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THE HIGHLANDERS
A POEM



BY
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Poem (if such it may be called) pretends not to that perfection which is entitled to the praise of Criticism; nor even to that negative excellence which usually averts its censure.

The charms of Fame, in the present performance, dazzle not the eye of its author; nor does the self-inspired confidence of Merit prompt him to publication.

If, like a drop of rain falling into the Ocean, it cause no visible augmentation to the approved Stock of Literature, the Public will sustain no injury, and the author feel little disappointment. Conscious of having intended well, he will derive no mortification from Vanity chagrined, or Ambition dejected: but will still continue to compassionate those neglected fellow Britons whose virtues and wretchedness stimulated his pen.

Whatever may prove the fate of this little Bark, a more able and experienced artist might certainly form (of materials with which the

Highlands would supply him) a noble vessel of much superior magnitude and beauty ; which might bear up against the dread waves of Criticism, and even defy the ravages of Time.

If this humble effort tend but, in the smallest degree, to awaken a sympathetic concern for the distresses of the virtuous people whose name it bears, in the bosoms of those who are able to remove them, every end and expectation will be answered to

THE AUTHOR.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

SCOTLAND is distinguished by two grand divisions denominated the Highlands, and Lowlands. The former division and its inhabitants form the subject of the following Poem. In the perusal of which to convince the reader that the distresses therein described, are not heightened by poetical licence, it may not be improper by way of Introduction, to aduce the authority of such persons as have already addressed the public on the subject. Doctor Anderson (who was employed by Government to examine into the state of the Hebrides) strongly confirms the relations before given by others, of the melancholy poverty and depression of their inhabitants.

“ These Islands,” says he, “ contain a numerous race of hardy and robust people, whose labour, if properly directed, might prove of great utility to the state. Their number (including those parts of Scotland where the inhabitants are in similar circumstances) cannot be fewer than five hundred thousand souls; who being totally unacquainted with the benefits which result from that compacted state of civil Society, in which individuals can, with ease, mutually give and receive reciprocal aid; live, at present, in detached solitary hamlets, in want of most of those enjoyments which men who have lived in society would think absolutely necessary to existence.----- In *their* situation, every man is not only obliged to dig and reap with his own hands the little field that is to furnish bread to himself and family; but, in many cases, also to carry home its produce on his own shoulders, and to take out the manure to his field in the same manner. He must also make every necessary he wants himself, with tools of his own forming.

“ Thus are these people continually employed in an uninterrupted, and fruitless industry, which is neither capable of freeing themselves from want, nor of benefiting the state. Hence, persons, who observe very little more of their mode of life, save that they frequently desert those employments which such observers think would turn out profitable to them, rashly conclude, that this proceeds from an unsteady disposition, a disinclination to labour, and an insuperable indolence of temperament. Contumely is thus added to oppression, and the poor wretches are cruelly insulted and abused, instead of being tenderly sympathized with, cherished and supported. Yet tho’ suffering, they complain not, but submit to their hard fate with a patient resignation.”

To

To this extract from Dr. Anderson, it may neither be improper nor disagreeable to subjoin others from Mr. Knox's "View of the British Empire:" a work replete with indefatigable researches, benevolence, and information.-----After particularizing the situation of the Hebride Isles, this elegant writer seems to exchange the pen for pencil----Witness the following fine-drawn landscape.

" The face of the country, in this division, exhibits one great mass of rugged mountains, appearing in all manner of directions, covered on the sides with heath or natural woods, and on the highest summits with everlasting snow. These mountains are separated from each other by vallies, straths, or glens; and in some places, by narrow deep chasms, darkened with timber; through which the united tributary streams of the surrounding mountains roll with great impetuosity, till they vent themselves into some inland lake; but more frequently into the capacious bays formed by the Atlantic, on the one side; or the British sea on the other side of the island.

" Such being the natural state of the Highlands the only parts capable of Agriculture are the vallies or glens around the bases of the mountains: and these vallies having the sun for a few hours only, vegetation advances slowly, and the harvests are always late. The climate is equally discouraging to the purpose of husbandry. The Spring is bleak and piercing: the Summer cold and short: the Autumn from the beginning of August, deluged with rains: the Winter long and tempestuous. During the latter season, the people are cut off from all communication with the low countries by deep beds of snow, impassable torrents, pathless mountains and morasses on one side; by long and impracticable navigations on the other.

" To these accumulated discouragements of nature, are added the oppression, and ill-judged policy of many proprietors of those sterile regions. Where both soil and climate conspire against the raising of grain in any considerable quantity; and where there are no markets, possibly within the distance of fifty miles, for the sale of corn, and the lesser articles of husbandry, the farmer turns his attention chiefly to the grazing of a few cattle and sheep, as the means whereby he expects to pay his rent, and support his family. If therefore, his farm hath been raised at the rate of 30 per cent. while the price of cattle hath scarcely advanced one, this method of improving estates (as the proprietors term it) furnishes a high sounding rent-roll, extremely pleasing to human vanity; but which being founded upon oppression, injustice and folly, hath hitherto proved fallacious and humiliating to all those who have persevered in the cruel experiment.

" Upon the whole, the situation of these people, inhabitants of Britain! is such as no language can describe or fancy conceive. If with great labour and fatigue the farmer raises a slender crop of oats and barley, the autumnal rains often baffle his utmost efforts, and frustrate all his expectations:

INTRODUCTION.

vii

tations : and, instead of being able to pay an exorbitant rent he sees his family in danger of perishing during the ensuing Winter, when he is precluded from every possibility of assistance elsewhere.

“ Meanwhile, the steward, hard pressed by letters from the gaming house, or Newmarket, demands the rent, in a tone which makes no great allowance for unpropitious seasons; the death of cattle, and other accidental misfortunes.

“ Such is the hard lot of the great body of people who inhabit a fifth part of our island. Neglected by Government: forsaken or oppressed by the Gentry: cut off, during most part of the year, by impassable mountains and impracticable navigations from the seats of Commerce, Industry, and Plenty: living at considerable distances from all human aid, without the necessaries of life, or any of those comforts which might soften the rigour of their calamities.-----Upon the whole, the Highlands of Scotland, some few estates excepted, are the seats of Oppression, Poverty, Famine, Anguish, and wild Despair; exciting the pity of every traveller, while the virtues of the inhabitants attract his admiration.

“ From this *ne plus ultra* of human depression, we entertain a hope, however, that matters will revert into a contrary direction, under the auspices of a benevolent Sovereign and Parliament, to whose humane, as well as political attention, that country and people are most humbly recommended.”

ARGUMENT.

Eulogium on England. The happiness of its inhabitants does not preclude a sympathetic concern for the distresses of others. With feelings similar to those a native of England would experience at beholding a vessel at some distance from the Coast wrecked by a storm, the author contemplates the distresses of the Highlanders. Their situation and dispositions described. The oppression and avarice which characterize some of the proprietors of their farms reprehended. A digression, containing encomiums on the lenity and benevolence of the Duke of Rutland and Lord Dudley-----short sketches of the Vale of Belvoir and Himley-----evening-----and Louisa, or the fatal effects of Seduction, a tale. Guilt and Innocence contrasted. The latter the reward and protection of Howard in his dangerous benevolent enterprizes. His virtues applauded, and the immortality of his name predicted. Himley contrasted with scenes in the Highlands. The hardships of the Highlanders during the herring fishery at the commencement of winter. A picture of misery occasioned by the shameful practice of impressing them in time of war. Their return home from the fishery, if left at liberty, not attended with those agreeable sensations which are generally experienced by a happier people.

The

The reason. Their miserable situation during winter. Their valour and fidelity exemplified in their conduct towards the Pretender. A caution against Prejudice ; strengthened by the opinions of Lord Chatham and General Wolfe concerning them. Their honesty illustrated by the infrequency of robberies and murders among them. Their duty to parents. Their hospitality to strangers compared with that of Abraham and Lot to the angels.-----For these virtues Pity laments the absence of temporary reward. She apostrophizes Government in their behalf ; and concludes the poem with a prediction of the salutary effects which this kingdom will derive from rendering them assistance.

A R C U M E N T.

“ AH, little think the gay licentious proud,
“ Whom pleasure, pow'r, and affluence surround;
“ They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
“ And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
“ Ah little think they, while they dance along,
“ How many feel, this very moment, death,
“ And all the sad variety of pain!
“ How many pine in want: How many drink
“ The cup of Grief, or eat the bitter bread
“ Of Misery,----Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,
“ How many shrink into the fordid hut
“ Of cheerless Poverty
“ How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
“ In deep retir'd distress. How many stand
“ Around the death-bed of their dearest friends,
“ And point the parting anguish.----Thought, fond man,
“ Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills
“ That one incessant struggle render life,----
“ One scene of toil, of suffering and of fate,
“ Vice, in his high career would stand appall'd,
“ And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think;
“ The conscious heart of Charity wou'd warm,
“ And her wide wish Benevolence dilate;
“ The social tear wou'd rise, the social sigh;
“ And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
“ Refining still, the social passious work.”

THOMSON.

THE
HIGHLANDERS,
A
POEM.

SAFE in a genial Isle, the seat of Peace,
Of blooming Science and unrival'd Arts ;
Where Freedom, like a fair luxuriant tree,
Spontaneous grows, with golden fruits, unknown
To other climes :-----In such a gifted land,
Shall mortals murmur, and an envious eye
Glance into distant realms ? Shall British souls
Sigh to degen'rate 'neath an Indian palm ?
To lose their native fire midst Gallia's sons,
In vineyards bland and aromatic scenes ?

B

Lo !

Lo! on her happy plains, by tow'ring oaks
Emboss'd, and with perennial verdure cloth'd,
BRITANNIA'S flocks and sleeky herds appear.
Down her capacious vales, with devious course,
Her rivers glide; and, in their silver waves,
Inverted woods and cultur'd hills display.
In her most rugged haunt some charm she holds;
In walks sequester'd most some rural grace.
Thro' all her peopled scenes commercial Hope
And Female Beauty shine: While, from her throne,
The Virtues (like the streams which bear her stores
To ev'ry part of her illustrious isle)
Into the bosoms flow of all mankind.

But is there one of all her num'rous sons,
So highly favour'd, and so blest by heav'n,
Who mounted on her white and lofty steeps,
Which brave the dashing wave or foaming surge
That roars indignant at their shelving feet :-----
Say, is there one who, station'd there, can view
An angry storm, remote, burst o'er the mast
Of some devoted ship, without a pang?

No-----

No-----he will lift a pleading eye to heav'n,
Will charge each gale with sympathetic sighs,
And swell the ocean with his pious tears.
Nor is a piteous anguish all the means
His heart wou'd tender in the suff'ers cause;
Swift o'er the billowy deep his aid wou'd launch
To save them from the dark relentless wave,
Uprear'd to overwhelm them in its cold embrace.

Nor can the humblest of her tuneful train
A kindred Kingdom's dire distresses view
Without a kindred tear. He can behold
Another nation happy, and derive
Exalted transports from the pleasing sight:
But he cou'd never arm with Stoic Pride,
Nor steel with Cruelty, a feeling heart
Against a brave and virtuous People's woes.

Where CALEDONIA's western mountains rear
Their lofty summits, crown'd with lasting snow,
There lives-----say rather, languishes, a race,

Whose

Whose bosoms (undebas'd by Vice's train)
Boast each affection that ennobles man.
Yet are they doom'd to till a chearless soil,
Which sparely feels the Sun's enliv'ning ray,
Too oft to see their labour's meed destroy'd
By Dearth-producing storms. To these dire ills,
To rig'rous clime and inauspicious skies,
Oppression, baleful, with an hell-born soul,
Adds wretchedness more dire. Her schedule base
(Where Mammon and Injustice are collegu'd)
With supercilious air she wide unfurls,
And thence confirms her arbitrary claim.
Unheard, plead Poverty and honest Truth;
Expostulating Reason's voice is lost,
And deludg'd fields upbraid and preach in vain.

O happy they ! whose herds and flocks enjoy
Fair *Belvoir's* spacious vales, for ever green,
For ever smiling to a RUTLAND's eye.
There just Humanity delights to stray

With

With beauteous Pity, his celestial mate :
While, at their guileless feet, with placid face,
And blushing with the roseate tints of eve,
Old Trent assembles all his infant streams ;---
Protracting, by meanders many' and wild,
His destin'd course tow'rs Ocean's wide expanse.

And happy they ! who till the fertile plains
Which claim a gen'rous DUDLEY for their Lord :
Whose laughing harvests wave, like seas of gold,
Round *Himley's* lofty groves.-----There wanders Taste
Enamour'd, and a new Elysium views
In ev'ry devious lawn. There Nature's smile
Blends into Elegance unwonted charms,
And spreads Enchantment thro' the spacious scene.
Full in the soften'd view the village spire
(Whence, sadly sweet, in measur'd notes and flow,
The simple peals falls on the list'ning ear)
Points to the marbled canopy of heav'n.
There too, lodg'd peaceful 'mid incumbent trees, .

Rises

Rises some chimney'd cot, whence columns grey
Of vap'rous smoke in curling forms ascend :
While, slow retiring in his flaming car
Down CAMBRIA's distant hills, th' imperial Sun
Sinks, curtain'd round with clouds of various hue.

Now wings the beetle her uncertain flight,
And hums along the glade.-----Now the soft hour
When rural lovers plight their tender vows,
And hold sweet converse of approaching bliss.-----
Are *all* from base Dissimulation free ?
Did ne'er BRITANNIA'S DAUGHTERS heave the sigh
Of injur'd love and confidence abus'd ?
-----Alas ! Louisa, let thy hapless fate
Speak for the Muse the melancholy truth :
Let thy sad tale, oft told but never sung,
Teach Woman caution and admonish Man.

Louisa bloom'd the fairest of that sex,
Heav'n's loveliest gift to man ; as blooms the rose
Th' unrival'd queen of Flora's beauteous train

Unknown

Unknown to Guilt, she was to Care unknown,
And happy as the unsuspecting lamb
Devoted soon at Lux'ry's shrine to bleed.
A solitary parent's eve of life
To gild with filial duty was the task
Her heart best lov'd ;----and, from his failing eye,
Delight she found transcending all the charms
Of titled Grandeur, or the wealth of mines.
When faithful Mem'ry, in her faultless form,
Trac'd the fair part'ner of his wedded days,
The tender sigh wou'd rise, and down his cheek,
Deep-worn with Age, wou'd fall the pious tear.
Oft, in these tributes to departed worth,
Louisa's soul, congenial wou'd unite :
Then, for a Father's peace, soon wou'd her face
The placid smile resume, and steal his griefs
From his too gentle breast.-----Their ev'ning hours,
Transient as perfumes on a dewy breeze,
With downy pinions wing'd away serene.
Her skilful hand now wak'd the slumb'ring strings'

C

To

To harmony ; while, from her sweeter tongue,
Low-warbling, issued some accordant strain.
Now, on the snowy vest, wou'd fancy form
The rose-bud op'ning on its mossy stem ;
The drooping harebell, and the pointed leaves
Of jasmine scatter'd with a careless grace.
He, seated near her, wou'd th' important truths
Of sacred lore inculcate and unfold :
Wou'd trace th' historic, or poetic page,
The comic, or the melting tragic scene,
To raise the smile of pleasantry, or move
The glowing heart with Mis'ry's piteous tale.

In mutual harmony and social bliss,
Retir'd in one of Nature's fairest haunts,
Thus pass'd the moments of their rural lives.

But Virtue oft is doom'd to meet the shaft
Of fell Misfortune and heart-piercing Woe :
For, in a luckless hour, Louisa's charms

Met

Met young Hilario's gay lascivious eye.
Form'd in a mould that gave to ev'ry limb
A fair proportion ; he, in manners soft,
Insinuating, cou'd his sex's wiles
Too well conceal. Base adulation flow'd
Smooth from his lips ; while ev'ry art combin'd
To weave a snare for her unguarded heart.

In happy hour (by him so falsely deem'd)
The fairest gem that decks the female breast
Wasted its lustre, and its beauty lost
Within his tainting arms,----Despoil'd, she seem'd
A lovely dew-bent flow'r, at early dawn
Pluck'd from its stem to grace a tyrant's breast,----
Awhile to languish,-----then, like some vile weed,
To be neglected, scorn'd, and cast away.

Peace, instantaneous, from her bosom fled ;
For Peace dwells not with Guilt :----and far, with Pea
Fled the seducer rude, nor e'er return'd.
Her beauteous eyes, bent earthward, weeping sought

The loneliest scenes. Oft, on Hilario's name,
His perjur'd name she call'd ; while ceaseless sighs,
Swell'd the light veil that deck'd her snowy breast.
-----But who can paint a Parent's deep distress,
When, hating life, his only blessing left-----
His much lov'd Louisa, from her shame,
Took fatal refuge in a neighb'ring stream ?
The melancholy cause her trembling hand
Left told in language of insane remorse ;
A sad memorial, stain'd with many a tear.

Thus, by some gale, furcharg'd with latent death,
The blossom'd tree, dismantled of its pride,
Sickens, dejected, thro' the waning year,
And in the wint'ry blast untimely falls.

Swift (an affecting lesson for her sex)
Thro' ev'ry clime her mournful story flew.
Hilario hears appall'd ; tho' Fashion's glare
Dazzles his view, and woos his viscious soul

To

To pleasures false :----avenging Guilt dispels
The visionary train ; and drives him far
From native country, and condemning friends;
But what can Flight avail the wounded mind ?
Its own dread Horrors it can never shun,----
Its own dark Fears portending future woe.

While Innocence a source of rapture finds,
Exhaustless as the glorious font of day,
In her own bosom : subject to no change
From change of climate or capricious Fate.
Tho' Earth, and Sea, and Air, in warring strife,
Blend all their horrors in a midnight storm,
And turn Confusion loose on Nature's works----
With *her* is sunshine and a perfect calm.
Whether an exile to the frozen realms
Of wild Siberia, clad in robes of Snow ;
Or whether panting on the Lybian shore----
The smile of Heav'n dawns bright upon her mind ;
Tempers the blast ; or, like the summer dew

(Falling

(Falling at Even on some languid flow'r)
 Refreshes and enlivens.-----THEE it cheers,
 Immortal HOWARD ! in the dungeon's gloom,----
 Beams on thine heart, and round thy sacred form
 An influence sheds, impervious to the breath
 Of livid *Pestilence*, Death's dread compeer.
 At thy approach the wasting Demon stays
 Her baleful conquests ; yielding to the pow'r
 That terminates her fell, unpeopling, reign ;
 And cherub *Health* resumes her milder sway.

From cell to cell, through each infected clime
 Unwearied, flies thy salutary aid,
 Despising Danger, and the low-born Thought
 That makes Religion Hatred ; * and inflames
 Her blinded Vot'ries with fanatic zeal.

For Thee some loftier Muse a laureate wreath
 Shall weave ; which, in *Humility's* despite,

Shall,

* " That makes Ambition Virtue.".

Shall, in the Temple of immortal Fame,
Encircle, blooming, thy benignant brow.

While *Sculpture* vainly pants in Thee to live
Till Nature's self expire, th' unfetter'd Bard
Shall charm remotest Ages with a song,
And, with thy Name, their Emulation fire.

In Himley's sacred shades a youthful Muse
To thee attunes this unambitious Lay,
An humble off'ring to a godlike mind.-----
Here mounts th' enraptur'd soul beyond all bounds
Of human frailty; borne to Nature's God
On Meditation's wing.----A deepen'd shade
Broods in th' umbrageous venerable oaks,
Where reigns a solemn stillness; undisturb'd,
Save by the minstrels of the sylvan scene.

How drear the prospect of the Highland wilds
To such retirement!-----Now the Muse's task
To mark the contrast of the distant scene,

And

And chronicle a catalogue of woes.
Cheerless, she views the dank and lurid vales,
Left matted with their prone and delug'd crops,
Like turbid shoals by whirling river form'd.
Awe-struck, she hears the tempest's hollow roar,
Mingled with sounds from mountain torrents borne.
Shudd'ring, she sees a patient suff'ring race
Of friendless mortals quit their lowly sheds,
And launch, in crazy barks, o'er seas unknown,
The wintry fry to capture: oft unblest
With other store for their adventurous cruise
Than mealy food and water from the spring.
Their heaths supply them with a rushy bed,
Expos'd alike to Tempest-driven rains;
To chrySTALLIZING frost and fleecy snow.

Thus trimm'd, o'er faithless rocks (which darkling lurk
Below the changeful surface of the deep
And mock the fury of the tyrant storm)
Their course they steer. The shoaly tribes full oft

Evade

Evade their nightly * search, and long refuse
 To be encompass'd in their meshy snares.
 But persevering Industry prevails,
 And draws them captive to the fatal air :
 Where, idly, with elastic force they bound
 Contortive----gasp----and soon, convuls'd, expire.

These stor'd securely for some distant mart,
 The reflux tide conducts them to the shore,
 Too oft (when desolating War demands)
 To be enslav'd ; and, with tyrannic force,
 Dragg'd to encounter foes ne'er prov'd their own. †
 -----Disgrace to Freedom, and to Britain's laws,
 Which brook such deeds inhuman ! Justice, rous'd,
 Invokes upon them the dread curse of heav'n,
 And registers, in characters of tears
 Caught from Affliction's eye, the woes they bring.
 Weeping, she paints the wife, of mate bereft,

D

Seeking

* The time when they are usually caught.

† See KNOX's "View of the Highlands."

Seeking a casual dole from door to door :
One infant in her arms (on which the eye
Paternal never beam'd) clings to her breast
But ill attir'd from cold and lawless gaze :
Another, lodg'd unfeemly at her back,
Mingles its plaintive sorrows with the wind :
While two, copartners of a pristine birth,
(Pressing with blood-stain'd feet the pointed stones----
Their lips all trembling and empurpled deep)
Look up to meet a mother's streaming eyes,
And vainly strive to sooth her troubled soul. *

With Day's extreme her toilsome wand'rings close.
When, flow retiring with her orphan train
To some deserted cot or dreary cave,
She folds them shiv'ring in her widow'd arms,
Then sinks, enfeebled, on the Earth's cold lap :
Where long she sits a spectacle of woe,
Dealing the morsels Charity bestow'd,
Unconscious where to find to-morrow's fare.

Thus

* See Frontispiece.

Thus hies the bird (whose mate, by base decoy,
Is fever'd from her love) at dusky eve,
To feed her callow brood, and waste in grief
The live-long night, nor wish return of morn.

But what, if War calamities like these
Fail to this woe-devoted race to bring,
And they, returning from their wintry toils,
Are hail'd by Freedom on their native shores?
----Alas! no joyous thoughts of blazing fire,---
Of ev'ning's genial meal, and balmy rest,
Transport their souls. Anticipation sweet
Of bliss domestic never wakes the sigh
Of extacy; nor steals th' enraptur'd tear
From a fond father's eye.----His partner's cares;
His children's various wants assail his breast,
And agonize each tender feeling there.

Worn with fatigue, and faint, he stays his step,
And, leaning on his trusty staff, awhile

Contemplates Life---its pleasures and its woes.
 To him it's *pleasures* few ; and, like the charms
 Of Iris seated on her shadowy car,
 These unsubstantial, evanescent, false.----
 Its *woes* (a ruthless train !) he then begins
 To number with his tears :----when, from the task,
 A storm's loud clamours call him, and constrain
 His feet to perseverance.----'Numb'd with cold,
 O'er trackless hills, they falt'ring bear him on ;
 Till, from some rock's stupendous height, he sees
 His lowly mansion in the neighb'ring vale
 Envelop'd deep in snow. The threshold gain'd,
 He meets, indeed, a conjugal embrace,
 The pledge of love sincere ;----but oh ! too soon
 His brighten'd eye is sullied with distress,
 Conducted by a mother's tearful look
 To where his child expires ! *-----Deep gulphs of snow

A tyrant

* This concern, where human Wants and Miseries are so accumulated, to *some*, perhaps, may seem improbable ; but to those who, like the author, are accustomed (in a professional capacity)

A tyrant Winter, borne on howling storms,
 Has fix'd between his loftier † abode
 And Lowland scenes. Of needful aid depriv'd,
 And needful food,----he seeks his vagrant herds
 Thro' pathless fens, and far-extending wilds,
 To lead them to his miserable home,

One roof of mould'ring turf, or scanty straw,
 Thus shields a tender wife, an offspring large,
 And a small famish'd herd from frowning skies.
 One diet serves them all---the meal of grain,
 Blighted or mildew'd by inclement show'rs;
 Nor that to fulness.-----This the wretched fare
 Of family and brute!----save when their blood,
 Thro' punctur'd vein the gen'rous cattle yield,
 Depriv'd by Famine of their milky store.

With

to visit the wretched abodes of Penury: and who, like him too, have frequently witnessed the bitterness of parental anguish over an expiring infant, however extreme their *poverty*----to *such*, the above will appear no inconsistent proof of the amazing strength of natural affection,

† i. e. *lofty*, compared with the Lowlands.

With this---with blood ! the miserable pair
 Silence the complaints of importuning Want
 Among their infant charge.*-----Unnat'ral food !
 But what will not the Life-corroding worm
 Of Hunger make its prey ?----The vital stream,
There, from another's meagre frame, it draws,
 T' invig'rate *that* just ebbing in its own,

Thy vot'ries thus, Ambition ! meanly great,
 By Pride impov'rish'd, and by Vice undone,
 Wou'd treat their Country. Her enfeebled State,
 Which long-protracted desolating wars
 Have drain'd to sickness, they wou'd joy to see
 In deeper ruin fall, exanimate :
 Heedless tho' Faction shake her bulwark down ;

Heedless

* Mr. Knox, speaking of the pitiable condition of their cattle, says,-----“ In summer they pick up a scanty support among the morasses, or heathy mountains ; but, in winter, when the grounds are covered with snow, and when the naked wilds afford neither shelter nor subsistence, the few cows, small, lean, and ready to drop down thro' want of pasture, are brought into the hut where the family resides ; and frequently share with them the small stock of meal which has been purchased or raised for the family only : while the cattle, thus sustained, *are bled, occasionally, to afford nourishment for the children*, after it has been boiled or made into cakes.”

See View of the Highlands, page 122.

Heedless tho' Majesty itself expire,
So they but profit by the gen'ral wreck.

Not such the nobler children of the North.
They love their Country with a filial mind,
Tho' desolate and drear. Their Chieftain's name
Wakes them to arms, and calls an ardor forth,
Which direst ills and dangers cannot damp,
Nor ought but Death subdue.----Witness the time
When Charles, misguided youth ! Britannia's throne
Strove, with a persevering zeal, to mount,
Which threw a lustre o'er a base emprise.
The dread of armies, disciplin'd and prov'd
On hostile shores, ne'er shook their hardy souls ;----
Their prince they honour'd, and for him they bled :
Happy to bleed, in what they glorious deem'd,
A rightful Cause.----They whom the pest of War,
Or arm of Justice spar'd, to their sad homes,
Their Highland huts retir'd,---to count with sighs

The

The loss of kindred, and lament the day
They left their mountains to regain a throne.

There too retir'd their vanquish'd Chief; secure
E'en amid those his project had deceiv'd,
Tho' poor and wretched. His asylum, safe
Kept by Fidelity, and found by Love,
Was inaccessible alike to Threat
Portending Death with all his terrors arm'd,
And Bribe, with ev'ry charm of proffer'd gold. *

But

* The *Fidelity* of the Highlanders would appear incredible to Christians and Philosophers of more happy climates, were it not fully authenticated by the experience of many ages. Among a variety of instances the following may be depended on.-----Hector Mackintosh, having, in 1527, carried fire and sword through the lands of the Murrays and Ogilvies, fled immediately from the hand of Justice. Two hundred of his followers were hanged: and such was their Fidelity, even in a bad cause, that, though each of them was separately offered his pardon, if he would discover where Hector was concealed, yet all of them rejected the condition, and submitted to their fate.

A more striking instance, if possible, of their Fidelity happened after the battle of Culloden.-----When the young Pretender found safety during five months among these people, though personally known to some hundreds of the lowest ranks, and though a reward of *thirty thousand pounds* had been offered to any person who would deliver him up: yet they not only rejected this immense sum with disdain; but also hazarded their lives in collecting provision and linen for his use, while the Highlands and the Hebride isles were over-run with soldiers in pursuit of him.

See Knox's View, &c.

But let not Party's demon, Prejudice,
 Which, with an eagle-eye, can spy a flaw
 In what it disapproves ; else, like a mole,
 Blind, and content with darkness : let her not
 Sneering confess them faithful as they're brave
 Then mar th' eulogium with a poison'd shaft----
 " That *Rebels* such are dangerous *Allies*."

Not so illustrious CHATHAM. Party rage
 Ne'er sway'd *his* tongue ; nor warp'd that noble mind
 Which, like the sun, enlighten'd all the world. *

E

----A

* "I trusted," exclaimed Lord Chatham in Parliament, " to the mountains of the North, to carry on the most extensive War in which England has ever been engaged."

" This was the declaration of the ablest, most impartial, and disinterested Minister of the age ; one who had penetration to discern, candour to acknowledge, and honesty to reward merit : whose elevated mind knew no distinction to country or people,---no narrow partialities ; but, in every respect, was eminently qualified for the great purposes of uniting more closely this wide extended empire, by a generous diffusion of *reciprocal* benefits and privileges, throughout the various branches of which it was composed."

" Till the days of that Great Man the intrinsic value of the Highlanders, like the diamond in the mine, remained in obscurity. Some obstructions removed, they shone forth at once a tractable, useful, people ; who might one day prove a considerable acquisition to the commerce,

as

-----A WOLFE beheld their bold intrepid lines
 For Albion's sake, to victory or death,
 March dauntless on :----and Galic phalanxes,
 Into disorder thrown at their approach,
 Exclaim'd----" Beware ! the English Lions come."*

Nor claim they less the Muse's praise when Peace
 Her olive sceptre sways, than while entrop'd,
 And animated with the glorious flame
 Of thund'ring War. No lurking robber there,

Bent

as well as to the internal strength of Britain."

KNOX.

What the Father had in *contemplation* for the mutual advantage of them and his Country, it is to be hoped his equally eminent and valuable Son, Mr. Pitt, will, by the exertion of his uncommon abilities, carry into *completion*. To place him, at his *present* age, upon an equality with his venerable Father, who was confessedly one of the first of men, is bestowing praise as just as it is great. The comparison drawn by Virgil between Iulus and Æneas---*sequitur Patrem non passibus æquis*, would, in the present instance, be very inapplicable. Neither are we authorized to parody Mr. Sherlock's expression on SHAKESPEARE; and say that, *Nature made CHATHAM and then broke the mould*: For, to the *political* system she has given another CHATHAM; though, perhaps, in the *poetical*, she may *never* permit to shine another SHAKESPEARE.

* " In rapid marches and sudden attacks, the Highlanders are unequalled.----During a long march, a regiment of these men keeps up with the cavalry. If a distant coast is invaded, or a post in danger, the Highlanders are collected at an hour's notice. They set off, and continue their march with incredible swiftness, leaving all other troops panting and breathless far behind. The French tremble at the sight of them, calling out----" The English Lions."

KNOX.

Bent upon plunder, takes his nightly round;
 No murd'rer dooms a widow's eye to lave
 A mangled husband: * and no wayward son,
 To Ruin borne along on Folly's tide,
 Untimely bows a parent's hoary head,
 With sorrow to the grave,-----No: these are deeds
 Nurtur'd in climes less rude. The barren North
 Disdains their produce, and wou'd rather see
 Dejected Innocence in tatter'd plaid,
 Sit on his naked cliffs, with trickling tears
 Washing their flinty fides, than crimes so base
 Shou'd stain the annals of his wild domain.

There too, in all her ancient charms attir'd,
 Dwells Hospitality, convivial maid!
 And bids a stranger welcome,-----At her door,
 (When Poverty forbids not) with a bowl
 Or cleanly pitcher, fill'd with bev'rage sweet,--

E 2

She

* "There is not a murder committed in the Highlands once in seven years; and robberies upon
 the road are unknown.

KNOX.

She, unintreated, takes her friendly stand,
The toil-worn trav'ler on his way to cheer. *

Thus, erst, "the Friend of God," in Mamre's plains,
Regal'd his angel-guests. A spreading tree
Shaded th' immortal strangers while they deign'd
Freely to share the simple gen'rous meal.
And thus did Lot, ere Sodom's guilty sons
(Devoted to th' avenging wrath of heav'n)
Beheld their city one wide wafting flame. †

Such various worth distinguishes those scenes
Where Nature sickens ; and from which the eye

Of

* " Kindness and Hospitality possess the people of these parts. We scarce passed a farm, but the good woman (long before our approach) fallied out, and stood by the road, holding out to us a bowl of milk or whey."

PENNANT.

" It need not, I suppose, be mentioned that in countries so little frequented as the Highlands, there are no houses where travellers are entertained for money. He that wanders about these wilds, either procures recommendations to those whose habitations lie near his way ; or, when night and weariness come upon him, takes the chance of general hospitality. If he finds only a Cottage, he can expect little more than shelter ; for the Cottagers have little more for themselves : but if his good fortune brings him to the residence of a Gentleman, he will be glad of a storm to prolong his stay."

JOHNSON.

† Gen. Ch. 18. and 19.

Of Pity, rais'd to Admiration, turns

Tearful aside, to ask such worth's reward.

---"And is there none," impatient she demands,

"No cheering meed for virtues great as these

"On this side heav'n?----Say, like delinquents base,

"Doom'd by their Country's laws to ceaseless toil,

"Must they the load,---the pond'rous load sustain

"Of human ills adown Life's vale of tears,

"Till Death, sole comforter, shall bid them find

"Rest from their labours in a peaceful grave?

"Must each revolving Winter find them left,

"Like worthless weeds, to perish in his blast;

"To pine and languish, like the wretched flocks

"His snows imprison in their mountain cells? *

"Forbid

* "The sheep, being left upon the open heaths, seek to shelter themselves from the inclemency of the weather among the hollows upon the lee-side of the mountains. Here they are frequently buried under the snow for several weeks together; and in severe seasons during two months or upwards. *They eat there own and each other's wool*, and hold out wonderfully under cold and hunger; but, even in moderate winters, a considerable number are generally found dead, after the snow has disappeared; and, in rigorous seasons, few or none are left alive."

KNOX.

-----" Forbid it, Mercy ! and prevent it You !

" Who, at a Nation's helm as pilots stand,

" To guard her from the rocks and adverse gales

" Which threaten danger to her gen'ral weak

" Compassion is your Country's attribute.

" A kind celestial principle that beams

" In all her children's eyes. And shall those eyes,

" Whence flows a tear for ev'ry *stranger's* tale

" (If fraught with genuine woe) with heedless gaze,

" Behold a *Sister-Kingdom's* wretchedness ?

" But, if *Compassion*, o'er ideal griefs,

" Be doom'd to weep at Theatres alone,

" Let *Interest* rouse you to redress their wrongs.

" Or soon that * Land, which British armies strove,

" In vain, to teach Allegiance, will possess

" Those Highland Warriors, whose immortal Sires

" Wak'd

* America : To prove that this apprehension is by no means chimerical or without foundation, the Reader is humbly refered to Mr. Knox's " View of the British Empire : " a work to which the Author of this Poem is much indebted for information.

A P O E M.

31

“ Wak'd Ossian's Muse of Fire.-----O persevere
“ To smooth the rigours of their hapless state !
“ Release them from Oppression's galling yoke ;
“ On all their coasts bid Commerce shed its smiles ;
“ Thro' all their islands Culture's aid extend,
“ To cheer their toil and soften Nature's frown :
-----“ Then, as the Stork supports his aged fire,
“ Their grateful arms shall, in th' embattled field,
“ Untarnish'd, succour old Britannia's cause ;
“ Shall spread her glory thro' remotest worlds,
“ And share her triumphs to the end of Time.”

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

- P. 7. Introduction: for *aduce*, r. *adduce*
- ib. for *depreſion*, r. *depreſion*
- P. 6. for *aud* r. *and*
- Argument: for *Higlanders*, r. *Highlanders*
- Poem, P. 6. for *delug'd*, r. *delug'd*
- P. 12. for *viſious*, r. *vicious*
- P. 15. for *with a ſong*, r. *with his ſong*
- P. 24. *baxxarded*, r. *hazarded*.