporate.

Enthusiasm and superstition seem to die together; and Donald is afraid of nothing but wolves and rattlesnakes, when once he gets beyond the mighty waters of the west. His devout propensities, however, still continue, and

require but a little encouragement shoot out and flourish with fresh vigour.

How melancholy, even in a political view, to let those energies of mind which devotion nourishes, die away ; and to see people inclined to make so much of a little knowledge, relapse into profound ignorance !

Four or five missionaries, who were masters of the Gaelic language, and qualified and disposed, not only to preach but to teach to read the Scriptures in that congenial and expressive tongue would do incalculable good in British America.

These poor well-meaning exiles have even in their expatriated state, a more than common claim on the maternal feelings of the parent country.

How very immaterial would be the expence, and how unspeakable the advantage, of supplying their spiritual wants,—of sowing the good seed in t

soil softened by tender sorrow, while it is moist with the tears of parting anguish! How sweet to those subdued and melted souls, to be enabled, in social worship, to lift up their voices in sacred chorus, with the words so dear to every pious highlander: “*Shi Dhia fhein ’m buachalich*”—“The Lord himself is my shepherd!”* And how melancholy to allow the fire that keeps the poor banished heart warm, even in exile, to languish into extinction for want of a favouring breath of instruction; that they may be thus forced to hang the harp of sacred melody on the willows, by those unknown streams, till they literally know not how to sing the Lord’s song in a strange land.

If their original impressions, the pious fervour which serves as a resource in this hopeless alienation, be once allowed

* Psalm xxiii.

to languish into extinction, the wish for instruction will diminish, as the power of procuring it increases. But at present, while the desire continues in full ardour, and the power is entirely withheld, if the spiritual wants of this well-meaning people were attended to, the union, industry, and good morals, that are the invariable result of strong impressions of religion, would soon enable them to procure for themselves this hallowed and much desired luxury.

New settlers, that can barely exist till they draw subsistence from the bosom of the earth, may in a very few years have abundance of food and clothing; but then, from the remoteness of their situation, they have nothing that they can turn into money, to answer so desirable a purpose.

How auspicious an omen would it be to the beginning of a new reign, if the golden sceptre of a compassionate sove-

reign were extended to these remote, yet faithful subjects! How earnestly would they pray for him, whose munificence should enable them to worship together in their native tongue, and to learn, through that medium, to “Fear God, and honour the king!”

The taste for knowledge, which would return to them (the highlanders) with this best knowledge, would do much to revive and preserve their national character. How far this last is calculated to make them good soldiers, good subjects, affectionate relatives, and faithful adherents, I leave the patient and candid reader of these pages to judge.

To nationality, and even to fond partiality, I plead guilty. Those may have insensibly kindled emotion, sufficient to give a glow to my language, on some occasions, unsuitable to the calmness of cool discussion or sober narrative: Yet I think my facts prove more than my

reasonings; and of the authenticity of those there is no room to doubt. To borrow a phrase from Scotch law, they are of "notour authority."

Of those visionary facts which I relate, merely as illustrations of the power of an imaginative habit of mind to impose upon the senses, and mislead the judgment, it is enough for me that I have not the merit of inventing them, and that I relate them merely as I heard them. I do not write for those that require to be told, that they are here preserved merely as indications of the state of mind existing in that period of civilization, the memorials of which I have endeavoured to preserve.

I have been minute, because the fine shadings of character can only be traced through minutiae;—I have been tedious, because investigation of what few comprehend must always be tedious: Yet I am satisfied, because I have, however

imperfectly, preserved much that would otherwise perish. And I flatter myself, that the genuine lovers of truth and nature will regard with an eye of favour the lineaments thus feebly pourtrayed; on account of their resemblance to the original, however defective the execution may be.

ESSAY X.

Upon the popular and well-known Song of Macgregor na Ruara.

THE title of this song, or monody, as it may more properly be called, is Macgregor na Ruara. Macgregor does not in this instance imply a surname: it is merely a patronymic; the poem affording internal evidence, that the warrior whose fate it deploras was a cadet of the Clan Grant, to whom the district of Glenlyon had at one time belonged; and who had been, as the poet supposes, unjustly deprived of his inheritance, and forced to wander as an outlaw, in continual danger from the vigilance of his pursuers.

He is called, Maegregor na Rua Strua, i. e. of the red or sanguine streams; which, to suit the music, has been abbreviated as we see it. This evidently was not his title, which he must have derived from Glenlyon. The epithet seems rather to have originated from some "strife of warriors," in which this hero had distinguished himself; in consequence of which, some mountain-stream had been for the time tinged with the blood of the combatants.

There is a well-known tradition that seems connected with this appellation, of a desperate engagement, which took place in times that answer to the era in which Macgregor fought and bled.

A party of that name engaged in a desperate combat a superior number of the Robertsons of Struan, on the borders of the river Tummel, where it is very narrow, with steep precipitous banks. The numbers on each side were small:

As far as I can recollect, they did not together amount to a hundred.

The conflict was desperate ; and the party, who were at length forced to fly were overtaken on the brink of this deep and rapid, though narrow river. One man, the only survivor of the vanquished party, by a most astonishing leap gained a rocky fragment in the midst of the channel, and, springing from thence to the other side, escaped his pursuers who felt more inclined to admire than emulate such a desperate exploit.

There is some reason to suppose, from the intrinsic evidence contained in this song, that it was composed during Montrose's wars. These were peculiarly fatal to the highlands of Scotland.

The two greatest men in the kingdom who, besides political differences, were inflamed with deadly rancour against each other, stirred up the ancient feud and animosities between different clans

to serve each their own purposes. So deceitful is the human heart, that it is hard to say, whether the virtuous Montrose and the pious Argyle did not persuade themselves that they were merely acting for the public good, while the means they made use of to promote what each considered as such, were so amply calculated to gratify their private animosity.

Never were means better suited to the ends of their respective leaders. A highlander felt the glory of his chief, in which the honour of his clan was included, paramount to every other consideration. Hence that implicit obedience, and that blind and headlong fury, with which the sanguinary orders of those exasperated rivals were carried into effect; and hence, for a time, the sense of good and evil, in what regarded war and rapine, seemed to slumber in every breast. Confiscation and outlawry became so fre-

quent, that they were far from being accounted a disgrace: On the contrary, every person so suffering was considered by his own party as a martyr to principle.

Yet while the smothered fires of private feuds were thus blown into flame, to add violence to the general conflagration, the muses do not seem to have been altogether silenced, nor private virtue entirely extinguished.

The fidelity, and even the humanity of individuals in these calamitous times, have been commemorated in ever-living verse: And even the simple tribute of sorrow now under our consideration, affords a proof of feeling and attachment worthy of remembrance.

Besides the strong ties of affinity held so sacred here, there were others that formed a bond of no small endearment. In the highlands, the children of gentlemen were always given out to nurse;

on this simple principle, that such a one could never have too many children, or too many adherents. The more sons the better : These were the ornament and defence of the clan. The more daughters, still the better ; for these formed ties by which useful alliances were procured : And the more foster-brothers and sisters that were created by the nursing of these children, the more a family had of adherents attached to them, with a fervour and fidelity beyond example.

Of this I remember a striking instance in our own times. A near relative of the writer of this discussion, being on service with the 42d regiment, when it was sent, with other troops, on a vain attempt to raise the siege of Bergen op Zoom : They lay entrenched for some time near the French lines. Some rash and unlikely project was formed for surprising a redoubt held by the enemy, in

the night ; which, I think, did not after all succeed. It was, however, attempted with great secrecy at midnight—“ moonless midnight.” An officer of the 42d was among the number of the proposed assailants ; but no privates from that regiment, to the great grief of that officer’s foster-brother, who would willingly have accompanied him.

The party left the trenches with the utmost silence and secrecy ; but from the utter darkness, and their imperfect knowledge of the ground, became confused, and so bewildered, that they knew not exactly where to proceed.

Fraser of Culduthil, the officer already mentioned, in the act of getting over the remains of an inclosure which stopped his path, felt his feet entangled in something. Putting down his hand to discover the cause, he caught hold of a plaid, and then seized the owner, who seemed to grovel on the ground. He

held the caitiff with one hand, and drew his dirk with the other, when he heard the imploring voice of his foster-brother. —“ What the d—l brought you here ?” “ Just love of you, and care of your per- son.” “ Why so, when your love can do me no good, and has already done me evil ? And why encumber yourself with a plaid ?” “ Alas ! how could I ever see my mother, had you been killed or wounded, and had I not been there, to carry you home to the surgeon, or to Christian burial ; and how could I do either, without my plaid to wrap you in !” —I cannot recollect the sequel of the adventure ; but upon enquiry, it was found, that the poor man had crawled out on his hands and knees between the centinels, then followed the party at some distance, till he thought they were approaching the place of assault, and then again crept in the same manner on the ground beside his mas-

ter, that he might be near him unobserved.

This faithful adherent had too soon occasion to assist at the obsequies of his foster-brother ; for Culduthil, looking over the edge of the trench, to view the approaches of the enemy, was killed by a cannon-ball in a few days after.

This subject of the tenderness of these kind of attachments, would admit of much farther illustration ; but I suppress many curious and authentic facts, to return to the foster-brother of Macgregor.

But, first, I have chosen this very popular and pathetic song to translate and illustrate, not merely as it is pathetic or popular, but that I do not know of any composition which, in the same bounds, exhibits a picture so correct and lively, both of the manners of the age, and of the miseries resulting from a state of society so licentious and unsettled as that must needs be, where the

power of the laws, as it were, are suspended, or made subservient to the fury of partizans.

I have made a metrical translation of the first fourteen verses of this song many years since, which will be found at the end of this essay.

I shall here insert the entire song literally translated, and shall add a comment on each verse, because each verse contains an allusion to some ancient custom, which can, in such a series of explanation, be most clearly illustrated.

There were two kinds of foster-brothers, bound to each other by the kindly ties I have mentioned. One were the children of the person by whom the child was nursed; the other, which was but of rare occurrence, were the children of other gentlemen who happened to be nursed by the same person.

This could not often take place, because people generally found qualified

nurses within their own bounds. But when such a tie was thus created, it was very binding. The *Cho Alt*, for that was the term by which this relation was signified, was the nearer for being the child of one's nurse; but he was the dearer for being one's equal, born in the same rank, bred to the same pursuits, and having, as it were, an inherent title to be one's chosen friend.

In this relation, as will hereafter appear, the author of the poem in question stood to the deceased warrior. He bitterly laments his violent death; and laments it the more, as it appears to have been occasioned by his own rashness, in neglecting various precautions given him by his *Chomh Alt*. These unavailing counsels, however, the latter repeats with a kind of mournful retrospection. They contain many curious particulars that mark the manners then prevalent,

and the anxious and precarious life of an outlaw.

I have endeavoured to transfuse some of the poetical spirit of the original into the metrical translation. To that, the epithet of fidelity may more properly be applied, because the perusal of it will leave an impression on the English reader, more resembling that produced on the imagination of a highlander by the original, than can possibly be done by a literal translation. The last, however, conveys with more distinctness and accuracy those facts and images which elucidate ancient manners.

The first verse is a chorus, repeated at the close of every stanza; and the song, tedious as it may appear to those who neither know its history nor feel its pathos, is always sung throughout, and meets with attention the hundredth time of repetition.

- “ My sadness, great sadness,
“ Deep sadness, lies on me.
“ I am oppress'd with sadness deep and dark,
“ Which I shall never conquer.
- “ Caused by Macgregor na Rua Strua,
“ Whose due was Glenlyon.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ By Macgregor of the banners,
“ Who was accompanied by the clamour of pipes.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ By his badge, from the pine,
“ He was known, when ascending the heights.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ His arrows were highly polished,
“ And decked with the plumes of the eagle.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ Arrows richly adorned,
“ As might suit the son of a king,
“ Held gracefully in the dexterous hand of the so
“ Murdoch.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ Though struck by a peasant
“ I should utter no complaint.
“ My sadness, &c.
- “ Though I were deeply injured,
“ Who but thyself would avenge me.
“ My sadness, &c.

“ Those that would revenge my wrongs

“ Are low in the chapel to the eastward.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Those that would support my cause,

“ It wounds me to think, are to me lost forever.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ My beloved *Choaltan*.*

“ Lie with their heads low in the narrow bed.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Thou also art in a narrow shroud of thin linen,

“ Without silk, or fitting ornaments.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Thou soughtest not, to adorn thy funeral weeds,

“ The high-born dames of thy country.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ To thee I oft proffered counsel,

“ Wouldst thou but have taken it.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ The time, said I, thou goest to the house of drinking,

“ Drink there no second draught.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Take the cup of cheerfulness standing ;

“ Guarding thy valour with caution.

“ My sadness, &c.

* His foster brothers.

“ Be not dainty of thy drinking vessels :

“ The horn or juniper *quai*ch may suffice.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Let winter be to thee as autumn,

“ And the first bleak days of spring as summer,

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Make thy bed on the o’erhanging rock,

“ And let thy slumbers be the lightest,

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Though the squirrel be nimble,

“ By art it may be entangled,

“ My sadness, &c.

“ Though the spirit of the hawk be coy and lofty,

“ By watchful dexterity she may be taken.

“ My sadness, &c.

“ My sadness, great sadness,

“ Deep sadness lies on me.

“ I am oppress’d with sadness deep and dark,

“ Which I shall never overcome.”

VERSE 1.

“ Macgregor na Rua Strua,

“ Whose due was Glenlyon.”

The meaning of this verse was, that the lamented chief, whom the song was

meant to celebrate, was, or ought to have been proprietor of Glenlyon, and was unjustly deprived of it.

There is an existing tradition, which points out, how this hapless warrior might have attained the patronymic of Macgregor.

When it so happened, that a person belonging to any name left the district, ruled and protected by his chief, to settle elsewhere; his children, instead of being called by the name of the clan, were denominated from his christian name; as, for instance, Gregor being a frequent surname among the Grants, the son of the expatriated individual of that name, was called Macgregor, which became the common appellation of his descendants: They, in the mean time, being considered, and considering themselves as cadets of the clan Grant, and entitled to wear their badge, and share all their honours and privileges.

This Macgregor, as has been already observed, appears to have been possessed of Glenlyon, but exiled and outlawed by the Argyle faction.

VERSE 2.

“ By Macgregor of the banners,

“ Who was accompanied by the clamour of pipes.”

By “ Macgregor of the banners,” is denoted a person of rank and consequence, sufficient to entitle him to have those warlike ensigns carried before him. The clamour of pipes, by which he was attended, is a similar indication of his consequence.

It is observable, that the sound of the pipes here is denominated clamour, not music.

This is perfectly consonant with the ideas entertained of this instrument, by the people whose national music it has been most erroneously accounted,

One might, with equal justice affirm; that the drum and spirit-stirring fife were the national music of the English.

The harp was, in fact, the national music of the highlands; of which their songs, adages, and legends of all kinds, afford sufficient proof.

During the cruel wars between king's men and queen's men, in the minority of James VI. the unity of the clans was in a great measure broken.

A sanguinary spirit was introduced; and the sweet sounds drawn by love and fancy, or by grief or tenderness, from the trembling strings of the *clarsach*, gave way to the ruder strains of martial music, which the bagpipe was so much better suited to convey.

Still this did not supply the place of that instrument, so dear to bards and heroes, the use of which was in some degree continued, till the sanguinary conflicts, in the time of the civil

wars, destroyed, for a season, all the functions of music, but those of summoning the tribes to war, animating the battle, and bewailing its victims.

For these purposes, the harsh and bold, or querulous and mournful strains of the pipe, were best adapted.

The voice of music, such as delights and soothes the ear and the imagination, was hushed for a time: And, during his incursions to the low country, the highlander found means to seize

——“ the brisk, awakening viol,

“ Whose soul-entrancing voice he loved the best.

And which has ever since entirely supplanted the harp, and may now be justly stiled their national music.

There are, indeed, few houses in the highlands where there is not a violin.

Another instrument, the very mention of which seems to imply ridicule, they manage so, as to produce sounds more

sweet and powerful, than can easily be believed. The Jew's harp, as they use it, forms no contemptible vehicle for their touching melodies.

There are very few among the lower class who do not play upon it, and many play on two at once, which, with the accompaniment of a female voice, produces more effect than can well be imagined.

The bagpipe, unless in extreme cases, where no other instrument could be had, was never played within doors, except in the instance I am about to refer to.

It attended marriage processions, because it was the only instrument on which one could play, while walking along with the crowd assembled on such occasions; and funerals for the same reason.

The mistake of supposing this instrument the favourite, or national one of the highlands, was a very natural one.

It arose from strangers being always deafened with its clamour in the halls of chieftains, where it was a customary piece of state to have the piper playing all the time of dinner.

A foreigner, whose name I forget, having visited the court of Queen Elizabeth, has left us a minute account of the ceremonial used in the meals of this wise princess, who took care to fence her innate dignity, with all the "pride, pomp, and circumstance" necessary to impress the common mind with an exalted idea of royalty.

When the queen went to dinner, that circumstance was announced by a flourish of trumpets and kettle drums in the great hall; and music continued to play all the time of the repast.

In the same manner, it was usual for the piper to march through the great hall, playing different martial tunes, and others appropriated to his tribe, all the

time his chief and his guests were at dinner: for a dinner without guests was not supposed to take place in the house of a chief.

Every clan had three appropriate tunes peculiar to itself, besides others of local significance. These were the gathering of the clan, its march, and its lament. Strains calculated to rouse valour, to nurse enthusiasm, and to add strength to those powerful ties that held together the descendants of a common father.

It should have been observed, that every chief had also a banner, on which his device and motto was inscribed or embroidered.

Thus "Macgregor of the banners," round whom was the clamour of pipes, was a poetical mode of describing the rank of this lamented personage.

VERSE 3.

“ By whose badge, from the pine,

“ He was distinguished when ascending the heights.”

This clearly points out the family of the warrior: However distant the cadet might remove, or whatever patronymic he might assume, still he wore the badge or bourgeonet, as Shakespeare calls it, of his clan: He retained the remote patronymic of the founder of his family, as Clanalpin of the Grants, Clanchallin of the Campbells, &c. and he wore the same insignia on his banner, to prove his claim to a remote origin, as well as his alliance with a powerful clan.

The badges of the different tribes were of no small importance in their military arrangements, and all the forms of life prevalent among them. Their habits being all of the same form, and, indeed, the same colours, differently arranged, it was necessary, that, in time

of war, they should be able at once to distinguish their kinsmen or allies from their enemies; and, at all times, it was convenient to know the individuals of this or that family.

To ascertain and discriminate those separate divisions of society, every clan wore a different *set*, as they stile it, of tartan; and what formed a more conspicuous distinction, every clan wore a badge on the side of the bonnet, which ascertained the tribe of each individual.

This badge was always of some plant or tree that does not shed the leaf, otherwise the distinction could not exist in winter.

The Grants have the fir or pine—the Macleods the juniper—the Frazers the yew—the Macintoshes the box—the Mackenzies the holly—the Macdonalds the crimson heath—another clan, whom I do not remember, the blue heath, &c. Macgregor's badge ascertained his ori-

gin from the Clan Alpine, all the branches of which wear this symbol...

VERSE 4.

" His arrows were highly polished,

" And decked with the plumes of the eagle,"

Still feeding his grief with sad recollections, the mourner calls back every little circumstance that evinced the dignity and importance of his friend. The eagle's plumes, and other decorations of his arrows, seem to refer to a pretty late period, immediately before these weapons were disused.

" That short brown shaft, sae meanly trimm'd,

" Looks like poor Scotland's gear,"

says the boastful Norwegian in Hardyknute.

The ballad is of dubious authenticity, but the language and sentiment are adopted from those indubitably ancient.

In latter times, the contempt in which the Scots archery had been held by the English and Norwegians, acted as a stimulus to the Scottish bowmen; yet, in the highlands, they were so far back in this respect, that it was only the high-born warrior whose shafts were polished and ornamented.

VERSE 5.

“ Arrows richly adorned,
“ As might suit the son of a king.”

Still he dwells with mournful complacency on all the marks of distinction and superiority which surrounded the fallen hero.

VERSE 6.

“ In the excelling hand of the son of Murdoch,
“ Held forward direct and gracefully.”

Murdoch, it would appear, was the father of the outlaw; Macgregor being a

patronymic derived from a more remote ancestor, who had left Strathispey at an earlier period.

VERSE 7.

“ The blow of a peasant

“ I should bear without complaining :”

i. e. my spirit is so extinguished by this misfortune, that even the blow of a menial could not rouse my indignation.

VERSE 8.

“ Though I were deeply injured,

“ Who but thyself would redress me :”

i. e. I am left helpless : My friend, my guide, my protector is gone, and my sorrow is incurable.

VERSE 9.

“ Those who would support my cause,

“ It is my wound to think, are lost to me for ever.”

This manner of expressing a deep

feeling of sorrow is frequent in the Gaelic. "It is my wound that they are lost:"—"It is my wound to think, I have myself been faulty," &c.

VERSE 10.

"Those who would avenge my wrongs
Lie low in that chapel to the eastward."

The mourner here uses the plural: From whence it would appear, that there were others with Macgregor when he fell.

The chapel is an expression applied in the Gaelic to consecrated ground, where probably the vestiges of such edifices remain.

East or west, the highlanders use constantly in speaking of distances:—"I am going east to such a place:"—"When do you go west," &c.

VERSE 11.

“ Thou, alas ! art in a narrow shroud of thin linen ;
“ Without silk or fitting ornament.”

It would appear that the funeral of this warrior, like that of Ophelia, had been deficient in certain customary rites ; which omission, the sorrowing survivor dwells upon as an added cause of lamentation.

VERSE 12.

“ Thou soughtest not, to adorn thy funeral weeds ;
“ The high-born dames of thy country.”

It seems in these days, when all ornamental needle-work was peculiar to persons of superior education, that the ladies of a district used to meet together, to sew, with rare devices, the grave-clothes of any distinguished person.

VERSE 13.

“ Often have I offered thee counsel :

“ Wouldst thou but have taken it from me.”

He recurs to past days, and feeds his grief with the remembrance of the slightest counsels of fond affection, the neglect of which had finally proved so fatal.

VERSE 14.

“ When thou goest, said I, to the house of drinking,

“ Take there no second draught.”

A very necessary precaution, considering the social and convivial habits of the highlanders, who, when they went to such a place, rarely indeed parted without seeing “ the cup of cheerfulness” often circle round the jovial board; their gaiety, on these occasions, running like lightning flashes across the gloom of their wonted thoughtfulness.

The single draught in this verse particularly expressive of the conceptions which haunt the mind of him who knows that his life is hunted with malicious diligence. The anecdote of dogs on the borders of the Nile who always drank running, for fear of the crocodile. This is one of the most interesting images of habitual terror.

VERSE 15.

“ Take the cup of cheerfulness standing,
“ Guarding thy valour with caution.”

The image of perpetual vigilance and suspicion is continued through this verse which shews, that though he was courageous that the valour of his friend could not fail, he is more distrustful of his friend's valour. The ardour which more endeared Macgregor to his friend, makes his friend tremble the more for his safety.

VERSE 16.

“ Be not dainty of thy drinking vessels :

“ The horn or juniper *quaich* may suffice.”

In every gentleman's house, and, indeed, in every decent public-house, antecedent to the general use of glasses, there was a cup of silver, in which drink was presented to persons of consequence. The poorer people, and meaner public-houses, had a cup, in the same form, of pewter. But the horn or juniper *quaich* served to contain the beverage of the common people.

These homely vessels are recommended on this occasion, that the rank of Macgregor might not be betrayed by his fastidiousness.

The juniper *quaich*, as I have seen it preserved in old families, was, after all, no despicable utensil. It had a small, round bottom, little broader than a half-crown, adorned with silver in the inside.

It was surrounded by staves, which were of smooth, polished juniper and birch alternately; narrow at the bottom, and spreading wider, and growing broader to the top, till it took the form of a wide cup or small bowl. The staves, alternately dark and light, and the small and delicate hoops with which it was surrounded, rendered this no inelegant drinking-cup.

But the motive that produced this anxiety and precaution in his *Cho Alt*, was the fear that Macgregor's nicety about his drinking apparatus might be the means of his rank being suspected, and his path explored. All the arts of fond solicitude which he had thus exerted, rise, embittered by regret, to the retrospection of sorrow. It affords a sort of consolation too, that nothing which the vigilance of affection could suggest, had been omitted.

VERSE 17.

“ Let winter be to thee as autumn,

“ And the three first bleak days of spring as summer.”

i. e. To ensure your safety, and elude pursuit, support the inclemencies of winter, travel from place to place, and sleep in the open air, as others in less hazardous circumstances do in harvest.

The *Faoilteach*, or three first days of February, serve many poetical purposes in the highlands. They are said to have been borrowed for some purpose by February from January, who was bribed by February with three young sheep.

These three days, by highland reckoning, occur between the 11th and 15th of February: and it is accounted a most favourable prognostic for the ensuing year, that they should be as stormy as possible. If these three days should be fair, then there is no more good weather to be expected through the spring. Hence

the *Faoilteach* is used to signify the ultimatum of bad weather.

VERSE 18.

“ Make thy bed on the projecting crag,
“ And let thy slumbers be the lightest.”

Who can read this without recall
the image described by Collins :

“ Who throws him on the ridgy steep
“ Of some loose hanging rock to sleep.”

There is a striking coincidence between the most terrifying image of danger which the English bard could produce, and the real danger to which the highland bard invites his friend to repose himself, that a still greater one may be shunned. A crag overhanging water is meant in the original.

Death was the worst consequence that could result from all the perils that might thus occur. But to have been taken

ve by his enemies would have been disgraceful.

Thus it appears, that the bard, anxious as he was to save the life of his friend, was still more solicitous to preserve his honour. This seems finally to have been done ; for he fell in the combat with his pursuers, overpowered, we may suppose, by numbers.

VERSE 19.

“ Though the squirrel be nimble,
“ By art it may be entangled.”

VERSE 20.

“ Though the spirit of the hawk be coy and lofty,
“ By watchful dexterity she may be taken.”

In the progress of the images which pass through the afflicted fancy of this poet of nature, the workings of a sensitive mind in deep sorrow may be traced in their genuine process. He begins,

by lamenting, that the sorrow which fills his mind is increased by time and reflection. He complains, not only of the present sorrow, but of a consciousness that it is never to be overcome.

Macgregor, "In glittering arms and "glory drest," rises full before him. He hears his pipes sounding: he sees his banners waving. The graceful form of the hero, in act to loose the shafts of vengeance, appears to his imagination, only to aggravate the sense of his own forlorn and unprotected state. To his wounded spirit, this sense of privation recalls the scene of the fatal combat, the lost *Cho Altan*, who perished with his friend, and the narrow house, where, deprived of funeral honours, they are for ever hidden from his view. The ineffectual efforts he had made to warn this victim of feudal revenge,—the counsels faithfully given,—the hardships of a

hunted life,—all crowd on his remembrance, and busy his thoughts.

This “ short interval of weary woe,” sets his mind loose to frame figurative imagery, expressive of the theme of every thought—the slaughter of Macgregor. His discriminated sketch of the qualities of the nimble and sportive squirrel, and the coy and lofty goshawk, for that is the species of hawk meant by the word in the original, shews the close observation of nature, and the happy adaptation of imagery, which characterize the poet.

He speaks of his outlawry, without attempting to palliate or evade the circumstance, this being often the result of caprice, or the vindictive spirit created by inherited feuds.

The pathos of this song, in the Gaelic language, is much heightened by the reiteration of the first stanza, with which every verse is closed.

We, that are for ever hurried along the stream of existence, on the short, quick surges of incessant variety, have scarce patience to attend to our own sensations. But to those accustomed, in the language of the psalmist, “ to commune with their own heart, and be still,” this mournful monotony produces an effect on the unpractised ear, somewhat like what one feels on reading the fine passage in which Thompson describes the widowed stock-dove.

“ Again

“ The sad idea of her murdered mate

“ Across her fancy comes, again resounds

“ A louder song of sorrow through the grove.”

Metrical Translation of the Song of Magregor na Ruara.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, incessant returning,

Time still, as he flies, adds increase to my mourning.

While I think on Macgregor, true heir of Glenlyon,
Where still to sad fancy his banners seem flying.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

On Macgregor na Ruara, whose pipes far resounding,
With their true martial strain set each bosom a bounding,
The badge of Strathspey, from yon pine by the fountain,
Distinguish'd the hero, when climbing the mountain,

My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

The plumes of the eagle gave wings to his arrow,
And destruction flew wide from the weapon so narrow :
His shafts, highly polished and bright, were a treasure,
That the son of a king might have boasted with pleasure.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

When the brave son of Murdoch so gracefully held them,
Well pois'd and directed, no weapon excell'd them.
Now dead to the honour and pride I inherit,
Not the blow of a vassal could rouse my sad spirit.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

Though insult or injury now should oppress me,
My protector is gone, and nought else can distress me.
Deaf to my loud sorrows, and blind to my weeping,
My aid and support in yon chapel lie sleeping.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

In that cold, narrow bed they shall slumber for ever;
Yet nought from my fancy their image shall sever.

He that shar'd the ainal breast which my infancy nourish'd,
Now cold in the earth, leaves no trace where they flourish'd
My sorrow, deep sorrow, &c.

No obsequies string, his pale corpse adorning,
No funeral honours to soothe our long mourning,
No virgins high-burn, with their tears to bedew thee,
To deck thy pale corpse, and with flow'rets to strew thee.

My sorrow, deep sorrow, incessant returning,
Time still, as it flies, adds increase to my mourning.

The six following verses, though full of original imagery, and abounding in curious matter, would have rather a grotesque appearance, if faithfully translated into English verse; and without minute accuracy, the peculiarity of the delineation, in which its merit lies, would be lost.

The wild and plaintive melody to which it is sung, is not only familiar to the highlanders, but well-known, and frequently played in the south of Scotland.

In the fourth volume of Mr George

Thomson's Collection of Scotch Songs, the above translation may be found, adapted to the original tune.

To contrast the above sad image of fatal turbulence and hopeless anguish, and to complete the picture of highland life, I have added a song truly pastoral : Not, indeed, the production of entirely pastoral times, but the theme and delight of the enamoured milk-maid and the wandering shepherd.

I shall subjoin to the song, part of a letter written to Mr Thomson, and which he published with it, as a kind of introduction.

“ The verses of *Chrochallin* have lived from the days when agriculture was in its infancy, and continue still to soothe every fold, and lull every cradle in these wild regions.

“ A literal translation I do not pretend to give ; but I will venture to ap-

peal to every judge of Gaelic and of poetry, whether I have not rendered the *spirit* of this curious fragment of antiquity.

“ The changes which time and culture have effected on manners, are best traced in popular songs ; more particularly the Gaelic fragments, in which the transitions from the life of a hunter to that of a herdsman, and from that to the more laborious and stationary pursuits of agriculture, are strongly marked.

“ Anciently, the hunter was admired as a person of manly courage, who, in the pursuit of a livelihood, exerted the virtues of patience and fortitude, and followed Nature into her most sublime retirements. Herdsmen were then accounted the sons of little men,—sordid inferior beings, who preferred ease and safety to noble daring, and boundless variety,—and were considered to be as much below the hunter, as the cattle

they tended were inferior in grace and agility to the deer which the others pursued.

“ Interest, however, reversed such opinions: In process of time, the maidens boasted of the numerous herds of their lovers, and viewed the huntsman as a poor, wandering adventurer.

“ About this time, the song here translated seems to have been composed. The enamoured nymph, willing to think Colin as rich as others, talks in an obscure and figurative manner of the *cattle of Colin*, (chro Challin), and pursues the metaphor through many playful allusions to the deer, roes, fawns, &c. and their manner of sporting and feeding, in a stile too minute for translation. In the end, however, it appears, that the boasted cattle of Colin were no other than those wild commoners of nature, and his sole profession that of hunting.

“ I have endeavoured to preserve the tender simplicity of the original, and to

render almost literally the fond repetition of endearing epithets.

“ The love-songs of those days were the breathings of real passion : Nobody thought of that most absurd of all things, — a fictitious love-song.”

“ It is silly, sooth,

“ And dallies with the innocence of love,

“ Like the old age.”

My Colin, lov'd Colin, my Colin, my dear,
Who wont the wild mountains to trace without fear ;
Oh ! where are thy flocks, that so swiftly rebound,
And fly o'er the heath, without touching the ground ?

So dappled, so varied, so beauteous their hue ;
So agile, so graceful, so charming to view ;
O'er all the wide forest, there's nought can compeer
With the light bounding flocks of my Colin, my dear.”

My Colin, dear Colin, my Colin, my love,
Oh ! where are thy herds, that so loftily move ?
With branches so stately, their proud heads are crowned ;
With their motion, so rapid, the woods all resound.

There the birch trees hang weeping o'er fountains so clear:
noon-day they're sleeping round Colin, my dear ;

Oh ! Colin, sweet Colin, my Colin, my joy,
Must those flocks and those herds all thy moments employ ?

To yon waterfall's dashing I tune my sad strain,
And gather these violets for Colin in vain ;
At sun-set he said he would meet with me here,
Then where can he linger, my Colin, my dear ?

Oh ! Colin, my darling, my pleasure, my pride,
While the flocks of rich shepherds are grazing so wide,
Regardless I view them, unheeded the swains,
Whose herds scatter'd round me, adorn the green plains.

Their offers I hear, and their plenty I see ;
But what are their wealth and their offers to me ?
While the light bounding roes, and the wild mountain-deer,
Are the cattle of Colin, my hunter, my dear.

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

DEAR MADAM,

ACCEPT of a very unpolished and very literal translation of the "Song of the Owl;" popularly so called, from its being addressed to the sage and solitary bird of night, whom a particular circumstance had, in the hour of inspiration, associated with the equally forlorn and solitary hunter. Poet, perhaps, we might stile him: But this swan-like dirge being all that remains of his composition, it may be supposed to be merely the pic-

ture of his local haunts and habitual feelings, drawn by the pencil of pensive recollection, and heightened occasionally by the colouring of fancy.

A poem so long, and so connected,—so entirely original, and so evidently produced by individual feeling,—in which neither the tenderness of love, the ardour of heroic enterprise, nor the joys of convivial intercourse, have any share,—is certainly somewhat anomalous and extraordinary. It is on this account curious; and more so, as giving a faithful picture of what we do not find any where else delineated, and what must throw light upon the manner in which the human character adapts itself to a very peculiar mode of existence.

What passes in the mind of a solitary being, illiterate, yet not ignorant of the charities, attachments, and occupations of a mode of life very nearly approaching to complete civilization:—How the

sympathies of kindness and compassion;—the powers of feeling and imagination, are to be exercised in a life almost entirely passed in solitude, and under circumstances that seemingly tend to extinguish all finer feeling,—all that constitutes taste, and feeds enthusiasm,—and to form, as we should suppose, the character of a gloomy, sordid savage, intent only on procuring food, and devouring it in solitary safety:—How a person thus situated would think and act,—every one who loves to trace human nature through all its various modifications must be desirous to know: But from the incapacity of such persons to combine their reflections, or communicate their ideas, so as to make them intelligible to more enlightened enquirers, this chapter of the history of the human mind has hitherto been like a sealed book.

The cogitations or conversations of

those hermits, whom piety, wrought up to a pitch of enthusiasm, had secluded from society, affords no parallel. Their minds were elevated, by the fervours of devotion, above this limited span of existence, to wide views of boundless futurity, varied by the recollections which their former intercourse with active life afforded.

The visionary and superstitious mode of worship, common to all ascetic recluses, wrought up their minds to a state which fitted them for those abstracted reveries that peopled solitude with saints and angels,—with courteous spirits, pouring light and consolation on the soul,—or demons, permitted to try their faith and fortitude by strange and sundry temptations.

Thus constant food for meditation arose from the objects to which their attention was devoted; and the imagination was always kept awake by the vi-

sionary illusions which naturally arose out of the received articles of their faith.

In this case, it is easy to trace the operations of mind in a recluse excluded from general conversation, and those objects by which the attention of mankind in social life is most commonly engrossed. But this singular-offspring of fancy and memory, in which the sage, (who only became poet when no longer equal to the hardships of the chase,) unfolds his former thoughts and feelings, opens quite a new scene in the region of intellect. Here the power of the inventive and discriminating faculties are peculiarly exhibited;—The glowing fancy, that embellishes, with a thousand beauties of its own creation, scenes rugged and barren in the extreme to an ordinary mind.

The fine perception, and instinctive taste that discerns the slightest trace of

grace or beauty in sounds, in forms, or colours,—in every pleasing or sublime feature of the ever-varying face of nature,—the sympathies of tenderness, so consonant to the lively sense of admiration,—and the strong habitual attachment, that in some measure, losing the grasp of those departed friends of whom “only the mist remains,” seizes with fond enthusiasm on the glens and recesses they were wont to haunt,—on the rocks that echoed to their voices, and even the animals that were the objects of their pursuit.

All these strong lines of the poetical character, unfolding in a sphere so ungenial, and delineated by the faithful pencil of unassisted nature, are certainly worthy of attention; and even the minute detail of his pleasures and occupations, and the almost unconscious tribute he pays to his departed friends, adds to



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the fidelity of the picture a more perfect finishing and verisimilitude.

This faithful delineation of objects, minute and peculiar to the spot where the solitary hunter lived and died, renders the translation extremely difficult. In the Gaelic language, there are terms so happy and significant, made use of as names to particular rocks, bogs, glens, &c. that they at the same time convey an idea of their productions and form, and of the relations they stand in to neighbouring objects. These marking and felicitous appellations it is impossible to translate : whence much of the spirit of Gaelic poetry must evaporate with the imagery thus lost.

But before you enter on the perusal of this singular composition, it is worth while to trace the accidental circumstances that gave occasion to it, as well as to give a more particular account of its author.

Before, and indeed for some time after the year 1745, there were here and there, in remote glens in the highlands, persons whose chief subsistence was derived from hunting, and a few solitary individuals who devoted themselves entirely to it.

This they were obliged to do in the most silent and secret manner. The proprietors of the ground would not have suffered such continued slaughter : And more deer was killed by what was called "stalking," *i. e.* moving unperceived amidst their haunts, and then standing motionless to shoot them as they passed, than by chasing them with greyhounds ; which they could only do on remote moors or mountains.

Those habits of silence and watchful secrecy, together with abstinence from liquor, gave a peculiar cast to their countenance and character. They were grave, taciturn, and steady. They did

not entirely feed on the venison they caught, but brought it to the habitations of their friends, and shared with them of their common food. The skins they sold to procure clothing. They shot with arrows, long after such weapons had fallen into general disuse; the report of a gun rendering it unsuitable to the privacy of their pursuits.

Near the western extremity of the parish of Laggan, where the prospect appears at a little distance entirely shut in by mountains, is a beautiful little valley called Strathmashie, divided by a small river called the Maeshy, which descends through it, and discharges into the Spey. Loch Laggan lies about seven miles to the west.

This fine lake, (much resembling the Windermere in Westmoreland,) discharges itself into the west sea through the Spean. It is six or seven miles in length, and extends from south to north, be-

between those lateral chains of mountains that stretch in an easterly and westerly direction towards the sea from the centre of the Grampians.

This central spot, difficult of access, and covered with wood, has been of old accounted a secure retreat, peculiarly adapted to the chase; and here the kings of Scotland, when they resided betwixt Dunkeld and Lochaber, had their summer hunting-seat.

Of this, several testimonies remain. The parallel roads in Glenroy, for instance, which descend from the southern boundary of this lake; a dark forest of six miles in length, on the east side of the lake, which is the only vestige remaining of the *Sylvæ Caledonia*, which actually extended from Dunkeld to the extremity of the north; and two islands in the lake, on which are the ruins of buildings of high antiquity; one of which is called "Eilan nan Rhi," i. e. the

King's Island ; the other, " Eilan nan " Conn," the Dog's Island. Tradition assures us, that in one of these islands, the king and his train feasted in security after the chase ; and in the other, the hounds and their keepers were accommodated.

There is a place shewn here, where seven kings are said to be buried ; and a brook, which descends into the lake, is called " Alt Merikie," the Brook of the Standards, from their being usually placed there. Many other names of places in this retreat allude to the former occasional residence of those monarchs, who are supposed to have chosen this almost inaccessible retreat, with a view of pursuing their silvan sports undisturbed, during their wars with the Picts.

The banks of this lake, and the grassy and woody openings, or rather labyrinths, that terminate it at each end,

were of all places the most inaccessible. On each side of the lake, rising above the woods and verdure, were ledges of lofty and barren rocks; and in the intricate outlets at each end, rocks, bogs, and impassible waters, were so intermingled, that it required all the dexterity of the natives to find a path for themselves or their cattle. Here the military never found their way; and it is not long since any officer of civil law penetrated into this sanctuary of primitive highland manners.

A road is now about to be made, at the public expence, through this retreat, to lead from Athol to Lochaber. In the estimate given in for it, fifty bridges are calculated upon. Such is the expence and difficulty of pursuing Nature to her last retreats!

This district was inhabited by some families of Macdonalds; faithful, honest, and affectionate among themselves, but

famous for their depredations in carrying off cattle from the more open and fertile countries. Indeed, they were not exactly the inhabitants of this secluded spot that were guilty of these acts of violence. Amidst the plenty which their streams and hills afforded, they might say, with the same intention as the Shunamite, " I dwell among my own people."

The Lochabrians, ever famous for their depredations, made their descent through this wild district, so impervious to strangers, and carried off the cattle through the same intricate paths to which the bard alludes, in his conversation with the owl. Her assertion of her innocence is a figure by which he justifies the people of the glens, as he calls them.

Where the chains of mountains open to the east and west end of the lake, rises, in the centre, a solitary mountain, called, from its form, "*Stronavatie*,"

It stands, surrounded by rocks, bogs, and precipices, with a mixture of wood, and beautiful scenery, and seems to be a central point between the two seas, in the midst of the Grampians. From the side of this mountain projects the "Craig Guanich," or Rock of Security, as the name implies.

This hill, this rock, the deep recesses, and lofty, naked mountains around it, seems to have bounded the excursions of the hunter in question. He piques himself upon being a nursling of the Craig Guanich, and on having spent his life among the roes and deer; with the beauty and elegance of whose forms he seems to have been much delighted. He mentions, with tender regret, the hunters, the companions of his youth, who were of the same kindred; the inhabitants of this district being chiefly Macdonalds, to which clan the hunter also belonged. Of a different family of the same name

were the depredators to which he alludes.

It is observable, that the last *gentleman* known to have carried off a *spreath* of cattle, and the only individual who ever, (under the old regime,) suffered death for such a crime, was Macdonald of Bohuntine in Lochaber, not far from this secret vale.

The Laird of Grant, then Sheriff of Inverness-shire, had him condemned and executed by his own authority; which event produced a general sensation of awe and astonishment, such as is now excited by condemning a man to death for fighting a duel; a crime equally condemned by the laws of God, and equally sanctioned in these days by false notions of honour and gallantry.

To return to our hunter.—Becoming too old to pursue the chase any longer on his beloved Craig Guanich, he came down to the inhabited glen of Stramashie,

and sheltered with some of his kindred there.

One night, in autumn 1772 or 1773, I am not sure which, as he was sitting quietly in the cottage where he resided, some cattle-drovers came in, called for whisky, and began to divide their profits. They addressed some conversation to him, and offered him liquor. Habitually sober and taciturn, he declined both, and sat, looking on in an absolute silence. At first they were provoked at finding him so unsocial, and finally suspected him of being a spy, waiting to discover what profit they made of their bargains.

They got up in a rage, and turned the poor hunter out of doors. He took shelter in a barn, and had lain long in solitary meditation, when he discovered a more suitable associate. This was an owl, seated on a beam opposite to him. He was too much chagrined by his late

the term of enjoyment already allotted him, reminds one of him who

“ From Nature’s temperate feast rose satisfied,

“ Thank’d Heaven that he had liv’d, and that he died.”

This translation is so difficult, that I think I should not have attempted it at all, if I had not found you take so lively an interest in one, who, being neither hero, lover, nor *bon vivant*, has nothing in common with common minds, and can only excite interest in those who love Nature well enough to follow her into her most secret recesses. To please you, I have translated it; and, to please myself, I shall some time or other polish and versify it.—With best respects to Miss ——, whose benevolent regards I depend upon for my hunter,—I am, dear madam, yours, &c.

*Address to the Owl; or, as it is called in the Gaelic
Language, the " Song of the Owl."*

OH, wailing owl of Srona !
Mournful is thy bed this night ;
If thou hast lived in the days of Donnegal,
No wonder thy spirit is heavy.

OWL.

" I am coeval with the ancient oak,
" Whose roots spread wide in yonder moss.
" Many a race has past before me,
" And still I am the lonely owl of Srona."

HUNTER.

Now since old age has overtaken thee,
Confess as to a priest,
And fearless tell to me,
The tales of days long past.

OWL.

" Rapine or falsehood I knew not,
" Nor grave nor sanctuary did I violate ;
" To the mate of my youth I was faithful :—
" I am old and forlorn, but guiltless.

“ Yet I have seen the valiant son of Britta,
“ And Fergus, the powerful champion ;
“ And the gray-haired Torraddon of Srona :
“ These were the heroes mighty and faithful.”

HUNTER,

Thou hast well begun, and must not cease :—
Relate what further thou hast seen :—
These had passed away,
Before Donnegal abode in the Fersaid.

OWL.

“ I saw the mettled Alexander of the spears ;—
“ The most renowned chief of Albin.
“ Often have I listened to his voice,
“ While clearing the hills of the chace.

“ I saw after him the gallant Angus—
“ Scarcely inferior.
“ In the Fersaid was his dwelling ;
“ And his work, the mill of Altaraich.”

HUNTER.

Many battles and inroads
Came then from Lochaber.—
Where, bird of the gloomy brow,
Was the place of thy concealment ?

OWL.

“ When the sounds of terror were heard,
“ And plundered herds were passing,
“ I turned aside from the sight,
“ And dwelt in the Craig Guanich.

“ Some of my kindred dwelt
“ Between the Inch and the Fersaid :—
“ Some, on the sands by Loch Laggan,
“ Where their evening cries were heard.”

HUNTER.

Rock of my heart ! the secure rock—
That rock where my childhood was cherished !
The joyous rock,—fresh, flowery, haunt of birds,—
The rock of hinds, and bounding stags—

The rock encircled by the sound of the chase,
Which it was my delight to frequent.
Where melodious rose the cry of the noble hounds,
Driving the herds of deer in their fastnesses.

Loud were the eagles round its precipices,—
Sweet its cuckoos and swans.
More chearing still the bleating
Of its fawns, kid-spotted.

Sweet to me, as the murmurs of the tufted wood,
At the elbow of the steep craggy rock :

And the light-formed hind, with slender limbs,
Reposing under the foliage, in the sultry heat.

She is nursed by the herbage, and hart's tongue :
The stag is her beloved and only mate :—
Mother of the sportive, small spotted fawn—
Spouse of him that abides.*

Swiftly he scours the plain,—
He makes not his bed in the dust.
The top of the fresh tufted heather
He prefers to the softest couch.

Graceful is the beauty of the brown deer,
Descending from searching the mountains ;
The son of the hind, and the excellent one,
That bent not his head in disgrace.

The hind, sharp-horned, of quick movements
Dun-speckled, of nimble step, her breast towards the moun-
tains.

The hart, spirited, antler-headed, majestic ;
Murmuring, as it were, an indistinct song :—red, of brin-
dled head.

* “ Him that abides.” An expression which implies fortitude. “ Him that abides,” means a person unconscious of any motive for flight or concealment.

Admirably wouldst thou course it,
Up against the hard and steep declivity.
Let every one praise the swift pursuer :—
Be mine to praise the speed and beauty that escapes.

Rock of my heart!—the great rock !
Beloved is the green plain under its extremity.
More delightful is the deep valley behind it,
Than the rich fields and proud castles of the stranger !

Oh my delight ! thou reedy mountain of springs !
The rushy bog, whence the stag roars :
The hound of clearest cry, who was wont to chase
The deer to Invermearain.

More pleasant to me than the humming song of the rustie,
Over the quern, as he grinds the crackling corn.
The low cry of the stag, of brownish hue,
On the declivity of the mountain in the storm.

When roars the stag of the little hill,
And bellows the stag of the rocky height.
These stags answer each other,
And the deer ascend, alarmed, from the Corry of retreat.*

* “Corry” signifies the hollow bosom of a mountain, in which, on account of the snow lying long there, the vegetation is often more luxuriant than in the lower grounds.

From my birth I have ever sought
The society of deers and roes.
I never bestowed a look on a skin of any other colour,
Than yellow, red, or brindled.

The banners of Alexander of the glens ;
Its splendid streamer waving from the standard.
The bright ensign of the race of Cona ;
Who regarded not the children of strangers.

I broke not the band of kindness,
Which held me to the Craig Guanich ;
But old age has separated us.
Long, however, was the festival I enjoyed.

Rock of my heart ! thou rock of refuge !
The rock of leaves, of water-cresses, of freshening showers
Of the lofty, beautiful, grassy heights :
Far distant from the shelly brink of the sea.

Seldom did I listen
To the spouting tumult of the whales ;
But much have I heard
Of the murmuring of the wild harts.

I placed not my confidence in searching
For the swift-gliding fish with the baited hook :—
Far more delightful to me was the rapid chase.
Traversing the purple mountains in Autumn.

A joyful task is the chace :—
Cheering are its circuits on the heights.
There is more delight and melody in the sound of its song,
Than in that of the mariner when loosing the rattling sail.

As long as I beheld the light,
And the breath remained in my body,
I would continue within sight of the deer :—
These are the herds in which I take pleasure.

Where were heard sounds more melodious
Than the cries of the gallant hounds approaching !
The slender stag rushing through the valley,
And the greyhounds mingling with the herds.

When I had only two firm legs,
Early did I wander on this side and on that ;
But now that I have acquired a third,
My motions are stiff and slow.

The strength of my bow lies useless on my breast,
To the joy of the dun harmless fawns ;
They sport secure and joyous, while I am gloomy and for-
lorn.
Alas! to-day my power continues not.

Alas! that this day they do not live!
That the mist only remains of the social band :
Whose joy was in the voice of the hounds,
Without riot, without drinking, without clamorous talk.

Low is laid in Kingussie
The foe of the red and dusky herd.
An arm dexterous to pierce the salmon,
And powerful in the strife of wrath.

In that shealing below I have left
Him whose death was woeful to me.
Often did he fix his shafts
In the ear of the brown antlered stag.

Ronald *, the son of the hoary Donald,
Who knew all that the schools could teach,
Excellent Macdonald of the clustering locks!
He lives not who can compare with him.

Dear loved Alexander of the glens,
Desolation remains where he is no more.
Often did he lay prone on the hills,
The son of the stag, with his dark gray dog.

Alexander, thou son of the mighty Allan,
Fatal to the deer of the mountain,
Long persevering in the chace.
My hope is still in the brave son of Donald.

* Probably some relation of the lamented Alex whose literature, as well as his dexterous archery, gushed him in the glens.

A Macdonald thou art without fail;
A stream of glittering steel;
Allied to the Clan Chattan;
And a nursling of the Craig Guanich.

Here follows a verse, scarce intelligible, and untranslatable. The bard seems entering on an enthusiastic reverie.

On the turret of fairies I sit, where the retiring sun
Points his last beam upwards to the summit of the hill:
I look on the end of Loch Treig:—
The sheltering rock where the chace was wont to be.

I see the dark lakes dim at a distance;
I see the mighty pile, and many coloured mountain:
I see in the deep vale, the last dwelling of Ossian of Fingal:
I see the hill of flat sepulchral stones.

I see the towering Bennevis,
And the red cairn at its foot;
And the deep and secret corry behind it.
I see the lonely western mountains, and the sea beyond them.

Precious is that red corry
Where we delighted to haunt.
The corry of fresh, heathy hillocks:
The nightly abode of fawns and stately stags.

I see the spiry heights of the woods
On this side of the forest of Leita—
The part where the slender stags meet—
The nightly abode of fawns and stately stags.

I see the wide Strath of the cattle,
Where the voice of heroes was wont to resound ;
And the wild corry of the rocky strait,
Where my hand oft inflicted a wound.

I see the rough heights of the brown stag,
And the ridgy mount of the fairy hill.
These, and the black mountain side,
Oft have I shed blood in its forest.

Once more I hail the streamy hill ;
Honoured as it is above the hills around.
Hail to Loch Eroch side, haunt of many deer !
It was my happiness to be there.

Carry my blessing to the lake,
Extended far, and deeply sheltered,
To the water of Lemina of the wild ducks &
Nurse of the spotted fawn and kid.

Lake of my heart art thou ! O lake !
Where played the shy water-fowl :
And many a white and stately swan
Did swim slowly amid their sport.

I shall drink of the Treig my fill,
That I may not any longer be sorrowful :
Clear water of the wholesome spring !
Drunk by the deer of graceful movements that bell round
its source.

Lasting was the connection, unbroken
Between me and this pure stream.
The juice of the lofty hills, that refreshes without intoxica-
tion—
Which I drank in abundance without satiety.

Alas! the communication is now broken off
Between me and the beloved rock of willows :
To it, I can no longer rise ;—
To me, it will never bend.

Haunts of my youth ! I have now addressed you all.—
Unwillingly do I take my leave of you :—
Of you and your swift inhabitants.—
The deer of the deep glens between the little hills.

The most sorrowful farewell that ever was taken
Of the deer in whom was my great delight.
I shall never more direct the hounds :—
I and thou, my faithful white dog.

We have lost the deer at bay, and the song that solaced us.
Never more shall I direct the hounds.
Mournful are our steps in the wonted track ;
Though we were for a time most cheerful !

The thick wood has taken from you the roe—
The steepy height has taken from me the stag:
Yet are we not disgraced, my hero!
For age has fallen upon us both.

Unkind art thou, old age!
Though we cannot avoid thy grasp:—
Thou bendest the man erect in stature,
That grew stately and warrior like.

His days thou shortenest—
His limbs thou lessenest—
His head thou deprivest of teeth—
His countenance thou changest with wrinkles.

Thou spectre! wrinkled, tattered, vile,
Blear-eyed, dun-coloured, listless.
Why, thou leper! should I permit thee
To take away my bow by violence?

I am myself more worthy
Of my excellent bow of yew,
Than thou, deaf bald-pated age!
Who sittest ghastly upon the hearth.

Age again answered:—

“ Too obstinately dost thou continue
“ To bear that tough and stubborn bow;
“ More seemly for thee were a knotted staff.”

Take thou from me the knotted staff.
Feeble coward, old age, thou mendicant;
Shalt thou deprive me of my faithful bow ?

“ Many a hero thy superior,
“ Once bold and vigorous in youth,
“ Have I left nerveless and feeble,
“ Despoiling him of stature, strength, and courage.”*

This recluse, solitary as his life appears to have been, seems to have had the power of clothing his few ideas in

* To Mr Alexander Kennedy, now resident in the island of Malta, I am indebted for assistance in translating many local and peculiar expressions in this poem.

I once thought of versifying this very singular poem : But, on second thought, though I am conscious much of the beauty of the diction is lost in this prosaic form, yet the original form of the expressions, and the spirit of the description are better preserved in a literal translation. Now, as the chief value of this consists in the faithful picture it gives of a mode of life which has hitherto been a kind of non-descript ; and, therefore, exhibits a new variety of the human character, I preferred exact fidelity to any endeavour of transferring poetical graces from the original language at the expence of losing any of the features of similitude.

language nervous, animated, and singularly expressive. This is the less extraordinary, as he cheered his "*Cu Bain*," (white dog,) with songs, as they came homewards from the chase; and the Gaelic having been for so many ages the language of a nation of poets, peculiarly susceptible of "musical delight," not only abounds in terms "smoothed" and suited to the sounding lyre," but has actually a kind of poetical vocabulary, rich in lofty and elegant phrases, not profaned by common use, yet simple and familiar; for that monster, *Mob*, exists not in the highlands.

The following few Letters are of little consequence in themselves, but are inserted merely to complete the series of those that have been already received with so much indulgence by the Public.

LETTER II.

SIR,

Laggan, Aug. 14. 1801.

I had the pleasure of your very kind letter some time ago. I hope you have received my answer, inclosing a note from Sir James Grant.

Since then, on a visit to a neighbouring clergyman's family, I met with "Burns's Life, Correspondence, &c."— You may believe, that

"By turns, I felt the glowing mind

"Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd."

In short, I could not think that any thing out of my domestic circle could so

much agitate and interest me, after what I have felt and seen. My admiration of worthy Mrs Dunlop, which was very great before, was kindled into a high fit of enthusiasm ; during the paroxysm of which fit, the within truly extempore lines were poured forth ; which I have an unaccountable desire to transmit to the amiable subject of them, in such a way, that she should not know from whence they came. By the bye, I have never seen her, though she has met with some of my family, and I with some of hers ; so she cannot conjecture, which is just what I wish.

You were kind enough to express a desire to serve or oblige me, which I believe very sincere. Now, you will gratify me much by taking the trouble to inclose the within in a blank cover, and direct it to Mrs Dunlop, whose address I don't exactly recollect ; but I think she lives at Loudon Castle. A

line, informing me that you have received this and my other letter, would be an additional favour, and will give me room to hope you excuse this great trouble, and take in good part the confidence I repose in you.*—I am, with increasing esteem, (for I have read your letters too,) your obliged, humble servant,

A. G.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR, *Laggan, Feb. 10. 1802.*

I MUST answer your friendly letter in such brief haste, that I can barely say,

* The poem alluded to is now published with the rest of the author's poems.

"I thank you" for all your admirable zeal of sympathy and friendship so actively displayed on this mournful occasion. But who, capable of such disinterested exertion, ever liked the language of profession? And how much more easy do I find it to express my feelings on this subject to any other than yourself!

You cannot easily imagine the perturbation and horror with which I opened the proposals you sent. I dreaded my name staring in my face, and all the fatherless train ranked up in order. But when I read it, what a relief! Think of one suddenly let out of purgatory. I shewed it to J——, and the only other person of taste and delicacy I could consult, our neighbour pastor, who was then with me. They were charmed with the delicacy, and no less with the judgment of the thing.

I would require folio paper to tell you of all the people who have sent compli-

ments of condolence, and offers of every possible assistance in forwarding my family. Of these I should mention *

* * *. Of my other friends

I will say nothing: both because I cannot say enough, and because I am not entitled to place their offers to my own account; Mr G. being, notwithstanding the shyness of his manners to strangers, and the obscurity of his situation, what renders all who knew him glad, in any way compatible, to serve his children. Lady Grant wrote to me above a week ago for a subscription-paper, and that in terms so kind. The most intimate friend I have, (except female friends,) I daily expect. He is my relation too. He is a man of much taste, and, I think, some genius: But then he has been tossed through the world, in a manner which necessarily blunts the finer feelings and perceptions. He is now, too, engrossed in business: So that, though his mind

could make the retrograde movement necessary for the task of poetical criticism his time is too much occupied to admit of his doing me this kind of service. I have not yet mentioned this matter to him : It costs me a great deal to mention it for the first time to any one. You must have seen how very genuine the reluctance is. Once for all, I shall explain the motives of it. Believe it is not caprice, false pride, or the blushing bashfulness that embarrasses a girl on her first public appearance. If I do not utterly misjudge myself, it is an innate sense of decorous propriety,—of the humble dignity which a mind in any degree delicate and informed may claim and assert, under all external disadvantages.

I know very well that my friends were pleased, and the more pleased because they were surprised, with my poems. Some of the pleasure, and all the

surprise, was owing to their springing up among so many cares and occupations, like productions of a mind at ease, without interfering with duty, or encroaching on time. Others, who neither knew nor cared much about poetry, were surprised at my liliacs and carnations, because they were the first that ever grew in the parish, and they found them where nothing of the kind was expected. Now I very well know, that both the poems and the flowers owed their power of pleasing chiefly to their locality, and would comparatively be very little thought of in any other place. The value they (the poems) have, lies merely in the simplicity of the thought, and the ease of the versification. They are, too, like portraits, whose chief merit is exact resemblance, but which have not even that merit, to those who have never seen the originals.

Thus thinking, and, I am pretty sure,

thinking correctly, I do feel sore and conscientious in stepping forth to claim from the public the reward due to genius, for the crude and hasty productions of mediocrity. The highlanders were a mere skeleton, except the first and last books; and these I have wrought and finished for publication. In the last-mentioned instance, I only *felt* conscientiously; but here I have *acted* conscientiously: that is, consulted my own simple taste, and been much more attentive to truth of delineation than to the beauty and glow of colouring, which is so often substituted for it.

I have drawn nature and manners as I see them around me, with correct chastity and scrupulous fidelity. Nothing is so cheap, nothing is so attainable, as flimsy and tinsel ornament. My muse shall have no ornament but the blue snood and silver brooch of her country; —no attire but the simple folds of cus-

tomary tartan. I know I should have pleased much more, had I permitted my imagination to wander among the very beautiful glens and glades that here and there derive a nameless enchantment from the sublime nakedness that surrounds them. Here I could have willingly luxuriated, and " paused on every charm," in happier days of unchecked enjoyment.

The present state of my mind, tied down to sad realities, is, however, favourable to that severe and masculine truth of taste which rejects superfluous decoration, and adopts the great outline, which leaves a general impression that cannot deceive, because it neither exaggerates, nor dwells exclusively on the softer features of the pictured scene. Arcadian images would please more; but verisimilitude will please longer. Misses will not put my book in their work-bag; but, as longevity is the por-

tion of truth, it may work its way into light, and lie on the tables of their grandsons ; and this not as a fine poem, but a correct drawing.

I wonder whether any human being will ever say so much of my muse as I have now said myself. Well knowing that Mr Mackenzie and you “ set down “ nought in malice,” I will “ nothing “ extenuate :” I will prune and compress abundantly, but will not promise to alter much. Elegance I should never attain ; and force and simplicity I should assuredly lose. Your answer is obvious and true : “ In these days of universal “ polish, every one understands elegance ; but simplicity is only for the “ few.”

But, then, I am not the advocate only, but the enthusiast of simplicity, approaching to wildness. I have grown half savage among the hills, and write verse faster than prose, while the fit is

on, and cannot write a line when it goes off; and so am past reclaiming.

Here, for your private amusement, is the epistle from the gander; very diffuse and prolix, but strictly true, and most picturesque and characteristic to those who knew our farm and barn-yard. The grief that made the gander eloquent was occasioned by a blunder of our dairy-maid, Anne Man, whom her master jestingly called Miss Homo, when we did not wish the children to know of whom we spoke. She killed the old brood goose in mistake for a young one, to send to Dunchattan: Which tough and venerable matron being presented at their anniversary feast, proved the source of no small disappointment to goose-eating guests; while her mate at home bewailed his partner with a sullen constancy that might be an example to unfeathered widowers. To you, half the merits of the gander's epistle will be

lost ; to strangers, it only seems ludicrous ; but to the gander's particular friends in this family, it appears in no small degree pathetic.

If I say any more about my goose, you will be tempted to account me one of the sisterhood. I therefore willingly release you ; being ever yours, with prosaic truth and poetic fervour.

A. G.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

March 13. 1802.

THIS is another, but not unprovoked trespass on your patience. Do you really think, after my undissembled reluctance to look the public in the face metaphorically, that any resemblance of my

faded countenance shall go forth to be stared at ?

I abhorred female portraits before a book ever since I read Pope's couplet about Mrs Centlivre :

“ Fair as before her works she stands confess'd,

“ In flow'rs and pearls, by bounteous Kirkall dress'd.”

If, indeed, it were possible to give an inside view of the Penserose grot, with its long festoons of ivy and woodbine depending from the top ; the great moss-covered stone that closes up the entrance ; and the large circular bason of pure water, surrounded thick with primroses and wild hyacinths, in the centre ; and could Miss O. and I be seen, as we often were, reclining on one side of the arched cavity ; that would indeed be a scene worth preserving.

I make no doubt, when you read the allusion to “ These happy hours, beyond recovery fled,” in the journal, you

thought it was all poetical painting. No such thing. If I have any romance with me, it is really, literally the romance of real life. The world does not suit me: It is cold, it is corrupt, it is joyless—I *must* have pleasures, and they *must* be pure. At the same time, I walk with the fear of common sense before my eyes; and therefore dare not join my brethren and sisters, the children of fancy, in their excursions to fairy-land; having sagaciously discovered that enchanted region to be like the lion's den, —many tracks of beasts going in, but none of any returning.

The highway, again, is too crowded for me. People who think of nothing but running straight forward would jostle me into the ditch, while I was dreaming of elysium. I had therefore a little quiet footpath of my own, which I took pleasure in decorating with simple flowers, cherished by my own hands.

Into that I allured others, who equally hated sloth and bustle; and there we cultivated friendship, and gathered its fruits. Nothing was distorted, nothing was exaggerated; yet every thing was brightened and enlivened.

The post waits, and must break my thread. You talk of the likeness of your unseen friend. The best likeness extant of me is M. There is a picture; but 'tis a family-piece, full of children. What think you of Moome's grave, with this verse from the poem to her memory?—

“ And Charity, with open hand,
“ Shall some angelic form assume,
“ And like her guardian genius stand,
“ To watch the long repose of Moome.”

In this case, Charity would be personified as the prominent figure—and, O how justly!—Dear sir, adieu, affectionately.

LETTER V.

Laggan, March 15. 1802.

I AM going to indulge you with what, from me, you will accept as a great rarity; viz. a short letter; so very short, that I will not even repeat any of the many acknowledgments M. desires me to make for favours received, while unexpectedly remaining so long in your family.

I received six packets, containing certain *invaluable* manuscripts, which the kindness of my friends have rescued from oblivion, and to which I have behaved like a very ostrich. The sight of them has, however, awakened some maternal feelings. The nymph of the fountain, and the lines commemorating my dear John and Charlotte, were, how

ever, wanting. I did not despair, thinking Mr. would bring them ; nor mention them, thinking it barely possible that they might still arrive. Here she is, but here they are not. I wish you could procure from these, who have the only copies, the hymn for the sons of the clergy; and the poem relative to the dear departed.

I have now got back copies of all the others, except that addressed to Mrs Dunlop, of which I did not retain one. If I had sent it off before either my enthusiasm or my courage cooled, it would have shared, perhaps, the fate of many other forgotten things, or be found with Astolpho's wits in the moon. I was, by distance and absence, so lost to all my friends, and, by constancy of affection, so endeared to them, that they treasured up my hasty scrawls, like memorials wafted from another planet. Had they been common friends, there would not

be any materials for the edifice you are constructing, vulgarly stiled a book. It is more valuable as a monument of their attachment than of my ability.

There is little modesty in all this ; for the inference is, what attractions must I possess to win and attach such friends : So the best way to escape mere egotism is, to run away as fast as possible ; which I shall do, after assuring you, that, run where I will, you shall always find me very truly yours.

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR.

Laggan, May 6. 1802.

I WILL yet add a few lines to the songs, as you wish. You would admire my condescension in this instance, as much

as you do my skill in military tactics, if you knew how much all my faculties are on the stretch at present on mournful heroics. But I am throwing all my narrative into notes, and condensing and concentrating to your heart's content. Witness this compendious tribute to the sufferers on the wrong side.

“ Forgive, ye vallant dead, ye kindred shades,
“ That glide with heroes through elysian glades,
“ The muse whose trembling hands entwine the wreath,
“ Whose mournful eyes retrace the paths of death,
“ So fast ye crowd upon her dazzled view,
“ Like sun beams on a cypress wet with dew ;
“ She sinks, o'ercome, unequal to relate
“ Your loyal zeal, or your disastrous fate.”

I have, however, done justice to Captain Mackenzie, whom you must have heard of as strongly resembling the prince, and passing himself for him, with his dying breath, that he (the prince) might elude the search of his pursuers. This answered the purpose of giving him time to shelter in the cave of Glen-

moriston with my great favourites, the thieves, whom I have also commemorated; and Flora Macdonald, though last, not least in love, shall close the procession.

The general* shall, as he well deserves, be the sole subject of a letter: But, in the meantime, I must extricate, exculpate, and exonerate myself, as to my principles. Know, then, that of all whigs, my father was the bluest, and taught me to look up to the reigning family as somewhat sublime and celestial. I do not know that my mother ever expressed the word politics in her life. She, however, feelingly lamented the ruin of the families she was connected with, and melted my heart with sad tales of the tragical fate of many of her Stuart relations, some of them truly valuable characters. From this harmonious discord arose in my mind,

* General Graham of Balgowan and Barossa.

a strange mixture of whig opinions and tory feelings, which I suppose will appear sufficiently obvious; for whatever casual decorations fancy may scatter over my subjects, I always write from my fixed principles and genuine feelings.—Lady ——'s fancy about the engraving is, with all due deference, absurd. A tombstone would cost less; and that we shall extract from her son. Sure I could never have said a word about meretricious: I never think of a fine word: M. should have erased it.

Adieu.—I was indeed very ill, and had such a depression, that if it had lasted, I had not lasted. I am now better, and all active and diligent. From six to nine, I am in the fields or garden; from ten to four, princelying as B. calls it; and the rest of the day, knitting with the children, or quacking with my poor neighbours, half a dozen of whom now await me.—Again adieu.

LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR, *Laggan, June 9, 1802.*

I HAVE it now in my power to acknowledge your songs, which made me blush as I used to do twenty years ago. This I consider as a rehearsal of the confusion I am hereafter to undergo, when I not only make my public appearance, but suffer public chastisement under the hard hands of the critics. Of these I think just now as I used to think of Raw-head and Bloody-bones about the beginning of his Majesty's reign.

You talk of my father Apollo, my stepfather, (for I will allow of no other appellation till he treats me better,) though himself a poet and physician,

has only allowed me to be a quack and a rhymers. Those rhyming and quacking occupations interfere greatly with each other in these busy days.

In the midst of a sublime soliloquy I must stop to listen to an old woman's tale of symptoms; or leave the poor prince starving in a cold boat while I drop laudanum for a sick child. If I give up quackery for rhyming, the death of some of my poor patients may ensue.

But what is that compar'd to fair renown.

After all this trifling, you must congratulate me on having, like a good housewife as I am, in spite of my stepfather, wound up my clue, that is, finished my book, and I am now busied with notes historical and explanatory. For the critical notes I must be obliged to you.

You will wish to know how I steered through between the yawning scylla of my Whig principles, and the whirling

charbydis of Jacobite sympathies. Take a specimen from what follows the conversation between Flora and the old king.

The Monarch still to honour's dictates true,
Nor mean revenge, nor cruel purpose knew ;
But long misled by faction's treacherous art,
As yet he reigned not in the general heart :
To fury's gripe resigned the imperial sword,
Nor heard when pity's gentle voice implor'd,
Nor knew, exalted on a distant throne,
How delegated power made misery groan.

Now, is not all this true? What Whig can add to it, or what Tory detract from it. But to return to a more harmonious subject.

I am quite pleased with this last volume of songs: which proves, that your stores are by no means exhausted; but you have kept the best to the last. I was glad to see from Burns,—

“ Bonny was yon rosy brier.”

It is a song I delight in. That other

charming song, too, free from the odious chorus about Menie's hawk e'e, which used to disfigure and degrade it. There is a verse in it inimitably descriptive.—

“ The shepherd steeks his faulding slap,
“ And owre the muirlands whistles shfl ;
“ With wild, unequal, wand'ring stap,
“ I meet him on the dewy hill.”

No mortal could draw this picture seated in a room. One must have wandered over real moors, and met real shepherds, with their cold abstracted aspect, and long unequal steps. How unlike the Arcadian shepherds who have gone through so many hands, that it is like following the house that Jack built to trace them to their origin.

Erskine's "Lone Vale," is truly what Burns called it. Sir Gilbert Elliot's song to the air of "Barbara Allan," is delightful. We have no ballad of equal pathos and simplicity of our own age. Where can it have been all this time,

never to have been sung or admired? The “ Ewie wi’ the crooked horn,” is inimitable. It has, however, a prototype in the Gaelic language, being a Strathspey song on the same subject, full of wild untranslatable humour. The poet tells you, for instance, that his crooked ewie moved with great force and dignity over the broad flags; and that with the very breath of her nostrils, she would throw a frog over on its back:—that every spring, in the first days of the season, she had twin lambs as large as calves, and as fat as butter, with many particulars equally astonishing, and meant to caricature the marvellous. Peter Pindar’s songs are all faultless elegance, but they do not come near the heart. One reads and admires, but does not wish to read again. His humour so amuses us, that we never wish to meet him in any other province.—Only think of hearing a tender tale from Parquin.

Boswell's "Country Laird" is incomparable. I wonder you do not try to get more numerous songs from him. Here comes breakfast; I must, therefore, once more tell you that I am yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR, *Bristol Wells, Dec. 29. 1802.*

I RECEIVED both your letters, and sincerely condole with you on the delay of the book of books, well knowing that you will have little rest till that enemy of my peace is once fairly launched.

I hasten to discuss your critical objections: But first hear me excuse what I cannot deny—my inaccuracy, and defect in subsequent correction. Of the Journal I shall only say, that it was hastily

snatched out of my hands; and fifty blundering copies taken of it before I had even leisurely read it over. The other smaller poems, though none of them the production of leisure, you will own to be pretty correct. As for the Highlanders, part of which was in fact written last winter, you must have yourself observed, that it has more force and less accuracy than any thing else.

Thus, then, I account for the production of more advanced years, written under deep depression, appearing to have more vigour and less polish than the last.

That elasticity of mind, upon which my friends compliment me, always rises most under distress and difficulty. When my mind is depressed by sorrow, it often assumes a high tone of enthusiasm: I retire within myself: The world vanishes from before me; and, under these circumstances, composition of the most

solemn and serious kind is a task not merely easy, but soothing and consolatory. But when I came down from this abstraction, to eating cares and endless interruptions,—ruffled and teased,—no longer mistress of myself,—I regarded the productions of my fancy with disgust and indifference, and could hardly endure to look over them.

Certainly a female writer is an incongruous thing! Minerva and the muses never married; and they were in the right of it.—When I tell you that I write almost extempore, it is not to boast of my blunders, but to make the truest, best apology for writing at all; which would have been inexcusable, either in my past happy or sorrowful days, if I devoted much time to that occupation.—I feel very sore about the dissertation in this age of doubt, when people begin to cavil when they get out of the

cradle, and go on doubting, till they find truth in the grave.

There seems a kind of hardy presumption in hazarding opinions which the wise, the learned, and the many have controverted. Moreover, the chain of evanescent evidence which has impressed on my mind that which I have endeavoured to convey to yours, would require a very tedious and minute investigation indeed to elucidate it. In my progress through life, I have met with things so much out of the common way, that I should never think of relating them, except to these who knew me thoroughly : Such is my dread of hazarding my veracity. Judge, then, how I must shrink from a public imputation, however unjust !

The figurative expressions in the ancient poem, which L. pretends to detect as borrowed from scripture and from Sterne, &c. abound in periods anterior

to the existence of J. Macpherson, in authors who never heard of the existence of Sterne or Fenelon. Now, as for the compliment to L. I assure you, I think exactly what I say ; for though I dislike his opinions, and am disgusted with certain affectations, I respect his abilities, and do not in the least doubt that he has persuaded himself to believe every word he says : But I am enraged at him for quoting, as evidence, a person without common morals or decency ; of whom I shall say no more at present, but that I think him completely despicable. By the bye, if this caitiff had not been disgraced by numberless detected falsehoods, his evidence should weigh ; for he had Gaelic. But what is Gaelic without truth, or truth without Gaelic, to this purpose ?

I am no way concerned about having imputed to me a degree of exaggeration, relating to the Arcadian scenes and U-

topian virtues of my Alpine regions. You know I have always represented the country as wild and barren, and the people as enduring a state of poverty and hardship. When I describe particular glens as possessed of sylvan beauty, I speak truth; but this regards not the face of the country, which I allow to be very bleak indeed.

LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

Laggan, Feb. 1803.

THE great desideratum with me, in thought, word, and deed, is method. I wish I knew where a "commodity of good methods were to be bought." I would be as willing to purchase them as Charteris would have been to buy a fair character, which he rated so high from

a similar motive, knowing its value from its want. Some disarranged folks pretend to be above method; but I humbly own it to be above me. I am determined that this letter, as a proof of my honest endeavour to reform, shall proceed methodically, and never once “reverse its march,” as L. most affectedly says, when any plain Christian or honest soldier would say “retreated.”

I shall cut and alter all you bid me about the Highlanders; and am daily, and more and more sensible, that without a pilot such as I have been so happy as to find in you, it would be madness in me to venture from shore. Unaccustomed to disguise, and hitherto having no motive for it, I shall appear to the world such as I really am, formed by the accidents of education and situation,—a solitary anomalous being, not thinking in track, or classing with any sect or party. Such once was he, whose steady

judgment directed, and whose intuitive penetration enlightened me. What class of beings will now own or protect me? I shall be like the bat, whom birds and mice alike shunned and disclaimed. The Jacobites will not endure me, because I honour the memory of the revolutionists. Whigs will detest me, because I have a great kindness for the Stuarts and their adherents, and dread all these factions who would make a cypher of their sovereign, and crown King Hydra, whom I always thought a worse monster than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived. Philosophers will regard me as a superstitious bigot, because all the powers and faculties of my soul repose with full confidence and joyful hope on, &c.—I refer you to the doxology, and think those much happier who understand that, and nothing else, than those who understand every thing else, and do not understand that.

I regard the sacred records with admiring reverence, as the pure fountain and original prototype of all that is truly sublime and beautiful in composition, as well as of useful knowledge and sound morality. Devotees, again, will utterly renounce me. Piety, even what is very sincere, has been lately driven by "the world and its dread laugh," to take shelter in tabernacles and conventicles; where spiritual pride is continually narrowing the limits of salvation, and within whose limits I could never confine myself.

It is among the lovers of truth and nature alone that I am to seek for my partizans. Who that admires Mrs P. or Miss S. will ever tolerate me? I have read no modern authors but in extracts, that I have chanced upon here and there. But the only female writers of poetry I can recollect at present, who have kept their garments unspotted, are Carter,

Barbault, and Williams. All the rest have sat much too long at their toilette, and are so bedizzened,—they nod such spangled plumes, and trail such pompous trains,—that, like every other artificial and superficial thing, they are only calculated for the fashion of the day,—to please and dazzle for a moment: But of the two former particularly, one might say, “The teeth of time may gnaw Tantalion—But they’re for ever.”

Miss Williams has since disfigured her stile with the slang of party: But how elegant were her first productions! I am told, the song,

“Where Evan mingles with the Clyde,”

is hers. I should have been charmed, though I had seen that only: Burns’ poems always excepted, I have seen no lyric production of latter days that has such power over my feelings.

Pray do not omit to tell me how far

your feminine poetic taste agrees with mine ; and how you like Darwin's Botanical Garden, of which I got a sight lately. They are really Hesperian gardens, glittering all over : the fruit gold, the leaves silver, and the stems brass. 'Tis odd how many coincide in the same sentiment. But Mrs M. Miss D. and Mrs F. have all said to me just what you say about the letters. The latter says, in her lively way, that she has herself what would make an interesting volume. Whatever I do, it will be always my fixed opinion, that it is wrong and indelicate to publish correspondence in the author's lifetime ; and even were I persuaded to do such a thing, my opinion would remain unaltered. Pope did it, indeed ; but then he was head of a sect, that looked up to him as infallible, — was a deep thinker, and wrote on literary subjects. I do not speak of his genius ; for I do not think that greatly

appears in familiar letters : they are valuable for something that comes more generally home to the heart than genius itself. The only series of mine worth preserving were addressed to Charlotte. Wrote with all the ease of confidential intimacy, they were at the same time meant to enlighten a strong and pure mind ;—a mind whose early culture had been utterly neglected, and its very first principles warped by naughty illiberal opinions, which it was my labour for years to obliterate. *There* was all that my reflection and observation, and the reflection and observation of one who saw far quicker and far deeper, could suggest for the direction of a young person, in circumstances delicate and difficult beyond example. There was the minute and faithful history of twelve years, during which very severe sufferings were blended with very superior enjoyments. Even now that I am drink-

ing the bitter dregs of this salutary mixture, I gratefully acknowledge, that its best ingredients are such as I hope to meet exalted and refined hereafter; and its worst, perhaps, the easiest and safest mode of trial here.

(This collection of letters, however, my girls, with extreme reluctance, committed to the flames, at the dying request of the person to whom they were addressed. She knew there was nothing in them that ought to have offended any human being; yet callous and restless curiosity might have found endless matter of speculation and conjecture, among figurative expressions, remote allusions, and fanciful flights, quite out of the common way: so she summarily desired them to burn all the papers in her repositories. They did this, with great regret; and there remains nothing else either connected or instructive. Though they remained, we should still suspend the pro-

duction of farther localities till we see the reception the public gives to those already submitted to its mercy.

M. L. whom I have read with great attention, and who has more plausibility and deeper research than any writer I have read on the subject, has not in the least shaken my Ossianick faith. If I were a man, which I always wish to be when I feel very angry and very helpless, I would soon apply Ithuriel's spear to his fair semblance. Indeed, his etymologies, in which the whole strength of his detections lie, fall to the ground with a touch, like a house of cards, as I shall hereafter prove to your conviction. I am going to abstract myself from all the weighty concerns of potatoes, flax, and children, to transcribe the disquisition by which I will live and die.—Adieu kindly. A. G.

[Here follows the only letter of the series mentioned in the above. It accidentally escaped the conflagration of the rest, by being left at Laggan.]

LETTER X.

MY DEAR C.

I HAVE got your letter, and your long journalizing packet, which has been just six weeks "suspended in mid air," that is, lying at Dalnacardach. No person could possibly enter into details with more interest than we did. I was sure you must needs esteem Miss R.; her mind is very pure; and she is a person, whose truth and uprightness may be always depended on.

Now this is not one of my tautolo-

gies: People of very pure minds are sometimes so hurried away by imagination and credulity, or so fickle and uncertain, that you are not safe with them. In her you will find a rational companion and steady friend. Principle built on piety is a pedestal on which one may safely lean. The piety of a young woman should be, like all her other virtues and graces, quiet and void of ostentation. Yet, depend upon it, besides the horror which a mind rightly turned must always feel at an impious character, a young girl without pious impressions must needs be very unamiable. She must either have resisted such impressions, or have been so unhappily circumstanced as to have no creature among her early connections solicitous about her present safety and eternal felicity.

How one's blood chills on reading Savage's tender complaint;—

“ No mother's care

“ Shielded my infant innocence with prayer.”

A helpless feeble creature, born to obey and to be protected; who is only amiable while she is gentle—only endured while she is spotless.

Such a creature as this, rejecting, or slighting the protection of Omnipotence, bold in presumption, and fearing nothing but the breath of her fellow mortals, is a being that imagination revolts at. There is a melancholy truth, too, very little thought of during the triumph of youth and beauty; it is the consideration of young women's being the sole material of which old women are made. Now an impious old woman,—a female that has made her way through all the peculiar sorrows that sex is heir to,—through a long life without seeking peace and consolation in the bosom of infinite mercy,—is so much the object of a peculiar undefined kind of horror,

that our ancestors, more pious, though less wise than their children, were very apt to consider such as very *bewitching creatures*, and feared to meet or look at them.

Least I should lose your attention by over-solemnity, I shall return to your Christmas letter. One of the first things that seems to have struck you was, the great scarcity of beauty among my town's women; and the next, the frequency of those burials that met you in such numbers whenever you went out. Now, in my time, there were as many beauties and as few burials there, as in most other places; and though I cannot account rationally for all this, I can do it poetically, by supposing all the fine women in town died of grief on your arrival, at seeing themselves outshone; and that it was their burials that so frequently disturbed your feelings in your walks.

Seriously, you feel strange and cold;

—you are not partial to the people, and therefore see nothing in a flattering light;—their manners do not generally please strangers: Yet, remember I predict, that you will yet grow very fond of these very people; and then you will find wit, beauty, and politeness, wherever you go.

I am glad to find you so sensible of the merit of those most estimable sisters to whose protection I recommended you; but I do not wish you to think “there is nobody like them.” You never in your life formed a more mistaken opinion, than in supposing certain friends of mine to resemble C. I will not refute such an idea, but trust your own good sense and discernment with discovering and rectifying this, and other errors of opinion. Having once been very young myself, I can easily understand the triumphant satisfaction young people feel in finding out the mistakes

and deceptions to which their seniors are liable, and how ready they are to cry out with David,

“ I wiser than my teachers am :”

But you, like other people, will find every year “ a critic on the past ;” and I do not wish you to adopt my opinions, merely because they are mine.—

“ Time and I against any two.”

Your last, which is just arrived, will supersede its elder sisters in my notice and attention ; but I will yet return to my comments on them. In the mean time, I congratulate you on the well-timed and considerate attention of your relations,—on Mrs D.’s goodness, which I hope you will never forget,—and even on Miss D.’s beauty, with which I see you yourself are dazzled ; and which, at any rate, can do no harm to herself or others, while she is so good natured and

unaffected as you describe her. I have enjoyed all your enjoyments,—worn your white plumes, or rather delighted to see you wear them,—danced along with you at your assembly,—and enjoyed, with my friend Mrs S. the pleasure of seeing you dressed for it, and of hearing you and your lovely (not fair) cousin contrasted like Bessy Bell and Mary Gray. May you both, like those charming cousins, be as long celebrated for fidelity in friendship towards each other, as for grace and beauty.

It is odd enough that you should light on your namesake C. G. for a partner. —They say he is generous and good natured; yet I think such a sudden tide of good fortune rushing on one bred to no expectations at so early an age, must be very dangerous. I consider the will as mere caprice. Had his father really loved him, he would have taken some care to fit him for the enjoyments of all

this wealth. As it is, his very good qualities may be fatal to him, and it is most likely

“ That dogs and men will drink him till they burst.” *

I am glad you formed no other acquaintance. I am told, you and Miss R. are visited by a swain of a very different description,—just the kind of person I should like, “ were I as free to choose “ at will,” &c.—but, probably he is a mere acquaintance, or possibly knows that Miss R. has “ that within, which “ passeth show,” and looks on you merely as a *fine child*, as indeed you would be little more, if lessons in the school of calamity had not prematured your reasoning faculties. Your little cousin is quite charmed with the acquisition you have made in the ———: He desires you to remember his last lesson about your

* This prediction has been literally fulfilled.

morning studies; and I appeal to your own feelings for testimony of the comfort resulting from beginning the day, as every rational creature, conscious of being liable to error and requiring protection, ought to do.

We have very great pleasure when we talk you over, (as indeed you are our frequent theme,)—in observing to each other your noble veracity.—I call it noble, because your never stooping to warp in the least, even when truth is disadvantageous to you, denotes an innate dignity of mind. This is very well indeed: Yet I would have it on a solid basis,—“on piety, morality is built,”—built like the pyramids we used to talk of, liable to no change or diminution.

I always begin with the intention of amusing you with anecdotes, domestic and parochial; but you engross me so, that all centres in yourself. The new year and Christmas were past in the accustomed way;—the young folks very

happy, the old folks enjoying their reflected happiness; and the wonted interludes of fiddling and dancing, relieved at times by a pastoral dialogue between the pastors and their mates. The Christmas was this year spent at D——. Our friend's leg would not allow him to come out. We went up—found him grumpy; and his mate willing to soothe him and be agreeable. I rallied her: and Caro was in the humour of being very facetious. We projected some matches among the little folks; and, finally, became quite joyous. Our friend shone out in his native colours;—all cheerfulness, candour, and benevolence. What a pity he should ever have mingled with the dirty world! and how honestly he tells us of the embarrassments it involved him in. He made us laugh by the hour with his London adventures, particularly his reading Greek to the bishop, to promote a project of Gen. Johnston's, which proved abortive after all.

You can't think how much interest he takes in you ; so does his mate, which is, in one respect, more valuable ; for he, as Caro says, scatters his good will among the whole human race. They spent the new year with us, which was succeeded by a less welcome visit,—more convenient and amusing to the visitors than the visited. But I leave an account of this to a young lady of the party, who has promised to detail it, and much other petty history.

I am glad to find so much entertainment in my Clarissa. What you say of wigs, formality, and change of manners, is all true, but will hold more forcibly with regard to all other writings of the former age than this ; particularly the abominable comedies of King Charles' time, from the heroes of which, two modern heroes, who you and I know, have taken their model of a fine gentleman. Modes are adventitious,

but nature is always the same ; and where was ever nature so truly and distinctly painted. The little touches often repeated, not only unfold character, but imprint it on the mind, with all its shades and variations.

The tediousness you complain of is necessary in so long a work, to prevent your tiring. This is odd, yet true. When once you are intimately acquainted with a person who has any marked features of character, you are interested in all he does and says : And how shall you be intimate with one whom you only see, as Job's friend saw the vision, in an indistinct and transient manner ? I will make you understand me at once. I sincerely believe you when you say, that the remembrance of our cottage is very dear to you, and that you often draw pictures of it in your solitary musings. — Say that you saw a fine landscape of the surrounding hills, the green valley,

and serpentine windings of the river below, and our cottage, with its sheltering hill and rushing brook, in a corner; you would be pleased, no doubt:—Say again, that some laborious Dutch painter had drawn our cottage as the main object of a piece, in which all its appendages should be faithfully delineated,—where you could see the honeysuckle on the porch, the pigeons sunning themselves on the thatch, Peter in manful contest with the gander, Anne Man milking the cows in the outer yard, and the children listening in the court to a sermon preached by John out of the wheelbarrow,—while Caro, in serene dignity, overlooked the whole from his wonted stand:—Say the picture were so very minute as to include my favourite ash tree, and the house which the literal Jack did literally build, to shelter the hatching goose.—Now, here are the shadows of two shades, or pictures of

imaginary drawings : Which would you prefer ?—The last, by all means. Well, Richardson is the Dutch painter, who has produced a drawing of superior interest, and equally minute detail. The shoe-strings of a person familiar to my imagination, and dear to my heart, are more to me, even in description, than the imperial purple which invests a form too great and too remote to come near my affections. It is no proof of *Clarissa's* being a less valuable work, that it is less fashionable. All I have told you formerly is true. *Clarissa* is the shore, fixed and unchangeable as truth and nature must ever be. The fashionable world is the ship, sailing away from it, but steering without chart or direction.

I tell you, C. I am sometimes tempted to say, with Wat Tyler's mob, " It was never a merry world since gentlemen came up ;" that is to say, since all manner of people must needs be ladies

and gentlemen. There is no fixed standard for sentiment or opinion, more than for rank or place. Change, endless mutation, is the thing; and while people are chasing a Proteus with vain diligence, the pursuit leaves no leisure for friendship, or for any serious and tranquil enjoyment. People must wear every thing that is new,—must read every thing that is new; for that only reason, must be every where,—see every thing, and know every body. The consequence is, that they are like rich people's children, who know no pleasure but getting new toys, breaking them, and throwing them away; while ours build a house of turf and pebbles, spend a whole day in gathering materials,—call, and almost think it a palace, when they have done, and then rejoice over it for a week, from the triumph of their conscious efforts in producing it.

Dear C. whatever you learn, do not

learn to despise peace, friendship, and needlework. That unquenchable thirst for amusement, that urges some people, without a rural idea, without materials for thought, to fly through these recesses in summer, merely to change, and to say they have been in odd, wild places, is a fatal symptom of a deranged system. What can one expect of young people, drunk with conceit, idleness, and boundless liberty, but what happens to other drunken people,—transitions from the feverish joys of an irregular imagination to irksome languor, and intolerable self-reproach?

How I have run on!—Young said, “The grandeur of his subject was his muse:” By the same rule, talking of Richardson, one may allowably be minute and tedious. Paper, fire, eyes, and candle, fail me, or I could give you such curious anecdotes of the learned Hamlet, and of David and Jonathan, who

are in a temporary state of exile from our dominions, and of Moome, whose hitherto uncontested power as queen of the hamlet has lately been in some danger. But Caro has great merit in her eyes just now for vindicating her rights. I wish you had seen her in all her vindictive majesty. You never heard one so eloquent. All the aggressors were forced to hide their diminished heads before her! I beg you will lay in a good stock of patience against your return; for she declares, as a mark of peculiar grace, that she will tell the dear creature, Miss C. every word of the dispute. Be proud, for Caro's very self is going to write to you. Parish news you will get from other quarters. I have long messages from all the children; the general purport of which is, to bid you return soon. The epoch fixed is, when the daisies come out. My sister *Pastorina* sends you her kindest wishes, valu-

able for their sincerity, though *unvarnished*. I send you a thousand benedictions, on the express condition that you will no longer haunt my dreams. Is it not enough that you keep possession of my thoughts all day?—Adieu. Believe I pray for you as well as dream of you. Yours tenderly, faithfully, maternally.

A. G.

LETTER X.

Bristol Wells.

* * * * *

IF you do print the dissertation, pray soften every thing that might irritate, or give needless pain. Yet I do not know : Truth supports itself in the long run. The noble plant rises, while the choak-

ing weeds decay. I would not willingly give pain to any human being, unless there was some good purpose to be answered by it. I know the enemies of the good *new* old cause will think I have said too much in James's favour; and his few personal friends will wonder at my confidence, living poor as I do, to diminish in the smallest degree the consequence of a man who died rich. They little comprehend how small value I set on this extraneous part of his character; or how very little of the grace of humility I derive from the defect in mine, which, in their view, should awe me into silence. At present I cannot afford to be humble; but if ever my wings are wet by a fertilizing shower, you will find my nest in the furrow.

Every man, if not the artificer of his own fortune, is, at any rate, much the artificer of his fame. Had James shewn as much candour and justice to himself.

as I have done to his character, this last would not have lain under the reflections which are now become so general, and believed as just. I am not afraid of poor and stingless resentment ; and will do all the justice to his memory that truth allows, in spite of the ignorant prejudice which will, I doubt not, regard this offering to the shade of departed genius with thankless malignity.

I have said my say, and closed my evidence : Further I shall never by any provocation be led. My feet are much too tender to tread the thorny paths of controversy. I feel elastic and thankful, as the period draws near when we shall all shelter in that blessed asylum, Wood-end. This, to be sure, is a very beautiful, though very dear place. M. for whom the wells have really done wonders, walks about in a fine mall and crescent, just below our window, with some very agreeable (not pleasant) Irish

acquaintances. Feeling myself to be unpleasant, I keep very free of *pleasant* people, merely such. I sit here, like an owl in a turret, contemplating the scene I have no desire to mix in. Sometimes I go awhile down to the pump-room, but oftener to the woody rocks that rise above our dwelling, to see Mr P's ships sail by; or catch with complacence the cold blast from Caledonia, and think I see it waving the amber locks of my dear boy, or bending the trees planted by his still dearer father round our once happy dwelling.

Do not you be concerned about people's imputing exaggeration to me, with regard to the Utopian scenes and Arcadian virtues of my Alpine regions. What would you have? You know I have always represented the country as wild and barren to the last degree, and the inhabitants living in a state of great poverty and hardship.

When I describe particular glens and sylvan scenes as possessed of wild and singular beauties ;—when I impute to the natives tenderness of sentiment, ardour of genius, and gentleness of manners beyond their equals in other countries ;—every one that knows any thing of them must know, that these have always characterized them. I am not afraid of being laughed at : Ridicule is not in this, nor in many other cases, the test of truth. In a word, I expect, but do not dread ridicule on this head.

Now for the half guinea—

“ Between the acting of a dreadful thing

“ And the first motion, all the interim is

“ Like a phantasma or a hideous dream :”

That is to say, between the writing of a book and the publishing, especially if it threatens to come out with an additional half crown, like a page holding up its train. I am sensible there is no-

thing essentially wrong, nor indeed very indelicate, in what you propose; for the increased quantity of matter, beyond what all your wise heads had dreamed of, greatly augments the expence of printing, and adds to the value, if any it has. There is a third more contained in it, as you, Mr Editor, assure me: Yet if this nymph of the wells were not, as she is, a most rapacious naiad, I would never balance a moment! Gather opinions, in the mean while, from the wise and the delicate; and upon no account let such a thing be mentioned in the north, where so many people subscribed for pure love,—and people, too, that must needs know that half-a-crown has no corners.

Adieu.—I wish sometimes that the book were in the well; and when I am in better humour, I feel disposed to put the well in the book, in return for the

benefits I have derived from it. Suppose I should begin—

O faunt benign ! in which I fain would drown—
My sad reflections, and this new half crown—

Or,

Why, greedy stream, dost thou, with whirlpool's power,
My purse, and peace, and poetry devour ?

This you will call low and prosaic. No such thing : Do not you see the figure by which the well swallows my poetry, which stands for the profits of my book, and the alliteration in the last verse ?— Pray, now, “ let desert mount,” and put this into the volume.

I feel a little like poor Parson Evans, who sung because he was full of melancholy.—But of this no more. I spend all my sorrow where I spend much of my time—among the tombs. And surely no where are tombs so eloquent as here, where so much intellectual light has

been extinguished, and so many of the fairest human flowers withered in their prime. Death is every where a glutton, but here an epicure.—Once more adieu.

A. G.

LETTER XI.

Laggan, Sep. 15. 1808.

* * * * *

Thus far had I proceeded, when your last arrived, and found me in the very altitudes of rural occupation. What use have I not made of these fine days! I have been in the court every morning, seeing the sun rise; and at the water side every evening, an hour after its setting.—Potatoes, rich in purple bloom, large as melons, and numerous as dew-

drops, how shall I leave you!—Lint, whose azure bells I meant this day to scatter;—Turnips, whose broad foliage already delights the gazing cattle, how shall I part with you!—Luxuriant oats, with verdure brightening into yellow;—Mildly fragrant hay, on whose half-finished stack the labourers dance to tunes,

“ Of power to take the prison'd soul,
“ And lap it in elysium,”

how shall I forsake you!—But, above all, sweet, smiling children, who move round me like obedient satellites, and exercise all your little ingenuity to attract me, how shall I frown repulsive, issue forth the cruel mandate that forbids playing before the window, and leave you only the sad alternative of imprisonment in the nursery, or banishment beyond the burn!—Here, alas! must I sit immured, and instead of your ani-

mating gambols, see only opposed the poppies in the flower-plots, nodding their heavy heads with sympathetic dulness; or the convolvalus, looking still bluer than myself, and emulous of my curiously involved periods; while carnations, whose endeavours at display seem checked by the ungenial clime and declining season, warn me against a public exhibition under similar disadvantages. Now you must have patience with this prelusive flourish, and consider it merely as a trial of the instrument which is just about to play a lesson of your own setting.—Follows extracts, criticisms, and amendments, of various kinds.—Still you cavil.—

“ Her gallant sons return no more.”

“ In vain her eyes the watery waste explore

“ For heroes, fated to return no more.”

Thus it should be printed. Now these pathetic repetitions are so natural, and

do so abound in the poetry of nature, that I can never believe mine is the only ear which is soothed, or the only heart that is touched by them. This is the only poetical artifice I have patience with :

“ And, reader, when thou seest my hobby-horse,
“ Wish, for the world's advantage and repose,
“ No mortal man may ever ride a worse.”

* * * * *

I wonder, now, if the meaning of this last is as obvious to you as it is to me. On two things I value myself; yea, of three I am proud. One is steadiness in friendship; the next, fidelity in translation; and the last, felicity in choosing mottoes. Of this last more hereafter.

* * * * *

My mottoes are all precisely correct, except in one instance; that to the journal which is from the Two Gentlemen of Verona, where I have changed my

love to my home, for obvious reasons ; and another, where I change another word. I know the rest are all correct, and if you do not say they are apposite, I must, for I really think so. Those from Milton, are from Comus and Lyeidas, which I greatly delight in, maugre Johnson and the ancients. There is one prefixed to the ballad (my only ballad mind) from the charming poem on the Marchioness of Winchester.

“ Gentle Lady, may thy grave

“ Peace and quiet ever have.”

You will find my mottoes all gospel, as you say of my eulogium on my west country friends. I confess that Ossian, in the hands of his translators, sometimes swells into tumidity ; but then Ossian was mortal, and Homer is allowed sometimes to nod.

I like the stile and character of Mor-

duth as a warlike poem, better than most of his warlike poems. Tell me how I have executed the version? Yet how should you, ignoramus that you are, who understand not the original? But you can still criticize the versification, and there is nothing else mine. The nameless poet you must regard with distant awe, enveloped as his reverend head is in the clouds of antiquity. I wish for my part I could find out what kind of a plaid he wore, or whether his great-coat was made of a deer-skin or a wolf skin. Sons of earth in lowlands have no such laudable curiosity. If at any time they should, they would rather know what kind of veil Penelope wore, than what vestment infolded the noble form of the renowned Boadicea.

Let us return to Morduth, who will take it amiss to be so long neglected.

There is a certain stile of poetry adapted to a certain stile of landscape.

as well as to a particular turn of mind. The inhabitant of a level and cultivated country, who dwells amidst a smiling landscape, where all is regular and tranquil, supposing the principles of taste to exist in his mind, will find them modified by the scenes around him. His soul will be soothed, and softened into the love of order and elegance.

When brought to admire the rugged grandeur of solitary mountainous wilds, —abrupt precipices,—dashing torrents, —expansive lakes,—and echoing caverns, he will try to be pleased, and partly succeed. But the repulsive ruggedness,—the cheerless gloom,—the bleak aspect of desolation will affect his regulated spirit, and cultivated feelings, in a far different manner from what they would a native, possessing originally the very same principles of taste. To him the deep toned blast that sweeps resistless down the moun-

tains, sounds a welcome prelude to the storm, that exalts while it agitates his mind. The dun solitude of the heathy waste,—the steep acclivity of the pathless rock, and the darksome recesses of the narrow wooded glen, have to him peculiar attractions. He views them as scenes distinguished by the exploits, and hallowed by the songs of his ancestors, the favourite haunts of the hunter, the hero, and the bard. It is needless to add, that each finds a strain of music and poetry congenial to these feelings, excited by his situation, and endeared by his habits.

At different periods of my life, and under various circumstances, I have been very differently affected by the same objects. I believe I might very early in some degrees affect the wonderful and wild; for I liked thunder exceedingly, and one of the strongest childish wishes I remember, when stand-

ing on the banks of the Ontario, viewing the passage of innumerable wild fowl to the upper lakes, was to mount on the wings of a swan to explore the depth of the luxuriant forests on their banks.

When I came a few years after to Scotland, Ossian obtained a complete ascendant over my imagination, to a much greater degree than ever he has done since. Thus determined to like the Highlands: a most unexpected occurrence carried me, in my seventeenth year, to reside there, and that in Abertarfe, the most beautiful place in it; yet it is not easy to say how much I was repelled and disappointed. In vain I tried to raise my mind to the tone of sublimity. The rocky divisions that rose with so much majesty in description, seemed like enormous prison walls, confining caitiffs in the narrow glens. These, too, seemed the dreary abodes of solitude and silence. These feelings, how-

ever, I did not even whisper to the rushes, but in the mean while was busied in all the little arts of self-deception. I made myself believe, that I admired a bold projection of rock, but, on reflection, discovered they were the fantastic tufts of flowers growing out of the crevices that had attracted me. I tried to think that a dark morass looked chearful when the summer sun shone on it, but I soon found that the silken tufts of Cannach, waving in the gale, and the groups of *rhoit*, which perfumed it, were the charms that engaged my fancy:

Thus I went on with more industry than success, trying to create a taste suitable to my dwelling, like Satan, when he said, "Hail horrors, hail," &c. but I could not with him add, "One who brings a mind not to be changed by place or time," as the sequel will show.

Two years after, I returned on a visit

to my friends in the south, and thought myself in duty bound to talk rapturously of Alpine scenery, the only affectation with which I can charge myself. Yet my heart did so warm to Stirlingshire, my mind expanded in these elysian fields, where every thing wore the aspect of tranquil cheerfulness. I discovered, that, however my fancy might be delighted with particular spots, the general aspect of things within the girdle of the Grampians was not congenial to me: And then the wild mountaineers, whose language I did not understand, and to whose character, of consequence, I was a stranger; but like the potent Prince to whom I just now compared myself, I had nothing for it but to return to the place from whence I came, where it was my fate to be planted and naturalized. And now my activity of mind, and love of knowledge, were confined to very

narrow limits indeed ; but, like water whose channel is impeded, they took a different course. Whatever appeared to me a subject of laudable curiosity, I had seized and appropriated. New objects perfectly compatible with my new duties appeared, and I pursued these with proportionate eagerness. The language, the customs, the peculiar tone of sentiment, and manners of the people,—the maxims, traditions, music, and poetry of the country I made my own with all possible expedition. I learnt them in the fields, the garden, and the nursery, in such a manner as rather to promote than interrupt my necessary avocations. And then I spoke of plants, from the fir on the top of Craigellachy, to the house-leek on the cottage wall.

What a scene did this open to me ! what an interest did it create, in a country walled in from the world ; where the language, customs, and traditions

have remained so many ages unimproved and undepraved, the native region of heroic, musical, and poetical enthusiasm !

“ There was need to purge my visual orb,

“ For I had much to see.” MILTON.

I felt like a gifted seer, from whose eyes the unseen powers had suddenly removed the veil of separation ; while solemn visions of renowned heroes, departed bards, and the fair of other times pass in airy groupes before him.

I am sure you are saying by this time, that if I had much to see, you have had rather too much to hear.

But stay a little : In the ninety-three, I again went southwards, and began to look for the beautiful country I had left behind. It was gone. I saw nothing round me but tame, flat nature, and formal, frigid art. The people were such a set of new-sprung, insulated beings ;

so uninteresting : And for the mobility, —bless them, they were so ungraceful and ungracious, so devoid of all courtesy and all sentiment ; the worst of them were like bears, and the very best like sheep at most. O how I did lift up my joyful voice, when I drew near the mountains of Perthshire, and at the pass of Killicrankie ! I worshipped the genius of the mountains with devotion the most ardent : And this morning I mounted the height above the house,—beheld the rising sun irradiate so many beautiful wreaths of mist, slowly ascending the aerial mountains ;—nay more, I had the whole parish in my view at once, and saw the blue smokes of eighteen hamlets at once, slowly rising through the calm dewy air ; every one of which hamlets had some circumstance about it that interested me, or somebody in it that I knew or cared for.—How populous, how vital is the *Strath* ! And with what a

mixture of emotions did I behold it!—
And all this I must leave,—and something that I value more than all this.

There is no saying where this current may carry me. But before I go quite out of sight, I shall methodically deduce the inference from all this. I have never had so clear a view of the origin and progress of taste, or of its distinct modifications in any other mind, as its gradations and changes in my own have afforded. The result of those changes is what I may call a catholic taste. Notwithstanding of my raillery on my native lowlands, these transitions have only enlarged my capacity of being delighted, as I may very truly stile it. I can now repose among the softer scenes of nature, taste the more gentle and elegant beauties of art, and with equal relish “mount in the rapid chariot of “the soul” to the regions of sublimity, or sink as suddenly among the paper-

kites of levity, and pass through all poetical gradations, from the Paradise of Milton to the fire-side bagatelles of Swift, without missing pleasure or instruction.

Now do not be angry with me for tiring you ; and, in return, I will not be angry at you for being tired. I did not by any means insist on your admiring the P. ; he is so coldly classical when he is best ; and when he is worst, — quite a P.

Through what endless interruptions I must write ! It was very judicious in the ancients to make Minerva a maiden lady : Had she had as numerous and noisy a family as mine, they would soon have teased her out of her wisdom. Over seven children and seven servants must I extend the sceptre of authority, now that Duncan is come home. I cannot describe the sudden palpitation that seized me when I heard you were all at Dunkeld ; and Mrs B. too, to come so

near, without coming nearer. *Et tu Brunii* To see me any where else, would be but seeing my ghost, and that a wandering, discontented ghost. Send me a brief account of your travelling occurrences and opinions. You will see that my spirits are much better; but you little know what need I had of this lucid interval. I would not live over the last month for the Indies. Tell her, whom I admire and pity most, that I enter into her present feelings, in a manner in which few others can. The departure of him whom she must ever lament would make life insupportable, if he did indeed depart. But he must remain, mingled with every idea. He is the companion of her solitude,—the subject of her meditations,—the vision of her slumbers. Long may you remain in happy ignorance.—Adieu. A. G.

LETTER XII

DEAR SIR,

Woodend, Sep. 13. 1808.

I HAVE been told, that the B— D—d people sending back their copies was quite in their stile. They certainly did subscribe, nevertheless, but have possibly forgot it. Surely no one ever met with less of this mortification than I have done. My subscribers are the very best beings of the kind existing. For the sake of those who depend upon me, I rejoice in the humiliation that has brought so much human worth to my view. I positively forbid you to sink to the flatness of supposing, that I mean subscribing to my book to stand as a proof of worth. But you well know how much of all that is good in character has come to my knowledge through this me-

dium. Yet, notwithstanding, I think seeking a subscription from people who know nothing of one's character or history, associates one with so many impudent and grovelling animals, that it comes very near the curse denounced on that pretty creature who floated in such redundant folds and glittering curvatures, according to Milton, till he was ordered to lick the dust. For myself, I never would have done it.

Those for whom I did it owe me no equal obligation. I have done nothing for them half so painful. I have, however, got some consolatory cordials to support me under such mischances. Mrs R. of K. who inherits the talents of that distinguished family, has taken the trouble to write observations upon it highly flattering.

* * * *

All those who have particularly distinguished me are old, with the exception

of Miss Dunbar, who, you know, has a mother;—and such a mother!—’Tis not altogether the sympathy of years, for my mind is young enough in all conscience. But ’tis the old school of poetry, from which affectation is excluded. Now, pray let me inform you, if you do not know it already, that a loathing of affectation is one of the first symptoms of a ripened and confirmed taste. I knew well mine could not suddenly please. How could it, having neither the tinsel and feathers of the late ode writers, nor the over-strained labour of thought, and quaint, not to say affected simplicity of language which distinguish the still later sonneteers.

’Tis odd how close taste in poetry follows taste in dress. Little as I ever dealt in decoration, I well remember being fatigued to death with making and arranging the endless knots, flowers, trimmings, puffings, frillings, and lap-

rets, with which my breast, elbows, and head, were adorned, when I, tho' plainer than any one else, followed the fashion of the day at humble distance.

The poetry wore the same exaggeration of ornament, in the same inelegant profusion. Then it was that the Della Crusca school arose;—all of a flutter, —sparkling, streaming, beaming, and gleaming;—till common sense was disgusted, and common patience exhausted. All of a sudden, the ladies, without the advantage of Grecian forms, or a Grecian climate, thought proper to assume the appearance of naiads and dryads. Two thirds of their “modest apparel” were shaken off with their plaited hair and broidered garments; and the simple folds of their thin drapery invited the winds, and enriched the faculty. Like devoted Iphigenias, they came forward in their transparent vests,

to perish at the shrine, not of Diana, but of Fashion.

Caprice never sets bounds to any thing. Proceeding to make themselves as like nymphs as possible, by throwing off all unnecessary, and some very necessary appurtenances, (for wood-nymphs wore no pockets,) they next departed far from these models of elegant simplicity; for who ever saw a nymph with a crop? The very huntresses did not deprive themselves of that natural ornament, however unsuited to their mode of life.

The poets upon this threw off *their* ornaments, and part of *their* attire, with all possible dispatch; and they, too, are metaphorically cropped. They, too, have deprived themselves of the unborrowed ornament of flowing diction, equivalent to that graceful and natural one which their prototypes, the ladies, have discarded.

When I began this letter, there was no one up in the house but myself. This forms a kind of apology for its length. It has amused me, and interrupted nothing better. I must conclude, where I ought to have begun,—with business.

* * * * *

Adieu, cordially. A. G.

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR MR T. *Woodend, Oct. 9. 1803.*

I HAVE just read your letter to Mrs T. which I consider as entirely addressed to myself, and shall therefore take the liberty to answer. First, then, Mrs T. is well and chearful, and seems to enjoy the country. Next, I am about to make a discourse divided into three

branches, contrary to my wonted Whimmedical ramble.—Alas! you little know how adverse my multifarious duties have been to method.—But now hear me.

First, I will speak indignantly; next, arithmetically; and last, musically.—It is over-cold, over-lazy, and over-cautious in you, to defer your visit till spring, when I have so many hundred good and important things to say to you that will die with the winter's frost. With the possibility of my own death, I do not mean to shock your nervous system, for many good reasons: One is, that you will require all your firmness to support you in your character of gentleman volunteer, in case of the apprehended invasion. Not that I in the least apprehend it. Then to think of taking away G. before she has finished her visit, and when I am just beginning to get leisure to improve the best of possible dispositions. And all this to be done, and your

visit deferred, merely on account of overdone preparations, the result of groundless panic.

Unless as a prisoner, depend upon it, no Frenchman will see the castle of Edinburgh this year. I lose patience at hearing of people taking away their plate and papers. What would plate or papers signify, if Edinburgh were in the hands of these tygers? Or what would they avail to people who had not spirit to stay and defend them?

You are by this time rejoicing at the news of our naval victory. Come, then, and celebrate it at Woodend. You will not find any where so many assembled under one roof who will so heartily rejoice to see you, or whom you can so unkindly disappoint. Now if you do not come, what will happen? Why, all the ninety-nine good turns that you have done me will be forgotten.

Now to be arithmetical, your account as well as Mr Arbuthnot's, appear to be perfectly exact, and most thankful am I for having my business in such kind and faithful hands. I shall discharge these accounts here when I see you. The obligation will assuredly be repaid, though never by me. I have my courteous printer's account,—a very moderate one I suppose. It is accompanied by a letter containing an apology altogether unnecessary. It is evident Mr M—— has given up many points which he would be justified in asserting out of indulgence to me. What he charges can be no equivalent to the trouble and charge of collection.

Do you know I have some thoughts of turning Catholic, purposely to get you canonized for delivering me from the purgatory of collecting. The very little I did in that way, I felt quite

spasmodic. I could not have outlived it, if I had it all to wade through.

I wonder if ever such a thing was heard of as an enthusiastic printer. If such things are, I should think Mr M— had caught a little of Miss Dunbar's enthusiasm. At this latter flame I warm myself whenever I felt the wintry breath of the world begin to chill me.

The British Critic is a very civil gentleman, and shews more candour and favour than I expected; for how very foreign is any thing I ever wrote to critics;—these barbers of the brain, who merely recollect the face of nature as one remembers ones old nurse, after being at college, getting acquainted with Hecuba and Clytemnestra, and old Rhea, the grandmother of the gods.

Now to speak musically, you are in a mistake about the music of Chro Challin, it is tender but not plaintive. It is the delight of highlanders and calves. How

these latter acquire a taste for it, I shall presently explain, if you will, as Pistol says, "Perpend."

Know, then, that there is always a great deal of singing at the folds. The cows grow very impatient for their calves, who are not let in to suck them, till half the milk has been drained from them. To amuse them, and moderate their impatience, the dairy maids sing some appropriate tune all the time they are milking, to which said cows listen with much complacence having very early acquired a taste for music, and shewing a decided preference to the tune they are most accustomed to, this same Cho Chalin. The calves, meantime, profit by the same, and actually stand still to listen.

Now I know I am preaching to the winds, for you do not believe a word I say. Go, however, to the highlands, and convince yourself that our calves

are not a whit behind Lorenzo's colts. See the fine speech on the power of music in the Merchant of Venice.

The old air to which I alluded as being the Ranz de Vaches of the highlands is, "Ha pill, Ha pill, Ha pill me tuilhdh," which is played at all funerals, and on other sad occasions. I will endeavour to adopt some light and cheerful, though pastoral, story to the *old wife*. Briefly now you may come here and set as many musical tasks as you please, I shall be the better for executing them. The first fine clear day that I can go alone to the wood, I shall perhaps meet my pensive muse there, and furnish words pathetic enough to suit my favourite tune. How could it be thus long neglected. When I am under a tree with a pencil, and the back of an old letter, I shall do my very best. A room and decent paper would reduce me to mere common-place. I should then

think of being *methodical*. I have one sad ditty by me, wrote in the true language of the heart. The task you propose will furnish occupation for my mind,—“ a mind that fain would wander from its woe,” of which this long wandering letter is too clear a proof.

I will, however, close this woeful wandering, with assuring you, that I am now and always, much yours, A. G.

LETTER XIV.

Woodend, December 4. 1803.

I am all acquiescence, and will alter till you say enough. Are not the songs your own adopted children; and shall they not be dressed to your taste. Did you ever meet one so amenable to

advice,—so ready to correct every error the moment it is pointed out.

Certainly

“ If the powers the giftie gie me

“ To see myself as ithers see me,”

I shall of myself retrench; if not, you must do it for me. But you have, I doubt, not pronounced me incorrigible. Make allowance, however, for a mind enfeebled by “ eating cares,” which will not yield even to “ soft Lydian airs.” I am very *quotative* to day; but those who are both poor and impudent, are always ready to borrow. I have sacrificed a favorite line to you—“ Shared “ the guiltless happiness he made.” But it is well bestowed to propitiate you, and expiate the sin of tautology. I am sincerely pleased with deserted and drear. I felt the tameness and sameness of dark and sable, but could not possibly help it. Nothing else occurred.

The song is a favourite of my own, so is the rising of the lark. If you do not make it suit the tune, your ear must be defective; for I have hummed it like a humble bee, and found it correct harmony, and very applicable. I assure you I wondered at my own success, as Moliere's *Gentilhomme Burgeois* did at his facility in making prose. You say I write too many letters; very true, but if you knew all, I cannot possibly help it.

I am deep in debt to some of my oldest and dearest friends, and necessary business is hard on me at this time; for few indeed consult my ease, but I am assailed on all sides with reproaches for my remissness. I will try to get out of this thorny path, and really "lap me in soft Lydian airs;" that is, finish your songs. Tell me how your friends like my attempts; there is nothing so difficult, unless one were merely fanciful

and poetical, which serious sorrow never is.
—I am going to relax my over-stretched
faculties in Glasgow. A fortnight hence
then you shall hear such warbling—But
wherever I am, depend upon my being
very much yours, A. G.

LETTER XV.*

DEAR SIR,

Woodend, June 24, 1804.

I HAD an epistle from you yesterday,
by which I find that you are got many
bars beyond the fat knight, who only
wished to imitate the wise Romans in
brevity,—such Laconism is worthy of
Lycurgus himself. Perhaps you meant
this as an example, but I am very slow
in taking hints.

* These letters were addressed to a particular friend of the author's, George Thomson, Esq. of Edinburgh, who took *gratuitously* the whole charge of editing the book so often alluded to.

I am not yet convinced that you are not charmed with the fluent redundancy of my epistolarly stile, and have yielded from despair of rivalling its copious fullness. Had I hoped for rapid sales and high celebrity, Mr T's letter, inclosed in your last, would have greatly mortified me; but wrapt up as I am in a vestment of modesty, covered with a garment of humility, and surmounted by a great coat of resignation, I can patiently endure to think that I am born to die like other mortals; and that my literal life may outlast my literary one. Those younger children will at least do no harm in Mr Stuart's shop. It is well that they neither eat or wear out clothes like their seniors, who, in spite of their good example, continue to do both. If this "plurality" of copies continues undiminished, I shall perhaps send some of them to the highland emigrants of India;—they will enjoy the simple picture

of the rude home for which they daily sigh, more than though all Arcadia opened in the song; and their hearts will bear testimony to the fidelity of the drawing. If any of them should feel inclined to apostatize, (which I do not much fear,) this faithful presentment of home, with all its simple charms, will win them back from luxury and currying. A thousand other good effects it will have, that a lowlander like you cannot calculate upon. So if it ever comes into your head, that this purely patriotic scheme was suggested by the love of worldly gain, discard all such evil imaginings, and expand your soul to enable you to form a due estimate of my beneficence, which I should call munificence, if I were not under a sneaking necessity of asking the price for the books. Never suppose me discouraged; I have second sight enough to see a second edition in dim and distant pros-

pect. This is not more sanguine in me, than printing three thousand copies was in my friends. It is not on my merit that I found my expectations unfortunately:—Every one has not your happy talent of discovering latent faculties and song-writing abilities.—I have a much surer dependence than my poetical or personal merits. It is the plain fidelity of my descriptions which has enlisted the nationality of my countrymen on my side. Now nationality is an unvarying and universal feeling. The poetry is quite good enough for those to whom the beauties of English poetry are new,—their tastes are not refined to fastidiousness, and I would not write beyond them if I could. Archdeacon Barbour is no more a poet than I am; but then he is what I am not, a good scholar. Yet it is not that which has preserved him alive through all changes of taste and language. It is the fidelity of his

description, the truth of his narrative, and the noble nationality of his countrymen, that have made him immortal. Bannockburn could support itself by its own simple majesty. Pomp and pageantry of description would have spoiled it.

You have no idea, by the by, what heroical nuts we shall gather when they ripen. It is but a short walk from this same Woodend to the source of that same glorious burn where they grow in great abundance ; and the walk through our wood is so beautifully varied, and tangled with honeysuckle and ivy, I had never imagined there could be a wood so populous and so musical in this country. The variety and number of birds is incredible. They are now in full song. Every little eminence round glows with thick blossomed broom and furze, that gives unspeakable gaiety to the face of nature ; and a little farther

on, there are brooks hid under wooded trees and waterfalls, that diffuse freshness and solemnity, suitable to the wild music that waters, birds, and breezes make in concert.

These spots inspire a kind of divine melancholy, that is both soothing and exalting. But why should I tell you of them, when you will not come. You do not deserve to see the luxuriant beauty of the tall wild hedge opposite my window, all fair and fragrant as it is, with great arching, eglantine of giant-size, end endless gean blossoms, and flowering hawthorn, and lavish honeysuckle. Nor do you deserve to behold or emulate the contentment of my well fed cows, that wander through a wilderness of sweets over my wild lawn, that is so beautifully uneven, and so richly flowery. It is all too good for you who would perhaps like to see it rolled and shaved ; but its charms are

well bestowed on me who love its negligence. I wish however you would deputize William to admire the summer beauties, I had almost said glories, of Woodend, before they fade into sober autumn,—too sober for me.

The melancholy that was once merely tender, is now wounding in the extreme. Therefore, farewell. A. G.

THE END.

ERRATA.—VOL. I.

Page 3, line 10, *for* anology, *read* analogy.—P. 6, l. 9, *for* prompts, *read* prompt.—P. 9, line 5, *for* caimine, *read* ceimine.—P. 9. Note, *for* drew, *read* draw.—P. 32, l. 14, *for* if goes, *read* if he goes.—P. 35, last line, *for* natural, *read* rational.—P. 42, last line, *for* will even trust, *read* will not even trust.—P. 47, l. 21, *for* Remeo, *read* Romeo.—P. 48, l. 23, *for* on, *read* in.—P. 73, l. 18, *for* were, *read* was.—P. 124, line 10, *for* Yet the, *read* Yet from the.—P. 170, l. 12, *for* his ways, *read* their ways.—P. 181, last line, *for* dark, *read* dank.—P. 195, last line, *for* matters, *read* matter.—P. 212, line 2, *for* lectable, *read* delectable.—P. 284, line 18, *for* music, *read* the music.—P. 297, l. 10, *for* Oxford, *read* Orford.

ERRATA.—VOL. II.

Page 6, line 20, *for* diminishes, *read* diminish.—P. 33, l. 22, *for* wit, *read* wits.—P. 43, l. 13, *for* orda, *read* osda.—P. 48, l. 5, *for* Badenach, *read* Badenoch.—P. 69, l. 15, *for* enjoyments, *read* enjoyment.—P. 94, line 22, *for* coteries, *read* coteries.—P. 124, l. 16, *for* house, *read* door.—P. 131, l. 14, *for* sports, *read* spots.—P. 145, l. 10, *for* treasures, *read* treasure.—P. 170, line 15, *for* on the grey down, *read* in the grey dawn.—P. 237, l. 12, *for* was, *read* were.