

## THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,  
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays ;  
Come, let us spend the lightsome days

In the birks of Aberfeldy.

Bonny lassie, will ye go,

Will ye go, will ye go ?

Bonny lassie, will ye go

To the birks of Aberfeldy ?

The little birdies blithely sing,  
While o'er their heads the hazels hing ;  
Or lightly flit on wanton wing

In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,  
The foamy stream deep roaring fa's  
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,

The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,  
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,  
And rising, weets wi' misty showers

The birks of Aberfeldy.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,  
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,  
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,  
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The old song of the Birks of Abergeldie was well known, and still merits notice.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,  
Will ye go, will ye go ;  
Bonnie lassie, will ye go  
To the birks of Abergeldie ?  
Ye shall get a gown of silk,  
A gown of silk, a gown of silk ;  
Ye shall get a gown of silk,  
And a coat of callimankie.

The song of Burns was conceived while he stood beside the Falls of Aberfeldy, in Perthshire, during his highland tour. He seldom adhered so closely to the spirit of the old words which he sought to imitate. His own original fancy, and happy turn of thought, carried him away from the paths of others.

## FAREWELL, THOU FAIR DAY.

Farewell, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,

Now gay with the bright setting sun ;

Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties !

Our race of existence is run.

Thou grim king of terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,

Go, frighten the coward and slave ;

Go, teach them to tremble, fell tyrant ! but know,

No terrors hast thou to the brave !

Thou strik'st the dull peasant, he sinks in the dark,

Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name ;

Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark !

He falls in the blaze of his fame.

In the field of proud honour, our swords in our hands,

Our King and our Country to save,

While Victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,

O ! who would not die with the brave !

Burns wrote this heroic song at the first out-burst of the French revolutionary war, and so well was he satisfied with what he had done, that he was desirous of having it set to music, and printed separately. The poet imagines a field of battle, the sun setting, the victory won, and the victorious and the wounded and the dying, chanting the song of death. The song, noble and heart-rousing as it is, has some lines of common sentiment and cumbrous expression.

## SAIR I RUE THE WITLESS WISH.

O sair I rue the witless wish  
 That gar'd me gang wi' you at e'en,  
 And sair I rue the birken bush  
 That screen'd us with its leaves sae green.  
 And tho' ye vow'd ye wad be mine,  
 The tear o' grief ay dims my e'e,  
 For, O! I'm fear'd that I may tyne  
 The love that ye hae promised me!

While ithers seek their e'ening sports,  
 I wander, dowie, a' my lane,  
 For, when I join their glad resorts,  
 Their daffing gi'es me meikle pain.  
 Alas! it was na sae shortsyne,  
 When a' my nights were spent wi' glee;  
 But O! I'm fear'd that I may tyne  
 The love that ye hae promised me.

Dear lassie, keep thy heart aboon,  
 For I ha'e wair'd my winter's fee,  
 I've coft a bonnie silken gown,  
 To be a bridal gift for thee.  
 And sooner shall the hills fa' down,  
 And mountain-high shall stand the sea,  
 Ere I'd accept a gowden crown  
 To change that love I bear for thee.

Ease and gentleness, rather than vehemence and vigour, characterise the songs of Tannahill. The sorrow of the lady in this song is moderate, and the rapture of the lover discreet. They would make a prudent and frugal pair.

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## AFTON WATER.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,  
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise ;  
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—  
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,  
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,  
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,  
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills !  
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills ;  
There daily I wander as noon rises high,  
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,  
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow ;  
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,  
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,  
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides ;  
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,  
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,  
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays ;  
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream—  
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

The pastoral feeling, which Burns infused into this sweet song, is in strict conformity with nature. The woodland primrose, the scented birk, the note of the blackbird, the call of the lapwing and the cushat, the flowery brae, and a fair heroine, are found now, as they were then, on the banks of this little stream. Time, which works such havoc with pastoral landscape, can take nothing away from Afton Water, unless it dries up the stream and strikes the ground with barrenness. Afton Water is in Ayrshire, and is one of the numerous streams which augment the Nith. The song was written in honour of Mrs. Dugald Stewart of Afton Lodge—an accomplished lady, and excellent lyric poetess ; and the first person of any note who perceived and acknowledged the genius of Burns.

## HER FLOWING LOCKS.

Her flowing locks, the raven's wing,  
Adown her neck and bosom hing ;  
How sweet unto that breast to cling,  
    And round that neck entwine her !  
Her lips are roses wet wi' dew !  
O, what a feast, her bonnie mou !  
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,  
    A crimson still diviner !

These are eight beautiful lines. They are too few to sing, too good to cast away, and too peculiar and happy ever to be eked out by a hand inferior to the hand of their author, Robert Burns. They will long continue as a fragment.

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## FAREWELL TO AYRSHIRE.

Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,  
    Scenes that former thoughts renew ;  
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,  
    Now a sad and last adieu.  
Bonnie Doon, sae sweet at gloamin,  
    Fare thee weel before I gang,  
Bonnie Doon, whare, early roaming,  
    First I wove the rustic sang.

Bowers, adieu ! where love decoying  
 First enthrall'd this heart o' mine ;  
 There the saftest sweets enjoying,  
 Sweets that memory ne'er shall tine :  
 Friends, so near my bosom ever,  
 Ye hae render'd moments dear ;  
 But, alas ! when forced to sever,  
 Then the stroke, oh ! how severe !

Friends, that parting tear reserve it,  
 Though 'tis doubly dear to me ;  
 Could I think I did deserve it,  
 How much happier would I be.  
 Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,  
 Scenes that former thoughts renew ;  
 Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,  
 Now a sad and last adieu !

Richard Gall wrote this song. When it first appeared it was called Burns's Farewell to Ayrshire, and passed for some time as the production of the silent poet. This, indeed, was doubted by many, for it was not in such a feeble and unimpassioned way that Burns recalled and dwelt upon the scenes of his early youth. But sweetness of versification and natural feeling will always obtain notice, and sometimes keep it, and this song has done both. It was first published in Johnson's Musical Museum.

## THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green,  
On every blade the pearls hang ;  
The Zephyr wanton'd round the bean,  
And bore its fragrant sweets along :  
In every glen the mavis sang,  
All nature listening seem'd the while,  
Except where green-wood echoes rang,  
Among the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,  
My heart rejoiced in nature's joy,  
When musing in a lonely glade  
A maiden fair I chanced to spy ;  
Her look was like the morning's eye,  
Her air like nature's vernal smile ;  
Perfection whisper'd, passing by,  
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle !

Fair is the morn in flowery May,  
And sweet is night in Autumn mild,  
When roving thro' the garden gay,  
Or wandering in the lonely wild :  
But woman, nature's darling child !  
There all her charms she does compile ;  
Ev'n there her other works are foil'd  
By the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

O, had she been a country maid,  
 And I the happy country swain,  
 Though shelter'd in the lowliest shed  
 That ever rose in Scotland's plain !  
 Through weary winter's wind and rain,  
 With joy, with rapture, I would toil ;  
 And nightly to my bosom strain  
 The bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,  
 Where fame and honours lofty shine ;  
 And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,  
 Or downward seek the Indian mine :  
 Give me the cot below the pine,  
 To tend the flocks or till the soil,  
 And every day have joys divine  
 With the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

The lady, in whose praise this fine song was written, was Miss Alexander of Ballochmyle, in Ayrshire. Burns, during one of his fits of solitary musing on the banks of his native stream, met with this west-country beauty among the woods, and her charms occasioned the song, which he enclosed to her in a letter written with much romantic respect and delicacy. The lass of Ballochmyle, like many other maidens on whom the folly of poets has lavished lasting verse, was cold or insensible, and Burns had not the fortitude to be silent—he complained of her neglect. Dr. Currie excuses the lady with singular infelicity: “ Her modesty might prevent

her from perceiving that the muse of Tibullus breathed in this nameless poet." I hope Miss Alexander listened to the doctor's defence as she did to the poet's strains, with " silent modesty and dignified reserve."

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### THE STOWN GLANCE O' KINDNESS.

'Twasna her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin ;  
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing ;  
'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,  
'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,  
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me ;  
But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,  
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,  
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest !  
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter—  
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter !

To a lady with blue eyes and flaxen ringlets, Burns seems largely indebted for his inspiration in song ; and I am afraid that the poet persisted in pouring out his praise long after the lady had no other charm than personal attractions left. One of the flaxen-tressed heroines of Burns contrived to cast suspicion upon her chastity

before her beauty was well budded :—but it would be discourteous to insist upon purity with a lady who had the weakness, or the boldness, never to care any thing for a virtue so sensitive and troublesome.

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**BONNIE LESLEY.**

O saw ye bonnie Lesley,  
As she gaed o'er the border?  
She's gane, like Alexander,  
To spread her conquests further.  
To see her is to love her,  
And love but her for ever ;  
For nature made her what she is,  
And never made anither !

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,  
Thy subjects we before thee ;  
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,  
The hearts o' men adore thee.  
The deil he cou'd na scaith thee,  
Or aught that wad belang thee,  
He'd look into thy bonnie face,  
And say, I canna wrang thee !

The powers aboon will tent thee ;  
Misfortune sha'na steer thee ;

Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,  
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.  
Return again, fair Lesley,  
Return to Caledonie!  
That we may brag, we hae a lass  
There's nane again so bonnie.

Mr. Thomson sought to stay the march of "Macedonia's madman" into the region of Scottish song, but Burns was unexpectedly obstinate, and Alexander keeps his place; though all who sing the song must wonder what he is doing there. The heroine, Miss Lesley Baillie of Ayrshire, now Mrs. Cuming of Logie, was on her way to England through Dumfries; Burns accompanied her towards the border, and on his way home made this song in her honour, and an exquisite song it is. The poet believed that he had parodied an old song, beginning with

My bonnie Lizzie Bailie,  
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie;

but the resemblance exists only in the first verse, and in the bard's imagination. It was to such casual inspirations that we owe many of his finest songs.

## GUDEWIFE, COUNT THE LAWIN.

Gane is the day, and mirk's the night,  
But we'll ne'er stray for faut o' light,  
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,  
And blude-red wine's the rising sun.

Then, gudewife, count the lawin,  
The lawin, the lawin ;  
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,  
And bring a coggie mair.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,  
And semple-folk maun fecht and fen ;  
But here we're a' in ae accord,  
For ilka man that's drunk's a lord.

My coggie is a haly pool,  
That heals the wounds o' care and dool ;  
And pleasure is a wanton trout—  
An' ye drink but deep, ye'll find him out.

Then, gudewife, count the lawin,  
The lawin, the lawin ;  
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,  
And bring a coggie mair.

Good drinking songs are few in number ; and England, with all her admiration of her brown ale and her

wine, has poured but little drunken inspiration into verse. The ancient verses which suggested this song to Burns are not unknown, nor do they deserve to be forgotten.

O, ilka day my wife tells me,  
That ale and brandy will ruin me ;  
But though gude drink shou'd be my dead,  
Ise have this written on my head :  
    O, gudewife, count the lawin,  
    The lawin, the lawin ;  
    Then, gudewife, count the lawin,  
    And bring a coggie mair.

The hero of the old song seems resolved not to settle with the hostess over an empty measure, and it is evident he will as little rise from a full one.

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### THE BONNIE WEE THING.

Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,  
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,  
I wad wear thee in my bosom,  
Lest my jewel I should tine.  
Wishfully I look and languish  
In that bonnie face o' thine ;  
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,  
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,  
In ae constellation shine ;  
To adore thee is my duty,  
Goddess o' this soul o' mine !  
Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,  
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,  
I wad wear thee in my bosom,  
Lest my jewel I should tine.

“ Composed on my little idol, the charming, lovely Davies :” such are the words of Burns which accompany this song in the *Reliques*. The song corresponds with the character which he draws, it is very brief and very beautiful. To the same lady the poet addresses one of his most laboured letters — he is apologizing for his indolence. “ In vain remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes : beneath the deadly-fixed eye and leaden hand of indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigours of winter in the chink of a ruined wall.” The ease and nature of his verse seldom found the way into the poet’s prose ; and though many passages of his letters are written with great ease and animation, and sparkling with poetic imagery, yet, on the whole, they are laboured and cumbrous, compared with his inimitable verse.

## EVAN BANKS.

Slow spreads the gloom my soul desires,  
The sun from India's shore retires ;  
To Evan banks, with temp'rate ray,  
Home of my youth, he leads the day.  
O banks to me for ever dear !  
O stream whose murmurs still I hear !  
All, all my hopes of bliss reside  
Where Evan mingles with the Clyde.

And she, in simple beauty drest,  
Whose image lives within my breast ;  
Who trembling heard my parting sigh,  
And long pursued me with her eye ;  
Does she, with heart unchanged as mine,  
Oft in the vocal bowers recline ?  
Or where you grot o'erhangs the tide  
Muse while the Evan seeks the Clyde ?

Ye lofty banks that Evan bound ;  
Ye lavish woods that wave around,  
And o'er the stream your shadows throw,  
Which sweetly winds so far below ;  
What secret charm to memory brings,  
All that on Evan's border springs ?  
Sweet banks ! ye bloom by Mary's side :  
Blest stream ! she views thee haste to Clyde.

Can all the wealth of India's coast  
Atone for years in absence lost ?  
Return, ye moments of delight,  
With richer treasures bless my sight !  
Swift from this desert let me part,  
And fly to meet a kindred heart !  
Nor more may aught my steps divide  
From that dear stream which flows to Clyde.

I found this song, when I was a boy, in an old Magazine, in a shepherd's shiel among the moorlands of Nithsdale, and I was so charmed with its descriptive beauty, that it was impressed on my memory at a couple of readings. It was printed in Burns's Reliques, by mistake, for one of his productions ; this was corrected by one of the Reviews, which took the song from Burns and gave it to Miss Williams.

And she, in simple beauty drest,  
Whose image lives within my breast ;  
Who trembling heard my parting sigh,  
And long pursued me with her eye.

These are sweet and delicate lines, and worthy of the great poet to whom the song was erroneously imputed.

## THE CRADLE SONG.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e !  
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
For thou art doubly dear to me.  
Thy daddie now is far awa,  
A sailor laddie o'er the sea ;  
But hope ay hechts his safe return  
To you my bonnie lamb an' me.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e !  
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
For thou art doubly dear to me.  
Thy face is simple, sweet an' mild,  
Like ony summer e'ening fa' ;  
Thy sparkling e'e is bonnie black ;  
Thy neck is like the mountain snaw.

Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
O saftly close thy blinkin' e'e !  
Baloo, baloo, my wee wee thing,  
For thou art doubly dear to me.  
O but thy daddie's absence lang  
Would break my dowie heart in twa,

Wert thou na left a dautit pledge,  
To steal the eerie hours awa !

The highland Baloo, or nursing song, is of a martial character, and very unlike this sweet little effusion from the pen of Richard Gall.

Hey balou, my sweet wee Donald,  
Image of the great Clanronald ;  
Brawly kens our wanton chief  
Wha gat my young highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie !  
An' thou live thou'll steal a naigie,  
Travel the country through and through,  
And bring me hame a Carlisle cow.

Through the lowlands, o'er the border,  
Weel, my babie, mayest thou furder ;  
Herry the loons o' the low countrie,  
Synne to the highlands hame to me.

The highland virago sees in imagination her son returning victorious from a foray, and rejoices in the resemblance which he bears to the head of the clan who had honoured her with his caresses. The more gentle lowland dame seeks to hush her own feelings and her child at the same time with the hope of her husband's return, the fair looks of her offspring, and the continuance of her love.

## THE LAMMIE.

Whar hae ye been a' day,  
My boy Tammy?  
I've been by burn and flow'ry brae,  
Meadow green and mountain gray,  
Courting o' this young thing  
Just come frae her mammy.

And whar gat ye that young thing,  
My boy Tammy?  
I gat her down in yonder howe,  
Smiling on a broomy knowe,  
Herding ae wee lamb and ewe  
For her poor mammy.

What said ye to the bonnie bairn,  
My boy Tammy?  
I praised her een, sae lovely blue,  
Her dimpled cheek, and cherry mou;—  
I pree'd it aft, as ye may trow!—  
She said, she'd tell her mammy.

I held her to my beating heart,  
My young, my smiling Lammie!  
I hae a house, it cost me dear,  
I've wealth o' plenishen and gear;  
Ye'se get it a' wer't ten times mair,  
Gin ye will leave your mammy.

The smile gade aff her bonnie face—  
 I maunna leave my mammy.  
 She's gi'en me meat, she's gi'en me claise,  
 She's been my comfort a' my days:—  
 My father's death brought monie waes—  
 I canna leave my mammy.

We'll tak her hame and mak her fain,  
 My ain kind-hearted Lammie !  
 We'll gie her meat, we'll gie her claise,  
 We'll be her comfort a' her days.  
 The wee thing gie's her hand, and says,—  
 There! gang and ask my mammy.

Has she been to the kirk wi' thee,  
 My boy Tammy ?  
 She has been to the kirk wi' me,  
 And the tear was in her e'e :  
 But O ! she's but a young thing,  
 Just come frae her mammy.

Tammie has been praised for his singleness of heart ; the Lammie for her simplicity ; and the old woman for kindness of nature and warmth of affection. I cannot feel that all this is deserved : the simplicity of Macneill is without manliness ; his lovers are somewhat conceited and silly ; and their language belongs to that period which precedes the dawn of love. The following ludicrous variation was often sung along with the song, and passed with many for a part of it :—

How auld may thy young thing be,  
 My boy Tammie?  
 How auld may thy young thing be,  
 My kind hearted Lammie?  
 She's twice six, twice seven,  
 Twice twenty and eleven;  
 Yet she's but a young thing  
 Just come frae her mammie.

This verse holds a riddle within it which I once heard solved: some of my readers may be able to pick the loop of the rustic enigma.

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### THE AULD MAN.

But lately seen in gladsome green  
 The woods rejoice the day,  
 Through gentle showers the laughing flowers  
 In double pride were gay:  
 But now our joys are fled  
 On winter blasts awa!  
 Yet maiden May, in rich array,  
 Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe  
 Shall melt the snaws of age;  
 My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,  
 Sinks in time's wintry rage.

Oh, age has weary days,  
 And nights o' sleepless pain!  
 Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,  
 Why com'st thou not again!

Burns wrote the Auld Man in one of those moments when he was, to use his own glowing words—

On the past too fondly pondering,  
 O'er the hapless future wandering.

But weary days of old age and nights of sleepless pain he was not doomed to suffer. The song was composed to an East Indian air: it has never been a favourite. Youth wishes to enjoy the golden time upon its hands, and age is far from fond of chanting of declining strength, white paws, and general listlessness.

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### ANNIE.

By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove,  
 While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi:  
 The winds were whispering through the grove,  
 The yellow corn was waving ready:  
 I listen'd to a lover's sang,  
 And thought on youthfu' pleasures mony;  
 And ay the wild-wood echoes rang—  
 O, dearly do I love thee, Annie!

O, happy be the woodbine bower,  
 Nae nightly bogle make it eerie ;  
 Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,  
 The place and time I met my dearie !  
 Her head upon my throbbing breast,  
 She, sinking, said, I'm thine for ever !  
 While mony a kiss the seal imprest,  
 The sacred vow, we ne'er should sever.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose brae,  
 The simmer joys the flocks to follow ;  
 How cheery through her shortening day  
 Is autumn in her weeds o' yellow !  
 But can they melt the glowing heart,  
 Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,  
 Or through each nerve the rapture dart,  
 Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure ?

“ I walked out with the Museum,” says Burns, “ in my hand ; and turning up ‘ Allan Water,’ the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air : so I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn till I wrote one to suit the measure. The ancient name of the tune, Ramsay says, is ‘ Allan Water,’ or ‘ My love Annie’s very bonnie :’ this last has certainly been a line of the original song. So I took up the idea, and as you will see have introduced the line in its place.” Burns was certainly correct in his conjecture, that the line which gave a name to Ramsay’s song belonged to an old lyric. The Allan is a northern stream ; and Benledi is a mountain west of Strathallan, three thousand and nine feet high.

## BONNIE BELL.

The smiling spring comes in rejoicing,  
And surly winter grimly flies :  
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,  
And bonnie blue are the sunny skies ;  
Fresh o'er the mountain breaks forth the morning,  
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell :  
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,  
And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

The flowery spring leads sunny summer,  
And yellow autumn presses near,  
Then in his turn comes gloomy winter,  
Till smiling spring again appear.  
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,  
Old time and nature their changes tell ;  
But never ranging, still unchanging,  
I adore my bonnie Bell.

I once saw a copy of this beautiful song, to which some weak hand had added a couple of strange stanzas. They were out of all keeping with the character of Burns's verses ; and the peasantry for whose acceptance they had been composed soon separated the impure clay from the beaten gold.

## THE DEIL'S AWA WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

The deil cam fiddling through the town,  
And danc'd awa wi' the exciseman ;  
And ilka wife cry'd, Auld Mahoun,  
We wish you luck o' the prize, man.  
We'll make our maut, and brew our drink,  
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man ;  
And mony thanks to the muckle black deil  
That danc'd awa wi' the exciseman.

There's threesome reels, and foursome reels,  
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man ;  
But the ae best dance e'er cam to our lan',  
Was the deil's awa wi' the exciseman.  
We'll make our maut, and brew our drink,  
We'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man ;  
And mony thanks to the muckle black deil  
That danc'd awa wi' the exciseman.

At a convivial meeting of the excisemen at Dumfries, Burns was called on for a song : the poet had a strong and manly, but not a very melodious voice. He declined singing ; but handed this very characteristic song to the chairman written on the back of a letter : it was sung with great enthusiasm. Burns was much esteemed in his official capacity for his moderation and kindness of heart. All the country shopkeepers and ale-house

wives delight in recalling him to their remembrance. Some of the more devout add to their commendations of the poet as an excise officer—"He was warst to himsel, puir fellow."

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### THE GLOOMY NIGHT.

The gloomy night is gathering fast,  
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast ;  
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,  
I see it driving o'er the plain :  
The hunter now has left the moor,  
The scatter'd coveys meet secure,  
While here I wander, prest with care,  
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The autumn mourns her ripening corn  
By early winter's ravage torn ;  
Across her placid, azure sky,  
She sees the scowling tempest fly ;  
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave—  
I think upon the stormy wave,  
Where many a danger I must dare,  
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,  
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore ;  
Though death in ev'ry shape appear,  
The wretched have no more to fear :

But round my heart the ties are bound,  
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound ;  
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,  
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,  
Her heathy moors and winding vales ;  
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,  
Pursuing past, unhappy loves !  
Farewell, my friends ! Farewell, my foes !  
My peace with these, my love with those :  
The bursting tears my heart declare—  
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr.

“ I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert under all the terrors of a jail ; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends ; my chest was on the road to Greenock ; and I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—

The gloomy night is gathering fast.”

Such is the history which Burns gives of this touching lyric—one of the most mournful of all his compositions, inasmuch as we associate it with his early history and his untimely death.

## O, FOR ANE AND TWENTY, TAM.

They snool me sair, and haud me down,  
 And gar me look like bluntie, Tam !  
 But three short years will soon wheel roun',  
 And then comes ane and twenty, Tam.  
 An O for ane and twenty, Tam,  
 An hey, sweet ane and twenty, Tam !  
 I'll learn my kin a rattlin sang  
 An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.

A glebe o' land, a claut o' gear,  
 Was left me by my auntie, Tam ;  
 At kith or kin I needna spier,  
 An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,  
 Though I mysel hae plenty, Tam ;  
 But hear'st thou, laddie ? there's my loof,  
 I'm thine at ane and twenty, Tam.  
 An O for ane and twenty, Tam,  
 An hey, sweet ane and twenty, Tam !  
 I'll learn my kin a rattlin sang  
 An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.

Tam had the good fortune to be beloved by a very lively and opulent young lady. Her account of her hopes and her affections is very confidential, and her

confidence has been rewarded by public favour. The "Moudiework," from which this admirable song accepted only the aid of the air, is a very old and very free lyric; which cannot well be quoted, and certainly can far less be sung. "This song is mine," is the brief claim which Burns makes to this production in the Reliques.

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### THE LASS OF ARRANTEENIE.

Far lone, among the Highland hills,  
 'Midst Nature's wildest grandeur,  
 By rocky dens, and woody glens,  
 With weary steps I wander :  
 The langsome way, the darksome day,  
 The mountain mist sae rainy,  
 Are nought to me, when gaun to thee,  
 Sweet lass of Arranteenie.

Yon mossy rose-bud down the howe,  
 Just op'ning fresh and bonnie,  
 Blinks sweetly 'neath the hazel bough,  
 And's scarcely seen by ony :  
 Sae sweet amidst her native hills  
 Obscurely blooms my Jeanie,  
 Mair fair and gay than rosy May,  
 The flower of Arranteenie.

Now, from the mountain's lofty brow,  
I view the distant ocean ;  
There avarice guides the bounding prow,  
Ambition courts promotion.—  
Let fortune pour her golden store,  
Her laurell'd favours many,  
Give me but this, my soul's first wish,  
The lass of Arranteenie.

I suspect that the "Lass of Arranteenie" is one of those aërial damsels whom lyric poets create as the Egyptians make gods—for the express purpose of falling down and worshipping the work of their own hands. He who sings of the charms of an imaginary maiden must share in the reproach with which the poet assails the Romish church:—

Thus Romish bakers praise the deity  
They chipp'd, while yet in its paniety.

This is one of poor Tannahill's songs, and contains a pretty picture of modest love and quiet affection.

## MY NANNIE-O.

Behind yon hills where Lugar flows,  
    'Mang moors an' mosses many-o,  
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,  
    An' I'll awa' to Nannie-o:  
The westlin wind blows loud and shill,  
    The night's baith mirk and rainy-o;  
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,  
    An' owre the hills to Nannie-o.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young;  
    Nae artfu' wiles to win ye-o:  
May ill befa' the flattering tongue  
    That wad beguile my Nannie-o!  
Her face is fair, her heart is true,  
    As spotless as she's bonnie-o;—  
The op'ning gowan, wet wi dew,  
    Nae purer is than Nannie-o.

A country lad is my degree,  
    An' few there be that ken me-o;  
But what care I how few they be?  
    I'm welcome aye to Nannie-o.  
My riches a's my penny-fee,  
    An' I maun guide it cannie-o;  
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,  
    My thoughts are a' my Nannie-o.

Our auld gudeman delights to view  
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie-o ;  
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,  
An' has nae care but Nannie-o.  
Come weel, come woe, I carena by,  
I'll tak what Heav'n will send me-o ;  
Nae ither care in life have I,  
But live, an' love my Nannie-o.

Burns was fond of his native hills and streams ; the rivers and rivulets of Ayrshire are remembered in many a moving song. A very pretty stream, with a very strange name, once flowed in the commencing line of "My Nannie-o:" the poet listened to the complaint of some fastidious singer, and removed Nannie's native stream, and replaced it with the Lugar. Such changes lessen our belief in the local truth of lyric verse ; but perhaps Burns exclaimed with Prior, when he sought to excuse himself from the charge of more serious levities, "Ye gods, must one swear to the truth of a song!" The poet, it will be remembered, changed his name from Burness to Burns, a kind of deliberate whim which deprived a very ancient name of an increase of honour. Those who live on the banks of the stream of Stinchar will think of the fame of which the poet deprived them by displacing it for the Lugar.

## LORD GREGORY.

O mirk, mirk is this midnight hour,  
And loud the tempest's roar ;  
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tow'r—  
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.  
An exile frae her father's ha',  
And a' for loving thee ;  
At least some pity on me shaw,  
If love it mayna be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove  
By bonnie Irwin side,  
Where first I own'd that virgin love,  
I lang, lang had denied ?  
How aften didst thou pledge and vow  
Thou wad for aye be mine !  
And my fond heart, itsel sae true,  
It ne'er mistrusted' thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,  
And flinty is thy breast :  
Thou dart of heaven that flashest by,  
O wilt thou give me rest !  
Ye mustering thunders from above,  
Your willing victim see !  
But spare, and pardon my fause love,  
His wrangs to heaven and me !

This song, by Burns, and also a song of the same name by Wolcot, were suggested by a very old lyric, called "The Lass of Lochroyan," which far excels them both in poetry and pathos. Wolcot complained with some bitterness of the unkindness of Burns in selecting the same subject as himself, and imputed it to envy. They have both written fine songs: the English verse is the more elegant—the Scottish the more natural. Dr. Currie claims the merit of originality for Wolcot; and Burns disclaims all wish to enter into competition:—"My song," he modestly says, "though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity about it."—I wonder if he ever read "The Lass of Lochroyan?"

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### A RED, RED ROSE.

O, my luvè's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June :  
O, my luvè's like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.  
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luvè am I ;  
And I will luvè thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry :

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;—  
 I will luv thee still, my dear,  
 While the sands o' life shall run.  
 And fare thee weel, my only luv !  
 And fare thee weel awhile !  
 And I will come again, my luv,  
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

There is an old Nithsdale song which seems to have suggested to Burns some part of this delightful little lyric. The heroine loses her lover, and exclaims—

O where's he gone whom I love best ?  
 And has left me here to sigh and mourn ;—  
 O I shall wander the world over  
 Till once I see if my love return.  
 The seas shall dry—the fishes fly—  
 The rocks shall melt down wi' the sun—  
 The labouring man shall forget his labour ;  
 The blackbird shall not sing, but mourn,  
 If ever I prove false to my love  
 Till once I see if he will return.

If all the song had equalled this specimen, it would have merited a place in any collection.

## O POORTITH CAULD.

O poortith cauld, and restless love,  
 Ye wreck my peace between ye ;  
 Yet poortith a' I could forgive,  
 An 't werena for my Jeanie.  
 O why should fate sic pleasure have,  
 Life's dearest bands untwining ?  
 Or why sae sweet a flower as love  
 Depend on Fortune's shining ?

This world's wealth when I think on,  
 Its pride, and a' the lave o't ;  
 Fie, fie on silly coward man,  
 That he should be the slave o't.

Her een sae bonnie blue betray  
 How she repays my passion ;  
 But prudence is her o'erword aye,  
 She talks of rank and fashion.

O wha can prudence think upon,  
 And sic a lassie by him ?  
 O wha can prudence think upon,  
 And sae in love as I am ?

How blest the wild-wood Indian's fate!  
He woos his simple dearie;  
The sillie bogles, wealth and state,  
Can never make them eerie.  
O why should Fate sic pleasure have  
Life's dearest bands untwining?  
Or why sae sweet a flower as love  
Depend on Fortune's shining?

“Poortith cauld” was sent to George Thomson unaccompanied by any remarks from Burns: it is a sweet and a touching song. The old words are of a gay and a pleasant character: the hero who “had a horse and had nae mair” was a man of a different stamp from the hero of the present song. In uniting the air to sadder words, Burns perhaps was conscious that he was disobeying the warning spirit of the old melody: but his mind was not always in a mirthful mood; and, I confess, I love his pathos more than his humour. I have followed the poet's first version of the song in the last verse, as more natural than the amended copy. The “humble cottar” has his visions of wealth and importance as well as the most lordly. The “wild-wood Indian” is living in what Alexander Peden called “black nature,”—a state of irreclaimable barbarism.