BURNS
ROBERT BURNS.
The Home Poets

THE COMPLETE
POETICAL WORKS OF
ROBERT BURNS

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

"For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas à Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birthday inserted among the wonderful events, in the Poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday and the Battle of Bothwell Bridge." So Burns wrote to a friend in the brief heyday of his prosperity at Edinburgh. When his last illness came upon him, and his life seemed a shipwreck, he told his wife: "Don't be afraid: I'll be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am at present."

Both of these prophecies, the jocose and the serious, have been completely verified, for the 25th of January, 1759, Robert Burns's birthday, is a date to be found in many a list of the world's memorable events; and now that he has been dead a century, his fame lives secure with that of the great poets.

His father, William Burns, at the time of the poet's birth, was a gardener and farm-overseer at Alloway in Ayrshire in Scotland, and was always a poor man. Like many others of his class in Scotland, he prized highly every mental accomplishment, and gave his children, of whom the second son Gilbert was always the most closely identified with his elder brother Robert, every advantage within his limited reach. Through him an excellent teacher was brought to the village. An autobiographical letter from Burns to a friend acknowledges his early debt to this man for sound instructions, and, no less generously, to an ignorant old woman who plied him as a child with all the local fairy-stories and superstitions which filled her credulous brain. Thus, he says, were "the latent seeds of poetry" cultivated. They were further developed by the reading of such books of verse, Scottish and English, as the schoolmaster put into the eager boy's hands. By the time he was twenty-two, he spoke of Poesy, as he might have done long before, "as the darling walk for my mind."

Many things had befallen him, however, through his youth. At fifteen he had had his first experience of love-making, and to the end of his life he could truly say in the words of his own song: —

"The sweetest hours that e'er I spend
Are spent amang the lasses, O!"

His bitterest hours, too, were often the direct result of these pleasures, for there was more of impulse than of wisdom in his constant dealings with "the lasses." One writer has said of him: "In almost all the foul weather which Burns encountered, a woman may be discovered flitting through it like a stormy petrel." In the

1 His own spelling of the name was Burness, or sometimes Burnes.
period of youth, also, he formed his habits of conviviality. Full of wit and glad
to escape from a naturally melancholy self, it is no wonder that when, at seventeen,
he went to study trigonometry and mensuration at a village on the Ayrshire coast
much frequented by smugglers, their free ways appealed to him strongly. Many
men before and since Burns have had to pay heavily for the very qualities which
have made them attractive to others: the pity of it is that, as in the case of Burns,
the tavern too often becomes the theatre of actions which finally subdue the real
good in a man to the evil about him.

Except for another absence from home, in a fruitless attempt to learn the trade
of a flax-dresser, Burns lived with his own people, earning like his brother Gilbert
£7 a year for his work on the farm, until the father died insolvent in 1784, when
Robert was twenty-five years old. Thereupon Gilbert and he contrived to enter
upon a new farming venture at Mossgiel in the parish of Mauchline. Their enter-
prise met with very indifferent success, though Robert, with the resolve, “Come,
go to, I will be wise,” tried hard to lead a prudent life. Yet the second and third
years at Mossgiel were marked by the production of some of his most memorable
poems. In 1786 Burns’s affairs were so complicated by his relations with a girl of
the neighborhood, Jean Armour, that he determined to go as a book-keeper to
Jamaica, and begin a new life. In the same year the more beautiful love-passages
with Mary Campbell, or “Highland Mary,” occurred. To raise the money for his
passage to America Burns published his poems, and soon received £20 for their
sale. Their rare merit was quickly recognized, and just as the poet was about to
embark on a ship from the Clyde, he received an urgent appeal to try his fortunes
in Edinburgh with a second edition of the poems. This jumped with his inmost
wishes, and his departure was abandoned.

In Edinburgh he soon found himself the lion of the hour. In the dedication of
his poems to the Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt he told the true secret of his
glory then and since in saying: “The poetic genius of my country . . . bade me
sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in
my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired.” No poet was
ever more thoroughly of his own country than Burns. The very fact of his lowly
origin and opportunities made him then, as it makes him still, the more conspicuous
as a poet born and not made to sing. The second edition was an immediate suc-
cess, and the Ayrshire ploughman was féted by all the wise and great, as they
were thought, of the Scottish capital. He felt, however, that this new life was not
for him, and, having tasted of it, took a lease in the spring of 1788 of the farm
of Ellisland on the banks of the Nith. Moreover he made such amends to Jean
Armour as he could by taking her as his wife to share his new home.

Farming was again a failure, and but for Burns’s appointment as an exciseman
with a salary of £50 a year, the very necessities of life would have been most
meagrely supplied. As it was, the farm had to be abandoned in 1791, and the
family, steadily growing, took lodgings in the town of Dumfries. As from Ellis-
land Burns had sent song after song to Edinburgh for the Scots Musical Museum,
so from Dumfries he kept Mr. George Thomson constantly supplied with beautiful lyrics for his collection of national songs and melodies.

In Dumfries matters did not mend. A growing feeling of resentment against the world made the poet more defiant of society than ever. He quarrelled with some of his best friends, and was generally at odds with his surroundings. The end was not far off, for in 1796, after sleeping one night for several hours in the snow, an illness beset him to which he soon succumbed. His last days were clouded by debts and the threat of prison, yet his friends and faithful wife did all in their power to bring him comfort. On the 21st of July, he died.

The voice of censure is not to be raised too bitterly against such as Burns. It has been written of him: "It is difficult to carry a full cup and not to spill it." Instead of mourning the results of human passions that lacked an adequate guiding hand, let us be thankful that with them was joined Burns's abundant gift of poetry. Because he was so human, so full of true feeling, common sense, humor, and susceptibility of every sort, his songs are exactly what they are. The handsome, impulsive fellow, endowed with many a rarer faculty than that "prudent, cautious self-control" which he himself honored as "wisdom's root," put himself without reservation into everything he wrote; and if his life was not a worldly success, perhaps it is something more to live on as the chief glory of national literature, and as a singer of songs which stand second to none in their true human music and direct inspiration.
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POEMS CHIEFLY IN THE SCOTTISH DIALECT

For some time before 1786, Burns had cherished a desire for "guid black prent;" and its fulfilment was hastened in the end by the thought of his removal to Jamaica. "Before leaving my native country," he says, "I resolved to publish my poems." [He issued a prospectus, and after securing a sufficient number of subscribers, the book with the above title was issued by John Wilson, Kilmarnock, appearing July 31, 1786. It was a handsome octavo, bound, except for a few copies in paper covers, in blue boards, with a white back and neat label. It was issued by subscription, and six hundred copies were printed. It contained the following preface.]

The following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocrites or Virgil. To the Author of this, these and other celebrated names (their countrymen) are, in their original languages, "a fountain shut up, and a book sealed." Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing Poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compœrs around him, in his and their native language. Though a Rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of Friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his was worth showing; and none of the following works were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind; these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as "An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth."

It is an observation of that celebrated Poet — whose divine Elegies do honor to our language, our nation, and our species — that "Humility has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame." If any Critic catches at the word genius, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possesst of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manoeuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him: but to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnsings of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he is indebted to Benevolence and Friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom — to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the Learned and the Polite, who may honor him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of Dulness and Nonsense, let him be done by, as he would in that case do by others — let him be condemned without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

1 Shenstone.
THE TWA DOGS

A TALE

According to Gilbert Burns, this Tale was “composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken.” During the night before the death of William Burness, Robert’s favorite dog, Luath, was killed by some person unknown. He thought at first of certain Stanzas to the Memory of a Quadruped Friend—a true Eighteenth-Century inspiration—“but this plan was given up for the Tale as it now stands.” “I have,” he says, in a letter to John Richmond, 17th February, 1786, “likewise completed [since he saw Richmond in November] my poem on the Dogs, but have not shown it to the world.” It was Luath’s successor—inherting his name or not—whose appearance at the “penny dance” at Mauchline led Burns to remark, in Jean Armour’s hearing, that “he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog did.”

’T was in that place o’ Scotland’s isle
That bears the name of auld King Coil,
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro’ the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgathered ance upon a time.
The first I’ll name, they ca’d him Cesar,
Was keepit for “his Honor’s” pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Shew’d he was nane o’ Scotland’s dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.
The second was a ploughman’s collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an’ comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca’d him,
After some dog in Highland sang,
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an’ faithfu’ tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws’nt face
Ay gat him friends in ilka place;
His breast was white, his tousie back
Weel clad wi’ coat o’ glossy black;
His gawsie tail, wi’ upward curl,
Hung owre his hirdies wi’ a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o’ither,
And unco pack an’ thick thegither;
Wi’ social nose whyles snuff’d an’ snowkit;
Whyles mice an’ moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles seour’d awa’ in lang excursion,
An’ worry’d ither in diversion;
Till tir’d at last wi’ monie a farce,
They sat them down upon their arse,
An’ there began a lang digression
About the “lords o’ the creation.”

CÆSAR

I’ve aften wonder’d, honest Luath,
What sort o’ life poor dogs like you have;
An’ when the gentry’s life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv’d ava.

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,
His coals, his kain, an’ a’ his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca’s his coach; he ca’s his horse;
He draws a bonie silken purse,
As lang’s my tail, whare, thro’ the steeks,
The yellow letter’d Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e’en it’s nought but toil-
Ing,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An’ tho’ the gentry first are stechin,
Yet ev’n the ha’ folk fill their pechan
Wi’ sauce, ragouts, an’ sic like trashtrie,
That’s little short o’ downright wastrie:
Our whipper-in, wee, blastit wonder,
Poor, worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than onie tenant-man
His Honor has in a’ the lan’;
An’ what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it’s past my comprehension.

LUATH

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they’re fash’t enough:
A cotter howkin in a sheugh, Wi’ dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, an’ sic like;
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains, 
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans, 
An' nought but his han' darg to keep 
Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters, 
Like loss o' health or want o' masters, 
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer, 
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger:

But how it comes, I never kend yet, 
They 're maistly wonderfu' contented; 
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies, 
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

But then to see how ye're negleckit, 
How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespeckit! 
Lord, man, our gentry care as little 
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;

They gang as saucy by poor folk, 
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our laird's court-day, 
(An' monie a time my heart's been wae), 
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash, 
How they maun thole a factor's snash:

He '1l stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear 
He '1l apprehend them, point their gear;
While they maun staun', wi' aspect humble, 
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches; 
But surely poor-folk maun be wretches!

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad 
think:
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink, 
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight, 
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided, 
They're ay in less or mair provided; 
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment, 
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives, 
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives; 
The prattling things are just their pride, 
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy 
Can mak the bodies unco happy: 
They lay aside their private cares, 
To mind the Kirk and State affairs;

They'll talk o' patronage an' priests, 
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts, 
Or tell what new taxation's comin, 
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns, 
They get the jovial, ranting kirns, 
When rural life, of ev'ry station, 
Unite in common recreation;

Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth 
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins, 
They bar the door on frosty win's; 
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream, 
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench, 
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster 
In favor wi' some gentle master, 
Wha, aiblins thrang a parliamentin', 
For Britain's guid his saul indentin' —

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it: 
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him: 
An' saying aye or no's they bid him: 
At operas an' plays parading, 
There's monie a creditable stock 
Of decent, honest, fawsont folk, 
Are riven out baith root an' branch, 
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench, 
In favor wi' some gentle master, 
For Britain's guid his saul indentin' —
An’ clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.

For Britain’s guid! for her destruction!
Wi’ dissipation, feud an’ faction.

LUATH

Hech, man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae monie a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an’ harass’d
For gear ta gang that gate at last?

O would they stay aback frae courts,
An’ please themsels wi’ countra sports,
It wad for ev’ry ane be better,
The laird, the tenant, an’ the cotter!
For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
Fient haet o’ them ’s ill-hearted fellows:
Except for breakin’ o’ their timmer,
Or speakin’ lightly o’ their limmer,
Or shootin’ of a hare or moor-cock,
The ne’er-a-bit they ’re ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, master Cesar:
Sure great folk’s life ’s a life o’ pleasure?
Nae cauld nor hunger e’er can steer them,
The vera thought o’t need na fear them.

CAESAR

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles, ye wad ne’er envy ’em!

It ’s true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro’ winter’s cauld, or simmer’s heat;
They ’ve nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An’ fill auld-age wi’ grips an’ granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a’ their colleges an’ schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An’ ay the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion, less will hurt them.

A countra fellow at the pleugh,
His acre ’s till’d, he ’s right eneugh;
A countra girl at her wheel,
Her dizzen’s done, she ’s unco weel;
But gentlemen, an’ ladies warst,
Wi’ ev’n down want o’ wark are curst:
They loiter, lounging, lank an’ lazy;
Tho’ deil-haet ails them, yet uneasy:
Their days insipid, dull an’ tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang an’ restless.

An’ ev’n their sports, their balls an’ races,
Their galloping through public places,
There ’s sic parade, sic pomp an’ art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party-matches,
Then sowther a’ in deep debauches;
Ae night they ’re mad wi’ drink an’ whor-ing,
Niest day their life is past enduring.

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an’ gracious a’ as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o’ ither,
They ’re a’ run deils an’ jads thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an’ platie,
They sip the scandal-potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi’ crabbit leaks
Pore owre the devil’s pictur’d beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer’s stackyard,
An’ cheat like onie unhang’d blackguard.

There ’s some exceptions, man an’ woman;
But this is Gentry’s life in common.

By this, the sun was out o’ sight,
An’ darker gloamin brought the night;
The bum-clock humm’d wi’ lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i’ the loan;
When up they gat, an’ shook their lugs,
Rejoic’d they were na men, but dogs;
An’ each took aff his several way,
Resolv’d to meet some ither day.

SCOTCH DRINK

Gie him strong drink until he wink,
That ’s sinking in despair;
An’ liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That ’s prest wi’ grief an’ care:
There let him bowse, and deep carouse,
Wi’ bumpers flowing o’er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An’ minds his griefs no more.

SOLOMON’S PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

Composed some time between the beginning of November, 1785, and 17th February, 1786 (letter of Burns to Richmond). On 20th March Burns sent a copy to his friend Robert Muir, wine-merchant, Kilmarnock: “May the —— follow with a blessing for your edification.” The metre, which has come to be regarded as essentially Scottish (see Prefatory Note to the Address to the Deil, p. 12), is that of Fergusson’s Cauler Water, of which Scotch Drink is a kind of parody.
Let other poets raise a fracas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drucken Bacchus,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug.
I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink!
Whether thro' wimplin worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
An' aits set up their awnie horn,
An' pease an' beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain:
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food!
Or tumbling in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's
blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin;
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin,
When heavy-dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin;
But oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin,
Wi' rattlin glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear,
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labor sair,
At's weary toil;
Thou ev'n brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet, humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine:
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter season,
E'er spier her price.

XV
Wae worth that brandy, burnin trash!
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

XVI
Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor, plackless devils like mysel!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

XVII
May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him, inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whisky-punch
Wi' honest men!

XVIII
O Whisky! soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes — they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's arses!

XX
For loyal Forbés' chartered boast
Is taen awa!

XXI
Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whisky stells their prize!
Hand up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor damn'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou 'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' whisky gill,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
An' deal 't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY
AND PRAYER
TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND HONORABLE THE SCOTTISH REPRESENTATIVES
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dearest of distillation! last and best —
— How art thou lost! —
Parody on Milton.

I
Ye Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doncelly manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

II
Alas! my roupet Muse is haerse!
Your Honors' hearts wi' grief 't wad pierce,
To see her sittin on her arse
Low i' the dust,
And scriechin out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

III
Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aqua-vite;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

IV
Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier youth
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle deevil blaw you south,
If ye dissemble!

V
Does onie great man glunch an' gloom?
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb!
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

VI
In gath'rin votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack:
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

VII
Paint Scotland greetin owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stowp as toom's a whistle;
An' damned excisemen in a bustle,
Seizin a stell,
Triumphant, crushin 't like a mussel,
Or lampit shell!

VIII
Then, on the tither hand, present her—
A blackguard smuggler right behind her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie vintner
Colleaguing join,
Pickin her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

IX
Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat,
By gallows knaves?

X
Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod i' the mire out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,
Or gab like Boswell,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

XI
God bless your Honors! can ye see 't,
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot-heat,
Ye winna bear it?

XII
Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
An' with rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues:
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

XIII
Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;
An' that glib-gabbet Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;
An' ane, a chap that's damned auld-farran,
Dundas his name:

XIV
Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay;
An' Livistone, the bauld Sir Willie;
An' monie itheres,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

XV
Thee, sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,
If Bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that your sword were wanted,
Ye'd lend your hand;
But when there's ought to say anent it,
Ye're at a stand.

XVI
Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see 't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi'a reekin whittle,
Anither sang.

XVII
This while she's been in crankous mood,
Her lost Militia fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her whisky.

XVIII
An' Lord! if ance they pit her till 't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk aw' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' the first she meets!

XIX
For God-sake, sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An’ to the Muckle House repair,
Wi’ instant speed,
An’ strive, wi’ a’ your wit an’ lear,
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu’d tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi’ his jeers an’ mocks;
But gie him ’t het, my hearty cocks!
E’en cowe the cadie!
An’ send him to his dicing box
An’ sportin lady.

Tell yon guid bluid of auld Boconnock’s,
I’ll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
An’ drink his health in auld Nanse Tin
nock’s
Nine times a-week,
If he some scheme, like tea an’ winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I’ll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He needna fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She ’s just a devil wi’ a rung;
An’ if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho’ by the neck she should be strung,
She ’ll no desert.

And now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your mither’s heart support ye;
Then, tho’ a minister grow dorty,
An’ kick your place,
Ye ’ll snap your fingers, poor an’ hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honors, a’ your days,
Wi’ sowps o’ kail and brats o’ claes,
In spite o’ a’ the thievish kaes,
That haunt St. Jamie’s!
Your humble Bardie sings an’ prays,
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT

Let half-stary’d slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich-clust’ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne’er envies,
But, blythe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
Tak aff their whisky.

What tho’ their Phæbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and Beauty charms,
When wretches range, in famish’d swarms,
The scented groves;
Or, hounded forth, dishonest arms
In hungry droves!

Their gun ’s a burden on their shouter;
They downa bide the stink o’ powther;
Their baulest thought ’s a hank’ring swither
To stan’ or rin,
Till skelp — a shot — they ’re aff, a’ throw’ther,
To save their skin.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, wi’ fearless eye he sees him;
Wi’ bluidy han’ a welcome gies him;
When he fa’s,
His latest draught o’ breathin leaes him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek
An’ raise a philosophic reek,
An’ physically causes seek
In clime an’ season;
But tell me whisky’s name in Greek:
I ’ll tell the reason.
THE HOLY FAIR

XXXII
Scotland, my auld, respected mither!  
Tho’ whiles ye moistify your leather,  
Till whare ye sit on craps o’ heather  
Ye tine your dam,  
Freedom and whisky gang thegither,  
Tak aff your dram!

A robe of seeming truth and trust  
Hid crafty observation;  
And secret hung, with poison’d crust,  
The dirk of defamation:  
A mask that like the gorget show’d,  
Dye-varying on the pigeon;  
And for a mantle large and broad,  
He wrapt him in Religion.  
Hypocrisy &-la-mode.

"Holy Fair’ is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion” (R. B., in Edinburgh Editions). The satire is chiefly concerned with the “tent-preaching” outside the church while the Communion services went on within. In Mauchline the preaching tent was pitched in the churchyard, whence a back entrance gave access to Nanse Tinnock’s tavern; and the “Sacrament” was observed once a year, on the second Sunday in August. Critics have classed the piece among the later ones in the Kilmarnock Edition; but in the MS. at Kilmarnock it is dated “Autumn, 1785,” and it probably records the events of that year. This ascription supports the tradition that Burns recited it in the tavern where the scene is laid, to an audience which included Jean Armour, with whom there was no quarrel till the spring of 1786.

I
Upon a simmer Sunday morn,  
When Nature’s face is fair,  
I walkèd forth to view the corn,  
An’ snuff the caller air.  
The rising sun, owre Galston Muirs,  
Wi’ glorious light was glintin;  
The hares were hirplin down the furs,  
The lav’rocks they were chantin  
Fu’ sweet that day.

II
As lightsomely I glor’d abroad,  
To see a scene sae gay,  
Three hizzies, early at the road,  
Cam skelpin up the way.

Twa had manteels o’ dolefu’ black,  
But ane wi’ lyart lining;  
The third, that gaed a wee a-back,  
Was in the fashion shining  
Fu’ gay that day.

III
The twa appear’d like sisters twin,  
In feature, form, an’ claes;  
Their visage wither’d, lang an’ thin,  
An’ sour as onie slaes:  
The third cam up, hap-step-an’-lowp,  
As light as onie lambie,  
An’ wi’ a curchie low did stoop,  
As soon as e’er she saw me,  
Fu’ kind that day.

IV
Wi’ bonnet aff, quoth I, “Sweet lass,  
I think ye seem to ken me;  
I’m sure I’ve seen that bonie face,  
But yet I canna name ye.”  
Quo’ she, an’ laughin as she spak,  
An’ taks me by the han’s,  
“Ye, for my sake, hae gi’en the feck  
Of a’ the Ten Comman’s  
A screed some day.

V
“My name is Fun — your cronie dear,  
The nearest friend ye hae;  
An’ this is Superstition here,  
An’ that’s Hypocrisy.  
I’m gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,  
To spend an hour in daffin:  
Gin ye’ll go there, you runkl’d pair,  
We will get famous laughin  
At them this day.”

VI
Quoth I, “Wi’ a’ my heart, I’ll do’t;  
I’ll get my Sunday’s sark on,  
An’ meet you on the holy spot;  
Faith, we’se hae fine remarkin!”  
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,  
An’ soon I made me ready;  
For roads were clad, frae side to side,  
Wi’ monie a wearie body,  
In droves that day.

VII
Here farmers gash, in ridin graith,  
Gaedd hoddin by their cotters;  
There swankies young, in braw braid-claith,  
Are springin owre the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang,  
In silks an' scarlets glitter;  
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,  
An' farls, bak'd wi' butter,  
Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,  
Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence,  
A greedy growr black-bonnet throws,  
An' we maun draw our tippence.  
Then in we go to see the show:  
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin;  
Some carryin dails, some chairs an' stools,  
An' some are busy bleth'rin  
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,  
An' screen our countra gentry;  
There Racer Jess, an' twa-three whores,  
Are blinkin at the entry.  
Here sits a raw o' tittlin jads,  
Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck;  
An' there a batch o' wabster lads,  
Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock,  
For fun this day.

Here some are thinkin on their sins,  
An' some upo' their claes;  
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,  
Anither sighs an' prays:  
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,  
Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces;  
On that a set o' chaps, at watch,  
Thrang winkin on the lasses  
To chairs that day.

Should Hornie, as in ancient days,  
'Mang sons o' God present him;  
The vera sight o' Moodie's face  
To's ain het hame had sent him  
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith  
Wi' rattlin and thumpin!  
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,  
He's stampin, an' he's jumpin!  
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,  
His eldritch squeel an' gestures,  
O how they fire the heart devout —  
Like cantharidian plaisters  
On sic a day.

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;  
There's peace an' rest nae langer;  
For a' the real judges rise,  
They canna sit for anger:  
Smith opens out his cauld harangues,  
On practice and on morals;  
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,  
To gie the jars an' barrels  
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,  
Of moral pow'rs an' reason?  
His English style, an' gesture fine  
Are a' clean out o' season.  
Like Socrates or Antonine,  
Or some auld pagan heathen,  
The moral man he does define,  
But ne'er a word o' faith in  
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote  
Against sic poison'd nostrum;  
For Peebles, frae the water-fit,  
Ascends the holy rostrum:  
See, up he's got the word o' God,  
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,  
While Common-sense has taen the road,  
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate  
Fast, fast that day.

Wee Miller niest, the guard relieves,  
An' orthodoxy raibles,  
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,  
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the birkie wants a manse:
So, cannilie he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now butt an' ben the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup commentators;
Here's crying out for bakes an' gills,
An' there the pint-stowp clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that in the end
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college;
It kindles wit, it waukens lear,
It pangs us fou' o' knowledge:
Be 't whisky-gill or penny wheep,
Or onie stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin deep,
To kittle up our notion,
By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table, weel, content,
An' steer about the toddy:
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
Aw' formin assignations
To meet some day.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rarin,
And echoes back return the shouts;
Black Russell is na spairin:
His piercin words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
Our verra "sauls does harrow"
Wi' fright that day!

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fou' o' lowin brunstane,
Whase ragin flame, an' scorchin heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!

The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin;
When presently it does appear,
'T was but some neebor snorin
Asleep that day.

'T wad be owre lang a tale to tell,
How monie stories past;
An' how they crowed to the yill,
When they were a' dismist;
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
Amang the furms an' benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
An' dawds that day.

In comes a gawsie, gash guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife;
The lasses they are shyer:
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother;
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gies them 't, like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu', ance yoursel,
How bonie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna for a kebbuck-heel
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin tow,
Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger hame the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
As saft as onie flesh is:
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' monie jobs that day begin,
May end in houghmagandie
Some ither day.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL

O Prince! O Chief of many thronèd pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war.

Milton.

Gilbert Burns states that his brother first repeated the Address to the Deil in the winter following the summer of 1784," while they "were going together with carts of coal to the family fire;" but it is clear from Burns's letter to Richmond, 12th February, 1786, that he misdates the poem by a year. The Address is, in part, a good-natured burlesque of the Miltonic ideal of Satan; and this is effected "by the introduction," to use the words of Gilbert Burns, "of ludicrous accounts and representations," from "various quarters," of that "august personage." Burns in his despairing moods was accustomed to feign the strongest admiration for Milton's Arch-Fiend and his dauntless superiority to his desperate circumstances; and his farewell apostrophe, although it takes the form of an exclamation of pity — and was accepted merely as such by the too-too sentimental yet austere Carlyle — is in reality a satiric thrust at the old Satanic dogma.

The six-line stave in rime couée, built on two rhymes, used in the Address to the Deil, was borrowed from the troubadours, and freely used in mediaeval English during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. There is small doubt that it was known to mediaeval Scotland, but the first Scotsman whose name is attached to it is Sir David Lindsay (1540). It fell into disuse with the decline of popular poetry after the Reformation [but was revived in the Piper of Kilbarchan and other ballads, rendered more familiar by Allan Ramsay, and] it so took the Scottish ear that by Fergusson's time, as may be seen in Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine (1768-1784), it had become the common inheritance of all such Scotsmen as could rhyme. Through Fergusson, who did his sprightliest work in it, and John Mayne (1759-1836) — author of The Siller Gun (1777), who wrote it by cantos — it passed into the hands of Burns, who put it to all manner of uses and informed it with all manner of sentiments: in ambitious and serious poetry like The Vision; in Addresses — to a Louse, a Mountain Daisy, the Toothache, the Devil, a Haggis, Scotch Drink, to name but these; in Elegies — upon Tam Samson and Poor Mailie and Captain Matthew Henderson; in such satires as Death and Dr. Hornbook and Holy Willie's Prayer; and in a series of Epistles of singular variety and range. His thoughts and fancies fell naturally into the pace which it imposes: as Dryden's into the heroic couplet, as Spenser's into the stanza of The Faerie Queen. Indeed, he cannot keep it out of his head, and his Alexandrines often march to the tune of it: —

"And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced
By Heaven's command" —

"And 'Let us worship God,' he says
With solemn air" —

"And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn
Thy hapless fate." —

'Tis small wonder, therefore, that a very large proportion of his non-lyrical achievement is set forth in it, or that Wordsworth should choose it for the stave of his memorial verses.

I

O thou! whatever title suit thee —
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Cloatie —
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstone cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

II

Hear me, Auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me
An' hear us squeel.

III

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag, nor lame,
Nor blate, nor scaur.

IV

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey, a' holes an' corners trying;
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

V

I've heard my rev'rend graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
ADDRESS TO THE DEIL
Or, where auld ruin'd castles grey
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.

VI
When twilight did my graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bumin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortrees comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

VII
Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The star shot down wi' skelten light,
Wi' you mysel', I gat a fright:
Ayont the lough,
Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sigh.

VIII
The cudgel in my niewe did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake;
When wi' an eldritch, stoor "quaick, quaick,"
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings.

IX
Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs an' dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

X
Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For O! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint hawkie 's gaen
As yell 's the bill.

XI
Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen an' croose;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantraip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.
An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd wicked scaul —
Was warst ava?

XIX

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

XX

An' now, Auld Cloots, I ken ye 're thinkin,
A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
To your black Pit;
But, faith! he 'll turn a corner jinkin,
An' cheat you yet.

XXI

But fare-you-weel, Auld Nickie-Ben!
O, wad ye tak a thought an' men'
Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
Still hae a stake:
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS
OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE: AN
UNCO MOURNFU' TALE

One of the few pieces written before 1784.
Burns "had, partly by way of frolic, bought
a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she
was tethered in a field adjoining the house at
Lochlie. He and I were going out with our
teams, and our two younger brothers to drive
for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a cu-
rious-looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding,
came to us with much anxiety in his face, with
the information that the ewe had entangled
herself in the tether, and was lying in the
ditch. Robert was much tickled with Huoc's
appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor
Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned
from the plough in the evening he repeated to
me her Death and Dying Words pretty much
in the way they now stand." — GILBERT
BURNS.

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Was ae day nibblin on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch:

There, groanin, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoce he cam doytin by.

Wi' glowerin een, an' lifted han's
Poor Hughoce like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, wae's my heart! he could na mend
it!
He gapèd wide, but naething spak.
At length poor Mailie silence brak:

"O thou, whose lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep —
O, bid him never tie them mair,
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will:
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

"Tell him, he was a Master kin',
An' ay was guid to me an' mine;
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel';
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' ripps o' corn.

"An' may they never learn the gaets,
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' pets —
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail!
So may they, like their great forbears,
For monie a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they 're
dead.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him — what I winna name —
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like other menseless, graceless brutes.
"An' niest, my yowie, silly thing; Gude keep thee frae a tether string! O, may thou ne'er forgather up, Wi' onie blastit, moorland toop; But ay keep mind to moop an' mell, Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!"

"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath, I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith: An' when you think upo' your mither, Mind to be kind to ane anither."

"Now, honest Hughoe, dinna fail, To tell my master a' my tale; An' bid him burn this cursed tether, An' for thy pains thou 'se get my blether."

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head, An' clos'd her een amang the dead!

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY

I
LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose, Wi' saut tears tricklin down your nose; Our Bardie's fate is at a close, Past a' remead! The last, sad cape-stane of his woes; Poor Mailie 's dead!

II
It's no the loss of warl's gear, That could sae bitter draw the tear, Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear The mourning weed: He's lost a friend an' neebor dear In Mailie dead.

III
Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him; A lang half-mile she could desory him; Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him, She ran wi' speed: A friend mair faithful ne'er cam nigh him, Than Mailie dead.

IV
I wat she was a sheep o' sense, An' could behave hersel wi' mense: I'll say 't, she never brak a fence, Thro' thievish greed. Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the spence Sin' Mailie 's dead.

V
Or, if he wanders up the howe, Her livin image in her yowe Comes bleatin till him, owre the knowe, For bits o' bread; An' down the briny pearls rowe For Mailie dead.

VI
She was nae get o' moorlan tips, Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips; For her forbears were brought in ships, Frae 'yont the Tweed: A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips Than Mailie's dead.

VII
Wae worth the man wha first did shape That vile, wanchanie thing — a rape! It maks guid fellows girn an' gape, Wi' chokin dread; An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape For Mailie dead.

VIII
O a' ye bards on bonie Doon! An' wha on Ayr your chanters tune! Come, join the melancholious croon O' Robin's reed! His heart will never get aboon! His Mailie 's dead!

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH

Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul! Sweet'ner of Life, and solder of Society! I owe thee much —

BLAIR.

The recipient of this epistle was the son of Robert Smith, merchant, Mauchline. He was born 1st March, 1765, and was thus six years younger than the poet. He lost his father early, and, perhaps by reason of his stepfather's rigid discipline, grew something regardless of restraint. He was, however, clever, affectionate, and witty; secured the poet's especial esteem by his loyalty during the Armour troubles; was a member of the Court of Equity (or Bachelors' Club, which met at the Whitefoord Arms), and the subject of a humorous epitaph (see post, p. 195) which need not be interpreted too literally; for some time kept a small draper's shop in Mauchline; in 1787 became partner in the Avon Printworks, Linlithgowshire; and about 1788 went to Jamaica, where he died. Several letters to him are in-
cluded in Burns’s correspondence. His sister’s “wit” is celebrated in *The Belles of Mauchline*. The *Epistle* was probably written early in 1786, before Burns had quite decided to attempt publication.

I

DEAR SMITH, the slee’est, pawkie thief,
That e’er attempted stealth or rie!  
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne’er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

II

For me, I swear by sun an’ moon,
And ev’ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye ’ve cost me twenty pair o’ shoon,
Just gaun to see you;
And ev’ry ither pair that’s done,
Mair taen I’m wi’ you.

III

That auld, capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She ’s turn’d you off, a human-creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on ev’ry feature
She’s wrote the Man.

IV

Just now I’ve taen the fit o’ rhyme,
My barmie noddle’s working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime,
Wy hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment’s time
To hear what ’s comin ?

V

Some rhyme a neebor’s name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu’ cash;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An’ raise a din;
For me, an aim I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

VI

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An’ damn’d my fortune to the groat;
But, in requit,
Has blест me with a random-shot
O’ countra wit.

VII

This while my notion’s taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid, black prent;
But still the mair I’m that way bent,
Something cries, “Hoolie !”
I red you, honest man, tak tent !
Ye ’ll shaw your folly:

VIII

“There ’s ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o’ letters,
Hae thought they had ensur’d their debtors,
A’ future ages;
Now moths deform, in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages.”

IX

Then farewell hopes o’ laurel-boughs
To garland my poetic brows !
Henceforth I’ll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang;
An’ teach the lanely heights an’ howes
My rustic sang.

X

I ’ll wander on, wi’ tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till Fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I ’ll lay me with th’ inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone !

XI

But why o’ death begin a tale ?
Just now we’re living sound an’ hale;
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave Care o’er-side !
And large, before Enjoyment’s gale,
Let’s tak the tide.

XII

This life, sae far’s I understand,
Is a’ enchanted fairy-land,
Where Pleasure is the magic-wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand, -
Dance by fu’ light.

XIII

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For, ancho that five-an’forty’s speel’d,
See, crazy, weary, joyless Eild,
Wi’ wrinkl’d face,
Comes hostin', hirplin' owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant, careless roamin;
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise:
An' fareweel dear, deluding Woman,
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant, in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy an' play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And haply eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chase;
Keen Hope does ev'ry sinew brace;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin,
To right or left eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on;
Till, curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!

Is Fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here flinging to the door,
And kneel, ye Pow'rs! and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her elines,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay rowth o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards
And maids of honor;
And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

"A title, Dempster merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.;
But give me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose or muslin-kail,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath Misfortune's blows
As weil 's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm an' cool,
Compar'd wi' you — O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dyke!

Nae hair-brained, sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In *arioso* trills and graces
Ye never stray;
But *gravissimo*, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

XXVIII

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye ’re wise;
Nae ferly tho’ ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattling squad:
I see ye upward cast your eyes —
Ye ken the road!

XXIX

Whilst I — but I shall haud me there,
Wi you ’ll scarce gang onie where —
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi’ you to mak a pair,
Whare’er I gang.

A DREAM

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the Statute blames with reason;
But surely *Dreams* were ne’er indicted Treason.

The outspokenness of this address — partly traceable to the poet’s latent Jacobitism — was distasteful to some of his loyal patrons, who advised that, unless it were modified, it should not be retained in the 1787 Edition. But, as he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop (30th April), he was “not very amenable to counsel” in such a matter; and, his sentiments once published, he scorned either to withdraw them or to dilute his expression. The author of the *Ode* here ridiculed was Thomas Warton. [Burns introduced *A Dream* with the following preface]: —

On reading in the public papers, the Laureate’s *Ode* with the other parade of June 4th, 1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birth-day Levee: and, in his dreaming fancy, made the following Address: —

I

**GUID-MORNIN** to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On ev’ry new birth-day ye see,
A humble Poet wishes!
My Bardship here, at your Levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

II

I see ye ’re complimented thrang,
By monie a lord an’ lady;
*God Save the King* ’s a cuckoo sang
That ’s unco easy said ay:
The poets, too, a venal gang,
*Wi*’ rhymes weel-turn’d an’ ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne’er do wrang,
But ay unerring steady,
On sic a day.

III

For me! before a Monarch’s face,
Ev’n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your Grace,
Your Kingship to bespatter;
There ’s monie waur been o’ the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV

’T is very true my sovereign King,
My skill may weil be doubted;
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
And downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e’en right reft and clouted,
And now the third part o’ the string,
An’ less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

V

Far be ’t frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire
To rule this mighty nation:
But faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye ’ve trusted ministration
To chaps wha in a barn or byre
Wad better fill’d their station,
Than courts ye day.

VI

And now ye ’ve gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaster;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester:
For me, thank God, my life ’s a lease,
Nae bargain wearin faster,
Or faith! I fear, that wi’ the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I’ the craft some day.
VII

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid follow's get,
A name not envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, God sake! let nae saving fit
Abridge your bonie barges
An' boats this day.

VIII

Adieu, my Liege! may Freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, wi' due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.

IX

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment,
A simple Bardie gies ye?
Thae bonie bairntime Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till Fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie
By night or day.

XI

Yet aft a ragged cowte's been known,
To mak a noble aiver;
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him at Agincourt wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day.

XII

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg,
Name sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon naughty dog,
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or trowth, ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day!

XIII

Young, royal Tarry-breeks, I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her—
A glorious galley, stem an' stern
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter;
Then heave aboard your grapple-ain,
An', large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

XIV

Ye, lastly, bonie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty!
But sneer na British boys awa!
For kings are unco scant ay,
An' German gentles are but sma':
They're better just than want ay
On onie day.

XV

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dantet;
But ere the course o' life be through,
It may be bitter sautet:
An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.

THE VISION

The division into "Duans" was borrowed from Ossian: "Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his Cath-Loda, vol. ii. of M'Pherson's Translation." (R. B.) To Duan I., as it appears in the 1786 Edition, seven stanzas were added in that of 1787, and one to Duan II.
DUAN FIRST

I
The sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
And hunger'd maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

II
The thresher's weary flingin-tree,
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And when the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

III
There, lanely by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin;
Aw heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

IV
All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time:
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done naething,
But stringing blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

V
Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank and clarkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

VI
I started, mutt'ring "Blockhead! coof!"
An' heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

VII
When click! the string the snick did draw;
And jee! the door gaed to the wa'.
XIV
Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd
floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds
With seeming roar.

XV
Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

XVI
By stately tow'r, or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to
dare,
With feature stern.

XVII
My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dyed steel
In sturdy blows;
While, back-recoiling, seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

XVIII
His Country's Saviour, mark him well!
Bold Richardton's heroic swell;
The chief, on Sark who glorious fell
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

XIX
There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong:
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd,
They strode along.

XX
Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,
Near many a hermit-fancied cove
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love
In musing mood),
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

XXI
With deep-struck, reverential awe,
The learned Sire and Son I saw:
To Nature's God, and Nature's law,
They gave their lore;
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

XXII
Brydon's brave ward I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND
I
With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

II
"All hail! my own inspirèd Bard!
In me thy native Muse regard!
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward,
As we bestow.

III
"Know, the great Genius of this land
Has many a light aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labors ply.

IV
"They Scotia's race among them share:
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart;
Some teach the bard — a darling care —
The tuneful art.
"Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits, pour;
Or, 'mid the venal Senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy;
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

"Hence, Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence, Dempster's zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence, sweet, harmonious Beattie sung
His Minstrel lays,
Or tore, with noble ardour swung
The sceptic's bays.

To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the laboring hind,
The artisan;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein,
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill.

Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the laborer's weary toil
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard;
And careful note each opening grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I — Coila my name:
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways:
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes;
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'er's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove;
I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields and azure skies
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise,
In pensive walk.

"When youthful Love, warm-blushing,
Keen-shivering, shot thy nerves along,
Those accents grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adoréd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild-send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misleq by Fancy’s meteor-ray,  
    By passion driven;  
But yet the light that led astray  
Was light from Heaven.  

XIX

“I taught thy manners-painting strains  
The loves, the ways of simple swains,  
Till now, o’er all my wide domains  
Thy fame extends;  
And some, the pride of Coila’s plains,  
Became thy friends.”

XX

“Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,  
To paint with Thomson’s landscape glow;  
Or wake the bosom-melting throe  
With Shenstone’s art;  
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow  
Warm on the heart.”

XXI

“Yet, all beneath th’ unrivall’d rose,  
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;  
Tho’ large the forest’s monarch throws  
His army-shade,  
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows  
Adown the glade.”

XXII

“Then never murmur nor repine;  
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;  
And trust me, not Potosi’s mine,  
Nor king’s regard,  
Can give a bliss o’ermatching thine,  
A rustic Bard.”

XXIII

“To give my counsels all in one:  
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;  
 Preserve the dignity of Man,  
With soul erect;  
And trust the Universal Plan  
Will all protect.”

XXIV

“And wear thou this” — She solemn  
said,  
And bound the holly round my head:  
The polish’d leaves and berries red  
Did rustling play;  
And, like a passing thought, she fled  
In light away.
The lads sae trig, wi’ wooer-babs
Weel-knotted on their garten;
Some unco blate, an’ some wi’ gabs
Gar lasses’ hearts gang startin
Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an’ foremost, thro’ the kail,
Their stocks maun a’ be sought ance;
They steek their een, an’ grape an’ wale
For muckle anes, an’ straight anes.
Poor hav’rel Will fell aff the drift,
An’ wandered thro’ the bow-kail,
And, for want o’ better shift,
A runt, was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow’t that night.

Then, straight or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an’ cry a’ throu’ her;
The vera wee-things, toddlin, rin
Wi’ stocks out-owre their shouther;
An’ gif the custock ‘s sweet or sour,
Wi’ jocetelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi’ cannie care, they ’ve plac’d them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae ‘mang them a’,
To pou their stalks o’ corn;
But Rab slips out, an’ jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an’ fast;
Loud skirl’d a’ the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
Whan kiutlin in the fause-house
Wi’ him that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea’es them gashing at their cracks,
An’ slips out by hersel:
She thro’ the yard the nearest taks,
An’ to the kiln she goes then,
And in the blue-clue throws then,
Right fear’t that night.

Wee Jenny to her graunie says,
“Will ye go wi’ me, graunie?
I’ll eat the apple at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnie :”
She fuff’t her pipe wi’ sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap’rin,
She notice’t na an aizle brunt
Her braw, new, wors’t apron
Out thro’ that night.

Ye little skelpie-limmer’s-face!
I daur ye try sic sportin,
As seek the Foul Thief onie place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An’ liv’d an’ died deleeret,
On sic a night.

Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind ’t as weel’s yestreen —
I was a gilpey then, I’m sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an’ wat,
An’ stuff was unco green;
An’ ay a rantin kirn we gat,
An’ just on Halloween
It fell that night.

Our stibble-rig was Rab M’Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
His sin gat Eppie Sim wi’ wean,
That lived in Achmachalla:
He gat hemp-seed, I mind it weel,
An’ he made unco light o’t;
But monie a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night.”

Then up gat fechtin Jamie Fleck,
An’ he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a’ but nonsense:
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An’ out a handfu’ gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae ’mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see’d him,
An’ try’t that night.

He marches thro’ amang the stacks,
Tho’ he was something sturtin;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
And haurls at his curpin;
And ev’ry now and then, he says,
“Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An’ her that is to be my lass
Come after me, an’ draw thee
As fast this night.”

He whistl’d up Lord Lenox’ March,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho’ his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley’d an’ eerie;
Till presently he hears a squeak,
An’ then a grane an’ grunte;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An’ tumbl’d wi’ a wintle
Out-owre that night.

He roar’d a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu’ desperation!
An’ young an’ auld come rinnin out,
An’ hear the sad narration:
He swoor ’t was hilchin Jean M’Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie —
Till stop! she trotted thro’ them a’;
An’ wha was it but grumphie
Asteer that night?

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen,
To winn three wechts o’ naething;
But for to meet the Deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An’ twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

She turns the key wi’ cannie throw,
An’ owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca’,
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattl’d up the wa’,
An’ she cry’d, L—d preserve her!
An’ ran thro’ midden-hole an’ a’,
An’ pray’d wi’ zeal and fervour
Fu’ fast that night.

They hoy’t out Will, wi’ sair advice;
They hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chane’d the stack he faddom’t thrice
Was timmer-propt for thravin:
He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak
   For some black gruesome carlin;
An’ loot a winze, an’ drew a stroke,
   Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
   Aff’s nieves that night.

XXIV
A wanton widow Leezie was,
   As cantie as a kittlin;
But ooh! that night, amang the shaws,
   She gat a fearfu’ settlin!
She thro’ the whins, an’ by the cairn,
   An’ owre the hill gaed serievin;
Whare three lairds’ lands met at a burn,
   To dip her left sark-sleeve in
   Was bent that night.

XXV
Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
   As thro’ the glen it wimpl’t;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,
   Whyles in a wiel it dimpl’t;
Whyles glitter’d to the nightly rays,
   Wi’ bickerin, dancin dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
   Below the spreading hazel
   Unseen that night.

XXVI
Amang the brachens, on the brae,
   Between her an’ the moon,
The Deil, or else an outler quey,
   Gat up an’ gae a croon:
Poor Leezie’s heart maist lap the hool;
   Near lav’rock-height she jumpit,
   But mist a fit, an’ in the pool
   Out-owre the lugs she plumpit
   Wi’ a plunge that night.

XXVII
In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
   The luggies three are ranged;
And ev’ry time great care is taen
   To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock’s joys
   Sin’ Mar’s-year did desire,
   Because he gat the toom dish thrice
   He heav’d them on the fire
   In wrath that night.

THE AULD FARMER’S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION
TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE
ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP
OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW-YEAR

[Probably composed about the beginning of 1786.]

I
A GUID NEW-YEAR I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there’s a ripp to thy auld baggie:
Tho’ thou’s howe-backit now, an’ knaggie,
   I’ve seen the day
   Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie,
   Out-owre the lay.

II
Tho’ now thou’s dowie, stiff, an’ crazy,
   An’ thy auld hide as white’s a daisie,
   I’ve seen thee dappl’t, sleek, an’ glaizie,
   A bonie gray:
   He should been tight that daur’t to raize’ thee,
   Ancie in a day.

III
Thou ance was i’ the foremost rank,
   A filly buirdly, steve, an’ swank;
   An’ set weel down a shapely shank
   As e’er tread yird;
   An’ could hae flown out-owre a stank
   Like onie bird.

IV
It’s now some nine-an’-twenty year
   Sin’ thou was my guid-father’s meere;
   He gied me thee, o’ tocher clear,
   An’ fifty mark;
   Tho’ it was sma’, ’t was weel-won gear,
   An’ thou was stark.

V
When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
   Ye then was trottin wi’ your minnie:
THE AULD FARMER TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE  27

Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

VI
That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonie bride:
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart I could brag'd wide,
For sic a pair.

VII
Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hobble,
An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
That day, ye was a jinker noble,
For heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'!

VIII
When thou an' I were young and skiegh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skriegh,
An' tak the road!
Town's-bodies ran, an' stood abiegh,
An' ca't thee mad.

IX
When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road ay like a swallow:
At brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

X
The sma', drop-rumpl't, hunter cattle
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazle.

XI
Thou was a noble fitte-lan',
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn:
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours' gaun,
On guid March-weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han'
For days thegither.

XII
Thou never braing't, an' fetch't, an' fiskit;
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow';
Till sprittie knowes wad rair't, an' riskit,
An' slypet owre.

XIII
When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer:
I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
For that, or simmer.

XIV
In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae face't it;
Thou never lap, an' sten't, an' breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

XV
My plough is now thy bairntime a',
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me threeteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

XVI
Monie a sair darg we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

XVII
An' think na, my auld trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
An' thy auld days may end in starvin;
For my last fow,
A heapet stimpart, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

XVIII
We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' anither;
Wi' tentie care I'll fit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather
Wi' sma' fatigue.
THE COTTER’S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

GRAY.

The Cotter’s Saturday Night is included in the list of poems mentioned by Burns in his letter to Richmond, 17th February, 1786; it was therefore composed between the beginning of November, 1785, and that date. Gilbert Burns relates that Robert first repeated it to him in the course of a walk one Sunday afternoon. He also states that the “hint of the plan, and the title of the poem,” were taken from Fergusson’s Farmer’s Ingle.

This is true, but the piece as a whole is formed on English models. It is the most artificial and the most imitative of Burns’s works. Not only is the influence of Gray’s Elegy conspicuous, but also there are echoes of Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, and even Milton; while the stanza, which was taken, not from Spenser, whom Burns had not then read, but from Beattie and Shenstone, is so purely English as to lie outside the range of Burns’s experience and accomplishment. “These English songs,” he wrote long afterwards (1794) to Thomson, “gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish.” This is so far true as to make one wish that here, as elsewhere, he had chosen a Scots exemplar: that he had taken (say) not merely the scheme but also the stave—\(a, b, a, c, b, c, d, d, d\)—of The Farmer’s Ingle, and sought after effects which he could accomplish in a medium of which he was absolute master. As it is, The Cotter’s Saturday Night is supposed to paint an essentially Scottish phase of life; but the Scottish element in the diction—to say nothing of the Scottish cast of the effect—is comparatively slight throughout, and in many stanzas is altogether wanting. In the ’94 Edition the vernacular was a little coloured by a more general substitution of \(an\) for \(and\), \(wi\) for \(with\), and so on. But it may be that Tytler, rather than Burns, was responsible for this; and the earlier orthography, being in better keeping with the general English cast, has been retained.

I

My lov’d, my honor’d, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;

With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend’s esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish esteem and praise:
The lowly train in life’s sequester’d scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho’ his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

II

November chill blaws loud wi’ angry sigh;
The short’ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the plough;
The black’ning trains o’ craws to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his shoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o’er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

III

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
The expectant wee-things, toddlin, stachin’ through to meet their dad, wi’ flitcherin’ noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin’ bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie’s smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a’ his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

IV

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun’;
Some ca’ the plough, some herd, some ten-tie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In yeulfu’ bloom, love sparkling in her e’e,
Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,  
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V
With joy unfeign’d, brothers and sisters meet,  
And each for other’s wefare kindly spiers:  
The social hours, swift-wing’d, unnotic’d fleet;  
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears.  
The parents partial eye their hopeful years;  
Anticipation forward points the view;  
The mother, wi’ her needle and her sheers,  
Gars auld claes look amaist as well’s the new;  
The father mixes a’ wi’ admonition due.

VI
Their master’s and their mistress’s command  
The younkers a’ are warnèd to obey;  
And mind their labours wi’ an eydent hand,  
And ne’er, tho’ out o’ sight, to jauk or play:  
“And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,  
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;  
Lest in temptation’s path ye gang astray,  
Implore His counsel and assisting might:  
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright.”

VII
But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;  
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o’ the same,  
Tells how a neebor lad came o’er the moor,  
To do some errands, and convey her hame.  
The wily mother sees the conscious flame  
Sparkle in Jenny’s e’e, and flush her cheek;  
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,  
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;  
Weel-pleas’d the mother hears, it’s nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII
With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;  
A strappin’ youth, he takes the mother’s eye;  
Blythe Jenny sees the visit ’s no ill taen;  
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.  
The youngster’s artless heart o’erflows wi’ joy,  
But blate and laithfu’, scarce can weel behave;  
The mother, wi’ a woman’s wiles, can spy  
What makes the youth sae bashfu’ and sae grave;  
Weel-pleas’d to think her bairn ’s respected like the lave.

IX
O happy love! where love like this is found:  
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!  
I’ve paced much this weary, mortal round,  
And sage experience bids me this declare: —  
“If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,  
One cordial in this melancholy vale,  
’Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,  
In other’s arms, breathe out the tender tale  
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev’ning gale.”

X
Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,  
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!  
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,  
Betray sweét Jenny’s unsuspecting youth?  
Curse on his perjur’d arts! dissembling, smooth!  
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil’d?  
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,  
Points to the parents fondling o’er their child?  
Then paints the ruin’d maid, and their distraction wild?

XI
But now the supper crowns their simple board,  
The healsome parritch, chief o’ Scotia’s food;  
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,  
That yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;  
The dame brings forth, in complimential mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
   And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII
The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
   They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride.
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

XIII
They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
   They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise.

XIV
The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
   How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
   With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal Bard did groaning lie
   Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV
Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
   How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
   Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
   Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

XVI
Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII
Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart,
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

XVIII
Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Divine preside.

XIX
From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refin'd!

XX
O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle.

XXI
O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

TO A MOUSE
ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Gilbert Burns testifies that these verses were suggested by the incident in the heading of the poem, and composed "while the author was holding the plough."

I
Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!

II
I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

III
I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

IV
Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
And naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

V
Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste;
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast;
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.
VI
That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleeky dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

VII
But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

VIII
Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!

EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET

JANUARY

The Davie of this Epistle was David Sillar, third son of Patrick Sillar, farmer at Spittle-side, near Tarbolton, born in 1760. He made the acquaintance of Burns early in 1781 at Lochlie; in May of that year was admitted a member of the Bachelors' Club; was for some time interim teacher in the parish school, Tarbolton, and afterwards started an "adventure" school at Commonside; opened a grocer's shop in Irvine towards the close of 1783; published in 1789 a volume of Poems in imitation of Burns, who helped him to get subscribers; after an attempt to get literary work in Edinburgh, returned to Irvine, where he took up teaching again, and ultimately became town councillor and magistrate; died 2d May, 1830. Burns, in his Second Epistle to Davie (see p. 128), with which Sillar prefaced his own Poems, thus chided him for his neglect of the Muse:

"Sic han's as you sud ne'er be faiket,
Be hain't wha like."

But this estimate was not justified: Sillar's published verses are mere commonplace. A letter giving his recollections of Burns was published in Josiah Walker's Edition (1811), and has often been reprinted. Sillar, whose skill as a fiddler may partly explain Burns's admiration, wrote the air to which A Rosebud by my Early Walk was set in Johnson's Museum.

"It was, I think, in the summer of 1784" writes Gilbert Burns, "when in the intervals of harder labour Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of this Epistle."

I

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely, westlin jingle:

While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great-fook's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker, and canker,
To see their cursèd pride.

II

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whyles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
And ken na how to ware 't;
But Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear;
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"
Auld age ne'er mind a feg;
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

III

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
E'v'n then, sometimes, we 'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that 's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile;
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma'.
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

IV

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal'? 
Yet Nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.

In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please then,
We'll sit an' sowth a tune;
Syne rhyme till 't we'll time till 't,
An' sing 't when we hae done.

V

It's no in titles nor in rank:
It's no in wealth like Lon'on Bank,
To purchase peace and rest.

It's no in makin muckle, mair;
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
An' centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest!
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrang.

VI

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet and dry,
Wi' never ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how oft, in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless and fearless
Of either Heaven or Hell;
Esteeming and deeming
It a' an idle tale!

VII

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
Nor make our scanty pleasures less
By pining at our state:
And, even should misfortunes come,
I here wha sit hae met wi' some,
An' thankful for them yet,
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill:
Tho' losses and crosses
- Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy,
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien':
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

IX

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Ts not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast,
Thou Being All-seeing,
O, hear my fervent pray'r!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

X

All hail! ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

xi
O, how that Name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin' rank an' file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phæbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hich, an' stilt, an' jimp,
And rin an unco fit;
But least then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

THE LAMENT

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE
ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet Affection prove the spring of Woe!

"The unfortunate issue," not of a "friend's,"
but of his own "amour,"—when Jean Armour, overborne by paternal authority, agreed
to discard him,—was, Burns declares, the
"unfortunate story alluded to" in the Lament:
a "shocking affair" he calls it, which had
nearly given him "one or two of the principal
qualifications among those who have lost the
chart and mistaken the reckoning of rationality." According to Gilbert, the poem was
composed "after the first distraction of his
feelings had a little subsided."

I
O THOU pale Orb that silent shines
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With Woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream!

II
I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked, distant hill;

I joyless view thy trembling horn
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning Peace?

III
No idle-feign'd, poetic pains
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim:
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures quaint and tame.
The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
The oft-attested Pow'r's above,
The promis'd father's tender name,
These were the pledges of my love!

IV
Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wished for Fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone!
And, must I think it! is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

V
O! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honor, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth?
Alas! Life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will
soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

VI
Ye wingèd Hours that o'er us pass'd,
Enraptur'd more the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast
My fondly treasur'd thoughts employ'd:
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
E'en ev'ry ray of Hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

VII
The morn, that warns th' approaching
day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe;
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering slow:
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen Recollection’s direful train,  
Must wring my soul, ere Phebus, low,  
Shall kiss the distant western main.

VIII
And when my nightly couch I try,  
Sore-harass’d out with care and grief,  
My toil-beat nerves and tear-worn eye  
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:  
Or, if I slumber, Fancy, chief,  
Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affliction:  
Ev’n day, all-bitter, brings relief  
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX
O thou bright Queen, who, o’er th’ expanse  
Now highest reign’st, with boundless sway!  
Oft has thy silent-marking glance  
Observ’d us, fondly-wand’ring, stray!  
The time, unheeded, sped away,  
While Love’s luxurious pulse beat high,  
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,  
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

X
O scenes in strong remembrance set!  
Scenes, never, never to return!  
Scenes if in stupor I forget,  
Again I feel, again I burn!  
From ev’ry joy and pleasure torn,  
Life’s weary vale I wander thro’;  
And hopeless, comfortless, I’ll mourn  
A faithless woman’s broken vow!

DESPONDENCY
AN ODE
Composed, no doubt, a little after The Lament.

I
Oppress’d with grief, oppress’d with care,  
A burden more than I can bear,  
I set me down and sigh;  
O Life! thou art a galling load,  
Along a rough, a weary road,  
To wretches such as I!  
Dim-backward, as I cast my view,  
What sick’ning scenes appear!

What sorrows yet may pierce me thro’,  
Too justly I may fear!  
Still caring, despairing,  
Must be my bitter doom;  
My woes here shall close ne’er  
But with the closing tomb!

II
Happy ye sons of busy life,  
Who, equal to the bustling strife,  
No other view regard!  
Ev’n when the wished end’s denied,  
Yet while the busy means are plied,  
They bring their own reward:  
Whilst I, a hope-abandoned wight,  
Unfitted with an aim,  
Meet ev’ry sad returning night  
And joyless morn the same.  
You, bustling and justling,  
Forget each grief and pain;  
I, listless yet restless,  
Find ev’ry prospect vain.

III
How blest the Solitary’s lot,  
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,  
Within his humble cell —  
The cavern, wild with tangling roots —  
Sits o’er his newly-gather’d fruits,  
Beside his crystal well!  
Or haply to his ev’ning thought,  
By unfrequented stream,  
The ways of men are distant brought,  
A faint-collected dream;  
While praising, and raising  
His thoughts to Heav’n on high,  
As wand’ring, meand’ring,  
He views the solemn sky.

IV
Than I, no lonely hermit plac’d  
Where never human footstep trac’d,  
Less fit to play the part;  
The lucky moment to improve,  
And just to stop, and just to move,  
With self-respecting art:  
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,  
Which I too keenly taste,  
The Solitary can despise —  
Can want and yet be blest!  
He needs not, he heed not  
Or human love or hate;  
Whilst I here must cry here  
At perfidy ingratitude!
O enviable early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies or the crimes
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses
That active man engage;
The fears all, the tears all
Of dim declining Age!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN

A DIRGE

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 10th August, 1788, Burns tells of an old grand-uncle who had gone blind: — “His most voluptuous enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of The Life and Age of Man. The old song began thus: —

‘T was in the sixteenth hundred year
Of God and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie;
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sob and sigh did say,
Ah! man was made to moan!”

I
When chill November’s surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev’ning, as I wand’red forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man, whose aged step
Seem’d weary, worn with care,
His face was furrow’d o’er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

II
“Young stranger, whither wand’rest thou?”
Began the rev’rend Sage;
“Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure’s rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast begun
To wander forth, with me to mourn
The miseries of Man.

III
“The sun that overhangs you moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling’s pride:
I’ve seen you weary winter-sun
 Twice forty times return;
And ev’ry time has added proofs,
That Man was made to mourn.

IV
“O Man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious, youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway,
Licentious passions burn:
Which tenfold force gives Nature’s law,
That Man was made to mourn.

V
“Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood’s active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then Age and Want — O ill-match’d pair! —
Shew Man was made to mourn.

VI
“A few seem favourites of Fate,
In Pleasure’s lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest:
But oh! what crowds in ev’ry land,
All wretched and forlorn,
Thro’ weary life this lesson learn,
That Man was made to mourn.

VII
“Many and sharp the num’rous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And Man, whose heav’n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,—
Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII
“See yonder poor, o’erlabour’d wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH

Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho’ a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

IX
"If I’m designed yon lordling’s slave —
By Nature’s law design’d —
Why was an independent wish
E’er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn?
Or why has Man the will and pow’r
To make his fellow mourn?

X
"Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

XI
"O Death! the poor man’s dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my agéd limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy fear thy blow
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!"

WINTER
A DIRGE

Burns writes in the First Common Place Book under date April, 1784: “There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more — I don’t know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me — than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees and raving o’er the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of Scripture, ‘Walks on the wings of the wind.’ In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortunes, I composed the following song — Winter, to wit. Gilbert affirms it to be a ‘juvenile production;’ and the poet himself, in his Autobiographic Letter to Dr. Moore, refers to it as “the eldest of my printed pieces,” and includes it among others composed in the interval between his return from Kirkoswald and his residence in Irvine. It is therefore impossible to assign it to a period so late as that conjectured by Chambers and Scott Douglas; and the “tract of misfortunes” cannot describe, as the latter held, the disasters at Irvine, but was probably one of family losses.

I
The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snow:
Wild-tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae:
While bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

II
"The sweeping blast, the sky o’ercast,”
The joyless winter day
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest’s howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

III
Thou Pow’r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (O, do Thou grant
This one request of mine!):
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH

First Common Place Book, under date August, 1784: “A Prayer when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threaten me, first put nature on the alarm.” A manuscript in the Burns Monument, Edinburgh, has the heading: “A Prayer when dangerously threatened with pleuritic attacks.” The piece has been assigned to 1784, but the entry in the
Common Place Book proves it earlier than the August of that year. It was probably written during Burns's residence in Irvine, when, as would appear from a letter to his father, 27th December, 1781, he had the prospect of "perhaps very soon" bidding "adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life."

O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun —
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done —

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-good — for such Thou art —
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

Enclosed, under the title of The Gowan, in a letter of 20th April, 1786, to John Kennedy, clerk to the Earl of Dumfries, at Dumfries House, near Mauchline: "I have here likewise enclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions. I am a good deal pleased with some sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which, as the elegantly melting Gray says, 'melancholy has marked for her own.'" The last four stanzas conveying the moral are in undiluted English.

I

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou 's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:

To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

II

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast!

When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

III

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,

Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

IV

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,

Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

V

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;

But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

VI

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;

Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

VII

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,

Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

VIII

Such fate to suffering Worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

IX
Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

TO RUIN
From the lines
"For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart" —
it would appear that this piece dates from the
close of Burns's residence at Irvine in 1782,
when, to crown his misfortunes, he was, as he
relates in his Autobiographical Letter, jilted
"with peculiar circumstances of mortification"
by one "who had pledged her soul to marry
him." True, he was greatly distracted by Ar-
mour's conduct in repudiating him; but there
is no evidence that he was revisited by the
hypochondriacal longing for death to which
expression is given in his second stanza.

I
ALL hail, inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning
Round my devoted head.

II
And thou grim Pow'r, by Life abhorr'd,
While Life a pleasure can afford,
O! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!

When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign Life's joyless day?
My weary heart its throbblings cease,
Cold-mould'ring in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more
To stain my lifeless face,
Encapsèd and graspèd
Within thy cold embrace!

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND
May —— 1786.

The "young friend" of this Epistle was An-
drew Hunter Aiken, son of Robert Aiken of
Ayr. After a successful commercial career in
Liverpool, he became English consul at Riga,
where he died in 1831. His son, Peter Free-
land Aiken, — born 1790, died 3d March, 1877,
— published in 1876 Memoirs of Robert Burns
and some of his Contemporaries.

William Niven of Kirkoswald — afterwards
of Maybole, and finally of Kilbride — was
accustomed to complain — not, however, to
Burns, in so far as is known, nor till after his
death — that this Epistle was originally ad-
dressed to him. His claim was supported by
the Rev. Hamilton Paul (Poems and Songs of
Burns, 1819); but, as Niven had no copy to
show, it would seem that, if a rhyming Epistle
were sent him, he set little store by the honour.
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricted;
But, och! mankind are unco weak
An' little to be trusted;
If Self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted!

IV
Yet they wha fa' in Fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure;
For still, th' important end of life
They equally may answer:
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

V
Ay free, aff han', your story tell,
When wi' a bosom cronic;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to onie:
Conceal yoursel as wee' ye can
Frae critical dissection:
But keek thro' ev'ry other man
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

VI
The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

VII
To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That 's justify'd by honour:
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

VIII
The fear o' Hell's a hangman's whip
To hau'd the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that ay be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause —
Debar a' side-pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX
The great Creator to revere
Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X
When ranting round in Pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on Life we're tempest-driv'n —
A conscience but a canker——
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
Is sure a noble anchor!

XI
Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may ye better reck the rede,
Than ever did th' adviser!

ON A SCOTCH BARD
GONE TO THE WEST INDIES

Probably among the latest written for the Kilmarnock Edition. While it was in progress, Burns was maturing his plans for emigration, and on 17th July, 1786, he wrote to David Brice, Glasgow: "I am now fixed to go for the West Indies in October."

I
A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,
An' owre the sea!
II
Lament him a’ ye rantin core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore;
Nae mair he ’ll join the merry roar
In social key;
For now he ’s taen anither shore,
An’ owre the sea!

III
The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, an’ a’ may bless him
Wi’ tearfu’ e’e,
For weel I wat they ’Il sairly miss him
That ’s owre the sea!

IV
O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle,
Wha can do nought but fyke an’ fumble,
’T wad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as onie wumble,
That ’s owre the sea!

V
Auld, cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
An’ stain them wi’ the saut, saut tear:
’T will mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee:
He was her Laureat monie a year,
That ’s owre the sea!

VI
He saw Misfortune’s cauld nor-west
Lang-mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An’ owre the sea.

VII
To tremble under Fortune’s cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu’ o’ drummock,
Wi’ his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So, row’t his hurdies in a hammock,
An’ owre the sea.

VIII
He ne’er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in:
Wi’ him it ne’er was under hiding.
He dealt it free;
The Muse was a’ that he took pride in,
That ’s owre the sea.

IX
Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An’ hap him in a cozie biel:
Ye ’ll find him ay a dainty chiel,
An’ fou o’ glee:
He wad na wrang’d the vera Deil,
That ’s owre the sea.

X
Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonilie!
I ’ll toast you in my hindmost gillie,
Tho’ owre the sea!

A DEDICATION
TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

Gavin Hamilton — to whom Burns here dedicates the First Edition of his poems, because “I thought them something like yoursel,” was descended from an old Ayrshire family, the Hamiltons of Kyne. The fifth son of John Hamilton of Kyne — who was settled as a Writer in Mauchline — by his first wife, Jacobina King, he was born in 1751, probably in November, as he was baptized on the 20th of that month; succeeded his father as solicitor in Mauchline, occupying a castellated mansion, now partly in ruins, hard by the churchyard; and sublet the farm of Mossgiel to Burns and his brother Gilbert. Like the poet, he sympathised with liberalism in religion, and they became warm friends. He was prosecuted in the autumn of 1784 by the Kirk-Session of Mauchline for neglect of public ordinances and other irregularities; and wrote a letter to the Session, affirming that its proceedings were dictated by “private pique and ill-nature.” The accusation is corroborated by Cromek, who states that the Rev. William Auld of Mauchline, having quarrelled with Hamilton’s father (in all probability the true cause of both the quarrel with the father and the Sessional prosecution of the son was the hereditary Episcopacy of the Hamiltons). Ultimately, through the intervention of the Presbytery of Ayr, Gavin Hamilton compelled the Session, on 17th July, 1785, to grant him a certificate that he was “free from public scandal or
ground of Church censure known" to them: a
triumph celebrated in Holy Willie's Prayer.
He was again prosecuted by the Session for
causing his servants to dig new potatoes in his
garden on the "last Lord's day" of July, 1787.
He died 5th February, 1805. Hamilton's
character is very fully portrayed in the Dedi-
cation, and incisively in his Epitaph (p. 55).
Several letters from Burns to him are pub-
lished, including a Rhyming Epistle and Stanza
on Naething; and there are references to him
in Holy Willie's Prayer, the Epistle to John
M'Math, and The Farewell.

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin Dedication,
To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye 're surnam'd like His Grace,
Perhaps related to the race:
Then, when I'm tired — and sae are ye,
Wi' monie a fulsome, sinfu' lie —
Set up a face how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do — maun do, sir, wi' them
wha
Mann please the great-folk for a wamefou';
For me ! sae laigh I need na bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, an' that 's nae flatt'rin,
It 's just sic poet an' sic patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him !
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only he's no just begun yet.

The Patron (sir, ye maun forgie me;
I winna lie, come what will o' me),
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He 's just — nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What 's no his ain he winna tak it;
What ance he says, he winna break it;
Ought he can lend he 'll no refuse 't,
Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang;
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It 's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye 'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos, and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he 's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It 's no thro' terror of damnation:
It 's just a carnal inclination,
And och ! that 's nae regeneration.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain !
Vain is his hope, whose stay an' trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice !

No — stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' the winnock frae a whore,
But point the rake that taks the door;
Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane;
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter — stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile
graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry
faces;
Grun't up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I 'll warrant then, ye 're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin !
Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
Ye 'll some day squeel in quaking terror,
When Vengeance draws the sword in
wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him; —
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans, __
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans !

Your pardon, sir, for this digression:
I maist forgat my Dedication;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.
So, sir, you see 't was nae daft vapour;  
But I maturely thought it proper,  
When a' my works I did review,  
To dedicate them, sir, to you:  
Because (ye need na tak' it ill),  
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,  
And your petitioner shall ever  
I had amaist said, ever pray,  
But that's a word I need na say;  
For prayin', I hae little skill o't;  
I 'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't;  
But I 'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,  
That kens or hears about you, sir: —

"May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark  
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk!  
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,  
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!  
May Kennedy's far-honor'd name  
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,  
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizzen,  
Are frae their nuptial labors risen:

Five bonie lasses round their table,  
And sev'n braw fellows, stout an' able,  
To serve their king an' country weel,  
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!  
May Health and Peace, with mutual rays,  
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;  
Till his wee, curlie John's ier-oe,  
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,  
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,  
With complimentary effusion;  
But, whilst your wishes and endeavours  
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,  
I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,  
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)  
That iron-hearted carl, Want,  
Attended, in his grim advances,  
By sad mistakes, and black mischances,  
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,  
Make you as poor a dog as I am,  
Your 'humble servant' then no more;  
For who would humbly serve the poor?  
But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n!  
While recollection's pow'r is giv'n,  
If, in the vale of humble life,  
The victim sad of Fortune's strife,

I, thro' the tender-gushing tear,  
Should recognise my master dear;  
If friendless, low, we meet together,  
Then, sir, your hand — my FRIEND and BROTHER!

TO A LOUSE
ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH

I
Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?  
Your impudence protects you sairly,  
I canna say but ye strunt rarely  
Owre gauze and lace,  
Tho' faith! I fear ye dine but sparely  
On sic a place.

II
Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonder,  
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,  
How daur ye set your fit upon her —  
Sae fine a lady!  
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner  
On some poor body.

III
Swith! in some beggar's hauffet squattle:  
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,  
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,  
In shoals and nations;  
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle  
Your thick plantations.

IV
Now haud you there! ye're out o' sight,  
Below the fatt'ris, snug an' tight;  
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,  
Till ye've got on it —  
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height  
O' Miss's bonnet.

V
My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,  
As plump an' grey as onie grozet:  
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,  
Or fell, red smeddum,  
I'd gie ye sic a hearty dose o' t,  
Wad dress your droddum.
VI
I wad na been surpris’d to spy
You on an auld wife’s flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On ‘s wyliecoat;
But Miss’s fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do ’t?

VII
O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An’ set your beauties a’ abroad!
Ye little ken what curséd speed
The blastie ‘s makin’!
Thae winks an’ finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin’!

VIII
O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
An’ foolish notion:
What airs in dress an’ gait wad lea’e us,
An’ ev’n devotion!

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK
AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD, APRIL 1, 1785

John Lapraik, whose song When I upon Thy Bosom Lean “so thirl’d the heart-strings” of Burns, was descended from an old Ayrshire family, which for several generations possessed the estate of Laigh Dalquhram, near Muirkirk. He was born in 1727; succeeded to the estate on the death of his father, and also rented the farm and mill of Muirsmill; lost his estate and all his means by the failure of the Ayr Bank in 1772; was inspired by Burns’s success to publish Poems on Several Occasions (1788); and died 7th May, 1807.

Lapraik’s song, so warmly praised by Burns, and afterwards sent by him for insertion to Johnson’s Museum, iii. 214 (1790), closely resembles one in Ruddiman’s Weekly Magazine, 11th October, 1773, When on Thy Bosom I Recline, dated Edinburgh, 11th October, and signed “Happy Husband.” It has been too rashly inferred that Lapraik plagiarised from this lyric; he may have written it himself. Another, When West Winds did Blow, which Burns also sent to Johnson, is not without merit. The original Epistle was at one time in the possession of Sir Robert Jardine, and the piece is also entered in the First Common Place Book under date June, 1785.
A pint an’ gill I ’d gie them baith,
To hear your crack.

VIII
But, first an’ foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell;
Tho’ rude an’ rough —
Yet crooning to a body’s sel,
Does weel eneugh.

IX
I am nae poet, in a sense;
But just a rhymer like by chance,
An’ hae to learning nae pretence;
Yet, what the matter?
Whene’er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

X
Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, “How can you e’er propose,
You wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?”
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye ’re maybe wrang.

XI
What’s a’ your jargon o’ your Schools,
Your Latin names for horns an’ stools?
If honest Nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammers?
Ye’d better taen up spades and shoos,
Or knappin-hammers.

XII
A set o’ dull, conceited hashes
Confuse their brains in college-classes,
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An’ syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o’ Greek!

XIII
Gie me ae spark o’ Nature’s fire,
That’s a’ the learning I desire;
Then, tho’ I drudge thro’ dub an’ mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, tho’ hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

XIV
O for a spunk o’ Allan’s glee,
Or Fergusson’s, the bauld an’ slee,
Or bright Lapraik’s, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be learner eneugh for me,
If I could get it.

XV
Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho’ real friends I b’lieve are few;
Yet, if your catalogue be fow,
I ’se no insist:
But, gif ye want ae friend that ’s true,
I’m on your list.

XVI
I winna blaw about mysel,
As ill I like my faults to tell;
But friends, an’ folks that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho’, I maun own, as monie still
‘As far abuse me.

XVII
There’s ae wee faut they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses — Gude forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
They weel can spare.

XVIII
But Mauchline Race or Mauchline Fair,
I should be proud to meet you there:
We’se gie ae night’s discharge to care,
If we forgather;
And hae a swap o’ rhymin-ware
Wi’ ane anither.

XIX
The four-gill chap, we ’se gar him clatter,
An’ kirsen him wi’ reekin water;
Syne we’ll sit down an’ tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An’ faith, we ’se be acquainted better
Before we part.

XX
Awa ye selfish, warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an’ grace,
Ev’n love an’ friendship should give place
To Catch-the-Plack!
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.
But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"

Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen’s worn to the grissle,
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am most fervent,
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

SECOND EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK
APRIL 21, 1785

Entered in the First Common Place Book under the first Epistle with this explanation: “On receiving an answer to the above I wrote the following.”

WHILE new-ca’d kye rowte at the stake
An’ pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
This hour on e’enin’s edge I take,
To own I’m debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro’ amang the naigs
Their ten-hours’ bite,
My awkart Muse sair pleads and begs,
I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl’d hizzie,
She’s saft at best an’ something lazy:
Quo’ she: “Ye ken we’ve been sae busy
This month an’ mair,
That trowth, my head is grown right dizzie,
An’ something sair.”

Her dowff excuses pat me mad:
“Conscience,” says I, “ye thowless jad!

I’ll write, an’ that a hearty blaud,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

“Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o’ hearts,
Tho’ mankind were a pack o’ cartes,
Roose you sae weil for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly;
Yet ye’ll neglect to shaw your parts
An’ thank him kindly?

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
An’ down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I: “Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I’ll close it:
An’ if ye winna mak it clink,
By Jove, I’ll prose it!”

Sae I’ve begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that’s rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff-loof.

My worthy friend, ne’er grudge an’ carp,
Tho’ Fortune use you hard an’ sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland harp
Wi’ gleesome touch!
Ne’er mind how Fortune waft an’ warp;
She’s but a bitch.

She’s gien me monie a jirt an’ fleg,
Sin’ I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the Lord, tho’ I should beg
Wi’ lyart pow,
I’ll laugh an’ sing, an’ shake my leg,
As lang’s I dow!

Now comes the sax-an-twentieoth simmer
I’ve seen the bud upo’ the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.
TO WILLIAM SIMPSON OF OCHILTREE

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON OF OCHILTREE

MAY, 1785

The "winsome Willie" of this Epistle was William Simpson, son of John Simpson, farmer in Ten-Pound Land, in the parish of Ochiltree. He was born 23d August, 1758; was educated at the University of Glasgow; became parish schoolmaster of Ochiltree in 1780, and in 1788 of Cumnock; and died 4th July, 1815. It has been inferred that the piece which drew the flattering letter from him was The Twa Herds. But the inference is not supported by the evidence adduced — the statement of Burns himself, that he gave a copy of that satire to "a particular friend;" for Burns affirmed to this same friend that he did not know who was the author, and had got a copy by accident.

I
I GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' grateful heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say 't, I wad be silly
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
Your flatterin strain.

II
But I 'se believe ye kindly meant it:
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelin's skelent;
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

III
My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
The braes o' fame;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

XI
Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie an' skelent;
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
An' muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A bailie's name?

XII
Or is't the naughty feudal thane,
Wi' ruffil'd sark an' glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks;
While caps an' bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

XIII
" O Thou wha gies us each guid gift !
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!"

XIV
Were this the charter of our state,
" On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to heaven, that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

XV
For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began:
" The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'T is he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he."

XVI
O mandate glorious and divine!
The followers o' the ragged Nine —
Poor, thoughtless devils! — yet may shine
In glorious light;
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night!

XVII
Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless neivefu' of a soul
May in some future carcass howl,
The forest's fright;
Or Fergusson, the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

IV

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed—
As whyles they 're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She 's gotten bardies o' her ain;
Chiel wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae Poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style;
She lay like some unkend of isle
Beside New Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings;
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon
Naebody sings.

Th' Ilissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line:
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest!
We 'll gar our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We 'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Whare glorious Wallace
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae Suthron billies.

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood?
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
Or glorious dy'd!

O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy;
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light;
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trottin burn's meander,
An' no think lang:
O, sweet to stray, an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive;
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.
TO WILLIAM SIMPSON OF OCHILTREE

XVII
Fareweel, my rhyme-composing brither!
We've been owre lang unkend to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal:
May Envy wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

XVIII
While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid, fat braxies;
While Terra Firma, on her axis,
Diurnal turns;
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In Robert Burns.

POSTSCRIPT

XIX
My memory 's no worth a preen:
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this New-Light,
'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

XX
In days when mankind were but callans;
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie;
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid Lallans,
Like you or me.

XXI
In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon
Gaed past their viewin;
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new ane.

XXII
This past for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiefs gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

XXIII
Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the Beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 't was the auld moon turn'd a neuk
An' out o' sight.
An' backlins-comin to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

XXIV
This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The herds and hissels were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

XXV
Frae less to mair, it gaed to sticks;
Frae words an' aiths, to clours an' nicks;
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

XXVI
This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' Auld-Light caddies bure sic hands,
That faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi nimble shanks
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

XXVII
But New-Light herds gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe;
Till now, amaist on ev'ry knowe
Ye'll find ane placed;
An' some, their New-Light fair avow,
Just quite barefae'd.

XXVIII
Nae doubt the Auld-Light flocks are bleatin;
Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin;
Mysel, I've even seen them greetin
Wi' girnin spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

XXIX
But shortly they will cowe the louns!
Some Auld-Light herds in neebor touns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
An’ stay ae month amang the moons
An’ see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An’ when the auld moon’s gaun to lea’e them,
The hindmost shaird, they’ll fetch it wi’ them,
Just i’ their pouch;
An’ when the New-Light billies see them,
I think they’ll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a’ this clatter
Is naething but a “moonshine matter;”
But tho’ dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope we, Bardies, ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

I
O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o’ cocks for fun an’ drinkin’!
There’s monie godly folks are thinkin’
Your dreams and tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin’
Straught to Auld Nick’s.

II
Ye hae sae monie cracks an’ cants,
And in your wicked drucken rants,
Ye mak a devil o’ the saunts,
An’ fill them fou’;
And then their failings, flaws, an’ wants
Are a’ seen thro’.

III
Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O, dinna tear it!
Spare’t for their sakes, wha aften wear it —
The lads in black;
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives’t aff their back.

IV
Think, wicked sinner, wha ye’re skaithing:
It’s just the Blue-gown badge an’ claiting
O’ saunts; tak that, ye lea’e them naething
To ken them by
Frae onie unregenerate heathen,
Like you or I.

V
I’ve sent you here some rhyming ware
A’ that I bargain’d for, an’ mair;
Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect,
Yon sang ye’ll sen’t, wi’ cannie care,
And no neglect.

VI
Tho’ faith, sma’ heart hae I to sing:
My Muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
I’ve play’d mysel a bonie spring,
An’ dane’d my fill!
I’d better gaen an’ sair’t the King
At Bunker’s Hill.

VII
’T was ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a rovin wi’ the gun,
An’ brought a paitrick to the grun’ —
A bonie hen;
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

VIII
The poor, wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne’er thinkin’ they wad fash me for ’t;
But, Deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the Poacher-Court
The hale affair.

IX
Some auld, us’d hands had taen a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn’d to lie;
So gat the whistle o’ my great,
An’ pay’t the fee.

X
But, by my gun, o’ guns the wale,
An’ by my pouther an’ my hail,
An’ by my hen, an’ by her tail,
I vow an’ swear!
The game shall pay, owre moor an’ dale,
For this, niest year!

XI
As soon’s the clockin-time is by,
An’ the wee pouts begun to cry,
Lord, I se hae sportin by an’ by
For my gowd guinea;
Tho’ I should herd the buckskin kye
For ‘t, in Virginia!

XII
Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
’T was neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three chops about the wame,
Scarce thro’ the feathers;
An’ baith a yellow George to claim
An’ thole their biethers!

XIII
It pits me ay as mad’s a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time’s expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

SONG
TUNE: Corn Rigs

In an interleaved copy of Johnson’s Museum,
Burns remarks: “All the old words that ever
I could meet to this were the following, which
seem to have been an old chorus: —

"O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie,
And when’er you meet a bonnie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.""
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

III
I lock'd her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely:
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!

But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She ay shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs o' barley.

IV
I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear;
I hae been happy thinking:
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly —
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonie:
I 'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

SONG: COMPOSED IN AUGUST

Burns states in his "autobiographical letter" that this song was the "ebullition" of his passion for a "charming fillette" (sic), Peggy Thomson, who "overset his trigonometry" at Kirkoswald when he was in his seventeenth year. His sister, Mrs. Begg, further affirms that the passion was afterwards revived, and it has been supposed that Thomson is the Peggy of his letter to Thomas Orr (11th November, 1784): "I am very glad Peggy is off my hand." But about this time he had also an "affair" with "Montgomerie's Peggy," "which," as he wrote in the First Common Place Book, "it cost some heart-aches to get rid of." Peggy Thomson became the wife of Mr. Neilson of Kirkoswald. Burns — when he was making ready for the West Indies in 1786 — presented her with a copy of his book, on which he inscribed the lines beginning:

"Once fondly loved and still remembered dear."

I
Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;

The gorcock springs on whirring wings
Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
The moon shines bright, as I rove by night
To muse upon my charmer.

II
The paitrick lo'es the fruitfu' fells,
The plower lo'es the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains;
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path o' man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linniet.

III
Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannic man's dominion!
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring ery,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

IV
But, Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue, the fields in view
All fading-green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way
And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ilka happy creature.

V
We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
While the silent moon shines clearly;
I'll clasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal showers to budding flow'rs,
Not Autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

SONG: FROM THEE, ELIZA

TUNE: Gilderoy

Burns, on his return to Mauchline from his Border tour, wrote to James Smith, 11th June, 1787: "Your mother, sister and brother, my
quondam Eliza, etc., all, all well.” This shows that Eliza lived in Mauchline. She was Elizabeth Miller — afterward Mrs. Templeton — celebrated in The Belles of Mauchline (post, p. 171) as the “Miss Betty” who’s “braw.” See also A Mauchline Wedding (post, p. 114).

I
From thee, Eliza, I must go
And from my native shore:
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean’s roar;
But boundless oceans, roaring wide
Between my Love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee.

II
Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no more!
But the latest throb that leaves my heart,
While Death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!

THE FAREWELL
TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES’S LODGE, TARBOLTON

Tune: Good-night, and joy be wi’ you a’.

“At this time the author intended going to Jamaica” (ms. R. B. in a copy of the ‘86 Edition in the British Museum). Burns was admitted an apprentice of the St. David’s Lodge, Tarbolton (formed by the union of the St. James’s with the St. David’s), 4th July, 1781, and, when a separation of the Lodges occurred in June, 1782, he adhered to the St. James’s, of which he was, on 22d July, 1784, elected depute master. The verses, it is supposed, were recited at a meeting of the Lodge held on the 23d June.

I
Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu;
Dear Brothers of the Mystic Tie!
Ye favour’d, ye enlighten’d few,
Companions of my social joy!
Tho’ I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune’s slidd’ry ba’;

With melting heart and brimful eye,
I’ll mind you still, tho’ far awa.

II
Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honour’d with supreme command,
Presided o’er the Sons of Light;
And by that Hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but Craftsmen ever saw!
Strong Mem’ry on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes, when far awa.

III
May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
Unite you in the Grand Design,
Beneath th’ Omniscient Eye above —
The glorious Architect Divine —
That you may keep th’ Unerring Line,
Still rising by the Plummet’s Law,
Till Order bright completely shine,
Shall be my pray’r, when far awa.

IV
And You, farewell! whose merits claim
Justly that Highest Badge to wear:
Heav’n bless your honour’d, noble Name,
To Masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a’;
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that’s far awa.

EPITAPH ON A HENPECKED SQUIRE

Burns states that the subject of this epitaph was “Mr. Campbell of Netherplace,” a mansion a little to the west of Mauchline, on the road to Mossgiel. It is probable that Campbell — or perhaps his wife — had given Burns some particular offence.

As father Adam first was fool’d,
A case that’s still too common,
Here lies a man a woman rul’d:
The Devil ruled the woman.

EPIGRAM ON SAID OCCASION

O Death, had’st thou but spar’d his life,
Whom we this day lament!
We freely wad exchanged the wife, 
An’ a’ been weel content.

Ev’n as he is, cauld in his graff, 
The swap we yet will do’t; 
Tak thou the carlin’s carcase aff, 
Thou’se get the saul o’ boot.

ANOTHER

ONE Queen Artemisa, as old stories tell, 
When depriv’d of her husband she lovèd so well, 
In respect for the love and affection he ’d show’d her, 
She reduc’d him to dust and she drank up the powder. 
But Queen Netherplace, of a different complexion, 
When call’d on to order the fun’ral direction, 
Would have eat her dead lord, on a slender pretence, 
Not to show her respect, but — to save the expense!

EPITAPHS

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER

In the Author’s Edition the Elder’s name is indicated merely by asterisks; in a copy of the ’86 in the British Museum, “Hood” is inserted; and in the First Common Place Book, under the date April, 1784, the heading is, “Epitaph on Wm. Hood, senr. in Tarbolton.”

HERE Souter Hood in death does sleep: 
In hell, if he’s gane thither, 
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep; 
He’ll haud it weel thegither.

ON A NOISY POLEMIC

James Humphry, a mason in Mauchline, with no doubt of his ability to debate with Burns. He died in 1844.

BELOW thir stanes lie Jamie’s banes: 
O Death, it ’s my opinion,

Thou ne’er took such a bleth’rin bitch 
Into thy dark dominion.

ON WEE JOHNIE

It is common to assume that Burns meant this for his own printer, John Wilson of Kilmarnock; but there was a bookseller in Mauchline, also of diminutive stature, named John Wilson. It has further been denoted, by Chambers, that the trifle is a literal translation of a Latin epigram in Nuge Venales, 1663.

Hic jacet wee Johnie

WHO’ER thou art, O reader, know, 
That Death has murder’d Johnie, 
An’ here his body lies fu’ low — 
For saul he ne’er had onie.

FOR THE AUTHOR’S FATHER

William Burness died at Lochlie, 13th February, 1784; and this Epitaph on my Ever Honoured Father was inserted in the First Common Place Book under the date April of that year. It is engraved on the tombstone in Ailsa-way Churchyard.

O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains, 
Draw near with pious rev’rence, and attend! 
Here lie the loving husband’s dear remains, 
The tender father, and the gen’rous friend.

The pitying heart that felt for human woe, 
The dauntless heart that fear’d no human pride, 
The friend of man — to vice alone a foe; 
For “ev’n his failings lean’d to virtue’s side.”

FOR ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Know thou, O stranger to the fame 
Of this much lov’d, much honour’d name! 
(For none that knew him need be told), 
A warmer heart Death ne’er made cold.
FOR GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

The poor man weeps — here Gavin sleeps,  
Whom canting wretches blam’d;  
But with such as he, where’er he be,  
May I be sav’d or damn’d.

A BARD’S EPITAPH

I
Is there a whim-inspirèd fool,  
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,  
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool? —  
Let him draw near;  
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,  
And drap a tear.

II
Is there a Bard of rustic song,  
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,  
That weekly this area’ thong? —  
O, pass not by!

III
Is there a man, whose judgment clear  
Can others teach the course to steer,  
Yet runs, himself, life’s mad career  
Wild as the wave? —  
Here pause — and, thro’ the starting tear,  
Survey this grave.

IV
The poor inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stain’d his name.

V
Reader, attend! whether thy soul  
Soars Fancy’s flights beyond the pole,  
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole  
In low pursuit;  
Know, prudent, cautious, self-control  
Is wisdom’s root.

ADDITIONS IN THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF 1787

On 30th July [1783], the eve of publication [of the Kilmarnock Edition of Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect], Burns wrote thus to Richmond: “My hour is now come,” and “you and I shall never meet in Britain more.” By the end of August nearly the whole impression was subscribed, and Burns, “after deducting all expenses,” pocketed, according to his own statement, “nearly twenty pounds:” a much smaller sum than is shown in the account between him and Wilson. “The money,” he says, “came in seasonably, as I was about to indent myself for want of money to pay my freight. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I bespake a passage in the very first ship that was to sail —  

“‘For hungry ruin had me in the wind.’”

Divers circumstances combined to delay his departure, and although on the 14th August he booked to sail on the 1st September, September passed and he was still in Scotland. On the 9th October, after settling accounts with Wilson, he offered him a second edition: “on the hazard of being paid out of the first and readiest.” Wilson declined, and the disappointment more strongly confirmed his determination to leave the country. He would inevitably have done so, if he had not chanced to see a letter from Dr. Blacklock to the Rev. Dr. Lawrie, of Newmilns, expressing a strong opinion in favour of a second edition, and affirming that the book might “obtain a more universal circulation than anything of the kind” within the writer’s memory. At this time he had taken “the last farewell” of his friends; his “chest was on the road to Greenock;” he had devised a song, The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast, as the “last effort” of his “Muse in Caledonia.” But the letter upset all his schemes, and determined him to get his verse reissued by an Edinburgh publisher; so he “posted” to the capital, “without a single acquaintance in town,” or “a single letter of recommendation” in his pocket. Through the Earl of Glencairn he was introduced to Creech: with the result that a new Edition (the First Edinburgh) was ready for delivery on the 18th April.
Three thousand copies were printed, for over fifteen hundred subscribers: the book being entitled “Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect. By Robert Burns. Edinburgh. Printed for the Author and Sold by William Creech. 1787.” Many important pieces — some written while the volume was going through the press — were added; but not even in the Dedication to the Caledonian Hunt was there so much as a hint that this was a Second Edition. [The Dedication is as follows: —]

DEDICATION

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CALEDONIAN HUNT

My Lords and Gentlemen,—A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country’s service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious Names of his native Land; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their Ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my natal Soil, in my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired. She whispered me to come to this ancient metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen,

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORN-BOOK

A TRUE STORY

According to Gilbert Burns, Hornbook was one John Wilson, parish schoolmaster of Tarbolton. To eke out his salary he opened a grocer’s shop, where he “added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade,” informing the public in a shop bill that “advice would be given in common disorders at the shop gratis.” At a “masonic meeting at Tarbolton in the spring of 1785” Wilson happened to air “his medical skill” in the presence of Burns, who — says Gilbert — as he parted with him in the evening at “the place where he describes the meeting with Death” was visited by “one of those floating ideas of apparitions he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore.” The visitation suggested a train of thoughts which he began running into Death and Dr. Hornbook on his way home. If Lockhart may be believed, the satire ruined Wilson in Tarbolton: not only was he compelled to shut his shop, but also he had presently to close his school. But, as he continued to act as Session-Clerk down to at least 8th January, 1786 (letter in Burns Chronicle 1895, p. 138), Lockhart must have been in some sort misinformed. Nevertheless, Wilson did remove to Glasgow, where he became schoolmaster and Session-Clerk of the Gorbals parish. He died 13th January, 1839.

Hately Waddell, on the authority of a “respected resident” in Tarbolton, brought forward a prototype of Death: one “Hugh Reid of the Langlands,” a “lang ghast-like body,” with whom Burns — “t is the Tarbolton tradition — forgathered, as here described, near “Willie’s mill.”
I
Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn’d:
Ev’n ministers, they hae been kend,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid at times to vend,
And nail’t wi’ Scripture.

II
But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true’s the Deil’s in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e’er he nearer comes oursel
’S a muckle pity!

III
The clachan yill had made me canty,
I was na fou, but just had plenty:
I stacher’d whyles, but yet took tent ay
To free the ditches;
An’ hillocks, stanes, an’ bushes, kend ay
Frae ghaists an’ witches.

IV
The rising moon began to glowr
The distant Cumnock Hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi’ a’ my pow’r
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou’d na tell.

V
I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie’s mill,
Setting my staff wi’ a’ my skill
To keep me sicker;
Tho’ leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

VI
I there wi’ Something does forgather,
That pat me in an eerie swither;
An awfu’ scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-tae’d leister on the ither
Lay, large an’ lang.

VII
Its stature seem’d lang Scotch ells twa;
The queerest shape that e’er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then its shanks,

They were as thin, as sharp an’ sma’
As cheeks o’ branks.

VIII
“Guid-een,” quo’ I; “Friend! hae ye been mawin,
When ither folk are busy sawin?’
It seem’d to mak a kind o’ stan’,
But naething spak.
At length, says I: “Friend! whare ye gaun?
Will ye go back?”

IX
It spak right howe: “My name is Death,
But be na’ fley’d.” Quoth I: “Guid faith,
Ye’re may be come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie:
I red ye weel, take care o’ skaith,
See, there’s a gully!”

X
“Gudeman,” quo’ he, “put up your whittle,
I’m no design’d to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear’d:
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard.”

XI
“Weel, weel!” says I, “a bargain be ’t;
Come, gie’s your hand, an’ say we’re gree’t;
We’ll ease our shanks, an’ tak a seat:
Come, gie’s your news:
This while ye hae been monie a gate,
At monie a house.”

XII
“Ay, ay!” quo’ he, an’ shook his head,
“It’s e’en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin’ I began to nick the thread
An’ choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An’ sae maun Death.

XIII
“Sax thousand years are near-hand fled
Sin’ I was to the butching bred,
An’ monie a scheme in vain’s been laid
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook ’s ta’en up the trade,
And faith! he’ll waur me.
XIV
"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan?
Deil mak his king's-hood in a spleuchan!—
He's grown sae well acquainted wi' Buchan
And ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin,
An' pouk my hips.

XV
"See, here's a scythe, an' there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd monie a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook wi' his art
An' cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a fart,
Damn'd haet they'll kill!

XVI
"T was but yestreen, nae farther gane,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But Deil-ma-care!
It just played dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

XVII
"Hornbook was by wi' ready art,
An' had sae fortify'd the part,
That when I look'd to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-runt.

XVIII
"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near-hand cowpit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld Apothecary
Withstood the shock:
I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
O' hard whin-rock.

XIX
"Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Altho' their face he ne'er had kend it,
Just shit in a kail-blade an' send it,
As soon's he smells 't,
Baith their disease and what will mend it,
At once he tells 't.

XX
"And then a' doctor's saws and whittles
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, and bottles,
He's sure to hae:
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

XXI
"Calces o' fossils, earth, and trees;
True sal-marimum o' the seas;
The farina of beans an' peas,
He has 't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

XXII
"Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings
Distill'd per se;
Sal-alkali o' midge-tail-clippings,
And monie mae."

XXIII
"Waes me for Johnie Ged's Hole now,"
Quoth I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward whare gowans grew
Sae white and bonie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plew:
They'll ruin Johnie!"

XXIV
The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
And says: "Ye nedna yoke the pleugh,
Kirkyards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They'll a' be trench'd wi' monie a sheugh
In twa-three year.

XXV
"Whare I kill'd ane, a fair strae death
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbrook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last clath
By drap an' pill.

XXVI
"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

XXVII
"A countra laird had taen the batts,
Or some curnmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
An' pays him well:
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,
Was laird himsel.

XXVIII

“A bonie lass — ye kend her name —
Some ill-brewn drink had hov’d her wame;
She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
In Hornbook’s care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame
To hide it there.

XXIX

“That’s just a swatch o’ Hornbook’s way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an’ slay,
An’ weel paid for ’t;
Yet stops me o’ my lawfu’ prey
Wi’ his damn’d dirt:

XXX

“But, hark! I’ll tell you of a plot,
Tho’ dinna ye be speakin o’t:
I’ll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead’s a herrin;
Niest time we meet, I’ll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin !”

XXXI

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which raised us baith:
I took the way that pleas’d mysel,
And sae did Death.

THE SIMPLE BARD, ROUGH AT THE RUSTIC
PLOUGH,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev’ry bough
(The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green
thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast
shril,
Or deep-ton’d plovers grey, wild-whistling
o’er the hill):

Shall he—nurst in the peasant’s lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early poverty to hardship steel’d,
And train’d to arms in stern misfortune’s
field—

Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely
sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o’er the
strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
Still, if some patron’s gen’rous care he trace,
Skill’d in the secret to bestow with grace;
When Ballantine befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells:
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

’T was when the stacks get on their winter hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap;
Potatoe-bings are snuggeéd up frae skaith
O’ coming winter’s biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o’er their summer toils —
Unnumber’d buds’ an’ flowers’ delicious spoils,
Seal’d up with frugal care in massive waxen piles —
Are doom’d by man, that tyrant o’er the weak,
The death o’ devils smoor’d wi’ brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on ev’ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather’d field-mates, bound by Nature’s tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart but inly bleeds,
And execrates man’s savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs;
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
Except perhaps the robin’s whistling glee,
Proud o’ the height o’ some bit half-lang tree;
The hoary morns precede the sunny days;
Mild, calm, serene, widespans the noon-tide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton
in the rays.

’T was in that season, when a simple Bard,
Unknown and poor — simplicity’s reward! —
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspir’d, or haply prest wi’ care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson’s wheel’d the left about
(Whether impell’d by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander’d forth, he knew not where nor why):
The drowsy Dungeon-Clock had number’d two,
And Wallace Tower had sworn the fact was true;
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
Through the still night dash’d hoarse along the shore;
All else was hush’d as Nature’s closéd e’e;
The silent moon shone high o’er tower and tree;
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o’er the glittering stream.

When, lo! on either hand the list’ning Bard,
The clanging sigh of whistling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro’ the midnight air,
Swift as the gos drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on th’ Auld Brig his airy shape up-rears,
The ither flutters o’er the rising piers:
Our warlock rhymer instantly deseried
The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the sp’ritual folk;
Fays, spunkies, kelpies, a’, they can explain them,
And ev’n the vera deils they brawly ken them).
Auld Brig appear’d of ancient Pictish race,
The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face;
He seem’d as he wi’ Time had warstl’d lang,
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at Lon’on, frae ane Adams got;
In ’s hand five taper staves as smooth ’s a bead,
Wi’ virils an’ whirligigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious
search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in ev’ry arch.
It chane’d his new-come neebor took his
’ee,
And e’en a vex’d and angry heart had he !
Wi’ thievless sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid-
een:—

**AULD BRIG**

“T doubt na, frien’, ye’ll think ye’re
nae sheep shank,
Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to
bank !
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me —
Tho’ faith, that date, I doubt, ye’ll never
see —
There ’ll be, if that day come, I’ll wad a
boddle,
Some fewer whigmeleeries in your noodle.”

**NEW BRIG**

“Auld Vandal! ye but show your little
mense,
Just much about it wi’ your scanty sense:
Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a
street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when
they meet,
Your ruin’d, formless bulk o’ stane an’
lime,
Compare wi’ bonie brigs o’ modern time ?
There’s men of taste would tak the Ducat
stream,
Tho’ they should cast the vera sark and
swim,
E’er they would grate their feelings wi’
the view
O’ sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.”

**AULD BRIG**

“Conceited gowk ! puff’d up wi’ windy
pride !
This monie a year I ’ve stood the flood an’
tide;
And tho’ wi’ crazy cild I ’m sair forfairn,
I’ll be a brig when ye ’re a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a’day rains
Wi’ deepening deluges o’erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the
brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar’s mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland
course,
Or haunted Garpal draws his feeble source,
Arous’d by blustering winds an’ spotting
thowes,
In monie a torrent down the saw-broo
rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring
speat,
Sweeps dams, an’ mills, an’ brigs, a’ to the
gate;
And from Glenbuck down to the Ratton-
Key
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen’d, tumbling
sea —
Then down ye ’ll hurl (deil nor ye never
rise!),
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the
pouring skies !
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture’s noble art is lost !”

**NEW BRIG**

“Fine architecture, trowth, I needs must
say ’t o’ t,
The Lord be thankit that we ’ve tint the
gate o’ t!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghast-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat’ning jut, like preci-
pices;
O’er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring
coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic — stony groves;
Windows and doors in nameless sculptures
drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam statuary’s dream,
The craz’d creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp’d on the bended
knee,
And still the second dread Command be
free:
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air,
or sea !
Mansions that would disgrace the building
taste
Of any mason reptile, bird or beast,
Fit only for a doited monkish race,
Or frosty maidens forsworn the dear embrace,
Or cuifs of later times, wha held the
notion,
That sullen gloom was sterling true de-
vo
tion:
Fancies that our guid brugh denies pro-
tection,
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!"

**AULD BRIG**

"O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy proveses, an' monie a bailie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay;
Ye dainty deacons, an' ye douce conveeners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
Ye godly councils, wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly brethren o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gie your hurties to the smitters;
And (what would now be strange), ye godly Writers;
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation
To see each melancholy alteration;
And, agonising, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base degen'rate race!
Nae langer rev'rend men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain, braid story;
Nae langer thrifty citizens, an' douce,
Meet owre a pint or in the council-house:
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men three-parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on damn'd New Brigs and harbours!"

**NEW BRIG**

"Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through.
As for your priesthood, I shall say but little, Corbies and clergy are a shot right kittle: But, under favour o' your langer beard, Abuse o' magistrates might weel be spar'd; To liken them to your auld-warld squad, I must needs say, comparisons are odd. In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle To mouth 'a Citizen,' a term o' scandal; Nae mair the council waddles down the street, In all the pomp of ignorant conceit; Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins, Or gather'd lib'ral views in bonds and seisins; If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp, Had shor'd them with a glimmer of his lamp, And would to common-sense for once betray'd them, Plain, dull stupidity stept kindly in to aid them."

What farther clish-ma-claver might been said, What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed, No man can tell; but, all before their sight, A fairy train appear'd in order bright: Adown the glittering stream they fealty danc'd; Bright to the moon their various dresses glane'd; They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat, The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet; While arts of minstrelsy among them rung, And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.

O, had McLauchlan, thairm-inspiring sage, Been there to hear this heavenly band engage, When thro' his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland rage; Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs, The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares; How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd, And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd! No guess could tell what instrument appear'd, But all the soul of Music's self was heard; Harmonious concert rung in every part, While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears, A venerable chief advanc'd in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye;
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality, with cloudless brow.
Next follow'd Courage, with his martial stride,
From where the Feal wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form, came from the towers of Stair;
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-lov'd abode;
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken, iron instruments of death:
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

THE ORDINATION

For sense, they little owe to frugal Heav'n:
To please the mob they hide the little giv'n.

In a letter to Richmond (17th February, 1786) Burns mentions that he had composed The Ordination, and describes it as "a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmar-nock." Probably he intended to publish it in the '86 Edition, which he was then contemplating, and had called it The Ordination to that end; nevertheless, as appears from the letter, not only was it written before the ordination, which took place 6th April, but also it was not even written in view thereof — it only celebrated the presentation. Moreover, an early copy — ms. — in the possession of Lord Rosebery, has merely this heading, "A Scotch Poem, by Rab Rhymer."

James Mackinlay, born at Douglas, Lanarkshire, in 1756, was first presented to the second charge of the Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock, in the August of 1785. He declined the presentation

on account of certain conditions attached to it. Presentation to another was made out on 15th November, but the messenger to the Presbytery of Irvine was despoiled of the warrant by certain parishioners. Thereupon a new presentation was made out for Mackinlay, who was ordained on 6th April following; was translated to the first charge, on a petition of the parishioners, 31st January, 1809; was made D. D., Aberdeen, 1810; died 10th February, 1841. A volume of his Sermons was published posthumously, with a Life by his son, Rev. James Mackinlay. Like Russell, he had a rousing voice; but his oratory was more persuasive and less menacing than Russell's. In a note to Tam Samson's Elegy Burns describes him "as a great favourite of the million." In The Kirk's Alarm he is addressed as "Simper James." His more than partiality for the "fair Killie dames" drew on him a presbyterial rebuke some years afterwards.

In all probability the satire was composed immediately after the second presentation.

I

Kilmarnock wabsters, fidge an' claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations;
Swith! to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

II

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder:
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
An' Russell sair misca'd her:
This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
An' he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

III

Mak haste an' turn King David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clanger;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirt up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure:
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.
IV

Come, let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas drove the murdering blade
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah, the scaldin' jad,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' th' inn that day.

V

There, try his mettle on the Creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,—
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion—
And gie him o'er the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin:
Spare them nae day.

VI

Now auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
An' toss thy horns fu' cantiy;
Nae mair thou'lt rowte out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture 's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' runts o' grace, the pick an' wale,
No gien by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

VII

Nae mair by Babel's streams we'll weep
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin.
Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms be tryin;
O, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
And a' like lamb-tails flyin
Fu' fast this day!

VIII

Lang, Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin;
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischief was brewin;
An' like a godly, elect bairn,
He's waled us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

IX

Now, Robertson, harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever;
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton repair,
An' turn a carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

X

Mu'trie and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
Just like a winkin baudrons,
And ay he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons;
But now his Honor maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

XI

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She's swingin' thro' the city!
Hark, how the nine-tailed cat she plays!
I vow it's unco pretty;
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common-Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie
Her plaint this day.

XII

But there's Morality himsel,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell
Between his twa companions!
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin onions!
Now there, they're pack'd aff to hell,
An' banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys
That Heresy can torture;
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
And cowe her measure shorter
By th' head some day.
ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in, 
And here’s — for a conclusion — 
To ev’ry New Light mother’s son, 
From this time forth, confusion! 
If mair they deave us wi’ their din 
Or patronage intrusion, 
We’ll light a spunk, and ev’ry skin 
We’ll run them aff in fusion, 
Like oil some day.

THE CALF

To the Rev. James Steven, on his text, Malachi iv. 2: 
"And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

“A nearly extemporaneous production, on a wager with Mr. Hamilton that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given time:” — R. B., Letter to Robert Muir, 8th September, 1786. It was written on Sunday, 3d September, after listening to a sermon by the Rev. James Steven. As originally composed and read to Gavin Hamilton and Dr. Mackenzie, it consisted of four stanzas only; but on the Sunday evening at eight o’clock Burns sent a copy to Dr. Mackenzie with two more — the fourth and the sixth. It was printed in 1787 (presumably before its appearance in the Edinburgh Edition), with some other verses, in a tract called The Calf; The Unco Calf’s Answer; Virtue to a Mountain Bard; and the Devil’s Answer to his vera worthy Fren Robert Burns. An explanation was added that The Calf had been sent to The Glasgow Advertiser, but declined. The same year appeared Burns’ Calf turned a Bull; or Some Remarks on his mean and unprecedented attack on Mr. S — when preaching from Malachi iv. 2.

James Steven, a native of Kilmarnock, was licensed to preach 28th June, 1786; acted for some time as assistant to Robert Dow, minister of Ardrossan; was ordained minister of Crown Court Chapel, London, 1st November, 1787; was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society; was admitted minister of Kilwinning, 28th March, 1803; and died of apoplexy 15th February, 1824. William Burns, Robert’s younger brother, in a letter of 20th March, 1790, thus chronicles a visit to Steven’s church: “We were at Covent Garden Chapel this forenoon to hear the Calf preach; he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever.”

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My Son, these maxims make a rule, 
An’ lump them ay thegither: 
The Rigid Righteous is a fool, 
The Rigid Wise anither; 
The cleanest corn that e’er was dight 
May hae some pyles o’ caff in; 
So ne’er a fellow-creature slight 
For random fits o’ daffin. 

O ye, wha are sae guid yoursel, 
Sae pious and sae holy,
ADDITIONS IN THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF 1787

Ye’ve nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebours’ faults and folly;
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi’ store o’ water;
The heapet happier ’s ebbing still,
An’ still the clap plays clatter!

II
Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass douce Wisdom’s door
For glaikit Folly’s portals:
I for their thoughtless, careless sakes
Would here propose defences—
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III
Ye see your state wi’ theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment’s fair regard,
What makes the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave;
That purity ye pride in;
And (what’s aft mair than a’ the lave)
Your better art o’ hidin.

IV
Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop!
Wi’ wind and tide fair i’ your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o’ baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

V
See Social-life and Glee sit down
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrify’d, they’re grown
Debauchery and Drinking:
O, would they stay to calculate,
Th’ eternal consequences,
Or — your more dreaded hell to state—
Damnation of expenses!

VI
Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o’ cases:
A dear-lov’d lad, convenience snug,
A treach’rous inclination—

But, let me whisper i’ your lug,
Ye’re aiblins nae temptation.

VII
Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho’ they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII
Who made the heart, ’t is He alone
Decidedly can try us:
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let’s be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What’s done we partly may compute,
But know not what’s resisted.

TAM SAMSON’S ELEGY
An honest man ‘s the noblest work of God.

Pope.

“When this worthy old sportsman went out
last muir-fowl season, he supposed it was to be,
in Ossian’s phrase, ‘ the last of his fields,’ and
expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried
in the muirs. On this hint the author com-
pose his Elegy and Epitaph” (R. B.). Sam-
son — a nursery-gardener and seedsman in Kil-
marnock, and an ardent sportsman — died 12th
December, 1795, in his seventy-third year.
The Epitaph is inscribed on his tombstone in
the yard of the Laigh Kirk, adjoining those of
the two ministers, Mackinlay and Robertson,
mentioned in the first stanza. The piece is
modelled — even to the use of certain lines —
on Sempill’s Piper of Kilbarchan. See ante,
p. 12, Prefatory Note to Address to the
On 18th November,
out for Edinburgh, Burns wrote to his frie
The piece is
See ante,
p. 12, Prefatory Note to Address to the
On 18th November,
out for Edinburgh, Burns wrote to his frie

I
Has auld Kilmarnock seen the Deil?
Or great Mackinlay thrawn his heel?
Or Robertson again grown weel?
To preach an’ read?
"Na’, waur than a’!" cries ilka chiel,  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

II  
Kilmarnock lang may grunt an’ grane,  
An’ sigh, an’ sab, an’ greet her lane,  
An’ cleeed her bairns — man, wife an’ wean —  
In mourning weed;  
To Death she’s dearly pay’d the kain:  
Tam Samson’s dead!

III  
The Brethren o’ the mystic level  
May hing their head in woefu’ bevel,  
While by their nose the tears will revel,  
Like onie bead;  
Death’s gien the Lodge an unco devel:  
Tam Samson’s dead!

IV  
When winter muffles up his cloak,  
And binds the mire like a rock;  
When to the loughs the curlers flock,  
Wi’ gleesome speed,  
Wha will they station at the cock? —  
Tam Samson’s dead!

V  
He was the king of a’ the core,  
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,  
Or up the rink like Jehu roar  
In time o’ need;  
But now he lags on Death’s hog-score:  
Tam Samson’s dead!

VI  
Now safe the stately sawmont sail,  
And trout’s bedropp’d wi’ crimson hail,  
And eels weel-kend for souple tail,  
And geds for greed,  
Since, dark in Death’s fish-creel, we wail  
Tam Samson dead!

VII  
Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a’;  
Ye cootie mooorcoks, crousely craw;  
Ye maunkins, cock your fud fu’ braw  
Withouten dread;  
Your mortal fae is now awa:  
Tam Samson’s dead!

VIII  
That wofu’ morn be ever mourn’d,  
Saw him in shootin graith adorn’d,  
While pointers round impatient burn’t,  
Frae couples free’d;  
But och! he gaed and ne’er return’d:  
Tam Samson’s dead!

IX  
In vain auld-age his body batters,  
In vain the gout his ancles fetters,  
In vain the burns cam down like waters,  
An acre braid!  
Now ev’ry auld wife, greetin, clatters:  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

X  
Owre monie a weary hag he limpit,  
An’ ay the tither shot he thumpit,  
Till coward Death behint him jumpit,  
Wi’ deadly feide;  
Now he proclaims wi’ tout o’ trumpet:  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

XI  
When at his heart he felt the dagger,  
He reel’d his wonted bottle-swagger,  
But yet he drew the mortal trigger  
Wi’ weel-aim’d heed;  
“Lord, five!” he cry’d, an’ owre did stagger —  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

XII  
Ilk hoary hunter mourn’d a brither;  
Ilk sportsman-youth bemoan’d a father;  
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,  
Marks out his head;  
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether:  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

XIII  
There low he lies in lasting rest;  
Perhaps upon his mould’ring breast  
Some spitefu’ moorfowl bigs her nest,  
To hatch an’ breed:  
Alas! nae mair he’ll them molest:  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"

XIV  
When August winds the heather wave,  
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,  
Three volleys let his memory crave  
O’ pouther an’ lead,  
Till Echo answers frae her cave:  
"Tam Samson’s dead!"
**ADDITIONS IN THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF 1787**

**XV**

"Heav'n rest his soul where'er he be!"
Is th' wish o' monie mae than me:
He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man want we:
"Tam Samson's dead!"

**THE EPITAPH**

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies:
Ye canting zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in Heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

**PER CONTRA**

Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets an' neunks o' Killie;
Tell ev'ry social honest billie
To cease his grievin;
For, yet unskaith'd by Death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's leevin!

**A WINTER NIGHT**

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pityless storm!
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?

Shakespeare.

Probably the piece which Burns sent to John Ballantine on 20th of November, 1786:
"Enclosed you have my first attempt in that irregular kind of measure in which many of
our finest odes are wrote. How far I have succeeded I don't know, but I shall be happy
to have your opinion on Friday first (24th November), when I intend being in Ayr." The
irregular strophes — imitated from Gray, and strikingly inferior to the introductory stanzas
—are freely paraphrased from Shakespeare's Blow, Blow, thou Winter Wind, in As You
Like It.

**II**

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked;
Poor Labour sweet in sleep was locked;
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or, thro' the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl:

**III**

List'n'ing the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

**IV**

Ilk happing bird — wee, helpless thing! —
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

**V**

Ev'n you, on murthering errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost and sheep-cote 'spoil'd
My heart forgets,
While pittyless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats!

**VI**

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark-muffî'd, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow-solemn, stole:

**VII**

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumin'd Man on brother Man
bestows!

See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Ev’n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale:
How pamper’d Luxury, Flatt’ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear;
Looks o’er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt’ring show —
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin’d —
Plac’d for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below!
Where, where is Love’s fond, tender thro’,
With lordly Honor’s lofty brow,
The pow’rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love’s noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone?
Mark Maiden-Innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares:
This boasted Honor turns away,
Shunning soft Pity’s rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing pray’rs!
Perhaps this hour, in Misery’s squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother’s fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

VIII
“O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy’d keen nature’s clam’rous call,
Stretch’d on his straw, he lays himself to sleep;
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill, o’er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon’s grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel Fortune’s undeserved blow?

Affliction’s sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!”

IX
I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail’d the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress’d my mind:
Thro’ all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN PROSPECT OF DEATH

I
Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between;
Some gleams of sunshine mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death’s unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms:
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

II
Fain would I say: “Forgive my foul offence,”
Fain promise never more to disobey.
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue’s way;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man:
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy’s plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn’d, yet to temptation ran?

III
O Thou great Governor of all below! —
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,—
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,  
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:  
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me  
Those headlong furious passions to confine,  
For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be  
To rule their torrent in th' allow'd line:  
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

PRAYER: O THOU DREAD POWER

Lying at a reverend friend's house one night, the author left the following verses in the room where he slept.

"The first time ever Robert heard the spinet played was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minister of Loudoun... Dr. Lawrie (has) several daughters; one of them played; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet, and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept." — Gilbert Burns. Robert wrote to the son on 15th November, 1786: "A poet's warmest wishes for their happiness to the young ladies, particularly the fair musician, whom I think much better qualified than ever David was, or could be, to charm an evil spirit out of Saul. Indeed, it needs not the feelings of the poet to be interested in the welfare of one of the sweetest scenes of domestic peace and kindred love that ever I saw; as I think the peaceful unity of St. Margaret's Hill can only be excelled by the harmonious concord of the Apocalyptic Zion." When he paid this visit his chest "was on the road to Greenock;" and but for the fact that Lawrie showed him Dr. Blacklock's letter, strongly recommending a second edition of his poems, he would have sailed in a few days for Jamaica.

I

O Thou dread Power, who reign'st above,  
I know thou wilt me hear,  
When for this scene of peace and love  
I make my prayer sincere.

II

The hoary Sire — the mortal stroke,  
Long, long be pleas'd to spare:  
To bless his little filial flock,  
And show what good men are.

III

She, who her lovely offspring eyes  
With tender hopes and fears —  
O, bless her with a mother's joys,  
But spare a mother's tears!

IV

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,  
In manhood's dawning blush,  
Bless him, Thou God of love and truth,  
Up to a parent's wish.

V

The beauteous, seraph sister-band —  
With earnest tears I pray —  
Thou know'st the snares on every hand,  
Guide Thou their steps alway.

VI

When, soon or late, they reach that coast,  
O'er Life's rough ocean driven,  
May they rejoice, no wand'r'er lost,  
A family in Heaven!

PARAPHRASE OF THE FIRST PSALM

This is probably an early composition, and dates from about the same time as the next piece.

I

The man, in life wherever plac'd,  
Hath happiness in store,  
Who walks not in the wicked's way  
Nor learns their guilty lore;

II

Nor from the seat of scornful pride  
Casts forth his eyes abroad,  
But with humility and awe  
Still walks before his God!

III

That man shall flourish like the trees,  
Which by the streamlets grow:  
The fruitful top is spread on high,  
And firm the root below.
IV
But he, whose blossom buds in guilt,
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

V
For why? that God the good adore
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

PRAYER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH

Inscribed in the First Common Place Book and thus prefaced: "There was a certain period of life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my future. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a Hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy: in this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following." It was probably written about the close of Burns's residence in Irvine, in 1782, and, under the title, Prayer under the Pressure of Bitter Anguish, is inscribed—in an early hand—at the end of a copy of Fergusson's Poems, published that year, now in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery.

I
O Thou Great Being! what Thou art
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all Thy works below.

II
Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.

III
Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

IV
But, if I must afflicted be
To suit some wise design,
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear and not repine!

THE NINETIETH PSALM VERSIFIED

Probably dating from the same period as the two last.

I
O Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

II
Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself
Arose at Thy command:

III
That Power, which rais'd and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

IV
Those mighty periods of years,
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

V
Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st: "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

VI
Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

VII
They flourish like the morning flower
In beauty's pride array'd,
But long ere night, cut down, it lies
All witherd and decay'd.
TO MISS LOGAN

WITH BEATTIE’S POEMS FOR A NEW YEAR’S GIFT, JANUARY 1, 1787

The Miss Logan of these verses was the “sentimental sister Susie” of the Epistle to Major Logan (post, p. 133). It is probable that Burns, when he last met her, had promised her a New Year’s gift from Jamaica; but, his prospects changing, he sent her Beattie’s volumes instead.

I

Again the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv’n,
And you, tho’ scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav’n.

II

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts
In Edwin’s simple tale.

III

Our sex with guile, and faithless love,
Is charg’d — perhaps too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you.

ADDRESS TO A HAGGIS

Hogg states that this spirited extravaganza was “written in the house of Mr. Andrew Bruce, Castlehill, Edinburgh, where a haggis one day made part of the dinner;” but it is unlikely that Burns set to work on it there and then. Chambers’s story, that the germ was the last stanza (as first printed) extemporised as grace at a friend’s house, is seemingly a variation of the same legend. *The Address* — “never before published” — appeared in *The Caledonian Mercury* on 19th December, 1786, and in *The Scots Magazine* for January, 1787.

I

Fair fa’ your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o’ the pudding-race!
Aboon them a’ ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a grace
As lang’s my arm.

II

The groaning trenched there ye fill,
Your hurrildies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o’ need,
While thro’ your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

III

His knife see rustic Labour dight,
An’ cut ye up wi’ ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin, rich!

IV

Then, horn for horn, they stretch an’ strive:
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till a’ their weel-swall’d kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld Guidman, maist like to rive,
“Bethankit!” hums.

V

Is there that owre his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi’ perfect sconner,
Looks down wi’ sneering, scornfu’ view
On sic a dinner?

VI

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither’d rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro’ bluidy flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

VII

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He’1l make it whissle;
Aw’ legs, an’ arms, an’ heads will sned
Like taps o’ thrissle.

VIII

Ye Pow’rs, wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o’ fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware,
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratfu’ prayer,
Gie her a Haggis!
JOHN BARLEYCORN

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH

This poem and another were enclosed in a letter from Edinburgh, 27th December, 1786, to William Chalmers, in which Burns stated that he “had carded and spun them” since he “passed Glenbuck,” the last Ayrshire hamlet on his way to Edinburgh.

I

Edina! Scotia’s darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow’rs,
Where once, beneath a Monarch’s feet,
Sat Legislation’s sov’reign pow’rs:
From marking wildly-scatt’red flow’rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray’d,
And singing, lone, the ling’ring hours,
I shelter in thy honor’d shade.

II

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labours plies;
There Architecture’s noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise:
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

III

Thy sons, Edina, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarg’d, their lib’ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to Sorrow’s wail,
Or modest Merit’s silent claim:
And never may their sources fail!
And never Envy blot their name!

IV

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy, milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur’d thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet strikes th’ adoring eye,
Heav’n’s beauties on my fancy shine:
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine!

V

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold vet’ran, grey in arms,
And mark’d with many a seamy scar:
The pond’rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o’er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell’d th’ invader’s shock.

VI

With awe-struck thought and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia’s kings of other years,
Fam’d heroes! had their royal home:
Alas, how chang’d the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wand’ring roam!
Tho’ rigid Law cries out: “T was just.”

VII

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Thro’ hostile ranks and ruin’d gaps
Old Scotia’s bloody lion bore:
Ev’n I, who sing in rustic lore,
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And fac’d grim Danger’s loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

VIII

Edina! Scotia’s darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow’rs;
Where once, beneath a Monarch’s feet,
Sat Legislation’s sov’reign pow’rs:
From marking wildly-scatt’red flow’rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray’d,
And singing, lone, the ling’ring hours,
I shelter in thy honor’d shade.

SONGS

JOHN BARLEYCORN

A BALLAD

Entered in the First Common Place Book under date June, 1785, with the title, John Barleycorn — A Song to its own Tune. Burns prefaces it with the remark that he had once heard the old song that goes by this name; and that he remembered only the three first verses and “some scraps” which he had “interwoven here and there in the piece.” In the ’87 Edition he inserted a note: “This is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name.” In view of these statements, special interest attaches to a set printed in Laing’s Early Metrical Tales (1826) from a stall copy of 1781, with a few corrections on the
authority of two others of later date. Here are the three first stanzas:

"There came three merry men from the east,
And three merry men were they,
And they did swear a solemn oath
That Sir John Barleycorn they would slay.

"They took a plough, and plough'd him down,
And laid clods upon his head;
And then they swore a solemn oath,
That Sir John Barleycorn was dead.

"But the spring-time it came on amain,
And rain towards the earth did fall:
John Barleycorn sprung up again,
And so subdued them all."

Robert Jamieson prints a set in his Popular Ballads and Songs (1806) as he heard it in Moray when a boy. In its first three verses it closely resembles the Burns; but Burns's poems were in circulation before Jamieson's boyhood was over, and may have influenced his memory. He prints another set from a black-letter copy in the Pepys Library, Cambridge, as well as sets of the analogous Allan-a-Maut ballad, including that in The Bannatyne MS. There is, further, a curious chap (1757) which is not included in Jamieson. The ungrammatical "was" in Burns's first line was probably suggested by "‘There was three ladies in a ha‘", in Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs (1776).

I
There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

II
They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

III
But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

IV
The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong:
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

V
The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

VI
His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

VII
They 've taen a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

VIII
They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore.
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

IX
They fill'd up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heav'd in John Barleycorn —
There, let him sink or swim!

X
They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

XI
They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crushed him between two stones.

XII
And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

XIII
John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.
A FRAGMENT: WHEN GUILFORD GOOD

TUNE: Gillicrankie

This was probably the "political ballad" which Burns enclosed to Henry Erskine — on the advice of Glencairn — for his opinion as to whether he should or should not publish it. The work of some nameless Loyalist, the old song on which it is moulded is printed in David Laing's Various Pieces of Fugitive Scottish Poetry, First Series (1826), which dates it 1689, under the title, Killychrankie [the battle was fought in that year], "To be Sung to its Own Tune:" —

"Olaverse and his Highland men
Come down upon a Raw, then,
Who, being stout, gave many a Clout,
The Lads began to claw then;"

and so on for eight mortal octaves. The same volume sets forth an Answer to the same tune in as many more.

I

When Guilford good our pilot stood,
An’ did our hellim thraw, man;
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
An’ did nae less, in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

II

Then thro’ the lakes Montgomery takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man;
Down Lowrie’s Burn he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca’, man:

But yet, what reck, he at Quebec
Montgomery-like did fa’, man,
Wi’ sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en’ mies a’, man.

III

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage
Was kept at Boston-ha’, man;
Till Willie Howe took o’er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi’ sword an’ gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;
But at New-York wi’ knife an’ fork
Sir-Loin he hacked sma’, man.

IV

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an’ whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa’, man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saratoga shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang’s he dought,
An’ did the buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton’s glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa’, man.

V

Then Montague, an’ Guilford too,
Began to fear a fa’, man;
And Sackville doure, wha stood the stoure
The German chief to thraw, man:
For Paddy Burke, like onie Turk,
Nae mercy had at a’, man;
An’ Charlie Fox threw by the box,
An’ lows’d his tinkler jaw, man.

VI

Then Rockingham took up the game,
Till death did on him ca’, man;
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man:
Saint Stephen’s boys, wi’ jarring noise,
They did his measures thraw, man;
For North an’ Fox united stocks,
An’ bore him to the wa’, man.

VII

Then clubs an’ hearts were Charlie’s cartes
He swept the stakes awa’, man,
Till the diamond’s ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair faux pas, man;
The Saxon lads, wi’ loud placads,
On Chatham’s boy did ca’, man;
An’ Scotland drew her pipe an’ blew:
“Up, Willie, waur them a’, man!”
VIII

Behind the throne then Granville’s gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee Dundas arrou’d the class
Be-north the Roman wa’, man:
An’ Chatham’s wraith, in heav’ny graith,
(Inspirèd bardies saw, man),
Wi’ kindling eyes, cry’d: “Willie, rise! Would I hae fear’d them a’, man?”

IX

But, word an’ blow, North, Fox, and Co.
Gowff’d Willie like a ba’, man,
Till Suthron raise an’ coost their claie
Behind him in a raw, man:
An’ Caledon threw by the drone,
An’ did her whittle draw, man;
An’ swoor fu’ rude, thro’ dirt an’ bluid,
To make it guid in law, man.

MY NANIE, O

Perhaps suggested by a poor thing of Ramsay’s:

“While some for pleasure pawn their health
’Twixt Lais and the bagnio,
I’ll save myself, and without stealth
Kiss and caress my Nanny, O.”

In Hogg and Motherwell’s Edition another version—oral: communicated by Peter Buchan—is printed; it begins, “As I gaed down thro’ Embro’ town.” In the First Common Place Book, where it appears under date of April, 1784, it is headed Song (Tune, “As I came in by London, O”). It is thus prefaced: “As I have been all along a miserable dupe to Love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was, at the time, real.”

According to Gilbert Burns, the heroine was Agnes Fleming. She was daughter of John Fleming, farmer at Doura, in the parish of Tarbolton. On the other hand, Mrs. Begg asserts that it was written in honour of Peggy Thomson of Kirkoswald (see ante, p. 52, Prefatory Note to Song: Composed in August), while Hamilton Paul champions the charms of a Kilmarnock girl.

I

BEHIND yon hills where Lugar flows
’Mang moors an’ mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos’d,
And I’ll awa to Nanie, O.

II

The westlin wind blaws loud an’ shill,
The night’s baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I’ll get my plaid, an’ out I’ll steal,
An’ owre the hill to Nanie, O.

III

My Nanie’s charming, sweet, an’ young;
Nae artfu’ wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa’ the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O!

IV

Her face is fair, her heart is true;
As spotless as she’s bonie, O,
The op’ning gowan, wat wi’ dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

V

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 ay to Nanie, O.

VI

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 Nanie, O.

VII

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep an’ kye thrive bonie, O;
But I’m as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An’ has nae care but Nanie, O.

VIII

Come weel, come woe, I care na by;
I’ll tak what Heav’n will send me, O:
Nae ither care in life have I,
But live, an’ love my Nanie, O.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O

This little masterpiece of wit and gaiety and movement was suggested either by the frag-
ment, Green Grow the Rashes, O in Herd's Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, or by the blackguard old song itself. Herd gives only three stanzas, of which the first is:

"Green grows the rashes — O
Green grows the rashes — O
The feather-bed is no sae saft
As a bed among the rashes."

But the song (or what is left of it) is given in the unique and interesting garland called The Merry Muses of Caledonia (c. 1800), probably — almost certainly — collected by Burns for his private use, together with a second and still grosser set attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Burns himself.

Entered by Burns in the First Common Place Book, under date August, 1786, the piece is preceded by a dissertation on young men, who are divided into "two grand classes — the grave and the merry," and by the remark:

"It will enable any body to determine which of the classes I belong to." It was published in Johnson's Museum, i. 77. Thomson proposed to set it to Cauld Kail in Aberdeen; but Burns declared that it would "never suit" that air.

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.

I

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 't were nae for the lasses, O.

II

The war'ly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

III

But gie me a cannie hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O,
An' war'ly cares an' war'ly men
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O!

IV

For you sae douce, ye sneer at this;
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the war'l' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.

V

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.

CHORUS

Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.

COMPOSED IN SPRING

TUNE: Johnny's Grey Breeks

Burns explains that the chorus is "part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's;" and that "Menie" is the "common abbreviation of Marianne." In all likelihood the song was composed after the rupture with Jean Armour, and the chorus added in Edinburgh by Burns himself.

I

Again rejoicing Nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues:
All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

CHORUS

And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that's in her e'e?
For it's jet, jet-black, an' it's like a hawk,
An' it winna let a body be.

II

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.

III

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie seedsman stalks;
But life to me 's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

IV

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And ev’ry thing is blest but I.

The sheep-herd steeks his faulding slap,
And o’er the moorlands whistles shill;
Wi’ wild, unequal, wand’ring step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

And when the lark, ’tween light and dark,
Blythe waukens by the daisy’s side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.

Come winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging, bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When nature all is sad like me!

CHORUS
And maun I still on Menie doat,
And bear the scorn that’s in her e’e?
For it’s jet, jet-black, an’ it’s like a hawk,
An’ it winna let a body be.

THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST

Tune: Roslin Castle

In an interleaved copy of Johnson’s Museum Burns inscribed the following note: “I composed this song as I conveyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica. I meant it as my farewell dirge to my native land.” In his Autobiographic Letter to Dr. Moore, “I had composed,” he says, “a song, The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast, which was to be the last effort of my muse in Caledonia, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes.” Professor Walker, on R. B.’s authority, affirms that he composed it on the way home from Dr. Lawrie’s; but, as it was to Dr. Lawrie that Blacklock wrote, we must infer that Walker was so far mistaken, and that the verses were made on the way thither.

Burns gives Roslin Castle as the tune to which this passionate lyric should be sung. His use of a refrain, however, suggests that the true model was The Birks of Invermay.
tune of Prepare, my Dear Brethren. It is
quoted, according to Mr. Baring Gould (Eng-
lish Minstrelsie, 1895, I. xxiii.), in The Bull-
finch (1746), The Wreath (1753), and The Oc-
casional Songster (1782); and we have found
it, as Burns before us, in A Select Collection of
English Songs (London, 1763)—an odd vol-
ume of which, containing this very lyric, with
notes in his handwriting, is before us as we
write — and in Calliope (Edinburgh, 1788).
Here is a stanza which must certainly have
been present when he was struggling with the
halting lines and the second-rate buckishness
of No Churchman Am I:—

"She too might have poisoned the joy of my life
With nurses, and babies, and squalling, and strife;
But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,
And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing."

The anapest with four accents has carried a
bacchanalian connotation from the time of
Shadwell's Psyche (1672) at least, and the pre-
sent stave has been the vehicle of innumerable
drinking songs, including the English A Tank-
ard of Ale, and the Irish One Bottle More.
Burns himself reverts to it in The Whistle (see
post, p. 99).

I
No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare,
For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my
care.

II
The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that
are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and
care.

III
Here passes the squire on his brother — his
horse,
There centum per centum, the cit with his
purse,
But see you The Crown, how it waves in
the air?
There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

IV
The wife of my bosom, alas ! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon proved it fair,
That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all
care.

V
I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;
But the pursy old landlord just waddl'd
up stairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

VI
"Life's cares they are comforts" — a
maxim laid down
By the Bard, what d' ye call him? that
wore the black gown;
And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair:
For a big-belly'd bottle's a heav'n of a care.

A STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE
Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
And honours Masonic prepare for to throw:
May ev'ry true Brother of the Compass
and Square
Have a big-belly'd bottle, when harass'd
with care!
ADDITIONS IN THE EDINBURGH EDITION OF 1793

In April, 1792, Creech proposed another issue, and Burns replied with an offer of fifty new pages, and the retrenchment and correction of some old pieces. Reminding his publisher that these fifty pages were as much his own “as the thumb-skull I have just now drawn on my finger, which I unfortunately gashed in mending my pen,” he practically agreed to Creech’s former terms: craving as his sole recompence a few books which he very much wanted, “with as many copies of this new edition of my own works as friendship or gratitude shall prompt me to present.” Creech was not the man to boggle at a bargain of the kind, and the new edition appeared in the February of 1793, under the title: “Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect. By Robert Burns. In two volumes. The Second Edition Considerably Enlarged. Edinburgh: Printed for T. Cadell, London, and William Creech, Edinburgh. 1793.” The volumes, with nearly the same page and the same type, but with many changes in spelling, and some new readings of lines and stanzas, were reprinted early in 1794, with — excepting for the substitution of “a New Edition” for “the Second Edition” — an exactly similar title. No other Scots reprint appeared in Burns’s lifetime.

WRITTEN IN FRIARS CARSE HERMITAGE, ON NITHSIDE

This is the second version of a piece originally inscribed on a window-pane of Friars Carse Hermitage in June, 1788 (see post, p. 120). Friars Carse adjoined Ellisland, and the owner, Captain Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, had given Burns a key to the grounds and the little hermitage which he had built there. It would appear from an undated letter to William Dunbar (asking him to decide between the two sets), and from the fact that Burns distributed copies of both, that he was by no means convinced of the superiority of the second set.

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, — in darkness lost:
Hope not sunshine ev’ry hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love with sprightly dance
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair:
Let Prudence bless Enjoyment’s cup,
Then raptur’d sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life’s meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life’s proud summits would’st thou scale?

Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold;
While cheerful Peace with linnet song
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev’ning close,
Beck’ning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-nook of ease:
There ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou ’st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound:
Say, man’s true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal Nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav’n
To Virtue or to Vice is giv’n;
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise —
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign’d and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep:
Sleep, whence thou shall ne’er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break;
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the beadsman of Nithside.

ODE, SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. OSWALD OF AUCHENCRUIVE

In a letter to Dr. Moore, 23d March, 1789, enclosing this Ode Burns explains its origin: "In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Whigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald; and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of a tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles further on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me, when would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode." In a letter (unpublished) to Mrs. Dunlop, enclosing the copy of the Ode, "Before I reached the other stage," he writes, "I had composed the following, and sent it off at the first post office for the Courant," by which, if this be true, it was declined. On May 7, 1789, the piece appeared in Stuart's Star with the following preface, here for the first time reprinted: —

"Mr. Printer,
"I know not who is the author of the following poem, but I think it contains some equally well-told and just compliments to the memory of a matron who, a few months ago, much against her private inclination, left this good world and twice five good thousands per annum behind her.

"We are told by very respectable authority that "the righteous die and none regardeth;" but as this was by no means the case in point with the departed beldam, for whose memory I have the honour to interest myself, it is not easy guessing why prose and verse have both said so little on the death of the owner of ten thousand a year.

"I dislike partial respect of persons, and am hurt to see the public make such a fuss when a poor pennyless gipsey is consigned over to Jack Ketch, and yet scarce take any notice when a purse-proud Priestess of Mammon is by the memorable hand of death imprisoned in everlasting fetters of ill-gotten gold, and delivered up to the arch-brother among thefinishers of the law, emphatically called by your bard, the hangman of creation.

"Tim Nettle."

Mrs. Oswald was the widow of Richard Oswald, second son of Rev. George Oswald, of Dunnet, Caithness. He purchased Auchen-cruive in 1772. He died at an "advanced age," 6th November, 1784, and in the obituary notice in The Scots Magazine is described as "an eminent merchant in London, and lately employed at Paris as a commissioner for negotiating a peace with the United States." From Burns's epithet, "Plunderer of Armies," he would appear to have been also an army contractor. In his letter to Dr. Moore, Burns states that he knew that Mrs. Oswald was detested by her tenants and servants "with the most heartfelt cordiality." She died 6th December, 1788, at her house in Great George Street, Westminster, and when Burns was driven from his inn by her "funeral pageantry," the body was on its way to Ayrshire. Burns himself was proceeding in the same direction (as we learn from a letter to Mrs. Dunlop of 18th December) to the Ayr Fair, held about the 12th January.

DWELLER in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation, mark!
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse?

STROPHE

View the wither'd beldam's face:
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of Humanity's sweet, melting
race?

Note that eye, 't is rheum o'erflows —
Pity's flood there never rose.
See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took, but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest,
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting
rest!

ANTISTROPHE

Plunderer of Armies! lift thine eyes
(A while forbear, ye torturing fiends),
Seest thou whose step, unwilling, hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies!
'T is thy trusty, quondam Mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate:
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE
And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glittering pounds a-year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O bitter mockery of the pompous bier!
While down the wretched vital part is driven,
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heaven.

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD!

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright:
His soul was like the glorious sun
A matchless, Heavenly light.

Matthew Henderson was the son of David Henderson, of Tamnockside, and Elizabeth Brown; born 24th February, 1738; succeeded in early youth to the estates on his father's death; became lieutenant in the Earl of Home's regiment; left the army to hold a government appointment in Edinburgh; was a member of the Poker and other convivial clubs, and a friend of Boswell, who has preserved one or two samples of his wit; died 21st November, 1788; and was buried in Greyfriars' Churchyard.

On 23d July, 1790, Burns sent "a first fair copy" to Robert Cleghorn, Saughton, to whom he stated that Henderson was a man he "much regarded." On 2d August he sent a copy to John M'Murdoo of Drumlanrig: "You knew Henderson," he said; "I have not flattered his memory." And in enclosing a copy to Dr. Moore (27th February, 1791) he described the Elegy as "a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much."
The text contains a long poem about mourning and reflecting on the passage of time. It is not structured like a typical epitaph, but rather a collection of stanzas that touch on various natural and human elements, alluding to the author's life and legacy.

The poem begins with a lamentation over the loss of a friend, followed by stanzas that invoke various natural elements—rivers, forests, hills, fields, trees, and even the stars. Each stanza is a reflection on the natural world and its capacity to mourn and bear witness to the passage of time.

The final stanzas are addressed to the reader, encouraging them to reflect on the life and legacy of the author, Matthew. The poem ends with a caution to the reader, reminding them of the fragility of life and the importance of cherishing the moments we have with our loved ones.

The text is rich in metaphor and imagery, and it is a powerful reflection on the human condition and the natural world. It is a poignant reminder of the transience of life and the importance of cherishing the moments we have with our loved ones.
VI
If thou art staunch, without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

VII
If thou hast wit and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

VIII
If onie whiggish, whingin sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
May dool and sorrow be his lot!
For Matthew was a rare man.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS
ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING

In enclosing this to Dr. John Moore, 27th February, 1791, Burns states that it was begun while he was busy with Percy’s Reliques of English Poetry: hence its antique flavouring. He sent copies to Mrs. Dunlop, to Mrs. Graham of Fintry, to Clarinda, and to Lady Winifred Constable, and was at pains to tell each of the four the reason why she was thus specially favoured. In an unpublished letter to Mrs. Dunlop (6th June, 1790), he wrote: “You know and with me pity the miserable and unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. To you and your young ladies I particularly dedicate the following Scots stanzas.” It was probably about the same time that in an undated letter (usually assigned to February, 1791, to accord with the date of that to Moore) — he wrote to Mrs. Graham of Fintry: “Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have in the enclosed ballad succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my Muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you.” To Clarinda (in an undated letter) he thus expressed himself: “Such, my dearest Nancy, were the words of the amiable but unfortunate Mary. Misfortune seems to take a peculiar pleasure in darting her arrows against ‘honest men and bonie lasses.’ Of this you are too, too just a proof; but may your future fate be a bright exception to the remark!” To Lady Constable the ode was sent at the same time that he acknowledged the present of a snuff-box, the lid of it inlaid with a miniature of Queen Mary.

I
Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o’ daisies white
Out o’er the grassy lea;
Now Phoebus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies:
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

II
Now laverocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow’r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis wild wi’ monie a note
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi’ care nor thrall opprest.

III
Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn’s budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a’ Scotland
Maun lie in prison strang.

IV
I was the Queen o’ bonie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu’ lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e’en:
And I’m the sov’reign of Scotland,
And monie a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands
And never-ending care.

V
But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance yet shall whet a sword
That thro’ thy soul shall gae!
The weeping blood in woman’s breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th’ balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman’s pitying e’e.
VI
My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne’er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother’s faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee;
And where thou meet’st thy mother’s friend,
Remember him for me!

VII
O! soon, to me, may summer suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair to me the autumn winds
Wave o’er the yellow corn!
And, in the narrow house of death,
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow’rs that deck the spring
Bloom on my peaceful grave.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM OF FINTRY, ESQ.

Burns first met Graham of Fintry at the Duke of Atholl’s during his northern tour in August, 1787; and in an undated letter in which he refers to this, solicited his influence in obtaining an appointment to a division in the Excise. In a letter dated 10th September, 1788, he made a special request in regard to a division in the Ellisland district, enclosing at the same time the poetical epistle, Requesting a Favour (see post, p. 140). Obtaining the division, he acknowledged Fintry’s exertions in the epistle on Receiving a Favour (see post, p. 144); and in an Election Ballad, made at the close of the contest for the Dumfries Burghs in 1790 (see post, p. 162), he addressed him thus:

“Fintry, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend of my Muse, friend of my life:” —

a eulogy amply justified by Fintry’s consistent and considerate kindness to him, through good and bad report, to the close of his life. The present Epistle was sent 6th October, 1791, with a letter in which he describes it as “a sheetful of groans, wrung from me in my elbow-chair, with one unlucky leg on my stool before me.” There is some poetical licence — let us call it so — in this description; not as regards his own condition, for he was then confined to his arm-chair by a bruised leg, but as regards the Epistle itself, for, with the exception of the introductory and closing lines, it consists of two revised and retrenched fragments, written near three years before, and originally intended, according to his own statement — which need not be taken quite seriously — to form part of a Poet’s Progress.

Graham of Fintry was descended from Sir Robert Graham of Strathcarron and Fintry, Stirlingshire, son of Sir William Graham of Kincardine by Mary Stewart, daughter of Robert III. The Grahams acquired the lands of Mains and of Lumlethan, Forfarshire, in the sixteenth century, and the estate was then named “Fintry.” The portion with the mansion-house was sold by Graham of Fintry — at some unknown date, but probably before 1789 — to Sir James Stirling; and another portion — Earl’s Strathdichty — in 1789 to Mr. D. Erskine, Clerk to the Signet (by the trustees of the creditors of Graham of Fintry). The part sold to Sir James Stirling was bought by Erskine’s trustees in 1801. Graham continued to be designated “of Fintry;” and the name of the estate was (according to the conditions of sale) changed to Linlathen. He died 10th January, 1815.

LATE crippl’d of an arm, and now a leg;
About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas’d, dejected, and deprest
(Nature is adverse to a cripple’s rest);
Will generous Graham list to his Poet’s wail
(It soothes poor Misery, hearkening to her tale),
And hear him curse the light he first survey’d,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature! partial Nature! I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain:
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground;
Thou giv’st the ass his hide, the snail his shell;
Th’ envenom’d wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Thy minions kings defend, control, devour,
In all th’ omnipotence of rule and power.
Foxes and statesmen subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug;
Ev’n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes — her dreaded spear and darts.

But O thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child — the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world’s skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still:
No heels to bear him from the op’ning dun,
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea’s horn;
No nerves olfact’ry, Mammon’s trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dulness’ comfortable fur;
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th’ unbroken blast from ev’ry side:
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics — appall’d, I venture on the name;
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame;
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes:
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads’ daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne’er one sprig must wear;
Foil’d, bleeding, tortur’d in th’ unequal strife,
The hapless Poet flounders on thro’ life:
Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fir’d,
And fled each Muse that glorious once inspir’d,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead even resentment for his injur’d page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless crit-ic’s rage!
So, by some hedge, the gen’rous steed deceas’d,
For half-starv’d snarling curs a dainty feast,
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch’s son.

O Dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter’d haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne’er madden in the fierce extremes
Of Fortune’s polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober, selfish ease they sip it up:
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder “some folks” do not starve.

The grave, sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad, worthless dog.
When Disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
And thro’ disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude “that fools are fortune’s care.”
So, heavy, passive to the tempest’s shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle Muse’s mad-cap train;
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain:
In equanimity they never dwell;
By turns in soaring heav’n or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet’s, husband’s, father’s fear!
Already one strong hold of hope is lost:
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust
(Fled, like the sun eclips’d as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears).
O, hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray’r!
Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare
Thro’ a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!
LAMENT FOR JAMES EARL OF GLENCAIRN

James Cunningham, fourteenth Earl of Glencairn, second son of William, thirteenth earl, and the eldest daughter of Hugh McGuire, a violinist in Ayr, whose family had been adopted by Governor Macrae of the H. E. I. C., was born in 1749; succeeded to the earldom in 1775; made the acquaintance of Burns—through James Dalrymple of Orangefield—in Edinburgh in 1786, and introduced him to Creech the publisher; succeeded in obtaining for the Edinburgh Edition the patronage of the Caledonian Hunt, and also exerted himself to the utmost to secure subscriptions among the nobility; used his influence in getting Burns an appointment in the Excise, and is always referred to by the poet in terms of the warmest regard. Owing to ill-health, he went to Lisbon in 1790 to pass the winter; but, finding himself rapidly failing, resolved to return, and died, after landing at Falmouth, 30th January, 1791. Learning of his death, Burns wrote thus to his factor, Alexander Dalziel:

"Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to say a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor?"

In a letter to Glencairn's sister, Lady Elizabeth Cunningham—conjecturally (but wrongly) dated by Scott Douglas "March, 1791" (it was written not earlier than September, and most probably in October)—concerning a copy of the Lament, "If," he wrote, "among my children I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour and a family debt that my dearest existence I owe to the noble heart of Glencairn."

He named his fourth son (born 12th August, 1794) "James Glencairn Burns." On the 23d October he sent a copy of the poem to Lady Don (ms. now in the University of Edinburgh) with this inscription: "To Lady Harriet Don this poem, not the fictitious creation of poetic fancy, but the breathings of real woe from a bleeding heart, is respectfully and gratefully presented by the author." In the note enclosing it he wrote: "As all the world knows my obligations to the late noble Earl of Glencarin, I wish to make my obligations equally conspicuous by publishing the poem. But in what way shall I publish it? It is too small a piece to publish alone. The way which suggests itself to me is to send it to the publisher of one of the most reputed periodical works—The Bee, for instance. Lady Betty has referred me to you." It did not appear in The Bee.

I

The wind blew hollow frae the hills;
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods,
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream.
Beneath a craigy steep a Bard,
Laden with years and meikle winding
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom Death had all untimely taen.

II

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleach'd white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes alang:

III

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and, glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

IV

"I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane;
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And others plant them in my room.

V

"I've seen sae monie changeful years,
On earth I am a stranger grown:
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alone my lade o' care;
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

VI

"And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow’r amang our barons bold,
His country’s pride, his country’s stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a’ the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

VII

“Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from Fortune’s mirkest gloom.

VIII

“In Poverty’s low barren vale,
Thick mists obscure involv’d me round;
Though oft I turn’d the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found;
Thou found’st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air:
The friendless Bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

IX

“O, why has Worth so short a date,
While villains ripen grey with time!
Must thou, the noble, gen’rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood’s hardy prime?
Why did I live to see that day,
A day to me so full of woe?
O, had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

X

“The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I’ll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a’ that thou hast done for me!”

LINES TO SIR JOHN WHITE-FOORD, BART.
SENT WITH THE FOREGOING POEM

Sir John Whitefoord was, like Glencairn, the warm friend of Burns, who wrote The Braes o’ Ballochmyle (see post, p. 225) in 1788, on the occasion of the family’s being compelled to sell the estate of that name.

THOU, who thy honour as thy God rever’st,
Who, save thy mind’s reproach, nought earthly fear’st,
To thee this votive off’ring I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The Friend thou valued’st, I the Patron lov’d;
His worth, his honour, all the world approv’d:
We’ll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the shadowy path to that dark world unknown.

TAM O’ SHANTER
A TALE

Of Brownys and of Bogillis full is this Buke.
GAWIN DOUGLAS.

Alloway Kirk was originally the church of the quoad civilia parish of Alloway; but this parish having been annexed to that of Ayr in 1690, the church fell more or less to ruin, and when Burns wrote had been roofless for half a century. It stands some two hundred yards to the north of the picturesque Auld Brig of Doon, which dates from about the beginning of the Fifteenth Century, and in Burns’s time was the sole means of communication over the steep-banked Doon between Carrick and Kyle. The old road to Ayr ran west of the Kirk: the more direct road dating from the erection of the New Brig — a little west of the old one — in 1815.

Burns’s birthplace is about three fourths of a mile to the north; so that the ground and its legends were familiar to him from the first. Writing to Francis Grose (first published in Sir Egerton Brydges’ Censura Literaria, 1796), — “Among the many witch-stories I have heard,” he says, “relating to Alloway Kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three. Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind and bitter blasts of hail — in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in — a farmer, or farmer’s servant, was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough-irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the Kirk of Alloway; and being rather on the anxious look-out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil, and the devil’s
friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering, through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach plainly shewed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan, or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was, that he ventured to go up to, nay into, the very Kirk. As luck would have it, his temerity came off unpunished. The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or cauldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, etc., for the business of the night. It was, in for a penny, in for a pound with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the cauldron from the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story. Another story, which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows: On a market-day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway Kirkyard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards further on than the said gate, had been detained by his business till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour between night and morning. Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the Kirk, yet, as it is a well-known fact, that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the Kirkyard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly discern the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out with a loud laugh, 'Weel luppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!' and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of the horse, which was a good one, when he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing vengeful hags were so close at his heels that one of them actually sprang to seize him: but it was too late; nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

"The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former with regard to the scene; but as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it. On a summer's evening, about the time nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the cheerful day, a shepherd boy, belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway Kirk, had just folded his charge and was returning home. As he passed the Kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of men and women who were busy pulling stems of the plant ragwort. He observed that as each person pulled a ragwort, he or she got astride of it and called out, 'Up horsie!' on which the ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his ragwort, and cried with the rest, 'Up horsie!' and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt was a merchant's wine-cellar in Bordeaux, where, without saying by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford until the morning, foe to the imps and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals. The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said such a one's herd in Alloway; and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale."

[As a vehicle for narrative, the octosyllabic couplet, employed by Burns in this piece, as also in The Twa Dogs, became classical in
Scotland through Barbour's Bruce (c. 1875).]
The motto is the eighteenth verse of Gavin Douglas's sixth "Proloug" (Iliados), and should read thus: "Of browneis and of bogillis full this buke."

Probably Burns drew the suggestion of his hero, Tam o' Shanter, from the character and adventures of Douglas Graham — born 6th January, 1739, died 23d June, 1811 — son of Robert Graham, farmer at Douglastown, tenant of the farm of Shanter on the Carrick Shore, and owner of a boat which he had named Tam o' Shanter. Graham was noted for his convivial habits, which his wife's ratings tended rather to confirm than to eradicate. Tradition relates that once, when his long-tailed grey mare had waited even longer than usual for her master at the tavern door, certain humourists plucked her tail to such an extent as to leave it little better than a stump, and that Graham, on his attention being called to its state next morning, swore that it had been depilated by the witches at Alloway Kirk (MS. Notes by D. Auld of Ayr in Edinburgh University Library). The prototype — if prototype there were — of Souter Johnie is more doubtful; but a shoemaker named John Davidson — born 1728, died 30th June, 1806 — did live for some time at Glenfoot of Ardlochan, near the farm of Shanter, whence he removed to Kirkoswald.

In Alloway Kirk and its surroundings, apart from its uncanny associations, Burns cherished a special interest. "When my father," says Gilbert, "feued his little property near Alloway Kirk the wall of the churchyard had gone to ruin, and cattle had free liberty of pasturing in it. My father and two or three other neighbours joined in an application to the Town Council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for enclosing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it as his burial-place, and we learned the reverence for it people generally have for the burial-place of their ancestors." When, therefore, Burns met Captain Grose — then on his peregrinations through Scotland — at the house of Captain Riddell, he suggested a drawing of the ruin; and "the captain," Gilbert says, "agreed to the request, provided the poet would furnish a witch story to be printed along with it." It is probable that Burns originally sent the stories told above for insertion in the work, and that the narrative in rhyme was an afterthought. Lockhart, on Cromek's authority, accepts a statement, said to have been made by Mrs. Burns, that the piece was the work of a single day, and on this very slender evidence divers critics have indulged in a vast amount of admiration. Burns's general dictum must, however, be borne in mind: "All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction;" together with his special verdict on Tam o' Shanter (letter to Mrs. Dunlop, April, 1791) that it "showed a finishing polish," which he despaired of "ever excelling." It appeared in Grose's Antiquities — published in April, 1791 — the captain's indebtedness being thus acknowledged: "To my ingenious friend, Mr. Robert Burns, I have been seriously obligated: he was not only at the pains of making out what was most worthy of notice in Ayrshire, the county honoured by his birth, but he also wrote, expressly for this work, the pretty tale annexed to Alloway Church."

Ere Grose's work was before the public, the piece made its appearance in The Edinburgh Magazine for March, 1791; and it was also published in The Edinburgh Herald of 18th March, 1791.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monda
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd i' Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.
Ah! gentle dames, it gars me greet,
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd, sage advices
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.

The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favours, sweet and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evansihing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Dell had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,

Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the thins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a breeze,
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tipenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we 'll face the Devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light:
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae a rape —
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife a father's throat had mangled —
Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furiously;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hundred linen! —
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach!
But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear).
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. . . .
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,

That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('t was a' her riches),
Wad ever grae'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,
Sic flights are far beyond her power:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A couple jad she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidge'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: " Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'Il get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie searce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.
ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT

On 21st April, 1789, Burns enclosed a copy of this production in an unpublished letter to Mrs. Dunlop: "Two mornings ago, as I was at a very early hour sowing in the fields, I heard a shot, and presently a poor little hare limped by me apparently very much hurt. You will easily guess this set my humanity in tears and my indignation in arms. The following was the result, which please read to the young ladies. I believe you may include the Major too, as whatever I have said of shooting hares I have not spoken one irreverent word against coursing them. This is according to your just right the very first copy I wrote." Enclosing a draft to Alexander Cunningham, 4th May, 1789 (in a letter only partly published in any collection of the Correspondence), Burns, after a somewhat similar account of the incident, added: "You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when all of them have young ones; and it gave me no little gloomy satisfaction to see the poor injured creature escape him."

On 2d June, 1789, Dr. Gregory sent to Burns a somewhat supercilious criticism, which induced him (however) to change one or two expressions for the better. Regarding the measure Dr. Gregory remarked that it was "not a good one;" that it did not "flow well;" and that the rhyme of the fourth line was "almost lost by its distance from the first, and the two interposed close rhymes:" hence, "Dr. Gregory is a good man, but he crucifies me" (R. B.). Burns's use of his stanza is groping and tentative; and the effect of his piece is one of mere frigidity.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH A WREATH OF BAYS

When, in 1791, the eccentric Earl of Buchan instituted an annual festival in commemoration of James Thomson, by crowning, with a wreath of bays, a bust of the poet surmounting the Ionic temple erected in his honour on the grounds in Dryburgh, he sent an invitation to Burns and suggested that he might compose an ode. Burns was harvesting, and must needs decline; but, in regard to the second half of the invitation, he (29th August, 1791) wrote as follows: "Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion; but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson and despaired. I attempted three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the Bard, on crowning his bust. I trouble your lordship with the enclosed copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task you would obligingly assign me." The piece is closely modelled upon Collins's ode.

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II
While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spikey blade:

III
While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed:

IV
While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

V
So long, sweet Poet of the year!
Shall bloom that wreath thou well has won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEROGRINATIONS THRO' SCOTLAND
COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM

The son of Francis Grose, a Swiss, who had settled as a jeweller at Richmond, Surrey, Francis Grose was born at Greenford, Middlesex, about 1731; was educated as an artist, and exhibited at the Royal Academy; in 1755 became Richmond Herald; was made Adjutant in the Hampshire, and latterly Captain and Adjutant in the Surrey militias; published Antiquities of England and Wales, 1773-1787; made the acquaintance of Burns during his antiquarian tour in Scotland in 1789 (see ante, p. 90, headnote to Tam o' Shanter); published Antiquities of Scotland, 1789-1791; was author of many treatises in different branches of antiquarian lore, as well as various miscellaneous works — among them an excellent Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1785); and died (of apoplexy) 12th May, 1791. His remarkable corpulence is suggested in the Epigram on Captain Francis Grose (see post, p. 186); and his wanderings are further denoted in the lively verses beginning "Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?" (p. 122). He had his own share of humour, and was an "inimitable boon companion."

I
Hear, Land o' Cakes, and brother Scots
Fray Maiden Kirk to Johnie Groat's,
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you takin notes,
And faith he'll prett it:

II
If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fogel wight,
O' stature short but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel:
And wow! he has an unco sleight
O' cauk and keel.

III
By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,
Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, Lord safe 's! colleagun
At some black art.

IV
Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chamber,
Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamour,
And you, deep-read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches:
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches!

V
It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle-blade
And dog-skin wallet,
And taen the— Antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

VI
He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets
Wad haud the Lothians three in tacket
A towmont guid;
And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets
Before the Flood.
VII
Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;  
Auld Tubaleain's fire-shool and fender;  
That which distinguished the gender  
O' Balaam's ass:  
A broomstick o' the witch of Endor,  
Weel shod wi' brass.

VIII
Forbye, he'll shape you aff fu' gleg  
The cut of Adam's philibeg;  
The knife that nicked Abel's craig  
He'll prove you fully,  
It was a faulding jocoteleg,  
Or lang-kail gullie.

IX
But wad ye see him in his glee —  
For meikle glee and fun has he —  
Then set him down, and twa or three  
Guid fellows wi' him;  
And port, O port! shine thou a wee,  
And then ye'll see him!

X
Now, by the Pow'rs o' verse and prose!  
Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose! —  
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,  
They sair misca' thee;  
I'd take the rascal by the nose,  
Wad say, "Shame fa' thee."

TO MISS CRUICKSHANK

A VERY YOUNG LADY

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR

Miss Jane Cruickshank, to whom these lines were addressed, was the daughter of the poet's friend, Mr. William Cruickshank, of the High School, Edinburgh, and was then about twelve or thirteen years old. In June, 1804, she married James Henderson, writer, of Jedburgh. She also inspired A Rosebud by my Early Walk. The present piece appears to have been written under the inspiration of "Namby-Pamby" Phillips (d. 1749).

BEAUTEOUS Rosebud, young and gay,  
Blooming on thy early May,  
Never may'st thou, lovely flower,

Chilly shrink in sleety shower!  
Never Boreas' hoary path,  
Never Eurus' pois'rous breath,  
Never baleful stellar lights,  
Taint thee with untimely blights!  
Never, never reptile thief  
Riot on thy virgin leaf!  
Nor even Sol too fiercely view  
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,  
Richly deck thy native stem;  
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm, 
Dropping dews and breathing balm,  
While all around the woodland rings,  
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings,  
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,  
Shed thy dying honours round,  
And resign to parent Earth  
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

SONG: ANNA, THY CHARMS

Scott Douglas, on plausible evidence, conjectured that this song referred to a sweetheart of Alexander Cunningham, and that it was a "vicarious effusion." His conjecture can now be fully substantiated. In an unpublished part of a letter to Cunningham, 4th May, 1789, Burns wrote: "The publisher of The Star has been polite. He may find his account for it, though I would scorn to put my name to a newspaper poem — one instance, indeed, excepted. I mean your two stanzas. Had the lady kept her character she should have kept my verses; but as she has prostituted the one [by marrying in January, 1789], and no longer made anything of the other; so sent them to Stuart as a bribe in my earnestness to be cleared from the foul aspersions respecting the D—— of G——" [Duchess of Gordon]. The piece appeared in Stuart's Star, 18th April, 1789. Burns also enclosed a copy to Mrs. Dunlop: "The following is a jeu d'esprit of t'other day on a despairing lover leading me to see his Dulcinea."

I

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,  
And waste my soul with care;  
But ah! how bootless to admire  
When fated to despair!

II

Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,  
To hope may be forgiven:
For sure ‘t were impious to despair
So much in sight of Heaven.

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER
THE DEATH OF JOHN M’LEOD, ESQ.

BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR’S

Burns made the acquaintance of Miss Isabella M’Leod during his first visit to Edinburgh. Her brother, John M’Leod of Rasay — the representative of the main Lewis branch of the clan — died 20th July, 1787. In reference to other misfortunes of the family Burns wrote his Raving Winds around her Blowing. In a ms. note, “This poetic compliment,” he says, “what few poetic compliments are, was from the heart.”

I

Sad thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella’s arms.

II

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

III

Fair on Isabella’s morn
The sun propitious smil’d;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil’d.

IV

Fate oft tears the bosom-chords
That Nature finest strung:
So Isabella’s heart was form’d,
And so that heart was wrung.

V

Dread Omnipotence alone
Can heal the wound he gave —
Can point the brimful, grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

VI

Virtue’s blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;

There Isabella’s spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF
BRUAR WATER

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE

Burns spent two days with the family of the Duke of Atholl during his northern tour in August, 1787; and in the Glenriddell Book, in which the Humble Petition is inscribed, he wrote: “God, who knows all things, knows how my heart aches with the throes of gratitude, whenever I recollect my reception at the noble house of Atholl.” In a letter to Professor Josiah Walker, enclosing the poem, he stated that “it was, at least the most part of it, the effusion of a half hour” at Bruar. But, he adds, “I do not mean it was extempore, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol’s chat and the jogging of the chaise would allow.”

I

My lord, I know, your noble ear
Woe ne’er assails in vain;
Embolden’d thus, I beg you ‘Il hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phebus’ scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

II

The lightly-jumping, glowrin trouts,
That thro’ my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I’m scorching up so shallow,
They ’re left the whitening stanes amang
In gasping death to wallow.

III

Last day I grat wi’ spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That, to a Bard, I should be seen
Wi’ half my channel dry;
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Ev’n as I was, he shor’d me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador’d me.
IV
Here, foaming down the skelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well,
As Nature gave them me,
I am, altho' I say 't my sel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

V
Would, then, my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees
And bonie spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly then, my lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen monie a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

VI
The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir;
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis mild and mellow,
The robin, pensive Autumn cheer
In all her locks of yellow.

VII
This, too, a covert shall ensure
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form:
Here shall the shepherd make his seat
To weave his crown of flow'rs;
Or find a shelt'ring, safe retreat
From prone-descending show'rs.

VIII
And here, by sweet, endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth,
As empty idle care:
The flow'rs shall vie, in all their charms,
The hour of heav'n to grace;
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

IX
And misty mountain grey;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

X
Let lofty firs and ashes cool
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' wat'ry bed:
Let fragrant birks, in woodbines drest,
My craggie cliffs adorn,
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn!

XI
So may, old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may, thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be: "Athole's honest men
And Athole's bonie lasses!"

ON SCARING SOME WATERFOWL IN LOCH TURIT

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OUGHTERTYRE

Thus presented in the Glenriddell Book MS.
"This was the production of a solitary forenoon's walk from Oughtertyre House. I lived there, the guest of Sir William Murray, for two or three weeks [October, 1787], and was much flattered by my hospitable reception. What a pity that the mere emotions of gratitude are so impotent in this world! 'T is lucky that, as we are told, they will be of some avail in the world to come."

Why, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat'ry haunt forsake?
Tell me, fellow creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow’s shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud, usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:
Plumes himself in freedom’s pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the clifl7y brow
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But Man, to whom alone is giv’n
A ray direct from pitying Heav’n,
Glories in his heart humane —
And creatures for his pleasure slain!

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand’ring swains,
Where the mossy rivulet strays
Far from human haunts and ways,
All on Nature you depend,
And life’s poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if Man’s superior might
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his powers you scorn;
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes, and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

VERSES WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL

OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE, IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH

Burns visited Taymouth on 29th August, 1787. “The piece is inscribed in the Glenriddell Book in the hand of an amanuensis, with the following note by Burns: “I wrote this with a pencil over the chimney-piece in the parlour of the inn at Kenmore, at the outlet of Loch Tay.”

Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O’er many a winding dale and painful steep,

Th’ abodes of covey’d grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till fam’d Breadalbane opens to my view.
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides:
The woods, wild-scatter’d, clothe their ample sides:
Th’ outstretching lake, imbosomed ’mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills:
The Tay meand’ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace rising on his verdant side,
The lawns wood-fring’d in Nature’s native taste,
The hillocks dropt in Nature’s careless haste,
The arches striding o’er the new-born stream,
The village glittering in the noontide beam —
Poetic ardors in my bosom swell,
Lone wand’ring by the hermit’s mossy cell;
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods,
Th’ incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods —
Here Poesy might wake her heav’n-taught lyre,
And look through Nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of Fate half reconcil’d,
Misfortune’s lighten’d steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds;
Here heart-struck Grief might heav’nward stretch her sean,
And injur’d Worth forget and pardon man.

LINES ON THE FALL OF FYERS NEAR LOCH NESS

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL ON THE SPOT

Burns visited the Fall of Foyers on 5th September, 1787. In a note in the Glenriddell Book, where the poem is inscribed by an amanuensis, “I composed these lines,” he wrote, “standing on the brink of the hideous cauldron below the waterfall.”
Among the heathy hills and ragged woods.
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, thro’ a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless Echo’s ear, astonish’d, rends.
Dim-seen through rising mists and ceaseless show’rs,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, lours:
Still thro’ the gap the struggling river toils,
And still, below, the horrid caldron boils —

ON THE BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD
BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES
OF FAMILY DISTRESS

In the Glenriddell Book — where the poem is inscribed — Burns explains that it is “on the birth of Mons. Henri, posthumous child to a Mons. Henri, a gentleman of family and fortune from Switzerland; who died in three days’ illness, leaving his lady, a sister of Sir Thomas Wallace, in her sixth month of this her first child. The lady and her family were particular friends of the author (she was a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop). The child was born in November, ’90.” On receiving the news of the birth Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop: “How could such a mercurial creature as a poet lumpishly keep his seat on receipt of the best news from his best friend? I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod — an instrument indispensably necessary — in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride — quick and quicker — out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. . . . I, almost extempore, poured out to him in the following verses.”

I
Sweet flow’ret, pledge o’ meikle love,
And ward o’ monie a prayer,
What heart o’ stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

II
November hirples o’er the lea,
Chill, on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt’ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

III
May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving show’r,
The bitter frost and snaw!

IV
May He, the friend of Woe and Want,
Who heals life’s various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

V
But late she flourish’d, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn,
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter’d and forlorn.

VI
Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unseath’d by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

THE WHISTLE
A BALLAD

Thus prefaced by Burns: “As the authentie Prose history of the Whistle is curious, I shall here give it. In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony Whistle, which, at the commencement of the orgies, he laid on the table; and whoever was last able to blow it, everybody else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the Whistle, as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories, without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots Bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority. After many overthrows on the part of the
Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwelton, ancestor to the present worthy baronet of that name; who, after three days and three nights’ hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table, ‘and blew on the Whistle his requiem shrill.’

‘Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert before mentioned, afterwards lost the Whistle to Walter Riddell of Glenriddell, who had married a sister of Sir Walter’s. On Friday, the 16th October, 1790, at Friars-Carse, the Whistle was once more contended for, as related in the Ballad, by the present Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwelton; Robert Riddell, Esq., of Glenriddell, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddell, who won the Whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq., of Craigdarroch, likewise descended of the great Sir Robert, which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honors of the field.’

In this Prefatory Note Burns misdates the contest by a year, as is proved by (1) the date of a letter — 16th October, 1789 — to Captain Riddell, in which he refers to the contest of the evening; and (2) by the memorandum of the “Bett,” now in the possession of Sir Robert Jardine of Castlemilk, first published in Notes and Queries, Second Series, vol. x. (1860), p. 423:

DOQUET

The original Bett between Sir Robert Laurie and Craigdarroch, for the noted Whistle, which is so much celebrated by Robert Burns’ Poems — in which Bett I was named Judge — 1789.
The Bett decided at Carse — 16th October, 1789.
Won by Craigdarroch — he drank upds. of 5 Bottles of Claret.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHISTLE

The Whistle gained by Sir Robert Laurie (now) in possession of Mr. Riddell of Glenriddell, is to be ascertainment to the heirs of the said Sir Robert now existing, being Sir R. L., Mr. R. of G., and Mr. F. of C. — to be settled under the arbitration of Mr. Jn. M’Murdo: the business to be decided at Carse, the 16th of October, 1789.

(Signed) ALEX. FERGUSON.
R. LAURIE.
ROB. RIDDELL.

COWHILL, 10th October, 1789.

John M’Murdo accepts as Judge.
Geo. Johnston witness, to be present.
Patrick Miller witness, to be pre. if possible.
Minute of Bett between Sir Robert Laurie and Craigdarroch, 1789.

The question whether or not Burns was present has been hotly debated. The references in his letter on the day of the fight, as well as the terms of the “Bett,” seem to show that, tradition notwithstanding, he was not. But there are no data for an absolute conclusion. For the stanza, see ante, p. 79, Prefatory Note to No Churchman Am I.

I

I sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish King,
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

II

Old Loda, still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The God of the Bottle sends down from his hall:
“This Whistle’s your challenge, to Scotland get o’er,
And drink them to Hell, Sir! or ne’er see me more!”

III

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur’d, what champions fell:
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle their requiem shrill.

IV

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Sear,
Unmatch’d at the bottle, unconquer’d in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea;
No tide of the Baltic e’er drunker than he.

V

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain’d;
Which now in his house has for ages remain’d;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew’d.

VI

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skilled in old coins; And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

VII
Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil, Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil; Or else he would muster the heads of the clan, And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

VIII
"By the gods of the ancients!" Glenriddel replies, "Before I surrender so glorious a prize, I’ll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More, And bumper his horn with him twenty times o’er."

IX
Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend, But he ne’er turn’d his back on his foe, or his friend; Said: — "Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field," And, knee-deep in claret, he’d die ere he’d yield.

X
To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair, So noted for drowning of sorrow and care; But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

XI
A Bard was selected to witness the fray, And tell future ages the feats of the day; A Bard who detested all sadness and spleen, And wish’d that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

XII
The dinner being over, the claret they ply, And ev’ry new cork is a new spring of joy; In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
POSTHUMOUS PIECES

[The poems included in this general division were gathered for the Centenary Edition from various periodicals, from the several series of tracts by Stewart and Meikle, Glasgow, originally published at a penny or twopence each, from similar cheap publications, from the more or less complete editions of Burns’s works, and from manuscripts not before printed.]

THE JOLLY BEGGARS

A CANTATA

The Burns of this "puissant and splendid production," as Matthew Arnold calls it,—this irresistible presentation of humanity caught in the act and summarised for ever in the terms of art—comes into line with divers poets of repute, from our own Dekker and John Fletcher to the singer of les Gueux (1813) and le Vieux Vagabond (1830), and approves himself their master in the matter of such qualities as humour, vision, lyrical potency, descriptive style, and the faculty of swift, dramatic presentation to a purpose that may not be gainsaid. It was suggested by a chance visit (in company with Richmond and Smith) to the "doss-house" of Poosie Nansie, as Agnes Gibson was nicknamed, in the Cowgate, Mauchline. This "ken" stood directly opposite Johnnie Dow’s tavern (The Whitefoord Arms). Thence issuing, the three friends heard a sound of revelry at Poosie Nansie’s, whose company they joined. And a few days afterwards Burns recited several bits of the cantata to Richmond.

RECITATIVO

I

When lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or, wavering like the bauckie-bird,
   Bedim cauld Boreas’ blast;
When hailstanes drive wi’ bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
   In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e’en a merry core
O’ randie, gangrel bodies
In Poosie-Nansie’s held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies:
   Wi’ quaffing and laughing
   They ranted an’ they sang,
   Wi’ jumping an’ thumping
The vera girdle rang.

II

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags
Ane sat, weel brac’d wi’ mealy bags
   And knapsack a’ in order;
His doxy lay within his arm;
Wi’ usquebae an’ blankets warm,
   She blinket on her sodger.
An’ ay he gies the tozie drab
The either skelpin kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
   Just like an aumous dish:
Ilk smack still did crack still
   Like onie cadger’s whup;
Then, swaggering an’ staggering,
   He roar’d this ditty up:—

AIR

TUNE: Soldiers Joy

I

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come:
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de dandle, etc.

II

My prenticeship I past, where my leader breath’d his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abrám;
And I servéd out my trade when the gallant game was play’d,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.
III
I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Eliott to head me
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.

IV
And now, tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.

V
What tho' with hoary locks I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home?
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of Hell at the sound of a drum.

RECITATIVO
He ended; and the kebars sheuk
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons backward leuk,
An' seek the benmost bore:
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out Encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
An' laid the loud uproar:—

AIR
TUNE: Sodger Laddie

I
I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men.
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie:
No wonder I 'm fond of a sodger laddie!

II
The first of my loves was a swaggering blade:
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

III
But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch;
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
He risked the soul, and I ventur'd the body:
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

IV
Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot;
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready:
I ask’d no more but a sodger laddie.

V
But the Peace it reduc’d me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy in a Cunningham Fair;
His rags regimental they flutter’d so gaudy:
My heart it rejoic’d at a sodger laddie.

VI
And now I have liv’d—I know not how long!
But still I can join in a cup and a song;
And whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie!

RECITATIVO
Poor Merry-Andrew in the neuk
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler-hizzie;
They mind 't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy.
At length, wi' drink an' courting dizzy,
He stoiter’d up an’ made a face; 
Then turn’d an’ laid a smack on Grizzie, 
Syne tun’d his pipes wi’ grave grimace: —

AIR

TUNE: Auld Sir Symon

I
Sir Wisdom ’s a fool when he ’s fou; 
Sir Knave is a fool in a session: 
He’s there but a prentice I trow, 
But I am a fool by profession.

II
My grannie she bought me a beuk, 
An’ I held awa to the school: 
I fear I my talent misteuk, 
But what will ye hae of a fool?

III
For drink I wad venture my neck; 
A hizzie ’s the half of my craft: 
But what could ye other expect 
Of ane that ’s avowedly daft?

IV
I ance was tyed up like a stirk 
For civilly swearing and quaffing; 
I ance was abus’d i’ the kirk 
For towsing a lass i’ my daffin.

V
Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport 
Let naebody name wi’ a jeer: 
There ’s even, I’m tauld, i’ the Court 
A tumbler ca’d the Premier.

VI
Observe’d ye yon reverend lad 
Mak’ faces to tickle the mob? 
He rails at our mountebank squad — 
It ’s rivalship just i’ the job!

VII
And now my conclusion I ’ll tell, 
For faith! I ’m confoundedly dry: 
The chiel that ’s a fool for himsel, 
Guid Lord! he ’s far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin, 
Wha kent fu’ weel to cleek the sterlin, 
For monie a pursie she had hookèd, 
An’ had in monie a well been doukèd. 
Her love had been a Highland laddie, 
But weary fa’ the waefu’ woodie! 
Wi’ sighs an’ sobs she thus began 
To wail her braw John Highlandman: —

AIR

TUNE: O An’ Ye Were Dead, Guidman

I
A Highland lad my love was born, 
The Lalland laws he held in scorn, 
But he still was faithfu’ to his clan, 
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman! 
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman! 
There ’s not a lad in a’ the lan’ 
Was match for my John Highlandman!

II
With his philibeg, an’ tartan plaid, 
An’ guid claymore down by his side, 
The ladies’ hearts he did trepan, 
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

III
We ranged a’ from Tweed to Spey, 
An’ liv’d like lords an’ ladies gay, 
For a Lalland face he fearèd none, 
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

IV
They banish’d him beyond the sea, 
But ere the bud was on the tree, 
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran, 
Embracing my John Highlandman.

V
But, Och! they catch’d him at the last, 
And bound him in a dungeon fast. 
My curse upon them every one — 
They ’ve hang’d my braw John Highlandman!

VI
And now a widow I must mourn 
The pleasures that will ne’er return; 
No comfort but a hearty can 
When I think on John Highlandman.
CHORUS
Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman!

RECITATIVO
I
A pigmy scraper on a fiddle,
Wha us'd to trysts an' fairs to driddle,
Her strappin limb an' gawsie middle
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn 't on fire.

II
Wi' hand on hainch and upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an *aria* key
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' *allegretto* glee
His *giga* solo: —

AIR
*Tune: Whistle Owre the Lave O't*

I
Let me ryke up to dight that tear;
An' go wi' me an' be my dear,
An' then your every care an' fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS
I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid
Was Whistle Owre the Lave O't.

IV
But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
An' while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS
I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid
*Was Whistle Owre the Lave O't.*

RECITATIVO
I
Her charms had struck a sturdy caird
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
An' draws a roosty rapier;
He swoor by a' was swearing worth
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he would from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

II
Wi' ghastly e'e poor Tweedle-Dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
An' pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
An' sae the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve
When thus the caird address'd her: —

AIR
*Tune: Clout the Cauldron*

I
My bonie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation;
I've taen the gold, an' been enrolled
In many a noble squadron;
But vain they search'd when off I march'd
To go an' clout the cauldron.

II
Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
With a' his noise an' cap'rin,
An' take a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron!
And by that stowp, my faith an' houpe!
And by that dear Kilbaigie!
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie!

RECITATIVO

I
The caird prevail'd: th' unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
An' partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
That show'd a man o' spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

II
But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
That play'd a dame a shavie:
The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft
Behint the chicken cavie;
Her lord, a wight of Homer's craft,
Tho' limpin' wi' the spavie,
He hirpl'd up, an' lap like daft,
An' shor'd them "Dainty Davie"
O' boot that night.

III
He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed!
Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart, she ever miss'd it.
He had no wish but — to be glad,
Nor want but — when he thristed,
He hated nought but — to be sad;
An' thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night.

AIR

TUNE: For A' That, An' A' That

I
I am a Bard, of no regard
Wi' gentle folks an' a' that,
But Homer-like the glowrin byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS
For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle 's a' that,
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

II
I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, an' richly reams —
My Helicon I ca' that.

III
Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to throw that.

IV
In raptures sweet this hour we meet
Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that!

V
Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
They 've taen me in, an' a' that;
But clear your decks, an' here's the Sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS
For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle 's a' that,
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They 're welcome till 't for a' that!

RECITATIVO

So sung the Bard, and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth!
They toom'd their pocks, they pawn'd
their duds,
They scarcely left to coor their fuds,
To quench their lowin drouth.
Then owre again the jovial thrang
The Poet did request
To lowse his pack, an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best:
He rising, rejoicing
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus: —
AIR

Tune: Jolly Mortals, Fill Your Glasses

I
See the smoking bowl before us!
Mark our jovial, ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing:

CHORUS
A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!

II
What is title, what is treasure,
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'T is no matter how or where!

III
With the ready trick and fable
Round we wander all the day;
And at night in barn or stable
Hug our doxies on the hay.

IV
Does the train-attended carriage
Thro' the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?

V
Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them prate about decorum,
Who have character to lose.

VI
Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all, cry out, Amen!

CHORUS
A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast,
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest!

SATIRES AND VERSES

THE TWA HERDS: OR, THE HOLY TULYIE

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE

Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war.

This piece and the two next, Holy Willie's Prayer, and The Kirk's Alarm — with three printed before, The Holy Fair, p. 9, The Address to the Deil, p. 12, and The Ordination, p. 63, — constitute what is certainly the most brilliant series of assaults ever delivered against the practical bigotry of the Kirk. Burns suffered by them in reputation during his life and long afterwards. Even his most amiable critics have generally failed to appreciate, or at least to indicate, their true significance, and have deemed it seemly to qualify admiration of their cleverness with apologies for their irreverence. But, irreverent or not, they did for the populace much the same service as was done by the Essay on Miracles for the class of light and leading, and have proved an enduring antidote against the peculiar superstitions with which the many Scots afflicted themselves so desperately and so long.

"The following," wrote Burns in a note to a MS. copy, now in the British Museum, "was the first of my poetical productions that saw the light. I gave a copy of it to a particular friend of mine, who was very fond of these things, and told him 'I did not know who was the author, but that I had got a copy of it by accident.' The occasion was a bitter and shameless quarrel between two Rev. gentlemen, Moodie of Riccarton and Russell of Kilmarnock. It was at the time when the hue and cry against patronage was at its worst." After a similar account in the Autobiographical Letter to Dr. Moore he adds: "With a certain set of both clergy and laity it met with a roar of applause." The quarrel was about parochial boundaries, and in the discussion of the question, says Lockhart, "the reverend divines, hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other coram populo, with a fiery virulence of personal invective such as has long been banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code."

I
O a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox
Or worrying tykes?
Or wha will tent the waifs an’ crooks
About the dykes?

II
The twa best herds in a’ the wast,
That e’er gae gospel horn a blast
These five an’ twenty simmers past —
O, dool to tell! —
Hae had a bitter, black out-cast
Atween themsel.

III
O Moodie, man, an’ wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle?
Ye ’ll see how New-Light herds will whistle,
An’ think it fine!
The Lord’s cause gat na sic a twistle
Sin’ I hae min’.

IV
O Sirs! whae’er wad hae expeckit
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit?
Ye wha were no by lairds respeckit
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit
To be their guide!

V
What flock wi’ Moodie’s flock could rank,
Sae hale an’ hearty every shank?
Nae poison’d, soor Arminian stank
He let them taste;
But Calvin’s fountainhead they drank —
O, sic a feast!

VI
The thummart, wilcat, brock, an’ tod
Weel kend his voice thro’ a’ the wood;
He smell’d their ilka hole an’ road,
Baith out and in;
An’ weel he lik’d to shed their bluid
An’ sell their skin.

VII
What herd like Russell tell’d his tale?
His voice was heard thro’ muir and dale;
He kend the Lord’s sheep, ilka tail,
O’er a’ the height;
An’ tell’d gin they were sick or hale
At the first sight.

VIII
He fine a mangy sheep could scrub;
Or nobly swing the gospel club;
Or New-Light herds could nicely drub
And pay their skin;
Or hing them o’er the burning dub
Or heave them in.

IX
Sic twa — O, do I live to see ’t?
Sic famous twa sud disagree ’t,
An’ names like villain, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi’en,
While New-Light herds wi’ laughin spite
Say neither ’s liein!

X
A’ ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
Thee, Duncan deep, an’ Peebles shaul’,
But chiefly great apostle Auld,
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them hot an’ cauld
Till they agree!

XI
Consider, sirs, how we’re beset:
There’s scarce a new herd that we get
But comes frae ’mang that cursed set
I winna name:
I hope frae heav’n to see them yet
In fiery flame!

XII
Dalrymple has been lang our fae,
M’Gill has wrought us meikle wae,
An’ that curs’d raseal ca’d M’Quhae,
An’ baith the Shaws,
That aft hae made us black an’ blae
Wi’ vengefu’ paws.

XIII
Auld Wodrow lang has hatch’d mischief:
We thought ay death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten to our grief
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha’ll soundly buff our beef —
I meikle dread him.

XIV
An’ monie mae that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forby turn-coats amang ousel;
There’s Smith for ane —
I doubt he’s but a greyneck still,
An’ that ye ’ll fin’!

XV
O a’ ye flock o’er a’ the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, an’ fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To cowe the lairds,
An' get the brutes the power themsels
To chuse their herds!

XVI
Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
An’ Learning in a woody dance,
An’ that fell cur ca’d Common-sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish’d o’er the sea to France—
Let him bark there!

XVII
Then Shaw’s an’ D’rymple’s eloquence,
M’Gill’s close, nervous excellence,
M’Quhae’s pathetic, manly sense,
An’ guid M’Math
Whathro’ the heart can brawly glance,
May a’ pack aff!

HOLY WILLIE’S PRAYER
And send the godly in a pet to pray.

The interlocutor in this amazing achievement in satire, this matchless parody of Calvinistic intercession — so nice, so exquisite in detail, so overwhelming in effect — was a certain William Fisher, son of Andrew Fisher, farmer at Montgarswood, Ayrshire, born in February, 1737; succeeded his father at Montgarswood, and afterwards tenanted the farm of Tongue-in-Auchterless; on 26th July, 1772, was ordained elder in the parish church of Mauchline; subsequently became one of the most strenuous of Auld’s assistants in his rigid surveillance of the parishioners, and was probably the informer against Gavin Hamilton for neglect of ordinances and violation of the Sabbath (see headnote to Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq., ante, p. 41); was himself in 1790 rebuked by the minister, in presence of the Kirk-Session, for drunkenness; and was reputed (see Stanza xvii. of The Kirk’s Alarm, p. 112) to have utilised his opportunities, as “elder at the plate,” to help himself to the kirk offerings, but there is no official record of any such charge. On his way home from Mauchline, in a snow-storm, he died in a ditch by the roadside, 13th February, 1809.

The occasion of the piece is thus explained by Burns in a preface in the Glenriddell Book at Liverpool: “ARGUMENT. — Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which confines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline — a Mr. Gavin Hamilton — Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton’s counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton’s being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the muse overheard him at his devotions, as follows.” A Presbyterial decision in favour of Hamilton was given in January, 1785. The Session appealed to the Synod, but was at last constrained to grant Hamilton a certificate, 17th July, 1785: to the effect that he was “free from public scandal or ground of church censure known to us.”

I
O Thou that in the Heavens does dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends ane to Heaven an’ ten to Hell
A’ for Thy glory,
And no for onie guid or ill
They’ve done before Thee!

II
I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here before Thy sight,
For gifts an’ grace
A burning and a shining light
To a’ this place.

III
What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha desperv’d most just damnation
For broken laws
Sax thousand years ere my creation,
Thro’ Adam’s cause!

IV
When from my mither’s womb I fell,
Thou might hae plung’d me deep in hell
To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail
In burning lakes,
Whare damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain’d to their stakes.

V
Yet I am here, a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample:
I'm here a pillar o' Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example
To a' thy flock!

VI
But yet, O Lord! confess I must:
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;
An' sometimes, too, in worldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled wi' sin.

VII
O Lord! yestreen, Thou kens, wi' Meg —
Thy pardon I sincerely beg —
O, may 't ne'er be a living plague
To my dishonour!
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

VIII
Besides, I farther maun avow —
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times, I trow —
But, Lord, that Friday I was fou,
When I cam near her,
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never steer her.

IX
Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre proud and high should turn
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy hand maun e'en be borne
Until Thou lift it.

X
Lord, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou has a chosen race!
But God confound their stubborn face
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' open shame!

XI
Lord, mind Gau'n Hamilton's deserts:
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at cartes,
Yet has sae monie takin arts
Wi' great and sma',
FRAE God's ain Priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

XII
And when we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
And set the world in a roar
O' laughin at us:
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes!

XIII
Lord, hear my earnest cry and pray'r
Against that Presbyt'ry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upo' their heads!
Lord, visit them, an' dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

XIV
O Lord, my God! that glib-tongued Aiken,
My vera heart and flesh are quakin
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
An' pish'd wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lip an' snakin,
Held up his head.

XV
Lord, in Thine day o' vengeance try him!
Lord, visit him who did employ him!
And pass not in Thine mercy by them,
Nor hear their pray'r,
But for Thine people's sake destroy them,
An' dinna spare!

XVI
But, Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine,
That I for grace an' gear may shine
Exce'll'd by nane;
And a' the glory shall be Thine —
Amen, Amen!

THE KIRK'S ALARM

William M'Gill, minister of Ayr — whose "heretic blast" aroused the "alarm" here burlesqued — was youngest son of William M'Gill, farmer of Carsenestock, Wigtonshire, born 1792; educated at the University of Glasgow; became assistant at Kilwinning in June 1780; and was ordained to the second charge of Ayr, 22d October, 1761, as colleague to William Dalrymple. M'Gill, who received the degree of D.D. in 1781, published (Edinburgh, 1786) a Practical Essay on the Death of Christ, which set forth doctrines held to be Socinian. It was commended in his colleague Dalrymple's History of Christ, 1787; and attacked, although guarded and by implication, by Dr. William Peebles, in a Centenary Sermon on
the Revolution, preached 5th November, 1788, and published soon afterwards. M’Gill replied in The Benefits of the Revolution, Kilmarnock, 1789; whereupon a complaint against his Essay, as being heterodox, was presented on 15th April to the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. The Synod ordered the Presbytery of Ayr to take up the case, and the General Assembly, though it quashed the order, added a general recommendation to the Presbytery to see to it that doctrinal purity was maintained. With this general warrant the Presbytery appointed (15th July) a committee to consider and report specifically on M’Gill’s doctrines; and on 14th April, 1790, he compromised the matter by offering an explanation and an apology, which the Synod accepted. M’Gill died 30th March, 1807. He was more philosopher than ecclesiastic. A simple and unworldly man and a resolute student, he was at the same time a quaint and cheerful humourist, and was held by his parishioners in singular affection and respect. Burns’s regard for him, like his reverence for Dalrymple, dated from childhood; and the doctrines which had so perturbed the “Orthodox” were those which William Burness [we have adopted throughout the Poet’s own spelling of his father’s name] had embodied in his Manual of Religious Belief. The satire was evoked by the action of the Presbytery on 15th July, 1789. Two days later Burns sent a draft of it to Mrs. Dunlop in an unpublished letter: “You will be well acquainted with the persecution that my worthy friend Dr. M’Gill is undergoing among your divines. Several of these ween foes have come through my hands before; but I have some thoughts of serving them up in a different dish. I have just sketched the following ballad and as usual send the first rough draft to you.”

I

ORTHODOX ! orthodox ! —
Wha believe in John Knox —
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience:
A heretic blast
Has been blawn i’ the Wast,
That what is not sense must be nonsense —
Orthodox!
That what is not sense must be nonsense.

II

Dr. Mac! Dr. Mac!
You should stretch on a rack,
To strike wicked Writers wi’ terror:
To join faith and sense,

Upon onie pretence,
Was heretic, damnable error —
Dr. Mac!
’T was heretic, damnable error.

III

Town of Ayr! Town of Ayr!
It was rash, I declare,
To meddle wi’ mischief a-brewing:
Provost John is still deaf
To the church’s relief,
And Orator Bob is its ruin —
Town of Ayr!
And Orator Bob is its ruin.

IV

D’rymple mild! D’rymple mild!
Tho’ your heart’s like a child,
An’ your life like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye:
Auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three’s ane and twa —
D’rymple mild!
For preaching that three’s ane and twa.

V

Calvin’s sons! Calvin’s sons!
Seize your sp’ritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need:
Your hearts are the stuff
Will be powther enough,
And your skulls are store-houses o’ lead —
Calvin’s sons!
Your skulls are store-houses o’ lead.

VI

Rumble John! Rumble John!
Mount the steps with a groan,
Cry: “The book is wi’ heresy cram’d;”
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adle,
And roar every note o’ the damn’d —
Rumble John!
And roar every note o’ the damn’d.

VII

Simper James! Simper James!
Leave the fair Killie dames —
There’s a holier chase in your view:
I’ll lay on your head
That the pack ye’ll soon lead,
For puppies like you there’s but few —
Simper James!
For puppies like you there’s but few.
VIII

Singet Sawnie! Singet Sawnie!
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evils await?
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl
Alarm every soul,
For the Foul Thief is just at your gate —
Singet Sawnie!
The Foul Thief is just at your gate.

IX

Daddie Auld! Daddie Auld!
There's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk:
Tho' ye can do little skaith,
Ye'll be in at the death,
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bark —
Daddie Auld!
For gif ye canna bite ye may bark.

X

Davie Rant! Davie Rant!
In a face like a saunt
And a heart that would poison a hog,
Raise an impudent roar,
Like a breaker lee-shore,
Or the Kirk will be tint in a bog —
Davie Rant!
Or the Kirk will be tint in a bog.

XI

Jamie Goose! Jamie Goose!
Ye hae made but toom roose
In hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark,
For the Lord's haly ark,
He has cooper'd, and ca'd a wrang pin in 't —
Jamie Goose!
He has cooper'd and ca'd a wrang pin in 't.

XII

Poet Willie! Poet Willie!
Gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your "Liberty's chain" and your wit:
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he shit —
Poet Willie!
Ye smelt but the place where he shit.

XIII

Andro' Gowk! Andro' Gowk!
Ye may slander the Book,
And the Book not the waur, let me tell ye:

Ye are rich, and look big,
But lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value —
Andro' Gowk!
Ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

XIV

Barr Steenie! Barr Steenie!
What mean ye? what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may hae some pretence
To havins and sense
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better —
Barr Steenie!
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

XV

Irvine-side! Irvine-side!
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share:
Ye've the figure, 't is true,
Even your faes will allow,
And your friends daurna say ye hae mair —
Irvine-side!
Your friends daurna say ye hae mair.

XVI

Muirland Jock! Muirland Jock!
Whom the Lord gave a stock
Wad set up a tinkler in brass,
If ill manners were wit,
There's no mortal so fit
To prove the poor Doctor an ass —
Muirland Jock!
To prove the poor Doctor an ass.

XVII

Holy Will! Holy Will!
There was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor:
The timmer is scant,
When ye're taen for a saunt
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour —
Holy Will!
Ye should swing in a rape for an hour.

XVIII

Poet Burns! Poet Burns!
Wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your Muse is a gipsy,
Yet were she ev'n tipsy,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are —
Poet Burns!
Ye could ca' us nae waur than we are.
POSTSCRIPTS

I

AFTON'S Laird! Afton's Laird!
When your pen can be spared,
A copy of this I bequeath,
On the same sicker score
As I mention'd before,
To that trusty auld worthy, Clackleith —
Afton's Laird!
To that trusty auld worthy, Clackleith.

2

FACTOR JOHN! Factor John!
Whom the Lord made alone,
And ne'er made another thy peer,
Thy poor servant, the Bard,
In respectful regard
He presents thee this token sincere —
Factor John!
He presents thee this token sincere.

A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN DAUGHTER

THE FIRST INSTANCE THAT ENTITLED HIM TO THE VENERABLE APPELLATION OF FATHER

The "wean" of this generous and delight-ful Address was the poet's daughter Elizabeth, by Elizabeth Paton, for some time a servant at Lochlie. The child was born in November, 1784. She was brought by her father to Moss-giel. On his marriage the child remained under the charge of his mother and his brother Gilbert. She married John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, and died 8th January, 1817, leaving several children. Cf. Prefatory Note to Epistle to John Rankine, ante, p. 50.

I

THOU' s welcome, wean! Mishanter fa' me,
If thoughts o' thee or yet thy mammie
Shall ever daunton me or awe me,
My sweet, wee lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Tyta or daddie!

II

What tho' they ca' me fornicator,
An' tease my name in kintra clatter?

The mair they talk, I'm kend the bet-
er;
E'en let them clash!
An auld wife's tongue's a feckless mat-
ter
To gie ane fash.

III

Welcome, my bonie, sweet, wee dochter!
Tho' ye come here a wee unsought for,
And tho' your comin I hae fought for
Baith kirk and queir;
Yet, by my faith, ye're no unwrought
That I shall swear!

IV

Sweet fruit o' monie a merry dint,
My funny toil is no a' tint:
Tho' thou cam to the warl' asklent,
Which fools may scoff at,
In my last plack thy part's be in't
The better half o't.

V

Tho' I should be the waur bestead,
Thou's be as braw and bienly clad,
And thy young years as nicely bred
Wi' education,
As onie bart o' wedlock's bed
In a' thy station.

VI

Wee image o' my bonie Betty,
As fatherly I kiss and daut thee,
As dear and near my heart I set thee,
Wi' as guid will,
As a' the priests had seen me get thee
That's out o' Hell.

VII

Gude grant that thou may ay inherit
Thy mither's looks an' gracefu' merit,
An' thy poor, worthless daddie's spirit
Without his failins!
'T will please me mair to see thee heir
Than stocket mailins.

VIII

And if thou be what I wad hae thee,
An' tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
I'll never rue my trouble wi' thee —
The cost nor shame o't —
But be a loving father to thee,
And brag the name o't.
THE INVENTORY

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF TAXES

A MS. of this catalogue of plenishing, dated May, 1786, sent to Lady Harriet Don and now in the Laing Collection in the University of Edinburgh, has this heading: "To Mr. Robt. Aiken in Ayr, in answer to his mandate requiring an account of servants, carriages, carriage horses, riding horses, wives, children," etc. Currie explains that the mandate enjoined on every man "to send a signed list of his horses, servants, wheel-carriages, etc., and whether he was a married man or a bachelor, and what children he had." The new tax was levied by Pitt (May, 1785) with a view to reducing the National Debt.

Sir, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu’ list
O’ guids an’ gear an’ a’ my egraith,
To which I’m clear to gie my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle: —
I hae four brutes o’ gallant mettle
As ever drew before a pettle:
My lan’-afore ’s a guid auld “has been,”
An’ wight an’ wilfu’ a’ his days been.
My lan’-ahin ’s a weel-gaun fillie,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,
An’ your auld borough monie a time
In days when riding was nae crime.
(But ance, when in my wooing pride
I, like a blockhead, boost to ride,
The wilfu’ creature sae I pat to —
Lord, pardon a’ my sins, an’ that too ! —
I play’d my fillie sic a shavie,
She’s a’ bedevil’d wi’ the spavie.)
My fur-ahin’s a wordy beast
As e’er in tug or tow was traced.
The fourth’s a Highland Donald hastie,
A damn’d red-wud Kilburnie blastie !
Foreby, a cowte, o’ cowtes the wale,
As ever ran afore a tail:
If he be spar’d to be a beast,
He ’ll draw me fifteen pund at least.

Wheel-carriages I hae but few:
Three carts, an’ twa are feckly new;
An auld wheelbarrow — mair for token,
Ae leg an’ baith the trams are broken:
I made a poker o’ the spin’le,
An’ my auld mither brunt the trin’le.

For men, I’ve three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for fechtin an’ for noise:
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t’ other,
Wee Davoc hands the nowte in fother.
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
An’ aften labour them completely;
An’ ay on Sundays nightly, nightly,
I on the Questions tairge them tightly:
Till, faith ! wee Davoc ’s grown sae gleg,
Tho’ scarcely langer than your leg,
He ’ll screed you aff “Effectual Calling”
As fast as onie in the dwelling.

I’ve nane in female servan’ station
(Lord keep me ay frae a’ temptation !):
I hae nae wife — and that my bliss is —
An’ ye hae laid nae tax on misses;
An’ then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils darena touch me.

Wi’ weans I’m mair than weel contented:
Heav’n sent me ane mair than I wanted !
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddie in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace:
But her, my bonie, sweet wee lady,
I ’ve paid enough for her already;
An’ gin ye tax her or her mither,
By the Lord, ye ’se get them a’ thegither !

But pray, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I’m takin:
Frai this time forth, I do declare
I ’se ne’er ride horse nor hizzie mair;
Thro’ dirt and dub for life I’ll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
I ’ve sturdy stumps, the Lord be thankit,
And a’ my gates on foot I’ll shank it.
The Kirk and you may tak’ you that,
It puts but little in your pat:
Sae dinna put me in your beuk,
Nor for my ten white shillings leuk.

This list, wi’ my ain hand I ’ve wrote it,
The day and date as under notit;}
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic Robert Burns.

A MAUCHLINE WEDDING

This, one of Burns’s best-natured squibs, was enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 21st August, 1788, and is here published for the
first time 1 (Lochryan mss). He explains that a sister of Miller, then "a tenant" of his heart, had huffed his "Bardship in the pride of her new connection." She was the Miss Betty of The Belles of Mauchline (see post, p. 171); and the Eliza of the Song (see ante, p. 52). Burns did not go on to describe the ceremony: "Against my Muse had come thus far," he writes, "Miss Bess and I were once more in unison."

I

When Eighty-five was seven months auld
And wearing thro' the aught,
When rolling rains and Boreas bauld
Gied farmer-folks a gaught;
Ae morning quondam Mason W . . .,
Now Merchant Master Miller,
Gaed down to meet wi' Nansie B . . .,
And her Jamaica siller
To wed, that day.

II

The rising sun o'er Blacksideen
Was just appearing fairly,
When Nell and Bess got up to dress
Seven lang half-hours o'er early!
Now presses clink, and drawers jink,
For linens and for laces:
But modest Muses only think
What ladies' underdress is
On sic a day!

III

But we'll suppose the stays are lac'd,
And bonie bosoms steekit,
Tho' thro' the lawn — but guess the rest!
An angel scarce durst keek it.
Then stockins fine o' silken twine
Wi' cannie care are drawn up;
An' garten'd tight where mortal wight —
As I never wrote it down my recollection does not entirely serve me.

IV

But now the gown wi' rustling sound
Its silken pomp displays;
Sure there's nae sin in being vain
O' siccan bonie claes!
Sae jimp the waist, the tail sae vast —
Truth, they were bonie birdies!
O Mither Eve, ye wad been grieve
To see their ample hurdies
Sae large that day!

That is, in the Centenary Edition.

V

Then Sandy, wi' red jacket braw,
Comes whip-jea-woa! about,
And in he gets the bonie twa —
Lord, send them safely out!
And auld John Trot wi' sober phiz,
As braid and braw's a Bailie,
His shouters and his Sunday's jiz
Wi' powther and wi' ulzie
Weel smeard that day.

ADAM ARMOUR'S PRAYER

Published in The Scots Magazine, January, 1808. The interlocutor in this intercession was Burns's brother-in-law. At this time he had headed a band of youngers in Mauchline in the work of stanging — which is riding astride an unbanked sapling — a loose woman, one Agnes Wilson, who figures in the Kirk-Session records of March, 1786, as "the occasion of a late disturbance in this place." The Geordie, whose "jurr" or maid she was, is described in The Scots Magazine as the village constable; but this is clearly a mistake. He was, in fact, one George Gibson, the husband of Poosie Nansie. See reference in the head-note to The Jolly Beggars, ante, p. 102. As Gibson resented the outrage on his maid, Armour, dreading the law's reprisals, absconded. According to the person who sent the thing to The Scots Magazine, Armour chose Burns's house as his hiding-place. The person adds that he got the manuscript from Armour himself, who told him "that Burns composed it one Sunday evening just before he took the Book," i.e. the Bible.

I

Gude pity me, because I'm little!
For though I am an elf o' mettle,
And can like onie webster's shuttle
Jink there or here,
Yet, scarce as lang's a guid kail-whittle,
I'm unco queer.

II

An' now Thou kenns our woeful case:
For Geordie's jurr we're in disgrace,
Because we stang'd her through the place,
An' hurt her spleuchan;
For whilk we daurna show our face
Within the clachan.
III
An' now we 're dern'd in dens and hollows,
And hunted, as was William Wallace,
Wi' constables — thae blackguard fallows —
An' sodgers baith;
But Gude preserve us frae the gallows,
That shamefu' death!

IV
Auld, grim, black-bearded Geordie's sel' —
O, shake him owre the mouth o' Hell!
There let him hing, an' roar, an' yell
Wi' hideous din,
And if he offers to rebel,
Then heave him in!

V
When Death comes in wi' glimmerin blink,
An' tips auld drucken Nanse the wink,
May Sautan gie her doup a clink
Within his yett,
An' fill her up wi' brimstone drink
Red-reekin het.

VI
Though Jock an' hav'rel Jean are merry,
Some devil seize them in a hurry,
An' waft them in th' infernal wherry
Through the lake,
An' gie their hides a noble curry
Wi' oil of aik!

NATURE'S LAW
HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO GAVIN HAMILTON,
ESQUIRE

Great Nature spoke, observant man obeyed.

Written shortly after the event, — "Wish me luck, Dear Richmond. Armour has just brought me a fine boy and girl at one throw. God bless the little dears!"
Auld cantie Coil may count the day,
As annual it returns,
The third of Libra’s equal sway,
That gave another Burns,
With future rhymes an’ other times
To emulate his sire,
To sing auld Coil in nobler style
With more poetic fire!

Ye Powers of peace and peaceful song,
Look down with gracious eyes,
And bless auld Coila large and long
With multiplying joys!
Lang may she stand to prop the land,
The flow’r of ancient nations,
And Burnses spring her fame to sing
To endless generations!

The Lord Daer was Basil William Douglas-Hamilton, second son of the fourth Earl of Selkirk. He was born 16th March, 1763, and educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he boarded with Professor Dugald Stewart, whose guest he was at Catrine when Burns met him at dinner. A warm admirer of the French Revolution, he went in 1789 to Paris, where he lived in terms of friendship with some of its chief promoters. On his return he joined the Society of the Friends of the People; became a zealous advocate of Reform; and raised the question of the eligibility of Scots Peers’ sons to vote in elections and sit in the Commons (the Court of Session decided against him in 1792). He died of consumption at Ivy Bridge, Devon, 8th November, 1794.

Burns, in sending the lines to Mackenzie, eulogised the Professor, dividing his character into “ten parts, thus: four parts Socrates, four parts Nathaniel, and two parts Shakespeare’s Brutus.” Of the verses he wrote that they “were really extempore but a little corrected since.”

Sae far I sprach’d up the brae
I dinner’d wi’ a Lord.

I’ve been at drucken Writers’ feasts,
Nay, been bitch-fou ’mang godly Priests —
Wi’ rev’rence be it spoken! —
I’ve even join’d the honor’d jorum,
When mighty Squireships o’ the Quorum
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi’ a Lord! — stand out my shin!
A Lord, a Peer, an Earl’s son! —
Up higher yet, my bonnet!
An’ sic a Lord! — lang Scotch ell twa
Our Peerage he looks o’er them a’,
As I look o’er my sonnet.

But O, for Hogarth’s magic pow’r
To show Sir Bardie’s willyart glow’r,
An’ how he star’d an’ stammer’d,
When goavin’’s he’d been led wi’ branks,
An’ stumpin’ on his ploughman shanks.
He in the parlour hammer’d!

To meet good Stewart little pain is,
Or Scotia’s sacred Demosthénés:
Thinks I: “They are but men”!
But “Burns”! — “My Lord”! — Good God! I doited,
My knees on ane anither knoited
As faultering I gaed ben.

I sidling shelter’d in a neuk,
An’ at his Lordship staw a leuk,
Like some portentous omen:
Except good sense and social glee
An’ (what surpris’d me) modesty,
I markéd nought uncommon.

I watch’d the symptoms o’ the Great —
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming:
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman!

Then from his Lordship I shall learn
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as well's another;
Nae honest, worthy man need care
To meet with noble youthfu' Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE

I
My curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gooms alang,
An' thro' my lug gies monie a twang
  Wi' gnawing vengeance,
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
  Like racking engines!

II
A' down my beard the slavers trickle,
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,
While round the fire the giglets keckle
  To see me loup,
An', raving mad, I wish a heckle
  Were i' their doup!

III
When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes,
Our neebors sympathise to ease us
  Wi' pitying moan;
But thee!—thou hell o' a' diseases,
  They mock our groan!

IV
Of a' the num'rous human dools —
  ill-hairsts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy frien's laid i' the mools,
  Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools —
  Thou bear'st the gree!

V
Whare'er that place be priests ca' Hell,
Whare a' the tones o' misery yell,
An' rankèd plagues their numbers tell
  In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
  Amang them a'!

VI
O thou grim, mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes o' discord squeel,
Till humankind aft dance a reel
  In gore a shoe-thick,
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
  A towmond's toothache.

Enclosed in a letter to "William Creech, Esq., London," dated 13th May, 1787: "My Honored Friend — the enclosed I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary inn in Selkirk, after a miserable, wet day's riding."

The son of the Rev. William Creech, minister of Newbattle, in Midlothian, Creech was born 21st April, 1745. He completed the Arts course at the University of Edinburgh; attended some medical lectures; was apprenticed to the publishers Kinaid and Bell; in 1770 accompanied Lord Kilmaurs, afterwards the Earl of Glencarn (and the patron of Burns) on a Continental tour; became partner with Kinaid in 1771 and the firm itself in 1773: when his shop, standing to the north of St. Giles', was soon, in Cockburn's phrase, "the natural resort of lawyers, authors, and all sorts of literary allies." In his house, too, he held literary gatherings, which came to be called "Creech's levees." To his social qualities and his ascendency in literary and municipal Edinburgh the Lament bears witness. Another trait in his character—a combination of bad business habits with a certain keenness over money—revealed itself in so unpleasant a fashion to Burns, in connexion with the settlement over the Poems, that the men's relations were strained and distant ever after; Burns from this time forth addressing Creech as "Sir," and in a fragment (see p. 181), meant for part of a Poet's Progress, describing him as

"A little, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight."

Before this, and before writing the Lament, Burns had mastered all Creech's peculiarities; and in his Second Common Place Book (in the possession of Mr. Macmillan) he gives a portrait which must be regarded as corrective of eulogy and satire alike: "My worthy bookseller, Mr. Creech, is a strange, multiform character. His ruling passions of the left-hand kind are—extreme vanity, and something of the more harmless modifications of selfishness. The one, mixed as it often is with great goodness of heart, makes him rush into all public matters, and take every instance of unprotected merit by the hand, provided it is in his power to hand it into public notice; the other quality makes him, amid all the embarass in which his vanity entangles him, now and then to cast half a squint at his own interest. His parts as a man, his deportment as a gentleman, and his abilities as a scholar, are much above mediocrity. Of all the Edinburgh literati and wits he writes the most like a gen-
gentleman. He does not awe you with the profundity of the philosopher, or strike your eye with the soarings of genius; but he pleases you with the handsome turn of his expression, and the polite ease of his paragraph. His social demeanour and powers, particularly at his own table, are the most engaging I have ever met with."

Creech was publisher of The Mirror, The Lounger, and the works of the chief Scots authors of his day. He contributed a number of Essays to The Edinburgh Courant, which he reprinted in a volume under the title Fugitive Pieces, 1791 (a second edition, published posthumously, with an account of his life, appeared in 1875). His Account of the Manners and Customs in Scotland between 1763 and 1783, originally contributed to the Courant, was brought down to 1793 and published in the Statistical Account of Scotland. He was also the author of An Account of the Trial of Wm. Brodie and George Smith (1789), having sat on the jury by which the famous Deacon was tried. He was a founder of the Speculative Society and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce. In 1811-13 he was Lord Provost. He died 14th January, 1815.

I

AULD chuckie Reekie’s sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel burnish’d crest,
Nae joy her bonie buskit nest
Can yield ava:
Her darling bird that she lo’es best,
Willie, ’s awa.

II

O, Willie was a witty wight,
And had o’ things an unco sleight!
Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight
And trig an’ braw;
But now they ’ll busk her like a fright —
Willie ’s awa!

III

The stiffest o’ them a’ he bow’d;
The bauldest o’ them a’ he cow’d;
They durst nae mair than he allow’d —
That was a law:
We’ve lost a birkie weel worth gowd —
Willie ’s awa!

IV

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks, and fools
Frae colleges and boarding schools
May sprout like simmer piddocks-stools
In glen or shaw:
He wha could brush them down to mools,
Willie, ’s awa!

V

The brethren o’ the Commerce-Chaumer
May mourn their loss wi’ doolfu’ clamour:
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a’.
I fear they ’ll now mak monie a stammer:
Willie ’s awa!

VI

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and Poets pour,
And toothy Critics by the score
In bloody raw:
The adjutant of a’ the core,
Willie, ’s awa!

VII

Now worthy Greg’ry’s Latin face,
Tytler’s and Greenfield’s modest grace,
M’Kenzie, Stewart, such a brace
As Rome ne’er saw,
They a’ maun meet some ither place —
Willie’s awa!

VIII

Poor Burns ev’n “Scotch Drink” canna quicken:
He cheeps like some bewilder'd chicken
Scar’d frae its minnie and the cleckin
By hoodie-craw.
Grief’s gien his heart an unco kickin —
Willie’s awa!

IX

Now ev’ry sour-mou’d, girnin blellum,
And Calvin’s folk, are fit to fell him;
Ik self-conceited critic-skellum
His quill may draw:
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum,
Willie, ’s awa!

X

Up wimpling, stately Tweed I ’ve sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks, now roaring red
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure ’s fled:
Willie, ’s awa!

XI

May I be Slander’s common speech,
A text for Infamy to preach,
And, lastly, streekit out to bleach
In winter snaw,
When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
Tho' far awa!

May never wicked Fortune touzle him,
May never wicked men bamboozle him,
Until a pow as auld 's Methusalem
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed new Jerusalem
Fleet-wing awa!

VERSES IN FRIARS CARSE
HERMITAGE

This is the first version of the Hermitage
verses (see ante, p. 80); that which was ac-
tually inscribed on the Friars Carse window-
pane — now in the Observatory Museum, Dum-
fries.

THou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these maxims on thy soul: —

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.
Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy aim.
Ambition is a meteor-gleam;
Fame a restless airy dream;
Pleasures, insects on the wing
Round Peace, th' tend'rest flow'r of spring;
Those that sip the dew alone —
Make the butterflies thy own;
Those that would the bloom devour —
Crush the locusts, save the flower.

For the future be prepar'd:
Guard whatever thou canst guard;
But, thy utmost duly done,
Welcome what thou canst not shun.
Follies past give thou to air —
Make their consequence thy care.
Keep the name of Man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence with lowly heart
Him, whose wondrous work thou art;
Keep His Goodness still in view —
Thy trust, and thy example too.

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quod the Beadsman on Nidside.

ELEGY ON THE DEPARTED
YEAR 1788

For lords or kings I dinna mourn;
E'en let them die — for that they 're born;
But O, prodigious to reflect,
A Townmont, sirs, is gane to wreck!
O Eighty-Eight, in thy sma' space
What dire events hae taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire 's tint a head,
An' my auld teethless Bawtie 's dead;
The tulyie's teugh 'tween Pitt and Fox,
An' our guidwife's wee birdie cocks:
The tane is game, a bluidie devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil;
The tither 's dour — has nae sic breedin,
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden.

Ye ministers, come mount the poupit,
Aw' ery till ye be haerse an' roupet,
For Eighty-Eight, he wished you weel,
Aw' gied ye a' baith gear an' meal:
E'en monie a plack and monie a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little feck!

Ye bonie lasses, dight your een,
For some o' you hae tint a frien':
In Eighty-Eight, ye ken, was taen
What ye 'll ne'er hae to gie again.

Observe the vera nowte an' sheep,
How dowff an' dowilie they creep!
Nay, even the yirth itsel does cry,
For Embro' wells are grutten dry!

O Eighty-Nine, thou 's but a bairn,
An' no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak care,
Thou now has got thy Daddie's chair:
Nae hand-cuff'd, mizzl'd, half-shackl'
Regent,
But, like himsel, a full free agent,
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae waur than he did, honest man!
As muckle better as ye can.
January 1, 1789.
CASTLE GORDON

Burns was introduced to the Duchess of Gordon in Edinburgh (1786-7). And during his northern tour in 1787 he called at Gordon Castle on 7th September, as recorded in his Journal: "Cross the Spey to Fochabers — fine palace, worthy of the noble, the polite, the generous proprietor. Dine. Company: Duke and Duchess, Ladies Charlotte and Madeline; Colonel Abercrombie and Lady, Mr. Gordon, and Mr. —, a clergyman, a venerable, aged figure, and Mr. Hoy, a clergyman too, I suppose — pleasant open manner. The Duke makes me happier than ever great man did — noble, princely, yet mild, condescending and affable, gay and kind; the Duchess, charming, witty, and sensible. God bless them." The piece was suggested by this visit. Burns sent it to Mr. Hoy, the Duke's librarian, who wrote to him that the Duchess wished he had written in Scotch. It is worth recalling how the Duchess told Sir Walter that Burns was the only man she had ever met whose conversation fairly "carried her off her feet."

I

Streams that glide in Orient plains,
Never bound by Winter's chains;
Glowing here on golden sands,
There immixed with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled hands;
These, their richly gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves:
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle Gordon.

II

Spicy forests ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray,
Hapless wretches sold to toil;
Or, the ruthless native's way,
Bent on slaughter, blood and spoil;
Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave:
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms of Castle Gordon.

III

Wildly here without control
Nature reigns, and rules the whole;
In that sober pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood.
Life's poor day I'll, musing, rave,

And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave
By bonie Castle Gordon.

ON THE DUCHESS OF GORDON'S REEL DANCING

Published in Stuart's Star for the 31st March (1789), and here first reprinted. Jane, Duchess of Gordon, second daughter of Sir William Maxwell, third Baronet of Monreith, was born in Hyndford's Close, Edinburgh, in 1746. She was beautiful, clever, witty, abounding in gaiety of temperament, of a most frolic habit, and more or less reckless of the proprieties. During her childhood a country cousin caught her one day, hard by her father's house, riding an Edinburgh pig — (Edinburgh was largely scavenged by pigs in those years) — her sister (afterwards Lady Wallace) belabouring her mount with a stick. On her marriage to Alexander, Duke of Gordon (1767), she became the queen of Edinburgh Society; which, under her rule, appears to have been as merry as cards, wine, suppers, dances, late hours, and her own enchanting example and incomparable energy could make it; while in London her house was a chief resort for the Pittites. In 1802 she went to Paris, with the purpose (so 'tis said) of making a match between her youngest daughter and Eugène Beauharnais, and returned to boast (so 't was reported) that Napoleon would "breakfast in Ireland, dine in London, and sup in Gordon Castle."

In her later years she lived apart from her husband. She died 11th April, 1812.

I

She kiltit up her kirtle weel
To show her bonie cutes sae sma',
And wallopèd about the reel,
The lightest louper o' them a'!

II

While some, like slav'ring, doited stots
Stoit'ring out thro' the midden dub,
Fankit their heels amang their coats
And gart the floor their backsides rub;

III

Gordon, the great, the gay, the gallant,
Skip't like a mankin owre a dyke:
Deil tak me, since I was a callant,
Gif e'er my een beheld the like!
ON CAPTAIN GROSE

WRITTEN ON AN ENVELOPE ENCLOSING
A LETTER TO HIM

This amusing parody of the funny old song against tale-telling travellers (Herd, 1769) —

"Keep ye weel frae Sir John Malcolme,
I go and ago
If he’s a wise man, I mistak him.
Iram, coram, dago

"Keep ye weel frae Sandie Don,
I go and ago
He’s ten times dafter than Sir John.
Iram, coram, dago :"

was "written in a wrapper inclosing a letter to Captain Grose," to be left with Mr. Cardonnel, the Edinburgh antiquary. Only two letters from Burns to Grose have been published: one recommending him to call on Professor Stewart; the other on witch stories connected with Alloway Kirk (see ante, p. 88). For a notice of Captain Grose, see ante, p. 94.

KEN ye ought o’ Captain Grose?
I go and ago
If he’s among his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago

Is he south, or is he north?
I go and ago
Or drownèd in the River Forth?
Iram, coram, dago

Is he slain by Hielan’ bodies?
I go and ago
And eaten like a wether haggis?
Iram, coram, dago

Is he to Abra’m’s bosom gane?
I go and ago
Or haudin Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago

Where’er he be, the Lord be near him!
I go and ago
As for the Deil, he daur na steer him.
Iram, coram, dago

But please transmit th’ enclosèd letter
I go and ago
Which will oblige your humble debtor
Iram, coram, dago

So may ye hae auld stanes in store,
I go and ago
The very stanes that Adam bore!
Iram, coram, dago

So may ye get in glad possession,
I go and ago
The coins o’ Satan’s coronation!
Iram, coram, dago

NEW YEAR’S DAY, 1791

[TO MRS. DUNLOP]

Editors have taken for granted that this was written for New Year’s Day, 1790; but the "grandchild" whose cap is referred to was probably the child of Mrs. Henri, born in November, 1790. Since also Mrs. Dunlop, on 1st January, 1791, snatched "a few moments" to acknowledge receipt of a letter, a poem, and a gilded card from Burns (Lochryan MSS.), it seems most likely that the latter is the true date.

Mrs. Dunlop, whose maiden name was Frances Anne Wallace, was the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie (descended from the uncle of the renowned leader) and Eleanor Agnew, daughter of Colonel Agnew, of Lochryan. She was born 16th April, 1780; married in 1748 John Dunlop of Dunlop, Ayrshire, who died in 1785; succeeded her father before July, 1777; and died 24th May, 1815. Being in a state of profound mental depression — from which, she affirmed, her "only refuge would have been the madhouse or the grave" — she fell to reading the Kilmarnock volume — the gift of a friend. It had an almost magical effect upon her spirits; and, feeling herself under an "inexpressible debt" to Burns for the relief thus experienced, she wrote to him what proved to be the initial letter of most engaging correspondence, — a correspondence which shows the poet at his easiest and best as a letter-writer at the same time that it reveals the lady for one of the staunchest and kindest friends he ever had. The persons re-
ferred to in the piece were members of her family.

This day Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again:
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
In vain assail him with their prayer:
Deaf as my friend, he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's with the hounds;
The happy tenants share his rounds;
Colia's fair Rachel's care to-day,
And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow
(That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow),
And join with me a-moralizing?
This day's propitious to be wise in!

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year has gone for ever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on — for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will Time, amus'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may — a few years must —
Repose us in the silent dust:
Then, is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes: all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies;
That on this frail, uncertain state
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone,
Whether as heavenly glory bright
Or dark as Misery's woeful night.

Since, then, my honour'd first of friends,
On this poor being all depends,
Let us th' important Now employ,
And live as those who never die.
Tho' you, with days and honours crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round
(A sight life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight pale Envy to convulse),
Others now claim your chief regard:
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

FROM ESOPUS TO MARIA

The "Maria" lampooned in this inept and unmanly parody of Pope's Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, in which the writer gives himself the lie all round with distressing particularity, was Mrs. Walter Riddell of Woodley Park, whose favour he had lost (see post, p. 178, Prefatory Note to Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell's Birthday). The Esopus was James Williamson, manager of the Dumfries Theatre, who, like Burns, had been an occasional guest at Woodley Park. The occasion of the piece was the committal to prison by the Earl of Lonsdale of Williamson's company of players as vagrants.

From those drear solitudes and frowsy cells,
Where Infamy with sad Repentance dwells;
Where turnkeys make the jealous portal fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare re-past;
Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
Blush at the curious stranger peeping in;
Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
Resolve to drink, nay half — to whore — no more;
Where tiny thieves, not destin'd yet to swing,
Beat hemp for others riper for the string:
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

"Alas! I feel I am no actor here!"
'T is real hangmen real scourges bear!
Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale;
Will make thy hair, tho' erst from gipsy poll'd,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare!
By barber woven and by barber sold,
Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare!
The hero of the mimic scene, no more
I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar;
Or, haughty Chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
In Highland bonnet woo Malvina's charms:
And steal me from Maria's prying eye.
BLEST HIGHLAND BONNET! ONCE MY PRADEST DRESS,
NOW, PROUDER STILL, MARIA'S TEMPLES PRESS!
I SEE HER WAVE THY TOWERING PLUMES AFAR,
AND CALL EACH COXCOMB TO THE WORDY WAR!
I SEE HER FACE THE FIRST OF IRELAND'S SONS,
AND EVEN OUT-IRISH HIS HIBERNIAN BRONZE!
The crafty Colonel leaves the tartan'd lines
For other wars, where he a hero shines;
The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head,
Comes mid a string of coxcombs to display
That Veni, vidi, vici, is his way;
The shrinking Bard adown the alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks,
Though there his heresies in Church and State
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate:
Still she, undaunted, reels and rattles on,
And dares the public like a noontide sun.
What scandal called Maria's jaunty stagger
The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger?
Whose spleen (e'en worse than Burns's venom, when
He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,
And pours his vengeance in the burning line),
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre-divine,
The idiot strum of Vanity bemus'd,
And even th' abuse of Poesy abus'd?
Who called her verse a Parish Workhouse, made
For motley foundling Fancies, stolen or strayed?
A Workhouse! Ah, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep:
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.
Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour?
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure?
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of Hell?
Thou know'st the Virtues cannot hate thee worse:
The Vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?
Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares,
In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares:
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one Satire's vengeance hurls?
Who calls thee, pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit!
Who says that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true?
Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born:
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that decyphering defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply!

NOTES AND EPISTLES

TO JOHN RANKINE

IN REPLY TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT

The "announcement" was "that a girl [Elizabeth Paton] in that neighbourhood was with child" by Robert Burns. The Epistle to John Rankine, ante, p. 50, sets forth the sequel.

I

I AM a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, altho' not a';
Some people tell me, gin I fa'
Ae way or ither,
The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

II

I hae been in for't ance or twice,
And winna say o'er far for thrice,
Yet never met wi' that surprise
That broke my rest.
But now a rumour's like to rise —
A whaup 's i' the nest!
TO JOHN GOLDIE

AUGUST, 1785

John Goldie or Goudie was the son of a miller in Galston parish, Ayrshire, where he was born in 1717. He prospered first as a cabinetmaker and then as a wine merchant in Kilmarnock, but lost money in mining speculations. He died in 1809. Much of his leisure was given to mechanical and scientific studies; but in later life he was almost equally addicted to advanced theology. He published an *Essay on Various Important Subjects Moral and Divine*—being an attempt to distinguish True from False Religion, 1779—popularly known as Goudie's Bible (the issue of a second edition, 1785, was the occasion of this Epistle); *The Gospel Recovered from its Captive State and Restored to its Original Purity*, six vols., London, 1784; and *A Treatise upon the Evidences of a Deity*, 1809. Before his death he had prepared a work on astronomy. Burns, as laureate of the New-Light party, was warmly welcomed by Goldie, who became one of his sureties for the Kilmarnock Edition, and entertained him while he was seeing the book through the press.

I

*O Goudie, terror o' the Whigs,*

Dread o' black coats and rev'rend wigs!

Sour Bigotry on her last legs

Girns and looks back,
Wishing the ten Egyptian plagues
May seize you quick.

II

Poor gapin, glowrin Superstition!
Wae's me, she's in a sad condition!
Fye! bring Black Jock, her state physician,
To see her water!
Alas! there's ground for great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

III

Enthusiasm's past redemption
Gane in a gallopin consumption:
Not a' her quacks wi' a' their gumption
Can ever mend her;
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
She'll soon surrender.

IV

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple
For every hole to get a stapple;
But now she fetches at the thrapple,
An' fights for breath:

Haste, gie her name up in the chapel,
Near unto death!

V

'Tis you an' Taylor are the chief
To blame for a' this black mischief;
But, gin the Lord's ain folk gat leave,
A toom tar barrel
An' twa red peats wad bring relief,
And end the quarrel.

VI

For me, my skill's but very sma';
An' skill in prose I've nane ava';
But, quietenswise between us twa,
Weel may ye speed!
And, tho' they sud you sair misca',
Ne'er fash your head!

VII

E'en swinge the dogs, and thresh them sicker!
The mair they squeel ay chap the thicker,
And still 'mang hands a hearty bicker
O' something stout!
It gars an owthor's pulse beat quicker,
An' helps his wit.

VIII

There's naething like the honest nappy:
Whare'll ye e'er see men sae happy,
Or women sonsie, saft, and sappy
'Tween morn and morn,
As them wha like to taste the drappie
In glass or horn?

IX

I've seen me daez't upon a time,
I scarce could wink or see a styme;
Just ae hauf-mutchkin does me prime
(Ought less is little);
Then back I rattle on the rhyme
As gleg's a whittle.

TO J. LAPRAIK

THIRD EPISTLE

I

Guid speed and furder to you, Johnie,
Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bonie!
Now, when ye 're nickin down fu' cannie
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne’er want a stoup o’ bran’y
To clear your head!

II
May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin the stuff o’er muirs an’ haggis
Like drivin' wrack!
But may the tapmost grain that wags
Come to the sack!

III
I’m bizzie, too, an’ skelpin at it;
But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it;
Sae my auld stumpie-pen, I gat it,
Wi’ muckle wark,
An’ took my jocteleg, an’ whatt it
Like onie clark.

IV
It’s now twa month that I’m your debtor
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin me for harsh ill-nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursell ye ’re better,
But mair profane!

V
But let the kirk-folk ring their bells!
Let’s sing about our noble sel’s:
We’ll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help or roose us,
But browster wives an’ whisky stills —
They are the Muses!

VI
Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it;
An’ if ye mak’ objections at it,
Then hand in nieve some day we’ll knot
it,
An’ witness take;
An’, when wi’ usquabae we ’ve wat it,
It winna break.

VII
But if the beast and branks be spar’d
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
And a’ the vittel in the yard
An’ theckit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

VIII
‘Then Muse-inspirin aqua-vite
Shall mak us baith sae blythe an’ witty,
There's Gau'n, misca'd waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honor in his breast
Than monie scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus't him:
And may a Bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed —
An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a Muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin', hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd!

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass;
But mean revenge an' malice fause
He'll still disdain
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws
Like some we ken.

They take Religion in their mouth,
They talk o' Mercy, Grace, an' Truth:
For what? To gie their malice skouth
On some puir wight;
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin streight.

All hail, Religion! Maid divine,
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee

To stigmatise false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't and foul wi' monie a stain
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes
But hellish spirit!

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which gies ye honor),
Even, Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belonged ye.

All hail, Religion! Maid divine,
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee

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Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belonged ye.

All hail, Religion! Maid divine,
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee
For my puir, silly, rhymin’ clatter
Some less maun sair.

II
Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbuck jink an’ diddle
To cheer you thro’ the weary widdle
O’ war’ly cares,
Till bairns’ bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld grey hairs!

III
But Davie, lad, I’ m red ye’ re glaikit:
I’ m tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An’ gif it ’s sae, ye sud belickit
Until ye fyke;
Sic han’s as you sud ne’er be failket,
Be hain’t wha like.

IV
For me, I’ m on Parnassus’ brink,
Rivin the words to gar them clink;
Whyles daez’t wi’ love, whyles daez’t wi’ drink
Wi’ jads or Masons,
An’ whyles, but ay owre late I think,
Braw sober lessons.

V
Of a’ the thoughtless sons o’ man
Commens me to the Bardie clan:
Except it be some idle plan
O’ rhymin clink —
The devil-haet that I sud ban! —
They never think.

VI
Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o’ livin,
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievein,
But just the pouche put the nieve in,
An’ while ought ’s there,
Then, hiltie-skiltie, we gae serievin,
An’ fash nae mair.

VII
Luce me on rhyme! It ’s ay a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure;
At hame, a-fiel’, at wark or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho’ rough an’ raploch be her measure,
She ’s seldom lazy.

VIII
Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl’ may play you monie a shavie,
But for the Muse, she ’ll never leave ye,
Tho’ e’er sae puir;
Na, even tho’ limpin wi’ the spavie Frae door to door!

TO JOHN KENNEDY, DUMFRIES HOUSE

Kennedy was factor to the Earl of Dumfries, and resided at Dumfries House, two miles west of Cumnock. He died at Edinburgh, 19th June, 1812. The first part of the letter is in prose, and refers to a copy of The Cotter’s Saturday Night enclosed to Kennedy. Burns sent other pieces to him; and either he or M’Murd is the “Factor John” of The Kirk’s Alarm, see ante, p. 113.

I
Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E’er bring you in by Mauchlin Corss
(Lord, man, there ’s lasses there wad force
A hermit’s fancy;
And down the gate in faith! they’re worse
An’ mair unchancy):

II
But as I’m sayin, please step to Dow’s,
An’ taste sie gear as Johnie brews,
Till some bit callan bring me news
That ye are there;
An’ if we dinna hae a bowse,
I’se ne’er drink mair.

III
It’s no I like to sit an’ swallow,
Then like a swine to puke an’ wallow;
But gie me just a true guid fallow
Wi’ right ingine,
And spunkie ance to mak us mellow,
An’ then we’ll shine!

IV
Now if ye ’re ane o’ warl’s folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
An’ sk lent on poverty their joke
Wi’ bitter sneer,
Wi’ you nae friendship I will troke,
Nor cheap nor dear.

V
But if, as I’m informed weel,
Ye hate as ill’s the vera Deil
TO MR. M’ADAM OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER
HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF
MY POETIC CAREER

There is no evidence that Burns had any further correspondence with this M’Adam, whose letter no doubt referred to the Kilmarnock Edition. The son ("Dunaskin’s laird" of stanza vii.) is alluded to in the Second Heron Ballad, p. 166, stanza vii. line 8, as "o’ lads no the worst."

I
SIR, o’er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud.
“See wha taks notice o’ the Bard!”
I lap, and cry’d fu’ loud.

II
Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million!
I’ll cock my nose aboon them a’;
I’m roos’d by Craigen-Gillan!

III
’T was noble, sir; ’t was like yoursel,
To grant your high protection:
A great man’s smile, ye ken fu’ well,
Is ay a blest infection.

IV
Tho’, by his banes wha in a tub
Match’d Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs thro’ dirt and dub
I independent stand ay;

V
And when those legs to guid warm kail
Wi’ welcome canna bear me,
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
An’ barley-scone shall cheer me.

VI
Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O’ monie flow’ry simmers,
An’ bless your bonie lasses baith
(I’m tauld they’re loosome kimmers)!

VII
An’ God bless young Dunaskin’s laird,
The blossom of our gentry,
An’ may he wear an auld man’s beard,
A credit to his country!

REPLY TO AN INVITATION

Written doubtless in a tavern.

SIR,
Yours this moment I unseal,
And faith! I’m gay and hearty.
To tell the truth and shame the Deil,
I am as fou as Bartie.
But Foorsday, Sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o’ your partie,
If on a beastie I can speel
Or hurl in a cartie.

Yours,—Robert Burns.
Machlin, Monday Night, 10 o’clock.

TO DR. MACKENZIE

AN INVITATION TO A MASONIC GATHERING

Dr. John Mackenzie—one of the poet’s
warmest friends—practised at Mauchline, on
completing his medical course at the University
of Edinburgh. He has recorded, in a letter to
Professor Walker (often reprinted), his first
impressions of Burns, whom he met during
the last illness of William Burness. After
removing to Mossgill, Burns had frequent
opportunities of meeting him at Gavin Hamil-
ton’s, the Masonic Lodge, and elsewhere; and
he introduced the poet to Sir John White-
foord, Professor Dugald Stewart, and other
persons of influence. At a later period Mac-
kenzie settled at Irvine, and in 1827 he retired
to Edinburgh, where he died 11th January,
1837. For Burns’s connexion with the lodge,
see ante, p. 53, Prefatory Note to The Fare-
well. He was then depute-master, and so signs
himself; the procession referred to in the note
took place on 24th June. The Masonic date
signifies 1786.

FRIDAY first’s the day appointed
By our Right Worshipful Anointed
To hold our grand procession,
To get a blaud o’ Johnie’s morals,

An’ taste a swatch o’ Manson’s barrels
I’ th’ way of our profession.
Our Master and the Brotherhood
Wad a’ be glad to see you.
For me, I wad be mair than proud
To share the mercies wi’ you.
If Death, then, wi’ skail the Deil
Some mortal heart is hechtin,
Inform him, an’ storm him,
That Saturday ye’ll fecht him.
Robert Burns, D. M.
Mossgill, 14th June, A.M. 5790.

TO JOHN KENNEDY

A FAREWELL

Forms the end of a letter sent from Kilmar-
nock, undated, but written some time between
the 3d and 16th August. Burns tells Ken-
nedy that he is about to set out for Jamaica,
and is in daily expectation of orders to repair
to Greenock. Hence these last lines. For
Kennedy see ante, p. 128, Prefatory Note to To
John Kennedy.

FAREWELL, dear friend! may guid luck
hit you,
And ’mong her favourites admit you!
If e’er Detraction shore to smit you,
May nane believe him!
And onie deil that thinks to get you,
Good Lord, deceive him!

TO WILLIE CHALMERS’ SWEET-
HEART

Sent to Lady Harriet Don with this expla-
nation: “Mr. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayr-
shire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to
write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his Dul-
cinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely ac-
quainted with her, and wrote as follows.” On
20th November, 1786, Burns, as “Bard-in-
Chief” of Kyle, Cunningham, and Carrick,
sent to Chalmers and another practitioner “in
the ancient and mysterious science of con-
founding right and wrong,” a warrant for the
destruction of a certain “wicked song or bal-
lad.” He also wrote Chalmers a humorous
letter on his arrival in Edinburgh, enclosing a
copy of his Address to that city. Chalmers
was a lawyer in Ayr.
I
Wi’ braw new branks in mickle pride,
And eke a braw new brechan,
My Pegasus I’m got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin:
Whyles owre a bush wi’ downward crush
The doited beastie stammers;
Then up he gets, and off he sets
For sake o’ Willie Chalmers.

II
I doubt na, lass, that weel kend name
May cost a pair o’ blushes:
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Nor his warm-urgèd wishes:
Your bonie face, sae mild and sweet,
His honest heart enamours;
And faith! ye’ll no be lost a whit,
Tho’ wirèd on Willie Chalmers.

III
Auld Truth hersel might swear ye’re fair,
And Honor safely back her;
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne’er a ane mistak her;
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy palmers:
Nae wonder then they’ve fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers!

IV
I doubt na Fortune may you shore
Some mim-mou’d, pouther’d priestie,
Fu’ lifted up wi’ Hebrew lore
And band upon his breastie;
But O, what signifies to you
His lexicons and grammars?
The feeling heart ’s the royal blue,
And that’s wi’ Willie Chalmers.

V
Some gapin, glowrin countra laird
May warsle for your favour:
May claw his lug, and straik his beard,
And hoast up some palaver.
My bonie maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp
Awa wi’ Willie Chalmers.

VI
Forgive the Bard! My fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom
Inspires my Muse to gie’m his dues,
For deil a hair I roose him.

EXTEMPORÉ TO GAVIN HAMILTON

May Powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers!

TO AN OLD SWEETHEART
WRITTEN ON A COPY OF HIS POEMS

The sweetheart was Peggy Thomson of Kirkoswald (see ante, p. 52, Prefatory Note to Song Composed in August). Thus prefaced in the Glenriddell Book: “Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the first edition of my Poems which I presented to an old sweetheart, then married. ’T was the girl I mentioned in my letter to Dr. Moore, where I speak of taking the sun’s altitude. Poor Peggy! Her husband is my old acquaintance, and a most worthy fellow. When I was taking leave of my Carrick relations, intending to go to the West Indies, when I took farewell of her, neither she nor I could speak a syllable. Her husband escorted me three miles on my road, and we both parted with tears.”

I
Once fondly lov’d and still remember’d dear,
Sweet early object of my youthful vows,
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere—
(Friendship! ’tis all cold duty now allows);

II
And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more—
Who, distant, burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th’ Atlantic roar.

EXTEMPORÉ TO GAVIN HAMILTON

STANZAS ON NAETHING

To you, Sir, this summons I’ve sent
(Pray, whip till the pownie is fraething!);
But if you demand what I want,  
I honestly answer you — naething.

II
Ne’er scorn a poor Poet like me  
For idly just living and breathing,  
While people of every degree  
Are busy employed about — naething.

III
Poor Centum-per-Centum may fast,  
And grumble his hurdies their claithing;  
He ’ll find, when the balance is cast,  
He’s gane to the Devil for — naething.

IV
The courtier cringes and bows;  
Ambition has likewise its plaything —  
A coronet beams on his brows;  
And what is a coronet? — Naething.

V
Some quarrel the Presbyter gown,  
Some quarrel Episcopal graithing;  
But every good fellow will own  
The quarrel is a’ about — naething.

VI
The lover may sparkle and glow,  
Approaching his bonie bit gay thing;  
But marriage will soon let him know  
He’s gotten — a buskit-up naething.

VII
The Poet may jingle and rhyme  
In hopes of a laureate wreathing,  
And when he has wasted his time,  
He’s kindly rewarded with — naething.

VIII
The thundering bully may rage,  
And swagger and swear like a heathen;  
But collar him fast, I ’ll engage,  
You’ll find that his courage is — nae-thing.

IX
Last night with a feminine Whig —  
A poet she couldn’a put faith in!  
But soon we grew lovingly big,  
I taught her, her terrors were — naething.

X
Her Whigship was wonderful pleased,  
But charmingly tickled wi’ ae thing;  
Her fingers I lovingly squeezed,  
And kissed her, and promised her — naething.

XI
The priest anathémas may threat —  
Predicament, sir, that we’re baith in;  
But when Honor’s reveillé is beat,  
The holy artillery’s — naething.

XII
And now I must mount on the wave:  
My voyage perhaps there is death in;  
But what is a watery grave?  
The drowning a Poet is — naething.

XIII
And now, as grim Death’s in my thought,  
To you, Sir, I make this bequeathing:  
My service as long as ye’ve ought,  
And my friendship, by God, when ye’ve — naething.

REPLY TO A TRIMMING EPIS- 
TLE RECEIVED FROM A TAILOR

The tailor was one Thomas Walker, who resided at Pool, near Ochiltree. His remon- 
strance, with Burns’s Reply, appeared in one of the tracts “printed for and sold by Stewart 
and Meikle.” Scott Douglas, who had seen the tailor’s manuscripts, concludes that Simp- 
son of Ochiltree (see ante, p. 47, Prefatory Note to Epistle to William Simpson) had as much 
to do with the composition of his Epistle as himself.

I
What ails ye now, ye lousie bitch,  
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?  
Losh, man, hae mercy wi’ your natch!  
Your bodkin’s bauld:  
I didna suffer half sae much  
Frae Daddie Auld.

II
What tho’ at times, when I grow crouse,  
I gie their wames a random pouse,  
Is that enough for you to souse  
Your servant sae?  
Gae mind your seam, ye prick-the-louse  
An’ jag-the-flae!
III
King David o' poetic brief
Wrocht 'mang the lassies sic mischief
As fill'd his after-life with grief
   An' bloody rants;
An' yet he's rank'd amang the chief
   O' lang-syne saunts.

IV
And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,
My wicked rhymes an' drucken rants,
I'll gie auld Cloven-Clootie's haunts
   An unco slip yet,
An' snugly sit amang the saunts
   At Davie's hip yet!

V
But, fegs! the Session says I maun
Gae fa' upo' anither plan
Than garrin lasses coup the cran,
   Clean heels owre body,
An' sairly thole their mither's ban
   Afore the howdy.

VI
This leads me on to tell for sport
How I did wi' the Session sort:
Auld Clinkum at the inner port
   Cried three times: — "Robin!
Come hither lad, and answer for 't,
Ye 're blam'd for jobbin!"

VII
Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
An' snoov'd awa' before the Session:
I made an open, fair confession —
   I scorn'd to lie
An' syne Mess John, beyond expression,
   Afore the howdy.

VIII
A fornicator-loun he call'd me,
An' said my faut frae bliss expell'd me.
I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me,
   "But, what the matter?"
(Quo' I) "I fear unless ye geld me,
   I'll ne'er be better!"

IX
"Geld you!" (quo' he) "an' what for no?
If that your right hand, leg, or toe
Should ever prove your spiritual foe
You should remember
To cut it aft; an' what for no
   Your dearest member?"

X
"Na, na" (quo' I), "I 'm no for that,
Gelding 's nae better than 't is ca't;
I'd rather suffer for my faut
   A hearty flewit,
As sair owre hip as ye can draw 't,
   Tho' I should rue it.

XI
"Or, gin ye like to end the bother,
To please us a' — I 've just ae ither:
When next wi' you lass I forgather,
   What's'er betide it,
I'll frankly gie her 't a' thegither,
   An' let her guide it."

XII
But, Sir, this pleas'd them warst of a',
An' therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
I said "Guid-night," an' cam awa,
   An' left the Session:
I saw they were resolvèd a'
   On my oppression.

TO MAJOR LOGAN
Major William Logan, a retired soldier, of
some repute as fiddler and wit, who lived at
Park, near Ayr, must not be confounded with
John Logan of Afton and Knockshinnoch (the
"Afton's Laird" of The Kirk's Alarm, p. 113),
with whom Burns also corresponded.

I
Hail, thairm-inspirin, rattlin Willie!
Tho' Fortune's road be rough an' hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
   We never heed,
But take it like the unbrack'd filly
   Proud o' her speed.

II
When, idly goavin, whyles we saunter,
Yirr! Fancy barks, awa we canter,
Up hill, down brae, till some mishanter,
   Some black bog-hole,
Arrests us; then the scathe an' banter
   We're forced to thole.

III
Hale be your heart! hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbuck jink an' diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O’ this vile warl’,

Until you on a cummock driddle,
A grey-hair’d carl.

IV
Come wealth, come poortith, late or soon,
Heaven send your heart-strings ay in tune,
And screw your temper-pins aboon
(A fifth or mair)
The melancholious, sairie croon
O’ cankrie Care.

V
May still your life from day to day,
Nae lente largo in the play
But allegretto forte gay,
Harmonious flow,
A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey —
Encore! Bravo!

VI
A’ blessings on the cheery gang,
Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
An’ never think o’ right an’ wrang
By square an’ rule,
But as the clegs o’ feeling stag
Are wise or fool.

VII
My hand-wal’d curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace!
Their tuneless hearts,
May fireside discords jar a bass
To a’ their parts!

VIII
But come, your hand, my careless brother!
I’ th’ ither warl’, if there’s anither —
An’ that there is, I’ve little swither
About the matter —
We, cheek for chow, shall jog thegither —
I ’se ne’er bid better!

IX
We’ve faults and failins — granted clearly!
We’re frail, backsliding mortals merely;
Eve’s bonie squad, priests wyte them sheerly
For our grand fa’;
But still, but still — I like them dearly . . .
God bless them a’!

X
Ochon for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa’ foul o’ earthy jinkers!
The witching, curs’d, delicious blinkers
Hae put me hyte,
An’ gart me weet my waukrife winkers
Wi’ ginnin spite.

XI
But by yon moon — and that’s high
swarin’ —
An’ every star within my hearin,
An’ by her een wha was a dear ane
I’ll ne’er forget,
I hope to gie the jads a clearin
In fair play yet!

XII
My loss I mourn, but not repent it;
I’lI seek my pursie whare I tint it;
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cantraip hour
By some sweet elf I ‘l yet be dinted:
Then vive l’amour!

XIII
Faites mes baissemains respectueuse
To sentimental sister Susie
And honest Lucky: no to roose you,
Ye may be proud,
That sic a couple Fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

XIV
Nae mair at present can I measure,
An’ trowth! my rhymin ware’s nae treasure;
But when in Ayr, some half-hour’s leisure,
Be ’t light, be ’t dark,
Sir Bard will do himself the pleasure
To call at Park.

TO THE GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE HOUSE

(MRS. SCOTT)

Written in answer to a rhyming epistle from
"The Guidwife of Wauchope-House to Robert Burns the Ayrshire Bard, February, 1787."
The lady was Mrs. Elizabeth Scott (born 1729, daughter of David Rutherford, Edinburgh,
TO WM. TYTLER, ESQ., OF WOODHOUSELEE

and niece to Mrs. Cockburn, the song-writer), wife of Walter Scott of Wauchope. Burns's visit to her on 10th May following is thus recorded in his *Journal* of the Border tour: "Wauchope — Mr. Scott exactly the figure and face commonly given to Sancho Panza — very shrewd in his farming matters, and not unfrequently stumbles on what may be called a strong thing rather than a good thing. Mrs. Scott all the sense, taste, intrepidity of face, and bold critical decision which usually distinguish female authors." She died 19th February, 1789. After her death a selection from her verses was published (1801), under the title *Alonzo and Cora*, in which Burns's *Epistle* was included.

I

**Guid Wife,**

I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin at the pleugh,
An', tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn;
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass:
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi clavers an' havers
Wearing the day awa.

II

E'en then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast,
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-thistle spreading wide
Aman the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
An' spar'd the symbol dear.
No nation, no station
My envy e'er could raise;
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

III

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairst I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain.

I see her yet, the sonsie quean
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een
That gart my heart-strings tingle!
I fired, inspired,
At ev'ry kindling keek,
But, bashing and dashing,
I fearèd ay to speak.

IV

Hale to the sex! (ilk guid chiel says):
Wi' merry dance on winter days,
An' we to share in common!
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heav'n below
Is rapture-giving Woman.
Ye surly sumphs, who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye're connected with her!
Ye're wae men, ye're nae men
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie swears.

V

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line!
The marl'd plaid ye kindly spare,
By me should gratefully be ware;
'T wad please me to the nine.
I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin owre my curple,
Than onie ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Farewell, then! lang hale, then,
Ne'er at your hallan ca'

R. Burns.

March, 1787.

TO WM. TYTLER, ESQ., OF WOODHOUSELEE

WITH AN IMPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT

Son of Alexander Tytler, an Edinburgh solicitor, William Tytler was born 12th October, 1711; was educated at the High School and University; was admitted Writer to the Signet
in 1744; and died 12th September, 1792. He bestowed his leisure upon historical and antiquarian studies, and is known (to those who care to know) as author of an Inquiry, Historical and Critical, into the Evidence against Mary Queen of Scots, 1759 (hence the terms of the poet’s address); a Poetical Remains of James I. of Scotland, 1783; a Dissertation on Scottish Music, 1774; and certain papers in the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries. He assisted Johnson with vol. i. of the Musical Museum, whereon his place was presently taken by Burns.

The Epistle (as awkward a piece of writing as Burns ever did in English) was accompanied by a copy of the Beugo engraving. A few lines of prose were added (those in brackets have not hitherto been printed): “My Muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces. [I have two requests to make. Burn the above verses when you have read them, as any little sense that is in them is rather heretical, and] do me the justice to believe me sincere in my grateful remembrance of the many civilities you have honoured me with since I came to Edinburgh, and in assuring you that I have the honour to be, revered sir, your obliged and very humble servant, Robert Burns.

“Lawn Market, Friday noon.”

Scott Douglas surmises that the expunged lines contained “some ultra-Jacobite sally;” but it is now manifest that Tytler would not have it known that he had disregarded Burns’s request.

I

Revered defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart! — a name once respected,
A name which to love was once mark of a true heart,
But now ’t is despis’d and neglected!

II

Tho’ something like moisture conglobes in my eye —
Let no one misdeem me disloyal!
A poor friendless wand’rer may well claim a sigh —
Still more, if that wand’rer were royal.

III

My Fathers that name have rever’d on a throne;
My Fathers have fallen to right it:

Those Fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name, should he scoffingly slight it.

IV

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen, and the rest of the gentry;
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine:
Their title ’s avow’d by my country.

V

But why of that epocha make such a fuss
That gave us the Hanover stem?
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I ’m sure ’t was as lucky for them.

VI

But loyalty — truce! we’re on dangerous ground:
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine, to-day that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter!

VII

I send you a trifle, a head of a Bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint’s dying prayer.

VIII

Now Life’s chilly evening dim-shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

TO MR. RENTON OF LAMERTON

Sent to Mr. Renton, Mordington House, Berwickshire, probably during the poet’s Border tour — though Renton is not mentioned in his Journal.

Your billet, Sir, I grant receipt;
Wi’ you I ’ll canter onie gate,
Tho’’t were a trip to yon blue warl’
Where birkies march on burning marl:
Then, Sir, God willing, I ’ll attend ye,
And to His goodness I commend ye.

R. Burns.
TO MISS ISABELLA MACLEOD

For Isabella Macleod, see ante, p. 96, Prefatory Note to On Reading in a Newspaper the Death of John M'Leod, Esq.

EDINBURGH, March 16, 1787.

I

The crimson blossom charms the bee,
The summer sun the swallow:
So dear this tuneful gift to me
From lovely Isabella.

II

Her portrait fair upon my mind
Revolving time shall mellow,
And mem'ry's latest effort find
The lovely Isabella.

III

No Bard nor lover's rapture this
In fancies vain and shallow!
She is, so come my soul to bliss,
The lovely Isabella!

TO SYMON GRAY

Symon Gray lived near Duns, and while Burns was on his Border tour sent him some verses for his opinion.

I

SYMON GRAY, you're dull to-day!  
Dullness with redoubled sway
Has seized the wits of Symon Gray.

II

Dear Symon Gray, the other day
When you sent me some rhyme,
I could not then just ascertain
Its worth for want of time;

III

But now to-day, good Mr. Gray,
I've read it o'er and o'er:
Tried all my skill, but find I'm still
Just where I was before.

IV

We auld wives' minions gie our opinions,
Solicited or no;

Then of its faults my honest thoughts
I'll give — and here they go:

V

Such damn'd bombast no age that's past
Can show, nor time to come;
So, Symon dear, your song I'll tear,
And with it wipe my bum.

TO MISS FERRIER

Jane Ferrier, eldest daughter of James Ferrier, Writer to the Signet — who resided in George Street, Edinburgh — and sister to Miss Ferrier the novelist. She was born in 1767; married General Samuel Graham, for some time deputy-governor of Stirling Castle; with Edward Blore, the architect, published drawings of the carved work in the state-rooms of that fortress under the title, Lacunar Streven-linense, 1817; and died in 1846.

I

Nae heathen name shall I prefix
Frae Pindus or Parnassus;
Auld Reekie dings them a' to sticks
For rhyme-inspiring lasses.

II

Jove's tuneful dochters three times three
Made Homer deep their debtor;
But gien the body half an e'e,
Nine Ferriers wad done better!

III

Last day my mind was in a bog;
Down George's Street I stoited;
A creeping, cauld, prosaic fog
My very senses doited;

IV

Do what I dought to set her free,
My saul lay in the mire:
Ye turned a neuk, I saw your e'e,
She took the wing like fire!

V

The mournfu' sang I here enclose,
In gratitude I send you,
And pray, in rhyme as weel as prose,
A' guid things may attend you!
SYLVANDER TO CLARINDA

Clarinda was Mrs. Agnes Maclehose, née Craig, daughter of Andrew Craig, surgeon, Glasgow. She was born in April, 1759 — the same year as her poet; and when he met her in Edinburgh (7th December, 1787) she had for some time been separated from her husband. The Bard, who was (as ever) by way of being a buck, accepted an invitation to take tea with her on the 9th; but an accident obliging him to keep his room, he wrote to express his regret, and at the same time intimated his resolve to cherish her “friendship with the enthusiasm of religion.” Mrs. Maclehose responding in the same key, the “friendship” proceeded apace. On Christmas Eve she sent him certain verses, signed “Clarinda.” On Burns saying He had nothing else to Do, three of which he quoted in the Glenriddell Book: —

“When first you saw Clarinda’s charms,
What rapture in your bosom grew!
Her heart was shut to Love’s alarms,
But then — you’d nothing else to do.

“Apollon oft had lent his harp,
But now’t was strung from Cupid’s bow;
You sung — it reached Clarinda’s heart —
She wish’d you’d nothing else to do.

“Fair Venus smil’d, Minerva frown’d,
Cupid observed, the arrow flew:
Indifference (ere a week went round)
Show’d you had nothing else to do.”

Thus challenged, Sylvander — he became Sylvander there and then — replied as in the text; and the romantic terms in which the two went on to conduct their correspondence soon served the ardent youth as a pretext for the expression of fiercer sentiments than Clarinda’s “principles of reason and religion” should have allowed. She sent her Arcadian poems, which he amended for Johnson’s Museum; and he fell so deeply enamoured that, on leaving Edinburgh (24th March) he must write thus to a friend:

“During these last eight days I have been positively crazy.” Clarinda (like Maman Vanquer) avait des idées — as what lady in the circumstances would not? And when Clarinda learned, in August, that Burns had married Armour, Clarinda resented her Sylvander’s defection as an unpardonable wrong. They were partly reconciled in the autumn of 1791; and ere she rejoined her husband in Jamaica, they had an interview on 6th December, which the gallant and romantic little song, O May, Thy Morn was ne’er sae Sweet, is held to commemorate. On the 27th he sent her Ae Fond Kiss and then We Sever, with the finest lines he ever wrote: —

“Had we never lov’d sae kindly,
Had we never lov’d sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted —
We had ne’er been broken-hearted.”

Behold the Hour, the Boat Arrive, and part of Gloomy December, with the remark: “The remainder of this song is on the wheels — Adieu! Adieu!” Mrs. Maclehose, still unreconciled to her husband, returned to Scotland in August, 1792. Burns and she corresponded occasionally, but never met again. She died 22d October, 1841.

I

When dear Clarinda, matchless fair,
First struck Sylvander’s raptur’d view,
Gaz’d, he listen’d to despair—
Alas! ’t was all he dared to do.

II

Love from Clarinda’s heavenly eyes
Transfix’d his bosom thro’ and thro’,
But still in Friendship’s guarded guise —
For more the demon fear’d to do.

III

That heart, already more than lost,
The imp beleagu’rd all perdu;
For frowning Honor kept his post —
To meet that frown he shrunk to do.

IV

His pangs the Bard refus’d to own,
Tho’ half he wish’d Clarinda knew;
But Anguish wrung the unweeting groan —
Who blames what frantic Pain must do?

V

That heart, where motley follies blend,
Was sterily still to Honor true:
To prove Clarinda’s fondest friend
Was what a lover, sure, might do!

VI

The Muse his ready quill employ’d;
No nearer bliss he could pursue;
That bliss Clarinda cold deny’d —
“Send word by Charles how you do!”

VII

The chill behest disarm’d his Muse,
Till Passion all impatient grew:
He wrote, and hinted for excuse,
’T was ’cause he’d nothing else to do.”
VIII
But by those hopes I have above!
And by those faults I dearly rue!
The deed, the boldest mark of love,
For thee that deed I dare to do!

IX
O, could the Fates but name the price
Would bless me with your charms and you,
With frantic joy I’d pay it thrice,
If human art or power could do!

Then take, Clarinda, friendship’s hand
(Friendship, at least, I may avow),
And lay no more your chill command —
I’ll write, whatever I’ve to do.

SYLVANDER.

Wednesday night.

TO CLARINDA

WITH A PAIR OF WINE-GLASSES

The glasses were sent as a parting gift when
Burns left Edinburgh, 24th March, 1788.

I
Fair Empress of the Poet’s soul
And Queen of Poetesses,
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses;

II
And fill them up with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge them to the generous toast:
“The whole of human kind!”

III
“To those who love us!” second fill;
But not to those whom we love,
Lest we love those who love not us!
A third: — “To thee and me, love!”

TO HUGH PARKER

A brother of Major William Parker of Kilmarnock, referred to in the song Ye Sons of

Old Killie (see post, p. 306). Writing to Robert Muir, 26th August, 1787, Burns sends compliments to Messrs. W. and H. Parker, and hopes that “Hughoe is going on and prospering with God and Miss M’Causlin.” The Epistle was written soon after his arrival in Ellisland on 12th June, 1788, whence, on writing to Mrs. Dunlop, he describes himself (14th June) as “a solitary inmate of an old smoky spence; far from every object I love, or by whom I am beloved; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday except Jenny Geddes, the old mare I ride on.”

In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne’er cros’t the Muse’s heckles,
Nor limpit in poetic shackles:
A land that Prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stacher’t thro’ it:
Here, ambush’d by the chimla cheek,
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,
I hear a wheel thrum i’ the neuk,
I hear it — for in vain I leuk:
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel
Enhusked by a fog infernal.
Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians,
I’m dwindled down to mere existence;
Wi’ nae converse but Gallowa’ bodies,
Wi’ nae kend face but Jenny Geddes.
Jenny, my Pegasean pride,
Dowie she saunters down Nithside,
And ay a westlin leuk she throws,
While tears hap o’er her auld brown nose!
Was it for this wi’ cannie care
Thou bure the Bard through many a shire?
At howes or hillocks never stumbled,
And late or early never grumbled?
O, had I power like inclination,
I’d heeze thee up a constellation!
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the Ecliptic like a bar,
Or turn the Pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phebus bids good-morrow,
Down the Zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship’s face:
For I could lay my bread and kail
He’d ne’er cast saut upo’ thy tail! . . .
Wi’ a’ this care and a’ this grief,
And sma’, sma’ prospect of relief,
And nought but peat reek i’ my head,
How can I write what ye can read?
—
Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o’ June,
TO ALEX. CUNNINGHAM

ELLISLAND IN NITHSDALE,
July 27th, 1788.

Alexander Cunningham, when Burns met
him in Edinburgh in the winter of 1786–7, was
practising as a lawyer. Probably Burns was
introduced to him at the Crochallan Club; and
they remained on the friendliest terms until
the poet's death. The Anna of this Epistle
and of the song Anna (ante, p. 95) was a Miss
Anne Stewart, who (to Cunningham's lasting
chagrin) married Mr. Forest Dewar, surgeon
and town-councillor, Edinburgh (13th January,
1789). Her perfidy suggested She's Fair and
Fause; and, according to Burns himself, it was
Cunningham's misfortune to which he assayed
to do further justice in Had I a Cave. Cun-
ningham married in 1792, and went into part-
nership with a goldsmith. He died January
27, 1812. In accordance with an announce-
ment made by Burns in an affecting letter a
fortnight before his death, the Poet's post-
humous child was named Alexander Cunning-
ham Burns. Holograph letters of Cunningham
— with copies of which we have been favoured
by his descendants — show that it was he who
originated both the subscription on behalf of
Mrs. Burns and the scheme for a collected
Edition; and that to him the success of both
enterprises was chiefly due.

I
My godlike friend — nay, do not stare:
You think the praise is odd-like?
But "God is Love," the saints declare:
Then surely thou art god-like!

II
And is thy ardour still the same,
And kindled still in Anna?
Others may boast a partial flame,
But thou art a volcano!

III
Even Wedlock asks not love beyond
Death's tie-dissolving portal;
But thou, omnipotently fond,
May'st promise love immortal!

IV
Thy wounds such healing powers defy,
Such symptoms dire attend them,
That last great antihectic try —
Marriage perhaps may mend them.

V
Sweet Anna has an air — a grace,
Divine, magnetic, touching!
She takes, she charms — but who can trace
The process of bewitching?

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY

REQUESTING A FAVOUR

This was doubtless the piece referred to in a
note to Miss Chalmers, 16th September, 1788:
"I very lately — to wit, since harvest began
— wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the
manner of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a
short essay, just to try the strength of my
Muse's pinion in that way." For an account
of Graham of Fintry, see ante, p. 85.

WHEN Nature her great master-piece de-
sign'd,
And fram'd her last, best work, the human
mind,
Her eye intent on all the wondrous plan,
She form'd of various stuff the various
Man.

The useful many first, she calls them
forth —
Plain plodding Industry and sober Worth:
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons
of earth,
And merchandise' whole genus take their
birth;
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics’ many-apron’d kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet —
The lead and buoy are needful to the net:
The caput mortuum of gross desires
Makes a material for mere knights and
squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow;
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave
designs —
Law, physic, politics, and deep divines;  
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,  
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood;  
Nature, well pleas'd, pronoune'd it very good;  
Yet ere she gave creating labour o'er,  
Half-jest, she tried one curious labour more.  
Some spumy, fiery, ignis fataus matter,  
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;  
With arch-alacrity and conscious glee  
(Nature may have her whim as well as we:  
Her Hogarth-art, perhaps she meant to show it),  
She forms the thing, and christens it — a Poet:  
Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,  
When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow;  
A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends;  
Admir'd and prais'd — and there the wages ends;  
A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,  
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;  
Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,  
Yet harping wanting wherewithal to live;  
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,  
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk:  
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.  
Viewing the propless climber of mankind,  
She cast about a standard tree to find;  
In pity for his helpless woodbine state,  
She clasp'd his tendrils round the truly great;  
A title, and the only one I claim,  
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the hapless Muses' tuneful train!  
Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main,  
Their hearts no selfish, stern, absorbent stuff,  
That never gives — tho' humbly takes — enough:  
The little Fate allows, they share as soon,

Unlike sage, proverb'd Wisdom's hard-wrung boon.  
The world were blest did bliss on them depend —  
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend !"  
Let Prudence number o'er each sturdy son  
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,  
Who feel by reason, and who give by rule  
(Instinct's a brute, and Sentiment a fool!),  
Who make poor "will do" wait upon "I should" —  
We own they're prudent, but who owns they're good?  
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye,  
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!  
But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,  
Heaven's attribute distinguish'd — to bestow!  
Whose arms of love would grasp all human race:  
Come thou who giv'st with all a courtier's grace —  
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes,  
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times!

Why shrinks my soul, half blushing, half afraid,  
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?  
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,  
I tax thy friendship at thy kind command.  
But there are such who court the tuneful Nine  
(Heavens! should the branded character be mine!),  
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,  
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.  
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit Soars on the spurning wing of injur'd merit!  
Seek you the proofs in private life to find?  
Pity the best of words should be but wind!  
So to Heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,  
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.  
In all the clam'rous ery of starving want,  
They dun Benevolence with shameless front;  
Oblige them, patronise their tinsel lays —  
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again!
The pie-bald jacket let me patch once more!
On eighteenpence a week I 've liv'd before.
Tho', thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift,
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
With man and nature fairer in her sight,
My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimier flight.

IMPROMPTU TO CAPTAIN RIDDELL

ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER

Burns's near neighbour at Friars Carse, who showed him great courtesy, and gave him a key to his private grounds and the Hermitage on Nithside (see ante, pp. 80, 120). Friars Carse was also the scene of the drinking bout celebrated in The Whistle (ante, p. 99). Burns wrote his song, The Day Returns (post, p. 219) for the anniversary (7th November) of Captain Riddell's marriage. At the Riddells' fireside he "enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of the fashionable people put together; " and his great regard was in no wise lessened by the quarrel with the Captain's brother and sister-in-law (see post, p. 178, Prefatory Note to Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell's Birthday), by which the hospitable doors of Glenriddell — a centre of music and books, of talk and fellowship and wine — were closed on him, as the sequel was soon to show, for ever. On Captain Riddell's death, 21st April, 1794, he hastened to dedicate his No More, Ye Warblers of the Wood (see post, p. 179) to his memory. Riddell was an accomplished musician, and composed several of the airs to Burns's songs in Johnson's Museum. He is the "worthy Glenriddell so skilled in old coins" of The Whistle. A fellow of the London Society of Antiquaries, he contributed some important papers to Archeologia. At his special request, Burns made a selection from his unprinted poems, which he presented, with a preface breathing warm affection for himself and his "amiable lady," and concluding thus: "Let these be regarded as the genuine sentiments of a man who seldom flattered any, and never those he loved."

POSTHUMOUS PIECES

ELLISLAND, Monday Evening.

I

YOUR News and Review, Sir,
I 've read through and through, Sir,
With little admiring or blaming:
The Papers are barren
Of home-news or foreign —
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

II

Our friends, the Reviewers,
Those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir;
But of meet or unmeet
In a fabric complete
I 'll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

III

My goose-quill too rude is
To tell all your goodness
Bestow'd on your servant, the Poet;
Would to God I had one
Like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

REPLY TO A NOTE FROM CAPTAIN RIDDELL

Ellisland.

Dear Sir, at onie time or tide
I 'd rather sit wi' you than ride,
Tho' 't were wi' royal Geordie:
And trowth ! your kindness soon and late
Aft gars me to mysel look blate —
The Lord in Heaven reward ye!

R. Burns

TO JAMES TENNANT OF GLENCONNER

Second son of John Tennant, farmer, of Glenconner, in the parish of Ochiltree — ancestor of the present Sir Charles Tennant of The Glen — by his first wife. He was born 1735; kept a mill at Ochiltree; and died April, 1835.

Auld comrade dear and brither sinner,
How 's a' the folks about Glenconner?
How do you this blue eastlin wind,
That 's like to blaw a body blind?
For me, my faculties are frozen,
My dearest member nearly done'd.
I've sent you here, by Johnie Simson,
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on:
Smith wi' his sympathetic feeling,
An' Reid to common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought and wrinkled,
An' meikle Greek an' Latin mangled,
Till, wi' their logic-jargon tir'd
And in the depth of science mir'd,
To common sense they now appeal —
What wives and wabsters see and feel !

But, hark ye, friend ! I charge you strictly,
Peruse them, an' return them quickly:
For now I'm grown sae cursed douse
I pray and ponder butt the house;
My shins my lane I there sit roastin,
Perusing Bunyan, Brown, an' Boston;
Till by an' by, if I haud on,
I'll grunt a real gospel groan.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
The ace an' wale of honest men:
When bending down wi' auld grey hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
An' views beyond the grave comfort him !
His worthy fam'ly far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear !

My auld schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my Mason-billie,
And Auchenbay, I wish him joy;
If he's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad and Meg the mither
Just five-and-forty years thegither !
And no forgetting wabster Charlie,
I'm tauld he offers very fairly.

An', Lord, remember singing Sannock
Wi' hale breeks, saxpence, an' a bannock !
And next, my auld acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy,
An' her kind stars hae airted till her
A guid chiel wi' a pickle siller !
My kindest, best respects, I sen' it,
To cousin Kate, an' sister Janet:
Tell them, frae me, wi' chieuls be cautious,
For faith ! they'll aiblins fin' them fashions;
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant a maidenhead's the devil !

An' lastly, Jamie, for yourself,
May guardian angels tak a spell,
An' steer you seven miles south o' Hell!
But first, before you see Heaven's glory,
May ye get monie a merry story,
Monie a laugh and monie a drink,
And ay eneugh o' needfu' clink !

Now fare ye weel, an' joy be wi' you !
For my sake, this I beg it o' you:
Assist poor Simson a' ye can;
Ye'll fin' him just an honest man.
Sae I conclude, and quat my chanter,
Yours, saint or sinner,
Rab the Rantier.

TO JOHN M'MURDO
WITH SOME OF THE AUTHOR'S POEMS

Son of Robert M'Murdo of Drumlanrig.
He became chamberlain to the Duke of Queensberry, and resided at Drumlanrig. He
is, perhaps, the "Factor John" of The Kirk's Alarm (see ante, p. 113). Burns was latterly
on terms of peculiar intimacy with him and his family, especially after 1793, when
M'Murdo kept house near Dumfries. He
died at Bath, 4th December, 1803. M'Murdo
and Colonel de Peyster of the Dumfries Volun-
teers were brothers-in-law, their wives being
daughters of Provost Blair, Dumfries. The
canvassing of M'Murdo and his "lovely
spouse" in the Dumfries election of 1790 is
thus described in the Election Ballad to Gra-
ham of Fintry (post, p. 163):

"She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, sub rosâ, played his part
Among their wives and lasses."

But Burns's esteem for both is sufficiently
shown in the present note and in the lines
On John M'Murdo (post, p. 178). Two of
their daughters are the respective themes of
Bonie Jean and Phyllis the Fair.

I
O, could I give thee India's wealth,
As I this trifle send!
Because thy Joy in both would be
To share them with a friend!

II
But golden sands did never grace
The Heliconian stream:
Then take what gold could never buy —
An honest Bard's esteem.

SONNET TO ROBERT GRAHAM,
ESQ., OF FINTRY
ON RECEIVING A FAVOUR, 19TH AUGUST,
1789

The favour was the appointment to an exercise district on which the writer's farm was situate. For Graham, see ante, p. 85. For the stave, it is fair to note that, judging by this and the other two or three essays in the form which Burns has left, he knew nothing about the sonnet except that it must consist of fourteen lines, and that (as his variations in the present case appear to show) he was not always sure of that. The reason is not, of course, that the sonnet (which is described in the Schorte Treatise [1585], and of which Montgomerie left some seventy finished and spirited examples) had no past in the vernacular, but that very few sonnets were made in the eighteenth century, and none of these few was the work of either Ramsay or Ferguson.

I call no Goddess to inspire my strains:
A fabled Muse may suit a Bard that feigns.
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night!
If aught that giver from my mind efface,
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace,
Then roll to me along your wand'ring spheres
Only to number out a villain's years!

I lay my hand upon my swelling breast,
And grateful would, but cannot, speak the rest.

EPISTLE TO DR. BLACKLOCK

Thomas Blacklock was born at Annan, of English (Cumberland) parents in 1721. At six months smallpox made him blind. He published Poems (poor stuff) in 1746; made the acquaintance of David Hume, who (with other friends) partly supported him at the University of Edinburgh; by Hume's advice completed a theological course; in 1762 was presented to the living of Kirkcudbright; but, the parishioners objecting to his blindness, retired in 1764 to Edinburgh, where he lived by taking pupils. He died 7th July, 1791. An edition of his verses appeared in 1793, with a life by Henry Mackenzie. It was owing to Blacklock that Burns resolved upon an Edinburgh Edition.

ELLISLAND, 21st October, 1789.

I
Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
I kend it still, your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you ay as weel's I want ye,
And then ye'll do!

II
The Ill-Thief blaw the Heron south,
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tauld mysel by word o' mouth,
He 'd tak my letter:
I lippen'd to the chiel in trowth,
And bade nae better.

III
But aiblins honest Master Heron
Had at the time some dainty fair one
To ware his theologic care on
And holy study,
And, tired o' sauls to waste his learn on,
E'en tried the body.

IV
But what d' ye think, my trusty fier?
I'm turned a gauger — Peace be here!
Parnassian queires, I fear, I fear,
Ye 'll now disdain me,
And then my fifty pounds a year
Will little gain me!

V
Ye glaikit, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha by Castalia's wimplin streamies
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
e ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

VI
I hae a wife and twa wee laddies;
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies:
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is —
I need na vaunt —
But I’ll sned besoms, thraw saugh woodies,
Before they want.

VI

Lord help me thro’ this warld o’ care!
I’m weary — sick o’t late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than monie ither;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a’ men brethren?

VIII

Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o’ carl-hemp in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne’er wan
A lady fair:
Wha does the utmost that he can
Will whyles do mair.

IX

But to conclude my silly rhyme
(I’m scant o’ verse and scant o’ time):
To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That’s the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

X

My compliments to sister Beckie,
And eke the same to honest Lucky:
I wat she is a daintie chuckie
As e’er tread clay:
And gratefully, my guid and cockie,
I’m yours for ay.

ROBERT BURNS.

TO A GENTLEMAN

WHO HAD SENT A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE

Probably Peter Stuart of The London Star.
He left The Morning Post to join with certain others, including John Mayne, author of The Siller Gun, in founding The Star and Evening Advertiser in the beginning of 1788; but in the February of 1789 he quarrelled, not, as has been vaguely supposed, with the proprietors of some other paper, but with the proprietors of The Star aforesaid, and on the 13th he brought out a Star of his own. The main ground of the quarrel was his support of the Prince of Wales, and he defended his secession in a lengthy address to the public. Thus for some six months two several Stars appeared in London: the old one — the Dog Star, Stuart called it — “published by John Mayne;” and the new one, “published by Peter Stuart,” ex-publisher of the old. At first Stuart retained the old title, with the addition below, Printed by P. Stuart; but on February 24th he changed it to Stuart’s Star and Evening Advertiser, and on April 27th to The Morning Star. Some two months after the journal died.

ELLISSLAND, Monday Morning.
TO PETER STUART

DEAR PETER, dear Peter,
We poor sons of metre
Are often negleckit, ye ken:
For instance your sheet, man
(Tho' glad I'm to see 't, man),
I get it no ae day in ten.

TO JOHN MAXWELL, ESQ., OF TERRAUGHTIE

ON HIS BIRTH-DAY

John Maxwell, though descended from a branch of the Maxwells, was born of humble parents at Buittle, 7th February, 1720, and apprenticed to a joiner in Dumfries. His industry and ability enabled him to repurchase the family estate of Terraughtie. Burns's prediction as to his length of days was so far verified, one learns, that he died (25th January, 1814) in his ninety-fourth year. In the Second Heron Election Ballad (p. 166) he is designated "Teuch Johnie."

I
Health to the Maxwells' vet'ran Chief! Health ay unsour'd by care or grief! Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sibyl leaf
This natal morn:
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
Sarce quite half-worn.

II
This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second-sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka Poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven,
Will yet bestow it.

III
If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on thy blest morrow,
May Desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an' hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure!

IV
But for thy friends, and they are monie,
Baith honest men and lasses bonie,
TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER

II
So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast,
Discordant, jar thy bosom-chords among!
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love ecstatic wake his seraph song!

III
Or Pity's notes in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious Virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals!

ROBERT BURNS.

DUMFRIES, 31st January, 1794.

REMORSEFUL APOLOGY

Probably sent to Mrs. Walter Riddell.

I
The friend whom, wild from Wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send
(Not moony madness more astray),
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

II
Mine was th' insensate, frenzied part —
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive?
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL

Written towards the close of '95. Burns was on very friendly terms with Mitchell, and often sent him first drafts for criticism.

I
Friend of the Poet tried and leal,
Wha wanting thee might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle Deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin jig an' reel
In my poor pouches!

II
I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That One-pound-one, I sairly want it;
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted,
I'd bear 't in mind!

III
So may the Auld Year gang out moanin
To see the New come laden, groanin
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin
To thee and thine:
Domestic peace and comforts crownin
The hale design!

POSTSCRIPT

IV
Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell Death was nearly nicket:
Grim loon! He got me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

V
But by that health, I 've got a share o' t,
And by that life, I 'm promis'd mair o' t,
My hale and weel, I 'll tak a care o' t,
A tentier way;
Then farewell Folly, hide and hair o' t,
For ance and ay!

TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER

Colonel Arent Schuyler de Peyster was descended from a Huguenot family settled in America, and served with distinction in the American War. He took up house at Mavis Grove, near Dumfries; and on 24th May, 1795, was appointed colonel of the Dumfries Volunteers, in which Burns was a private. He was a brother-in-law of John M'Murdo (see ante, p. 143). He died 26th November, 1822, in his 66th year.

I
My honor'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal:
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill
And potion glasses.
II
O, what a canty warld were it,
Would pain and care and sickness spare it,
And Fortune favor worth and merit
As they deserve,
And ay a rowth — roast-beef and claret! —
Syne, wha wad starve?

III
Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her,
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still:
Ay wavering, like the willow-wicker,
'Tween good and ill!

IV
Then that curst carmagnole, Auld Satan,
 Watches, like baudrons by a ratton,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye ne'er cast saut on —
He's aff like fire.

V
Ah Nick! Ah Nick! it is na fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
O' Hell's damned waft!

VI
Poor Man, the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft, as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy damn'd auld elbow yeuks wi' joy
And hellish pleasure,
Already in thy fancy's eye
Thy sicker treasure!

VII
Soon, heels o'er gowdie, in he gangs,
And, like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy gurnin laugh enjoys his pangs
And murdering wrestle,
As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
A gibbet's tassle.

VIII
But lest you think I am uncivil
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the Devil!
Amen! Amen!

TO MISS JESSIE LEWARS
Thine be the volumes, Jessie fair,
And with them take the Poet's prayer:
That Fate may in her fairest page,
With ev'ry kindliest, best presage
Of future bliss enrol thy name;
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution, still aware
Of ill — but chief Man's felon snare!
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind —
These be thy guardian and reward!
So prays thy faithful friend, the Bard.

Robert Burns.
June 26, 1796.

INSCRIPTION
WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A
COPY OF THE LAST EDITION OF MY
POEMS, PRESENTED TO THE LADY
WHOM, IN SO MANY FICTITIOUS REVER-
IES OF PASSION, BUT WITH THE MOST
ARDENT SENTIMENTS OF REAL FRIEND-
SHIP, I HAVE SO OFTEN SUNG UNDER
THE NAME OF CHLORIS

For Chloris, see Prefatory Note to Lassie
wi' the Lint-white Locks, post, p. 289. The copy
sent to George Thomson, now at Brechin Cas-
tle, corresponds with the text. An early draft
is in the Clarke-Adam Collection.
The stanza is that of much English eight-
teenth century verse: among the rest, of Gold-
smith's Edwin and Angelina.

I
'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair
Friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse;
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse.

II
Since thou in all thy youth and charms
Must bid the world adieu
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms),
To join the friendly few;

III
Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lour
(And ne'er Misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower);

IV
Since life's gay scenes must charm no more:
Still much is left behind,
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store —
The comforts of the mind!

V
Thine is the self-approving glow
Of conscious honor's part;
And (dearest gift of Heaven below)
Thine Friendship's truest heart;

VI
The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove:
And doubly were the Poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

Une Bagatelle de l'Amitié.

COILA.

THEATRICAL PIECES

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODS ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT, MONDAY, 16TH APRIL, 1787

William Woods, born 1751, was originally a printer, but joined (c. 1768) a strolling company at Southampton. After appearing in London, he removed, about 1771, to Edinburgh, where he played leading parts in tragedy and sentimental comedy. He died 14th December, 1802, and was buried in the Old Calton Cemetery. He was author of two plays: The Volunteers (1778) and The Twins (1780); the last one published in '83. Burns's interest in Woods was probably quickened by the player's friendship with Fergusson, who, in his Last Will, bequeaths him his Shakespeare: —

"To Woods, whose genius can provoke
My passions to the bowl or sock;
For love to thee and to the Nine,
Be my immortal Shakespeare thine."

The piece, like the others in this category, is on the traditional lines originally laid down by Dryden.

When by a generous Public's kind acclaim
That dearest need is granted — honest fame;

When here your favour is the actor's lot,
Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heavenly Virtue's glow
But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous throng:
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song.
But here an ancient nation, fam'd afar
For genius, learning high, as great in war.
Hail, Caledonia, name for ever dear!
Before whose sons I'm honor'd to appear!
Where every science, every noble art,
That can inform the mind or mend the heart,
Is known (as grateful nations oft have found),
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound!
Philosophy, no idle pedant dream,
Here holds her search by heaven-taught Reason's beam;
Here History paints with elegance and force
The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
Here Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plan,
And Harley rouses all the God in man.
When well-form'd taste and sparkling wit unite
With manly lore, or female beauty bright
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace
Can only charm us in the second place),
Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
As on this night, I've met these judges here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live:
Equal to judge, you're candid to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With Decency and Law beneath his feet;
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name:
Like Caledonians you applaud or blame!

O Thou, dread Power, Whose empire-giving hand
Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honor'd land!
Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire;
May every son be worthy of his sire;

When here your favour is the actor's lot,
Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heavenly Virtue's glow
But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barb'rous throng:
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song.
But here an ancient nation, fam'd afar
For genius, learning high, as great in war.
Hail, Caledonia, name for ever dear!
Before whose sons I'm honor'd to appear!
Where every science, every noble art,
That can inform the mind or mend the heart,
Firm may she rise, with generous disdain
At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's chain;
Still self-dependent in her native shore,
Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
Till Fate the curtain drop on worlds to be no more!

PROLOGUE SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE OF DUMFRIES
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY EVENING, 1790

Of Sutherland Burns wrote (9th February, 1790) to William Nicol: "A worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with." To his brother Gilbert, 11th January, 1790, he described him as "a man of apparent worth," adding that he quoted the prologue "to his audience with applause." "I shall not be in the least mortified," wrote Burns, "though they are never heard of, but if they can be of any service to Mr. Sutherland and his friends, I shall kiss my hands to my Lady Muse, and own myself much her debtor."

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city
That queens it o'er our taste — the more 's the pity!
Tho', by the bye, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home.
But not for panegyric I appear:
I come to wish you all a good New Year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story.
The sage, grave Ancient cough'd, and bade me say:
"You're one year older this important day."
If wiser too — he hinted some suggestion,
But 't would be rude, you know, to ask the question;
And with a would-be-roguish leer and wink
He bade me on you press this one word — Think!

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush with hope and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
To you the dotard has a deal to say,
In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way!
He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
That the first blow is ever half the battle;
That, tho' some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
That, whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, tho' not least in love, ye youthful fair,
Angellic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
To you old Bald-Pate smoothes his wrinkled brow,
And humbly begs you'll mind the important — Now!
To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
And offers bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, tho' haply weak endeavours,
With grateful pride we own your many favours;
And howsoever our tongues may ill reveal it,
Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

SCOTS PROLOGUE FOR MRS. SUTHERLAND
ON HER BENEFIT-NIGHT AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES, MARCH 3, 1790

What needs this din about the town o' Lon'ou,
How this new play an' that new song comin?'
Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle courted?
Does Nonsense mend like brandy — when imported?
Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will bauldly try to gie us plays at hame?
For Comedy abroad he need na toil:
A knave and fool are plants of every soil.
Nor need he stray as far as Rome or Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece:
There's themes enow in Caledonian story
Would show the tragic Muse in a' her glory.
Is there no daring Bard will rise and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless fell?
Where are the Muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o’ the name o’ Bruce?
How here, even here, he first unsheath’d the sword
’Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord,
And after monie a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench’d his dear country from the jaws of Ruin!
O, for a Shakespeare, or an Otway scene
To paint the lovely, hapless Scottish Queen!
Vain all th’ omnipotence of female charms
’Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion’s arms!
She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman:
A woman (tho’ the phrase may seem uncivil)
As able — and as cruel — as the Devil!
One Douglas lives in Home’s immortal page,
But Douglasses were heroes every age;
And tho’ your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas followed to the martial strife,
Perhaps, if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a’ the land
Would take the Muses’ servants by the hand;
Not only hear, but patronize, befriend them,
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;
And aiblins, when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard, and say: “The folks hae done their best.”
Would a’ the land do this, then I’ll be caution
Ye’ll soon hae Poets o’ the Scottish nation
Will gar Fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
And warsle Time, an’ lay him on his back!

For us and for our stage, should onie spier: —
“Whase aught thae chiels maks a’ this bustle here?”
My best leg foremost, I’ll set up my brow: —
“We have the honor to belong to you!”
We’re your ain bairns, e’en guide us as ye like,
But like good mithers, shore before ye strike;
And grateful still, I trust ye’ll ever find us
For gen’rous patronage and meikle kindness
We’ve got frae a’ professions, sets an’ ranks:
God help us! we’re but poor — ye’se get but thanks!

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN
AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT, NOVEMBER 26, 1792

Sent to Miss Fontenelle in a complimentary letter: “Your charms as a woman would secure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would secure admiration to the plainest figure.” She is also the subject of a flattering Epigram (p. 189). Miss Fontenelle won some applause on the London boards. Her name appears in the obituary of The Gentleman’s Magazine for September, 1800: “In Charles-town, South Carolina, a victim to the yellow fever, Miss Fontenelle, who made her début many years ago at Covent Garden, and afterwards performed at the Haymarket. In America she played under the name of Mrs. Wilkinson.”

WHILE Europe’s eye is fix’d on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of kings;
While quacks of State must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the Rights of Man;
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention.

First, in the sexes’ intermix’d connexion
One sacred Right of Woman is Protection:
The tender flower, that lifts its head elate,
Helpless must fall before the blasts of fate,
Sunk on the earth, defae’d its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th’ impending storm.

For us and for our stage, should onie spier: —
“We have the honor to belong to you!”
We’re your ain bairns, e’en guide us as ye like,
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough rude Man had naughty
ways:
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up
a riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet!
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times
are fled;
Now, well-bred men — and you are all
well-bred —
Most justly think (and we are much the
gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor man-
ers.

For Right the third, our last, our best, our
dearest:
That right to fluttering female hearts the
nearest,
Which even the Rights of Kings, in low
prostration,
Most humbly own — 'tis dear, dear Admi-
ration!
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life — Immortal
Love.
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations,
airs —
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage
dares?
When awful Beauty joins with all her
charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?
But truce with kings, and truce with con-
stitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let Majesty your first attention summon:
Ah! 'ça ira!' the Majesty of Woman!

ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER
BENEFIT NIGHT, DECEMBER 4, 1793,
AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES

Still anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious, sure, this night than
ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such mat-
ter,
'T would vamp my bill, said I, if nothing
better:

So sought a Poet roosted near the skies;
Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;
Said, nothing like his works was ever
printed;
And last, my prologue-business slily hinted.
"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man
of rhymes,
"I know your bent — these are no laugh-
ing times:
Can you — but, Miss, I own I have my
fears —
Dissolve in pause, and sentimental tears?
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sen-
tence,
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers fell Re-
pentance?
Paint Vengeance, as he takes his horrid
stand,
Waving on high the desolating brand,
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty
land?"

I could no more! Askance the creature
eyeing: —
"D'ye think," said I, "this face was made
for crying?"
I'll laugh, that's poz — nay more, the
world shall know it;
And so, your servant! gloomy Master
Poet!"

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 't is my fix'd be-
lief
That Misery's another word for Grief.
I also think (so may I be a bride!)
That so much laughter, so much life en-
joy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye;
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive —
To make three guineas do the work of five;
Laugh in Misfortune's face — the beldam
witch —
Say, you'll be merry, tho' you can't be
rich!

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love!
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast
strove;
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
Measur'd in desperate thought — a rope
— thy neck —
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the
deep,
Peekest to meditate the healing leap:
Would’st thou be cur’d, thou silly, moping elf?
Laugh at her follies, laugh e’en at thyself;
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrible,
And love a kinder: that’s your grand specific.

To sum up all: be merry, I advise;
And as we’re merry, may we still be wise!

POLITICAL PIECES
ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Breadalbane,
President of the Right Honorable the Highland Society,
which met on the 23rd of May last, at the Shakespeare,
Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate
the designs of five hundred Highlanders who, as the Society were informed by Mr. M’Kenzie of Applecross,
were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters whose property they were, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. Macdonald of Glengary to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing — Liberty.

Long life, my lord, an’ health be yours,
Unskait’d by hunger’d Highland boors!
Lord grant nae duddie, desperate beggar,
Wi’ dirk, claymore, or rusty trigger,
May twin auld Scotland o’ a life
She likes — as lambskins like a knife!

Faith! you and Applecross were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight!
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
Than let them ance out owre the water!
Then up amang thae lakes and seas,
They’ll mak what rules and laws they please:
Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin;
Some Washington again may head them,
Till (God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed)
Poor dunghill sons of dirt an’ mire
May to Patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier owre the pack vile!
An’ whare will ye get Howes and Clintons

To bring them to a right repentance?
To cowe the rebel generation,
An’ save the honor o’ the nation?
They, an’ be damn’d! what right hae they
To meat or sleep or light o’ day,
Far less to riches, pow’r, or freedom?
What, and your lordship likes to gie them?

But hear, my lord! Glengary, hear!
Your hand’s owre light on them, I fear:
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna say but they do gaylies:
They lay aside a’ tender mercies,
An’ tirl the hulings to the burses.
Yet while they’re only poind and herriet,
They’ll keep their stubborn Highland spirit.
But smash them! crush them a’ to spails,
An’ rot the dyvors i’ the jails!
The young dogs, swinge them to the labour:
Let wark an’ hunger mak them sober!
The bizzies, if they’re aughtlins fawson,
Let them in Drury Lane be lesson’d!
An’ if the wives an’ dirty brats
Come thiggin at your doors an’ yetts,
Flaffin wi’ duds an’ grey wi’ beas’,
Frightin awa your deuks an’ geese,
Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,
The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
Wi’ a’ their bastard pack
Go on, my lord! I lang to meet you,
An’ in my “house at hame” to greet you
Wi’ common lords ye shanna mingle:
The benmost neuk beside the ingle,
At my right han’ assigned your seat
’Tween Herod’s hip an’ Polycrate,
Or (if you on your station tarrow)
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat, I’m sure ye’re weel deservin’t;
An’ till ye come — your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB
HELL,
1st June, Anno Mundi 5790.

Without giving his authority, Currie accounts for the piece thus: “It appears that on the 31st December he (Burns) attended a meeting to celebrate the birthday of the lineal descendant of the Scottish race of kings, the late unfortunate Prince Charles Edward.”
More he knew not; but he assumed the "perfect loyalty to the reigning sovereign of all who attended the meeting," and he withheld a large portion of the Ode because it was "a kind of rant, for which indeed precedent may be cited in various other odes, but with which it is impossible to go along."

AFAR the illustrious Exile roams,
Whom kingdoms on this day should hail,
An inmate in the casual shed,
On transient pity’s bounty fed,
Haunted by busy Memory’s bitter tale!
Beasts of the forest have their savage homes,
But He, who should imperial purple wear,
Owns not the lap of earth where rests his royal head:
His wretched refuge dark despair,
While ravening wrongs and woes pursue,
And distant far the faithful few
Who would his sorrows share!

False flatterer, Hope, away,
Nor think to lure us as in days of yore!
We solemnize this sorrowing natal day,
To prove our loyal truth — we can no more —
And, owning Heaven’s mysterious sway,
Submissive, low, adore.
Ye honor’d, mighty Dead,
Who nobly perish’d in the glorious cause,
Your King, your Country, and her laws:
From great Dundee, who smiling Victory led
And fell a Martyr in her arms
(What breast of northern ice but warms!)
To bold Balmerino’s undying name,
Whose soul of fire, lighted at Heaven’s high flame,
Deserves the proudest wreath departed heroes claim!

Not unrevenged your fate shall lie,
It only lags, the fatal hour:
Your blood shall with incessant cry
Awake at last th’ unsparing Power.
As from the cliff, with thundering course,
The snowy ruin smokes along
With doubling speed and gathering force,
Till deep it, crushing,whelms the cottage in the vale,
So Vengeance’ arm, ensanguin’d, strong,
Shall with resistless might assail,
Usurping Brunswick’s pride shall lay,
And Stewart’s wrongs and yours with tenfold weight repay.

Perdition, baleful child of night,
Rise and revenge the injured right
Of Stewart’s royal race!
Lead on the unmuzzled hounds of Hell,
Till all the frightened echoes tell
The blood-notes of the chase!
Full on the quarry point their view,
Full on the base usurping crew,
The tools of faction and the nation’s curse!
Hark how the cry grows on the wind;
They leave the lagging gale behind;
Their savage fury, pitiless, they pour;
With murdering eyes already they devour!
See Brunswick spent, a wretched prey,
His life one poor despairing day,
Where each avenging hour still ushers in a worse!
Such Havoc, howling all abroad,
Their utter ruin bring,
The base apostates to their God
Or rebels to their King!

ODE TO THE DEPARTED

George III. began to show signs of mental derangement on 22d October, 1788; and on 5th December his physicians reported that, although he was not incurable, it was impossible to predict how long his illness might last. Fox and the “Portland Band” (i.e. the Whigs) who hoped to return to power through the Prince of Wales, maintained that the Heir-Apparent must take up the Regency with plenary sovereign powers; but on 16th December Pitt brought in resolutions for appointing him Regent with restricted authority. The Bill passed the Commons on 11th February, 1789, but its progress was suspended by the announcement of the Chancellor on the 19th that the King was convalescent; and on 10th March he resumed his state.

Daughter of Chaos’ doting years,
Nurse of ten thousand hopes and fears!
Whether thy airy, unsubstantial shade
(The rights of sepulture now duly paid)
Spread abroad its hideous form
On the roaring civil storm,
Deafening din and warring rage
Factions wild with factions wage;
Or Underground
Deep-sunk, profound
Among the demons of the earth,
With groans that make
The mountains shake
Thou mourn thy ill-starr'd blighted birth;
Or in the uncreated Void,
Where seeds of future being fight,
With lighten'd step thou wander wide
To greet thy mother — Ancient Night —
And as each jarring monster-mass is past,
Fond recollect what once thou wast:
In manner due, beneath this sacred oak,
Hear, Spirit, hear! thy presence I in-voke!

By a Monarch's heaven-struck fate;
By a disunited State;
By a generous Prince's wrongs;
By a Senate's war of tongues;
By a Premier's sullen pride
Louring on the changing tide;
By dread Thurlow's powers to awe —
Rhetoric, blasphemy, and law;
By the turbulent ocean,
A Nation's commotion;
By the harlot-caresses
Of Borough addresses;
By days few and evil;
(Thy portion, poor devil!),
By Power, Wealth, and Show — the Gods
by men adored;
By nameless Poverty their Hell abhorred;
By all they hope, by all they fear,
Hear! and Appear!

Stare not on me, thou ghostly Power,
Nor, grim with chain'd defiance, lour!
No Babel-structure would I build
Where, Order exil'd from his native sway,
Confusion might the Regent-sceptre wield,
While all would rule and none obey.

Go, to the world of Man relate
The story of thy sad, eventful fate;
And call presumptuous Hope to hear
And bid him check his blind career;
And tell the sore-pret sons of Care
Never, never to despair!

Paint Charles's speed on wings of fire,
The object of his fond desire,
Beyond his boldest hopes, at hand.
Paint all the triumph of the Portland Band
(Hark! how they lift the joy-exulting voice,
And how their num'rous creditors rejoice!);
But just as hopes to warm enjoyment rise,
Cry "Convalescence!" and the vision flies.

Then next pourtray a dark'ning twilight gloom
Eclipsing sad a gay, rejoicing morn,
While proud Ambition to th' untimely tomb
By gnashing, grim, despairing fiends is borne!
Paint Ruin, in the shape of high Dundas
Gaping with giddy terror o'er the brow:
In vain he struggles, the Fates behind him press,
And clamorous Hell yawns for her prey below!
How fallen That, whose pride late scaled the skies!
And This, like Lucifer, no more to rise!
Again pronounce the powerful word:
See Day, triumphant from the night, restored!

Then know this truth, ye Sons of Men
(Thus ends thy moral tale):
Your darkest terrors may be vain,
Your brightest hopes may fail!

A NEW PSALM FOR THE CHAPEL OF KILMARNOCK

ON THE THANKSGIVING-DAY FOR HIS MAJESTY'S RECOVERY

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop of 4th April, 1789, [probably for 4th May], Burns wrote: "The following are a few stanzas of new Psalmody for that 'joyful solemnity' [the Thanksgiving for the King's recovery] which I sent to a London newspaper with the date and preface following: 'Kilmarnock, 25th April. Mr. Printer,— In a certain chapel, not fifty leagues from the market cross of this good town, the following stanzas of Psalmody, it is said, were composed for, and devoutly sung on, the late joyful solemnity of the 23d.'" The paper was Stuart's Morning Star, where parody and letter, dated "Kilmarnock, April 30th," and signed "Duncan M'Leerie"— the hero
POSTHUMOUS PIECES

he of an old Kilmarnock song preserved in
*The Merry Muses* — appeared on May 14th.

I

O, SING a new song to the Lord!
Make, all and every one,
A joyful noise, ev'n for the King
His restoration!

II

The sons of Belial in the land
Did set their heads together.
"Come, let us sweep them off," said they,
"Like an o'erflowing river!"

III

They set their heads together, I say,
They set their heads together:
On right, and left, and every hand,
We saw none to deliver.

IV

Thou madest strong two chosen ones,
To quell the Wicked's pride:
That Young Man, great in Issachar,
The burden-bearing tribe;

V

And him, among the Princes, chief
In our Jerusalem,
The Judge that's mighty in Thy law,
The man that fears Thy name.

VI

Yet they, even they with all their strength,
Began to faint and fail;
Even as two howling, rav'ning wolves
To dogs do turn their tail.

VII

Th' ungodly o'er the just prevail'd;
For so Thou hadst appointed,
That Thou might'st greater glory give
Unto Thine own anointed!

VIII

And now Thou hast restored our State,
Pity our Kirk also;
For she by tribulations
Is now brought very low!

IX

Consume that high-place, Patronage,
From off Thy holy hill;

And in Thy fury burn the book
Even of that man M'Gill!

X

Now hear our prayer, accept our song,
And fight Thy chosen's battle!
We seek but little, Lord, from Thee:
Thou kens we get as little!

INSCRIBED TO THE RIGHT
HON. C. J. FOX

Enclosed to Mrs. Dunlop in the same letter
as the preceding piece: "I have another poetic
whim in my head, which I at present dedicate,
or rather inscribe, to the Hon. Charles J. Fox;
but how long the fancy may hold I can't say.
A few of the first lines I have just rough
sketched as follows."

How Wisdom and Folly meet, mix, and
unite,
How Virtue and Vice blend their black
and their white,
How Genius, th' illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles con-
diction,
I sing. If these mortals, the critics, should
bustle,
I care not, not I: let the critics go whistle!

But now for a Patron, whose name and
whose glory
At once may illustrate and honour my
story:—

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits,
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem
mere lucky hits;
With knowledge so vast and with judg-
ment so strong,
No man with the half of 'em e'er could go
wrong;
With passions so potent and fancies so
bright,
No man with the half of 'em e'er could go
right;
A sorry, poor, misbegot son of the Muses,
For using thy name, offers fifty excuses.

Good Lord, what is Man! For as simple
he looks,
Do but try to develop his hooks and his
crooks!
With his depths and his shallows, his good
and his evil,
All in all he's a problem must puzzle the
Devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely
labors,
That, like th' old Hebrew walking-switch,
eats up its neighbours.
Human Nature's his show-box — your
friend, would you know him?
Pull the string, Ruling Passion — the pic-
ture will show him.
What pity, in rearing so beauuteous a sys-
tem,
One trifling particular — Truth — should
have miss'd him!
For, spite of his fine theoretic positions,
Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its
tribe,
And think Human Nature they truly de-
scribe:
Have you found this, or t'other? There's
more in the wind,
As by one drunken fellow his comrades
you'll find.
But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan
In the make of that wonderful creature
called Man,
No two virtues, whatever relation they
claim,
Nor even two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin brother to
brother,
Possessing the one shall imply you've the
other.

But truce with abstraction, and truce
with a Muse
Whose rhymes you'll perhaps, Sir, ne'er
deign to peruse!
Will you leave your justings, your jars,
and your quarrels,
Contending with Billy for proud-nodding
laurels?
My much-honour'd Patron, believe your
poor Poet,
Your courage much more than your pru-
dence you show it.
In vain with Squire Billy for laurels you
struggle:
He'll have them by fair trade — if not, he
will smuggle;

Nor cabinets even of kings would conceal
'Em,
He'd up the back-stairs, and by God he
would steal 'em!
Then feats like Squire Billy's, you ne'er
can achieve 'em;
It is not, out-do him — the task is, out-
thieve him!

ON GLENRIDDELL'S FOX
BREAKING HIS CHAIN
A FRAGMENT, 1791

THOU, Liberty, thou art my theme:
Not such as idle poets dream,
Who trick thee up a heathen goddess
That a fantastic cap and rod has!
Such stale conceits are poor and silly:
I paint thee out a Highland filly,
A sturdy, stubborn, handsome dapple,
As sleek's a mouse, as round's an apple,
That, when thou pleasest, can do wonders,
But when thy luckless rider blunders,
Or if thy fancy should demur there,
Wilt break thy neck ere thou go further.

These things premiss'd, I sing a Fox —
Was caught among his native rocks,
And to a dirty kennel chained —
How he his liberty regained.

Glenriddell! a Whig without a stain,
A Whig in principle and grain,
Could'st thou enslave a free-born crea-
ture,
A native denizen of Nature?
How could'st thou, with a heart so good
(A better ne'er was sluiced with blood),
Nail a poor devil to a tree,
That ne'er did harm to thine or thee?

The staunchest Whig Glenriddel was,
Quite frantic in his country's cause;
And oft was Reynard's prison passing,
And with his brother-Whigs canvassing
The rights of men, the powers of women,
With all the dignity of Freemen.

Sir Reynard daily heard debates
Of princes', kings', and nations' fates,
With many rueful, bloody stories
Of tyrants, Jacobites, and Tories:
From liberty how angels fell,
That now are galley-slaves in Hall;
How Nimrod first the trade began
Of binding Slavery's chains on man;
How fell Semiramis — God damn her! —
Did first, with sacrilegious hammer
(All ills till then were trivial matters)
For Man dethron'd forge hen-peck fetters;
How Xerxes, that abandoned Tory,
Thought cutting throats was reaping glory,
Until the stubborn Whigs of Sparta
Taught him great Nature's Magna Charta;
How mighty Rome her fiat hurl'd
Resistless o'er a bowing world,
And, kinder than they did desire,
Polish'd mankind with sword and fire:
With much too tedious to relate
Of ancient and of modern date,
But ending still how Billy Pitt
(Unlucky boy !) with wicked wit
Has gagg'd old Britain, drained her coffer,
As butchers bind and bleed a heifer.

Thus wily Reynard, by degrees
In kennel listening at his ease,
Suck'd in a mighty stock of knowledge,
As much as some folks at a college;
Knew Britain's rights and constitution,
Her aggrandisement, diminution;
How Fortune wrought us good from evil:
Let no man, then, despise the Devil,
As who should say: “I ne'er can need
him,”
Since we to scoundrels owe our Freedom.

ON THE COMMEMORATION OF
RODNEY'S VICTORY

KING'S ARMS, DUMFRIES, 12TH APRIL,
1793

Rodney's action off Dominica, 12th April,
1792, was for some time celebrated year by
year.

INSTEAD of a song, boys, I'll give you a
toast:
Here's the Mem'ry of those on the Twelfth
that we lost! —
We lost, did I say? — No, by Heav'n,
that we found!
For their fame it shall live while the world
goes round.

The next in succession I'll give you: the
King!
And who would betray him, on high may
he swing!
And here's the grand fabric, our Free
Constitution
As built on the base of the great Revolu-
tion!
And, longer with Politics not to be cram'm'd,
Be Anarchy curs'd, and be Tyranny
dann'd!
And who would to Liberty e'er prove
disloyal,
May his son be a hangman — and he his
first trial!

ODE FOR GENERAL WASHING-
ton's Birthday

"I am just going to trouble your critical
patience with the first sketch of a stanza I
have been framing as I paced along the road.
The subject is Liberty: you know, my honoured
friend, how dear the theme is to me. I de-
sign it as an irregular ode for General Wash-
ington's birthday." (R. B. to Mrs. Dunlop,
25th June, 1794.)

No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,
No lyre Æolian I awake.
'Tis Liberty's bold note I swell:
Thy harp, Columbia, let me take!
See gathering thousands, while I sing,
A broken chain, exulting, bring
And dash it in a tyrant's face,
And dare him to his very beard,
And tell him he no more is fear'd,
No more the despot of Columbia's
race!
A tyrant's proudest insults brav'd,
They shout a People freed! They hail an
Empire sav'd!

Where is man's godlike form?
Where is that brow erect and bold,
That eye that can unmov'd behold
The wildest rage, the loudest storm
That e'er created Fury dared to raise?
Avaunt! thou caitiff, servile, base,
That tremblest at a despot's nod,
Yet, crouching under the iron rod,
Canst laud the arm that struck th' insult-
ing blow!
Art thou of man's Imperial line?
Dost boast that countenance divine?
Each skulking feature answers: No!
But come, ye sons of Liberty,
Columbia's offspring, brave as free,
In danger's hour still flaming in the van,
Ye know, and dare maintain the Royalty
Of Man!

Alfred, on thy starry throne
Surrounded by the tuneful choir,
The Bards that erst have struck the patriot lyre,
And rouse'd the freeborn Briton's soul of fire,
No more thy England own!
Dare injured nations form the great design
To make detested tyrants bleed?
Thy England exerçates the glorious deed!
Beneath her hostile banners waving,
Every pang of honour braving,
England in thunder calls: "The tyrant's cause is mine!"
That hour accruest how did the fiends rejoice,
And Hell thro' all her confines raise th' exulting voice!
That hour which saw the generous English name
Link't with such damnéd deeds of everlasting shame!

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Fam'd for the martial deed, the heaven-taught song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes!
Where is that soul of Freedom fled?
Immengled with the mighty dead
Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep!
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath!
Is this the ancient Caledonian form,
Firm as her rock, resistless as her storm?
Show me that eye which shot immortal hate,
Blasting the Despot's proudest bearing!
Show me that arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
Crush'd Usurpation's boldest daring!
Dark-quench'd as yonder sinking star,
No more that glance lightens afar,
That palsied arm no more whirls on the waste of war.

THE FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE

TUNE: Killiecrankie

This is the earliest of a series of election ballads, all in some sort parodies of popular pieces. Regarding the genesis of this one, see ante, p. 75, Prefatory Note to When Guilford Good, and post, p. 227, Prefatory Note to The Battle of Sherramuir. It celebrates an entertainment given by William Cunningham of Annbank in 1788, on attaining his majority, but intended (so men held) to serve a political end as well.

I
O, wha will to Saint Stephen's House,
To do our errands there, man?
O, wha will to Saint Stephen's House
O' th' merry lads of Ayr, man?
Or will ye send a man o' law?
Or will ye send a sodger?
Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'!
The meikle Ursa-Major?

II
Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
For Worth and Honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man.
Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter;
Annbank, wha guess'd the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champêtre.

III
When Love and Beauty heard the news
The gay green-woods amang, man,
Where, gathering flowers and busking bowers,
They heard the blackbird's sang, man;
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
Sir Politics to fetter:
As theirs alone the patent bliss
To hold a Fête Champêtre.

IV
Then mounted Mirth on gleesome wing,
O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
Ilk glen and shaw she knew, man.
She summon'd every social sprite,
That sports by wood or water,
On th' bonie banks of Ayr to meet
And keep this Fête Champêtre.
Cauld Boreas wi’ his boisterous crew
Were bound to stakes like kye, man;
And Cynthia’s car, o’ silver fu’,

Clamb up the starry sky, man:
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
Or down the current shatter;
The western breeze steals through the trees
To view this Féte Champétre.

How many a robe sae gaily floats,
What sparkling jewels glance, man,
To Harmony’s enchanting notes,
As moves the mazy dance, man!
The echoing wood, the winding flood
Like Paradise did glitter,
When angels met at Adam’s yett
To hold their Féte Champétre.

When Politics came there to mix
And make his ether-stane, man,
He circled round the magic ground,
But entrance found he nane, man:
He blush’d for shame, he quat his name,
Forswore it every letter,
Wi’ humble prayer to join and share
This festive Féte Champétre.

There was five carlins in the South:
They fell upon a scheme
To send a lad to Lon’on town
To bring them tidings hame:

Nor only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there:
And aiblins gowd and honor baith
Might be that laddie’s share.

There was Maggie by the banks o’ Nith,
A dame wi’ pride eneugh;
And Marjorie o’ the Monie Lochs,
A carlin auld and teugh;

And Blinkin Bess of Annandale,
That dwelt near Solway-side;
And Brandy Jean, that took her gill
In Galloway sae wide;

And Black Joan, frae Crichton Peel,
O’ gipsy kith an’ kin:
Five wighter carlins were na found
The South countrie within.

To send a lad to London town
They met upon a day;
And monie a knight and monie a laird
This errand fain wad gae.

O, monie a knight and monie a laird
This errand fain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
O, ne’er a ane but tway!

The first ane was a belted Knight,
Bred of a Border band;
And he wad gae to London Town,
Might nae man him withstand;
And he wad do their errands weel,  
And meikle he wad say;  
And ilka ane at London court  
Wad bid to him guid-day.

And he wad na hecht them courtly gifts,  
Nor meikle speech pretend;  
But he wad hecht an honest heart  
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

Now wham to chuse and wham refuse  
At strife thae carlins fell;  
For some had gentle folk to please,  
And some wad please themsel.

Then out spak mim-mou’d Meg o’ Nith,  
And she spak up wi’ pride,  
And she wad send the Soger lad,  
Whatever might betide.

For the auld Guidman o’ London court  
She didna care a pin;  
But she wad send the Soger lad  
To greet his eldest son.

Then up sprang Bess o’ Annandale,  
And swore a deadly aith,  
’Says: — “I will send the belted Knight,  
Spite of you carlins baith !”

For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair,  
And fools o’ change are fain;  
But I hae tried this Border Knight:  
I’ll try him yet again.”

Then Brandy Jean spak owre her drink: —  
“Ye weel ken, kimmers a’,  
The auld Guidman o’ London court,  
His back ’s been at the wa’;

“And monie a friend that kiss’d his caup  
Is now a fremit wight;  
But it’s ne’er be sae wi’ Brandy Jean —  
I’ll send the Border Knight.”

Says Black Joán frae Crichton Peel,  
A carlin stoar and grim:—  
“The auld Guidman or the young Guidman  
For me may sink or swim !”

“For fools will prate o’ right or wrang,  
While knaves laugh in their slive;  
But wha blaws best the horn shall win —  
I’ll spier nae courtier’s leave !”

Then slow raise Marjorie o’ the Lochs,  
And wrinkled was her brow,  
Her ancient weed was russet gray,  
Her auld Scots heart was true:—

“There’s some great folk set light by me,  
I set as light by them;  
But I will send to London town  
Wham I lo’e best at hame.”

Sae how this sturt and strife may end,  
There’s naebody can tell.  
God grant the King and ilka man  
May look weel to themsel !

ELECTION BALLAD FOR WESTERHA’

Written on behalf of Sir James Johnstone,  
and modelled on the Jacobite ballad Up and  
Waur them A’, Willie. In the letter to Mrs.  
Dunlop enclosing the preceding ballad Burns  
wrote of the Duke of Queensberry: “His  
Grace is keenly attached to the Buff and Blue  
party; renegades and Apostates are, you know,  
always keen.”

Up and waur them a’, Jamie,  
Up and waur them a’!  
The Johnstones hae the guidin o’t:  
Ye turncoat Whigs, awa !
I

The Laddies by the banks o' Nith
Wad trust his Grace wi' a', Jamie;
But he'll sair them as he sair'd the King —
Turn tail and rin awa, Jamie.

II

The day he stude his country's friend,
Or gied her faes a claw, Jamie,
Or frae puir man a blessin wan —
That day the Duke ne'er saw, Jamie.

III

But wha is he, his country's boast?
Like him there is na twa, Jamie!
There's no a callant tents the kye
But kens o' Westerha', Jamie.

IV

To end the wark, here's Whistlebirk —
Lang may his whistle blaw, Jamie! —
And Maxwell true, o' sterling blue,
And we'll be Johnstones a', Jamie.

Up and waur them a', Jamie,
Up and waur them a'!
The Johnstones hae the guidin o't:
Ye turncoat Whigs, awa!

AS I CAM DOON THE BANKS O' NITH

William Douglas, fourth Duke of Queensberry (1724-1810), the notorious "Old Q.," is "his Grace" of the last ballad and is satirised again in the following not hitherto printed. Queensberry supported the proposal that the Prince of Wales should assume the government, with full royal prerogatives, during the King's illness.

As I cam doon the banks o' Nith
And by Glenriddell's ha', man,
There I heard a piper play
Turn-coat Whigs awa, man.

Drumlanrig's towers hae tint the powers
That kept the lands in awe, man:
The eagle's dead, and in his stead
We've gotten a hoodie-craw, man.

The turn-coat Duke his King forsook,
When his back was at the wa', man:

---

The rattan ran wi' a' his clan
For fear the house should fa', man.

The lads about the banks o' Nith,
They trust his Grace for a', man:
But he'll sair them as he sair't his King,
Turn tail and rin awa, man.

ELECTION BALLAD

AT CLOSE OF THE CONTEST FOR REPRESENTING THE DUMFRIES BURGHS, 1790

ADDRESS TO ROBERT GRAHAM OF FINTRY

For Graham of Fintry, see ante, p. 85.

I

FINTRY, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my Muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle's I am?
Come, then! Wi' uncouth kintra fleg
O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him!

II

But where shall I gae rin or ride,
That I may splatter nane beside?
I wad na be uncivil:
In mankind's various paths and ways
There's ay some doytin body strays,
And I ride like a devil.

III

Thus I break aff wi' a' my birr,
An' down yon dark, deep alley spur,
Where Theologies dander:
Alas! curst wi' eternal fogs,
And damn'd in everlasting bogs,
As sure's the Creed I'll blunder!

IV

I'll stain a band, or jaup a gown,
Or rin my reckless, guilty crown
Against the haly door!
Sair do I rue my luckless fate,
When, as the Muse an' Deil wad hae 't,
I rade that road before!

V

Suppose I take a spurt, and mix
Amang the wilds o' Polities —
Electors and elected —
ELECTION BALLAD

Where dogs at Court (sad sons o' bitches!)
Septennially a madness touches,
Till all the land's infected?

VI
All hail, Drumlanrig's haughty Grace,
Discarded remnant of a race
Once godlike — great in story!
Thy fathers' virtues all contrasted,
The very name of Douglas blasted,
Thine that inverted glory!

VII
Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore;
But thou hast superadded more,
And sunk them in contempt!
Follies and crimes have stain'd the name;
But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim,
From aught that's good exempt!

VIII
I'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig bears,
Who left the all-important cares
Of fiddlers, whores, and hunters,
And, bent on buying Borough Towns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster-loons,
And kissing barefit bunters.

IX
Combustion thro' our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad
Of mad unmuzzled lions,
As Queensberry buff-and-blue unfurl'd,
And Westerha' and Hopeton hurl'd
To every Whig defiance.

X
But cautious Queensberry left the war
(Th' unmanner'd dust might soil his star;
Besides, he hated bleeding),
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cæsarean fight
Or Cicereonian pleading.

XI
O, for a throat like huge Mons-Meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banner!
Heroes and heroines commix,
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honor!

XII
M'Murdo and his lovely spouse
(Th' enamour'd laurels kiss her brows!)
Led on the Loves and Graces:
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, sub rosa, played his part
Among their wives and lasses.

XIII
Craigdarroch led a light-arm'd core:
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pour,
Like Hecla streaming thunder.
Glenriddell, skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs
And bared the treason under.

XIV
In either wing two champions fought:
Redoubted Staig, who set at nought
The wildest savage Tory;
And Welsh, who ne'er yet flinch'd his
High-wav'd his magnum-bonum round
With Cyclopeian fury.

XV
Miller brought up th' artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the Banks,
Resistless desolation!
While Maxwelton, that baron bold,
'Mid Lawson's port entrench'd his hold
And threaten'd worse damnation.

XVI
To these what Tory hosts oppos'd,
With these what Tory warriors clos'd,
Surpasses my describing:
Squadrons, extended long and large,
With furious speed rush to the charge,
Like furious devils driving.

XVII
What verse can sing, what prose narrate
The butcher deeds of bloody Fate
Amid this mighty tulyie?
Grim Horror girn'd, pale Terror roar'd,
As Murther at his thrapple shor'd,
And Hell mix'd in the brulyie.

XVIII
As Highland craigs by thunder cleft,
When lightnings fire the stormy lift,
Hurl down with crashing rattle,
As flames among a hundred woods,
As headlong foam a hundred floods —
Such is the rage of Battle!
XIX
The stubborn Tories dare to die:
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
Before th' approaching fellers!
The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan Bullers.

XX
Lo, from the shades of Death's deep night
Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
And think on former daring!
The muffled murtherer of Charles
The Magna Charter flag unfurls,
All deadly gules its bearing.

XXI
Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame:
Bold Scrimgeour follows gallant Graham,
Auld Covenanters shiver...
Forgive! forgive! much-wrong'd Montrose!
Now Death and Hell engulp thy foes,
Thou liv'st on high for ever!

XXII
Still o'er the field the combat burns;
The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns;
But Fate the word has spoken;
For woman's wit and strength o' man,
Alas! can do but what they can:
The Tory ranks are broken.

XXIII
O, that my een were flowing burns!
My voice a lioness that mourns
Her darling cubs' undoing
That I might greet, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly
From furious Whigs pursuing!

XXIV
What Whig but melts for good Sir James,
Dear to his country by the names,
Friend, Patron, Benefactor?
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save;
And Hopeton falls — the generous, brave! —
And Stewart bold as Hector.

XXV
Thou, Pitt, shalt rue this overthrow,
And Thurlow growl this curse of woe,
And Melville melt in wailing!

Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice,
And Burke shall sing: — "O Prince, arise!
Thy power is all prevailing!"

XXVI
For your poor friend, the Bard, afar
He sees and hears the distant war,
A cool spectator purely:
So, when the storm the forest rends,
The robin in the hedge descends,
And, patient, chirps securely.

XXVII
Now, for my friends' and brethren's sakes,
And for my dear-lov'd Land o' Cakes,
I pray with holy fire:
Lord, send a rough-shod troop o' Hell
O'er a' wad Scotland buy or sell,
To grind them in the mire!

BALLADS ON MR. HERON'S ELECTION, 1795
BALLAD FIRST
In this Election for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, Heron of Kerroughtrie, the Whig candidate, was opposed by Thomas Gordon of Balmaghie. Burns, who had visited Heron in June, 1794, warmly supported him, not merely for friendship's sake but out of a special dislike to the more conspicuous among Balmaghe's supporters. This ballad and the next he enclosed in a letter to Mr. Heron, stating that he had distributed them "among friends all over the country."

I
Wham will we send to London town,
To Parliament and a' that?
Or wha in a' the country round
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Thro' Galloway and a' that,
Where is the Laird or belted Knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

II
Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett —
And wha is 't never saw that?
Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree met,
And has a doubt of a' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Here's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent patriot,  
The honest man, and a' that!

III
Tho' wit and worth, in either sex,  
Saint Mary's Isle can shaw that,  
Wi' Lords and Dukes let Selkirk mix,  
And weel does Selkirk fa' that!  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Here's Heron yet for a' that!  
An independent commoner  
Shall be the man for a' that.

IV
But why should we to Nobles jeuk,  
And it against the law, that,  
And even a Lord may be a gowk,  
Wi' ribban, star, and a' that?  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Here's Heron yet for a' that!  
A Lord may be a lousy loon,  
Wi' ribban, star, and a' that.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills  
Wi's uncle's purse and a' that;  
But we'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,  
A man we ken, and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Here's Heron yet for a' that!  
We are na to be bought and sold,  
Like nowte, and naigs, and a' that.

VI
Then let us drink: — "The Stewartry,  
Kerroughtree's laird, and a' that,  
Our representative to be:"

For wee he's worthy a' that!  
For a' that, and a' that,  
Here's Heron yet for a' that!  
A House of Commons such as he,  
They wad be blest that saw that.

BALLAD SECOND: THE ELECTION

TUNE: Fy, Let Us A' to The Bridal

A parody of The Blythesome Wedding, the classic, in Watson's First Part (1706), attributed to Francis Semple: —

"Fy, let us All to the Briddel,  
For there will be Lillting there,

For Jockie 's to be marry'd to Maggie,  
The Lass with the Gauden Hair:  
And there will be Lang-kail and Pottage,  
And Bannocks of barley-Meal;  
And there will be good Salt-herring  
To relish a kog of good Ale."

I
Fy, let us a’ to Kirkcudbright,  
For there will be bickerin there;  
For Murray’s light horse are to muster,  
An’ O, how the heroes will swear!  
And there will be Murray commander,  
An’ Gordon the battle to win:  
Like brothers, they ’ll stan’ by each other,  
Sae knit in alliance and kin.

II
An’ there ’ll be black-nebbit Johnie,  
The tongue o’ the trump to them a’:  
Gin he get na Hell for his haddin,  
The Deil gets nae justice ava!  
And there ’ll be Kemplotter’s birkie,  
A boy no sae black at the bane;  
But as to his fine nabob fortune —  
We ’ll e’en let the subject a’lone!

III
An’ there ’ll be Wigton’s new sheriff —  
Dame Justice fu’ brawly has sped:  
She’s gotten the heart of a Bushby,  
But Lord! what’s become o’ the head?  
An’ there ’ll be Cardoness, Esquire,  
Sae mighty in Cardoness’ eyes:  
A wight that will weather damnation,  
For the Devil the prey would despise.

IV
An’ there ’ll be Douglass’ doughty,  
New christening towns far and near:  
Abjuring their democrat doings  
An’ kissing the arse of a peer!  
An’ there ’ll be Kemmure sae generous,  
Wha’s honor is proof to the storm:  
To save them from stark reprobation  
He lent them his name to the firm!

V
But we winna mention Redcastle,  
The body — e’en let him escape!  
He ’d venture the gallows for siller,  
An’ ’t were na the cost o’ the rape!  
An’ whare is our King’s Lord Lieutenant,  
Sae famed for his gratefu’ return?  
The billie is getting his Questions  
To say at St. Stephen’s the morn!
VI

An' there 'll be lads o' the gospel:
Muirhead, wha's as guid as he's true;
An' there 'll be Binnie's Apostle,
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue;
An' there 'll be folk frae St. Mary's,
A house o' great merit and note:
The Deil ane but honors them highly,
The Deil ane will gie them his vote!

VII

An' there 'll be wealthy young Richard,
Dame Fortune should hang by the neck:
But for prodigal thriftless bestowing,
His merit had won him respect.
An' there 'll be rich brither nabobs;
Tho' nabobs, yet men o' the first!
An' there 'll be Collieston's whiskers,
An' Quinton — o' lads no the warst!

VIII

An' there 'll be Stamp-Office Johnie:
Tak tent how ye purchase a dram!
An' there 'll be gay Cassencarry,
An' there 'll be Colonel Tam;
An' there 'll be trusty Kerroughtree,
Wha's honour was ever his law:
If the virtues were pack't in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'!

IX

An' can we forget the auld Major,
Wha 'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys?
Our flatt'ry we 'll keep for some other:
Him only it's justice to praise!
An' there 'll be maiden Kilkerran,
An' also Barskimming's guid Knight.
An' there 'll be roaring Birtwhistle —
Yet luckily roars in the right!

X

An' there frae the Niddlesdale border
Will mingle the Maxwells in droves:
Teuch Johnie, Staunch Geordie, and Wattie
That girs for the fishes an' loaves!
An' there 'll be Logan's M'Doual —
Scouludd'y an' he will be there!
An' also the wild Scot o' Galloway,
Sogering, gunpowther Blair!

XI

Then hey the chaste interest of Broughton,
An' hey for the blessings 't will bring!
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons —
In Sodom 't would mak him a King!

An' hey for the sanctified Murray
Our land wha wi' chapels has stor'd;
He founder'd his horse among harlots,
But gie'd the auld naig to the Lord!

BALLAD THIRD:
JOHN BUSHBY’S LAMENTATION
TUNE: Babes In the Wood

For John Bushby, see post, p. 198, Prefatory
Note to Epitaph on John Bushby.

I
'T was in the Seventeen Hunder year
O' grace, and Ninety-Five,
That year I was the wae'est man
Of onie man alive.

II
In March the three-an'-twentieth morn,
The sun raise clear an' bright;
But O, I was a waefu' man,
Ere to-fa' o' the night!

III
Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land
Wi equal right and fame,
Fast knit in chaste and holy bands
With Broughton's noble name.

IV
Yerl Galloway's man o' men was I,
And chief o' Broughton's host:
So twa blind beggars, on a string,
The faithfu' tyke will trust!

V
But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre 's broke,
And Broughton's wi' the slain,
And I my ancient craft may try,
Sin' honesty is gane.

VI
'T was by the banks o' bonie Dee,
Beside Kirkcudbright's towers,
The Stewart and the Murray there
Did muster a' their powers.

VII
Then Murray on the auld grey yaud
Wi' wingèd spurs did ride:
The Trogger

That auld grey yaud a' Nidsdale rade,
He staw upon Nidside.

VIII
An' there had na been the Yerl himsel,
O, there had been nae play!
But Garlies was to London gane,
And sae the kye might stray.

And there was Balmaghie, I ween—
In front rank he wad shine;
But Balmaghie had better been
Drinkin' Madeira wine.

And frae Glenkens cam to our aid
A chief o' doughty deed:
In case that worth should wanted be,
O' Kenmure we had need.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
And Buittle was na slack,
Whase haly priesthood nane could stain,
For wha could dye the black?

And there was grave Squire Cardoness,
Look'd on till a' was done:
Sae in the tower o' Cardoness
A howlet sits at noon.

And there led I the Bushby clan:
My gamesome billie, Will,
__ And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
___ My footsteps follow'd still.

The Douglas and the Heron's name,
We set nought to their score;
The Douglas and the Heron's name
Had felt our weight before.

But Douglasses o' weight had we:
The pair o' lusty lairds,
For building cot-houses sae fam'd,
And christenin' kail-yards.

And then Redeastle drew his sword
That ne'er was stain'd wi' gore
Save on a wand'rer lame and blind,
To drive him frae his door.

And last cam creepin' Collieston,
Was mair in fear than wrath;
Ae knave was constant in his mind —
To keep that knave frae scath.

THE TROGGER

TUNE: Buy Broom Besoms

Written for Heron's election for Kirkeudbright in '96. [See ante, p. 164, Prefatory Note to First Heron Election Ballad.] Burns died before the result was known. On this occasion Heron was opposed by the Hon. Montgomery Stewart, son of the Earl of Galloway. A trogger is a travelling hawker or packman.

CHORUS

Buy braw troggin
Frae the banks o' Dee!
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me!

I
 WHA will buy my troggin,
Fine election ware,
Broken trade o' Broughton,
A' in high repair?

II
There's a noble Earl's
Fame and high renown,
For an auld sang — it's thought
The guids were stown.

III
Here's the worth o' Broughton
In a needle's e'e.
Here's a reputation
Tint by Balmaghie.

IV
Here's its stuff and lining,
Cardoness's head —
Fine for a soger,
A' the wale o' lead.
Here's a little wadset —
Buittle's scrap o' truth,
Pawn'd in a gin-shop,
Quenching holy drouth.

Here's an honest conscience
Might a prince adorn,
Fраe the downs o' Tinwald —
So was never worn!

Here's armorial bearings
Fраe the manse o' Urr:
The crest, a sour crab-apple
Rotten at the core.

Here is Satan's picture,
Like a bizzard gled
Pouncing poor Redcastle,
Sprawlin like a taed.

Here's the font where Douglas
Stane and mortar names,
Lately used at Caily
Christening Murray's crimes.

Here's the worth and wisdom
Collieston can boast:
By a thievish midge
They had been nearly lost.

Here is Murray's fragments
O' the Ten Commands,
Gifted by Black Jock
To get them aff his hands.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin? —
If to buy ye're slack,
Hornie 's turnin chapman:
He 'll buy a' the pack!

CHORUS
Buy braw troggin
Frae the banks o' Dee
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me!
So, may be, on this Pisgah height
Bob's purblind mental vision.
Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet,
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear that he has the Angel met
That met the Ass of Balaam.

In your heretic sins may ye live and die,
Ye heretic Eight-and-Thirty!
But accept, ye sublime majority,
My congratulations hearty!
With your honors, as with a certain King,
In your servants this is striking,
The more incapacity they bring
The more they're to your liking.

THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS

The Bennals was a farm in Tarbolton parish. Miss Jean refused Gilbert Burns. The father, supposed to have "Braid money to tocher them a', man," went bankrupt in 1789, when Robert wrote to his brother William: "You will easily guess that from his insolent vanity in his sunshine of life, he will now feel a little retaliation from those who thought themselves eclipsed by him."

I
In Tarbolton, ye ken, there are proper young men,
And proper young lasses and a', man:
But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals?
They carry the gree frae them a', man.

II
Their father's a laird, and weel he can spare 't:
Braid money to tocher them a', man;
To proper young men, he'll clink in the hand
Gowd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

III
There's ane they ca' Jean, I'll warrant ye 've seen
As bonie a lass or as braw, man;
But for sense and guid taste she'll vie wi' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

IV
The charms o' the min', the langer they shine
The mair admiration they draw, man;
While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,
They fade and they wither awa, man.

V
If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this frae a frien',
A hint o' a rival or twa, man:
The Laird o' Blackbyre wad gang through the fire,
If that wad entice her awa, man.
VI
The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed
For mair than a towmond or twa, man:
The Laird o' the Ford will straught on a board,
If he canna get her at a', man.

VII
Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
The boast of our bachelors a', man:
Sae sonsy and sweet, sae fully complete,
She steals our affections awa, man.

VIII
If I should detail the pick and the wale
O' lasses that live here awa, man,
The faut wad be mine, if they didna shine
The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

IX
I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,
My poverty keeps me in awe, man;
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
Does little or naething at a', man.

X
Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse
Nor hae 't in her power to say na, man:
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
My stomach's as proud as them a', man.

XI
Though I canna ride in well-booted pride,
And flee o'er the hills like a craw, man,
I can haud up my head wi' the best o' the breed,
Though fluttering ever so braw, man.

XII
My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best;
O' pairs o' guid breeks I hae twa, man,
And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,
And ne'er a wrang steek in them a', man.

XIII
My sarks they are few, but five o' them new —
Twal' hundred, as white as the snaw, man!

XIV
A ten-shillings hat, a Holland cravat —
There are no monie Poets sae braw, man!

XV
I never had frien's weel stockit in means,
To leave me a hundred or twa, man;
Nae weel-tocher'd aunts, to wait on their drants
And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I'LL GO AND BE A SODGER
Inspired, it may be, by the destruction of the shop at Irvine, when the writer was "left, like a true poet, not worth sixpence."

I
O, why the deuce should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three and five feet nine,
I'll go and be a sodger.

II
I gat some gear wi' meikle care,
I held it weel thegither;
But now it's gane — and something mair:
I'll go and be a sodger.

APOSTROPHE TO FERGUSSON
INSCRIBED ABOVE AND BELOW HIS PORTRAIT

The copy of Fergusson bearing this passionate but Anglified and imitative protest was given by Burns, while in Edinburgh in 1787, to a young woman, herself a writer of verse: "This copy of Fergusson's Poems is presented as a mark of esteem, friendship and regard to Miss R. Carmichael, poetess, by Robert Burns. "Edinburgh, 19th March, 1787."

A volume of verse by Rebekah Carmichael, printed and sold by Peter Hill, appeared in 1790; and in 1806, under the name of Rebekah.
Hay, the same person enclosed a printed poem, On Seeing the Funeral of Sir William Forbes, in a letter (now in the British Museum) presumably to some of Forbes’s relations, in which she stated that she “was weak and ill,” and begged for assistance.

Curse on ungrateful man, that can be pleas’d
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!

O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the Muse,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the Bard unfitted for the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE

Miss Miller is the “Nell” of A Mauchline Wedding (see ante, p. 114); Miss Markland married Mr. James Findlay, [an exciseman, formerly but wrongly supposed to be the hero of] Wha is That at My Bower Door (post, p. 236); Miss Smith, the witty sister of the witty James Smith (see ante, p. 15), became the wife of another of Burns’s special friends, James Candlish, and the mother of a famous Free Church leader, the Rev. Dr. Candlish of Edinburgh; Miss Betty was the “Eliza” of Burns’s song (see ante, p. 52) and the “Bess” of A Mauchline Wedding aforesaid; Mr. Paterson, a Mauchline merchant, got Miss Morton; and of the other Burns noted in the Glenriddell Book:

INSCRIBED ON A WORK OF HANNAH MORE’S

PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY

“I received your kind letter with double pleasure on account of the second flattering instance of Mrs. C.’s notice and approbation. I assure you I

‘Turn out the brunt side o’ my shin,’”
as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory, says, of such a patroness. Present her my most grateful acknowledgments in your very best manner of telling the truth. I have inscribed the following stanza on the blank leaf of Miss More’s works.” (R. B. to Robert Aiken, 3d April, 1786.) Mrs. C. is not identified. Scott Douglas suggested Mrs. Cunninghame of Enterkine, but discovered that she was not married until 1794. He then bethought him of the wife of Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, forgetting that she had a handle to her name. Mrs. Cunninghame of Lainshaw subscribed for two copies of the First Edinburgh.

THOU flatt’ring mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear, the beauteous donor!
Thou'st sweetly female ev'ry part,
Yet such a head and — more — the heart
Does both the sexes honor:
She show'd her taste refin'd and just,
When she selected thee,
Yet deviating, own I must,
For so approving me:
But, kind still, I mind still
The giver in the gift;
I'll bless her, and wiss her
A Friend aboon the lift.

POSTHUMOUS PIECES

A brother's sigh, a sister's tear,
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess! Thou'rt bereft
Of my paternal care,
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith, my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
O, then befriend my Jean!

II

What bursting anguish tears my heart?
From thee, my Jeany, must I part?
Thou, weeping, answer'st: "No!"
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace —
I for thy sake must go!
Thee, Hamilton, and Aiken dear,
A grateful, warm adieu:
I with a much-indebted tear
Shall still remember you!
All-hail, then, the gale then
Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles, and whistles —
I'll never see thee more!

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAXUS

"'Ruisseau" — French for "brooks" (i. e.
"burns") — is an innocent play on the writer's
name.

I
Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair;
Cauld Poverty wi' hungry stare
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious Fear, nor cankert Care,
E'er mair come near him.

II
To tell the truth, they seldom fash'd him,
Except the moment that they crush'd him;
For sune as Chance or Fate had hush'd 'em,
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or sang he lash'd 'em,
And thought it sport.

III
Tho' he was bred to kintra-wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin’s mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was learned and clark,
Ye roos’d him then!

VERSES INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN BELOW A NOBLE EARL’S PICTURE

A special compliment (and a gross) to the writer’s patron, the Earl of Glencairn (see ante, p. 87, Prefatory Note to Lament for James Earl of Glencairn), who declined, being a person of taste, to have it included in Edition ’87.

I
Whose is that noble, dauntless brow?
And whose that eye of fire?
And whose that generous princely mien,
Ev’n rooted foes admire?

II
Stranger! to justly show that brow
And mark that eye of fire,
Would take His hand, whose vernal tints
His other works admire!

III
Bright as a cloudless summer sun,
With stately port he moves;
His guardian Seraph eyes with awe
The noble Ward he loves.

IV
Among the illustrious Scotch sons
That Chief thou may’st discern:
Mark Scotia’s fond-returning eye —
It dwells upon Glencairn.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR

Sir James Hunter Blair, son of John Hunter, bailie in Ayr, was born 2d February, 1741; was apprenticed in the banking house of the brothers Coutts, Edinburgh; became, with Sir William Forbes, joint partner in the bank; assumed the name of Blair when his wife—a daughter of John Blair of Dunskey, Wigtonshire—succeeded to her estates in 1777; greatly improved the estates in agriculture and trade; partly rebuilt Portpatrick, and started a packet service to Ireland; was also an active citizen of Edinburgh, for which he was chosen M. P. in 1781 and 1784, and in 1784 Lord Provost; was created a baronet, 1786; and died of putrid fever 1st July, 1787.

To Robert Aiken, Burns wrote: “The melancholy occasion of the foregoing poem affects not only individuals but a country. That I have lost a friend is but repeating after Caledonia.” Further, in the Glenriddell Book he thus prefaches his Elegy: “This performance is but mediocre, but my grief was sincere. The last time I saw the worthy, public-spirited man—a man he was! how few of the two-legged breed that pass for such deserve the designation!—he pressed my hand, and asked me with the most friendly warmth if it was in his power to serve me; and if so, that I would oblige him by telling him how. I had nothing to ask of him; but if ever a child of his should be so unfortunate as to be under the necessity of asking anything of so poor a man as I am it may not be in my power to grant it, but by God I shall try.”

I
The lamp of day with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sank beneath the western wave;
Th’ inconstant blast howl’d thro’ the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

II
Lone as I wander’d by each cliff and dell,
Once the lov’d haunts of Scotia’s royal train;
Or mus’d where limpid streams, once hallo’d well,
Or mould’ring ruins mark the sacred Fane.

III
Th’ increasing blast roared round the beetleing rocks,
The clouds, swift-wing’d, flew o’er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

IV
The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And ’mong the cliffs disclos’d a stately form
In weeds of woe, that frantic beat her breast,
And mix’d her wailings with the raving storm.

V
Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow:
’T was Caledonia’s trophied shield I view’d,
Her form majestic droop’d in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued;

VI
Revers’d that spear redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl’d,
That like a deathful meteor gleam’d afar,
And brav’d the mighty monarchs of the world.

VII
“’ My patriot son fills an untimely grave! ’
With accents wild and lifted arms, she cried;
“Low lies the hand that oft was stretch’d to save,
Low lies the heart that swell’d with honor’s pride.

VIII
“A weeping country joins a widow’s tear;
The helpless poor mix with the orphan’s cry;
The drooping Arts surround their patron’s bier;
And grateful Science heaves the heartfelt sigh.

IX
“ I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair Freedom’s blossoms richly blow.
But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless fate has laid their guardian low.

X
“My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name?
No: every Muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

XI
“And I will join a mother’s tender cares
Thro’ future times to make his virtues last,
That distant years may boast of other Blairs!”

She said, and vanish’d with the sweeping blast.

ON THE DEATH OF LORD PRESIDENT DUNDAS

Robert Dundas of Arniston, descended from an old Scottish family, and eldest son of Robert Dundas, who also was Lord President of the Court of Session, was born 18th July, 1713. He was appointed Lord Advocate in 1754, and in 1760 became Lord President, in which capacity he acquired a high repute for courtesy, fairness, and ability. He died 13th December, 1787. In a letter to Alexander Cunningham, 11th March, 1791, Burns states that he wrote the verses at the suggestion of Alexander Wood, Surgeon, and that Wood left them, together with a letter from the author, in the house of the Lord President’s son (see ante, p. 168, Prefatory Note to The Dean of the Faculty); that Mr. Dundas “never took the smallest notice of the letter, the poem, or the poet; ” and that since then he (Burns) never saw the name of Dundas in a newspaper but his “heart felt straitened ” in his “bosom.” He makes a similar statement in an interleaved copy of his Poems presented to Bishop Geddes, but adds: “Did the fellow—the gentleman—think looked for any dirty gratuity?” No doubt Dundas did think so: none, either, that Burns, by this time a person of importance, was hopeful of—not a present in money but a place. In a letter to Charles Hay, Advocate, published in The Scots Magazine (June, 1818), where the piece appeared, Burns gives a different account of its origin: “The enclosed poem was written in consequence of your suggestion, last time I had the pleasure of seeing you. It cost me an hour or two of next morning’s sleep, but did not please me; so it lay by, an ill-digested effort, till the other day that I gave it a critic brush. These kind of subjects much hackneyed; and besides, the wailings of the rhyming tribe over the ashes of the great are... out of all character for sincerity: ” which well enough describes both the quality and the effect of a performance meriting no better reception than it got.
Lone on the bleaky hills, the straying flocks
Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
Down foam the rivulets, red with dashing rains;
The gathering floods burst o’er the distant plains;
Beneath the blast the leafless forests groan;
The hollow caves return a hollow moan.
Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
Ye howling winds, and wintry swelling waves,
Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
Sad to your sympathetic glooms I fly,
Where to the whistling blast and water’s roar
Pale Scotia’s recent wound I may deplore!
O heavy loss, thy country ill could bear! A loss these evil days can ne’er repair!
Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
Hearing the tidings of the fatal blow,
She sank, abandon’d to the wildest woe.
Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
Now gay in hope explore the paths of men.
See from his cavern grim Oppression rise,
And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes!
Keen on the helpless victim let him fly,
And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry!
Mark Ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times!
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way;
While subtle Litigation’s pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong!
Hark, injur’d Want recounts th’ unlisten’d tale,
And much-wrong’d Mis’ry pours th’ unpitied wail!
Ye dark, waste hills, ye brown, unsightly plains,
Congenial scenes, ye soothe my mournful strains.
Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll!
Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
Life’s social haunts and pleasures I resign;
Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
To mourn the woes my country must endure:
That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

ELEGY ON WILLIE NICOL’S MARE

Probably William Nicol (see post, p. 195, Epitaph for William Nicol) bought the nag for use in his holidays at Moffat. She got into poor condition, and Burns offered to take her to Ellisland to recruit. When, however, he had got her into good enough condition for Dumfries Fair, she suddenly died of an unsuspected affection of the spine. In the letter, 9th February, 1790, enclosing the Elegy he wrote: “I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunate mare, beginning (the name she got here was Peg Nicholson): ‘Peg Nicholson’, etc. No doubt, the mare was named after Margaret Nicholson, who, being insane, tried to stab George III. on 2d August, 1786.

I

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare
As ever trod on airn;
But now she’s floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o’ Cairn.

II

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
An’ rode thro’ thick an’ thin;
But now she’s floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

III

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And once she bore a priest;
But now she’s floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.

IV

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
An’ the priest he rode her sair;
And much oppress’d, and bruised she was,
As priest-rid cattle are.
LINES ON FERGUSSON

I

ILL-FATED genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson!
What heart that feels, and will not yield a tear
To think Life's sun did set, e'er well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career!

II

O, why should truest Worth and Genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of Want and Woe,
While titled knaves and idiot-greatness shine
In all the splendour Fortune can bestow?

ELEGY ON THE LATE MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO

Elizabeth Burnet, the “fair Burnet” of the Address to Edinburgh (ante, p. 73), was the younger daughter of James Burnet, Lord Monboddo. Burns was a frequent visitor to Monboddo's house in 1786-7; and almost worshipped the fair hostess. “His favourite for looks and manners,” wrote Mrs. Alison Cockburn, “is Bess Burnet—no bad judge indeed.” In a letter to William Chalmers (27th December, 1786), he describes her as “the heavenly Miss Burnet,” and declares that “there has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton’s Eve on the first day of her existence.” Being asked, after his first visit to the house, by Father Geddes, if he admired the young lady, “I admired God Almighty more than ever,” he replied; “Miss Burnet is the most heavenly of all His works.” This fair and gracious creature died (of consumption) 17th June, 1790, in her twenty-fifth year. In the Elegy Burns once more “falls to his English;” and with the wonted result. Yet it was long on the anvil. In enclosing a copy to Alexander Cunningham, 23d January, 1791, he states that he had been hammering at it for months; and so dissatisfied is he with the result that he still calls it a fragment. He was wise enough not to include it in Edition '93.
ON GENERAL DUMOURIER’S DESERTION

Charles François Dumouriez, being recalled by the Convention after Neerwinden (January, 1793), and menaced with a charge of treason, took refuge in the Austrian camp. After many wanderings he settled in England (1804) at Turville Park, near Henley-on-Thames, and died there 14th March, 1823. [Dampierre, one of his generals, and Beurnonville, an emissary of the Convention but a friend of Dumouriez, had disappointed him by retaining their allegiance to the Republic. Dampierre became

ON SOME COMMEMORATIONS OF THOMSON

A trifle — produced extempore — which Burns, as he acknowledged to Graham of Fintry, 5th January, 1793, had sent to Captain Johnstone’s “extremist sheet,” The Edinburgh Gazetteer. To publish it was almost to stultify himself; for had he not made the verses recited at the Earl of Buchan’s ceremony (see ante, p. 93)? Still, on reading an account of the proceedings, he may have recognised that the ridiculous Earl had simply utilised him for his own glorification.

I
Dost thou not rise, indignant Shade,
And smile wi’ spurning scorn,
When they wha wad hae starved thy life
Thy senseless turf adorn?

II
They wha about thee mak sic fuss
Now thou art but a name,
Wad seen thee damn’d er they had spar’d
Ae plack to fill thy wame.

III
Helpless, alane, thou clamb the brae
Wi’ meikle honest toil,
And claucht th’ unfading garland there,
Thy sair-won, rightful spoil.

IV
And wear it there! and call aloud
This axiom undoubted:
—
Would thou hae Nobles’ patronage?
First learn to live without it!

V
“To whom hae much, more shall be given”
Is every great man’s faith;
But he, the helpless, needful wretch,
Shall lose the mite he hath.
commander-in-chief on the defection of his superior and was killed in battle soon after. Beurnonville lived to become a peer and Minister of State under Louis XVIII."

The piece is a rough but spirited and characteristic parody of the old bacchanalian set of *Robin Adair*.

I

You’re welcome to Despots, Dumourier!
You’re welcome to Despots, Dumourier!
How does Dampierre do?
Ay, and Beurnonville too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier?

II

I will fight France with you, Dumourier,
I will fight France with you, Dumourier,
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you,
By my soul, I’ll dance with you, Dumourier!

III

Then let us fight about, Dumourier!
Then let us fight about, Dumourier!
Then let us fight about
Till Freedom’s spark be out,
Then we’ll be damn’d, no doubt, Dumourier.

ON JOHN M’MURDO

Cunningham states that the verses (such as they are) "accompanied a present of books or verse;" and that afterwards Burns, being on a visit to the house, took out a diamond, and wrote them, as he was fond of doing, on a pane of glass. For M’Murdo see ante, p. 143, Prefatory Note to To John M’Murdo.

BLEST be M’Murdo to his latest day!
No envious cloud o’ercast his evening ray!
No wrinkle furrow’d by the hand of care,
Nor ever sorrow, add one silver hair!
O may no son the father’s honor stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain!

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK IN JANUARY

Enclosed in a letter to Alexander Cunningham, 20th February, 1793: "I made the following sonnet the other day, which has been so fortunate as to obtain the approbation of no ordinary judge, our friend Sime." It was also sent to Maria Riddell as "a small but sincere mark of esteem."

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See aged Winter, ’mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrowed brow.
So in lone Poverty’s dominion drear
Sits meek Content with light, unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring ought to hope or fear.
I thank Thee, Author of this opening day,
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, Thy boon was purer joys:
What wealth could never give nor take away!
Yet come, thou child of Poverty and Care,
The mite high Heav’n bestow’d, that mite with thee I’ll share.

IMPROMPTU ON MRS. RIDDELL’S BIRTHDAY

4TH NOVEMBER, 1793

Mrs. Walter Riddell, whose maiden name was Maria Woodley, was the daughter of William Woodley, Commander and Governor of St. Kitts and the Leeward Islands. She married in the West Indies Walter Riddell, younger brother of Captain Robert Riddell, who had an estate in*...*
It reads like a reckless avowal of passion; but he disarmed the lady's criticism and resentment—a fact not hitherto set forth—by describing it as "cold and inanimate," and protesting that "to write a line worth reading on the subject," it "would be absolutely necessary" for him "to get in love." Then, at a party at Woodley Park, in January, 1794, he and the men got drunk in the dining-room. The talk ran on the Rape of the Sabines, and they seem to have gone to the drawing-room with the design of giving a friendly imitation of the Romans. This, so far as can be divined, they did: Burns—who was in liquor, and may well have lost his head in other ways—laying rude hands on his hostess. On the morrow he sent her a desperate apology "from the regions of hell, amid the horrors of the damned." "To the men of the company," he added, "I will make no apology:—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt.

But the indignant lady disregarded this and other overtures, and Woodley Park was for some time shut to him. Also, when Mrs. Riddell disliked or disdained, she was apt (as Burns had noted in a letter to Smellie, 22d January, 1792) "to make no more secret of it" than when she respected and esteemed; and he was rewarded for his too-too practical note of admiration, not only with the loss of Captain Riddell's friendship, but with estrangement also from Maria's intimates. This roused the cad in him, and he perpetrated the ignoble Esopus to Maria (ante, p. 123), and a number of "epigrams" on her husband and herself (see post) which have neither wit nor decent feeling. These notwithstanding, by the February of 1795 Mrs. Riddell's anger had begun to cool. She sent her Bard a book, together with a song of her own inditing:

"For there he rov'd that broke my heart,
Yet to that heart, ah! still how dear!"

and withal so discerning and impartial in understanding, that it remains the best thing written of him by contemporary critic. Being left a widow (Walter Riddell, who was something of a wastrel, had got rid of Woodley Park) Maria married (1807) Philips Lloyd Fletcher, a Welsh gentleman; but died on the 15th December, 1808. She published (1) Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward and Caribbean Isles, with Sketches of the Natural History of these Islands (Edinburgh, 1792), printed by William Smellie, to whom she dedicated the book; and (2) The Metrical Miscellany (1802), with eighteen songs of her own.

I

OLD Winter, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferred: —
"What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?"

My cheerless suns no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags dreary slow;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny, English hanging, drowning.

II

Now Jove, for once be mighty civil:
To counterbalance all this evil
Give me, and I 've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!

That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me.

"'T is done!" says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoiced in glory.

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RIDDELL OF GLEN-RIDDELL

For Captain Riddell, who died 20th April, 1794, see ante, p. 142, Prefatory Note to Impromptu to Captain Riddell.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
Nor pour your descant grating on my soul!
Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy verdant stole,
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar!
How can ye charm, ye flowers, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend.
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round the untimely tomb
where Riddell lies.
Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe,
And sooth the Virtues weeping o'er his bier!
The man of worth — and "hath not left his peer"!
Is in his "narrow house" for ever darkly low.
Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet;
Me, memory of my loss will only meet.

A SONNET UPON SONNETS

We have done our utmost to determine whether this copy of verses — one of the crowd of pieces produced in imitation of Lope de Vega on the Sonnet:

"Un soneto me manda hacer Violante," etc.;
or of Voiture on the Rondeau:

"Ma foy! C'est fait de moi. Car Isabeau," etc. —
be very Burns or merely a copy of Burns's handwriting; and we have also taken counsel with such experts as Dr. Garnett and Mr. Austin Dobson. It seems to be unknown; and we have assumed that it is one of his few metrical experiments (see ante, p. 144, Prefatory Note to Sonnet, etc.).

FOURTEEN, a sonneteer thy praises sings;
What magic myst'ries in that number lie!
Your hen hath fourteen eggs beneath her wings
That fourteen chickens to the roost may fly.
Fourteen full pounds the jockey's stone must be;
His age fourteen — a horse's prime is past.
Fourteen long hours too oft the Bard must fast;
Fourteen bright bumpers — bliss he ne'er must see!
Before fourteen, a dozen yields the strife;
Before fourteen — e'en thirteen's strength is vain.
Fourteen good years — a woman gives us life;
Fourteen good men — we lose that life again.
What lucubrations can be more upon it?
Fourteen good measur'd verses make a sonnet.

FRAGMENTS

TRAGIC FRAGMENT

"In my early years nothing less would serve me than courting the Tragic Muse. I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy, forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my further progress. In those days I never wrote down anything; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory. The following, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character — great in occasional instances of generosity and daring at times in villanies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself: 'All villain,'" etc. (R. B.) Scott Douglas refers this "prentice exercise — he calls it a "pathetic address" — to family misfortunes and the study of Shakespeare. Burns's own description is preferable as regards the intention of the thing.

ALL villain as I am — a damned wretch,
A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting sinner —
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness,
And with sincere, tho' unavailing, sighs
I view the helpless children of distress.
With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
Ev'n you, ye hapless crew! I pity you;
Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity:
Ye poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds,
Whom Vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
Oh! but for friends and interposing Heaven,
I had been driven forth, like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
O injured God! Thy goodness has endow'd me
With talents passing most of my companions,
Which I in just proportion have abused,
As far surpassing other common villains
As Thou in natural parts has given me more.


**ON WILLIAM SMELLIE**

William Smellie was, says Burns (undated letter to Peter Hill), “a man positively of the first abilities and greatest strength of mind, as well as one of the best hearts and keenest wits.”

**DEFENCE OF MISS PEGGY KENNEDY**

Sent to Mrs. Dunlop, 23d October, 1788, with the fragment on William Smellie: “These,” he wrote, “are embryotic fragments of what may one day be a poem.” Another instalment, sent on the 29th, he afterwards incorporated in To Robert Graham of Fintry (ante, p. 85). His subject was his publisher (see ante, p. 118, Prefatory Note to Lament, ete.).

A LITTLE upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,  
And still his precious self his dear delight;  
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets  
Better than e’er the fairest She he meets.  
Much specious lore, but little understood  
(Veneering oft outshines the solid wood),  
His solid sense by inches you must tell,  
But mete his subtle cunning by the ell!  
A man of fashion, too, he made his tour,  
Learn’d “Vive la bagatelle et vive l’amour:”  
So travell’d monkies their grimace improve,  
Polish their grin—nay, sigh for ladies’ love!  
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,  
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

**RUSTICITY’S UNGAINLY FORM**

Enclosed in a volume of songs sent to Mrs. Lawrie of Newmilns. Chambers states that it was intended as a justification of the writer’s defence of Miss Peggy Kennedy (see Young Peggy, post, p. 201), when he touched on the topic of her “fall” in such a fashion as to make Mrs. Lawrie forbid discussion. But Miss Kennedy’s “fall” was still to come.

**RUSTICITY’S UNGAINLY FORM**

May cloud the highest mind;  
But when the heart is nobly warm,  
The good excuse will find.

**II**

Propriety’s cold, cautious rules  
Warm Fervour may o’erlook;  
But spare poor Sensibility  
Th’ ungentle, harsh rebuke.

**ON WILLIAM SMELLIE**

“T entirely agree with that judicious Philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent Theory of Moral Sentiments, that Remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our own follies or crimes have made us miserable and wretched, to bear it up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.” (R. B.)

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,  
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,  
Beyond comparison the worst are those  
By our own folly, or our guilt brought on:  
In ev’ry other circumstance, the mind  
Has this to say:—“It was no deed of mine.”

But, when to all the evil of misfortune  
This sting is added:—“Blame thy foolish self!”

Or, worser far, the pangs of keen remorse,  
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt,  
Of guilt, perhaps, where we’ve involved others,  
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov’d us;  
Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!  
O burning Hell! in all thy store of torments  
There’s not a keener lash!  
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart  
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,  
Can reason down its agonizing throbs,  
And, after proper purpose of amendment,  
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?

O happy, happy, enviable man!  
O glorious magnanimity of soul!
that he had "ever met with." The son of Alexander Smellie, an Edinburgh architect, he was born in the Pleasance (Edinburgh) in 1740. Being apprenticed to a firm of printers, he yet contrived to attend the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew classes at the University, and to achieve distinction in them all. His love of knowledge once awakened, he was not content till he had completed the round of literary and scientific study, including the full Medical Course. In 1765 he became partner in a firm which some years later, as Balfour and Smellie, was appointed Printers to the University; and on its dissolution in 1782 he took in Creech, engaging himself the while in literature and—especially—science. He was credited with at least the preparation for the press of Buchan’s Domestic Medicine, 1770; he supervised and in great part compiled the first Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1777; he edited The Edinburgh Magazine and Review, 1773–1776; he translated Buffon’s Natural History, 9 vols. 1780–1781; he wrote the Philosophy of Natural History, 2 vols. 1790–1799—to name but these. He died 24th June, 1795. He was the life and soul of the club known as “The Crochallan Fencibles,” for whose “use” the collection called The Merry Muses of Caledonia is stated (on the title-page) to have been “selected,” and which met in an historic tavern kept by the Highlander David Douglas. This same Douglas occasionally entertained his guests by singing the Gaelic song Chro Challin = “Cattle of Colin;” and in a whimsical spirit Smellie appropriated the song’s name to the brotherhood.

CROCHALLAN CAME:
The old cock’d hat, the brown surtout the same;
His grisly beard just bristling in its might (’T was four long nights and days to shaving-night);
His uncomb’d, hoary locks, wild-staring, thatch’d
A head for thought profound and clear unmatch’d;
Yet, tho’ his caustic wit was biting rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

SKETCH FOR AN ELEGY
Probably the original form of the elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson, although his name is not mentioned.

I
CRAIGDARROCH, fam’d for speaking art
And every virtue of the heart,

POSTHUMOUS PIECES

Stops short, nor can a word impart
To end his sentence,
When mem’ry strikes him like a dart
With auld acquaintance.

II
Black James—whase wit was never laith,
But, like a sword had tint the sheath,
Ay ready for the work o’ death—
He turns aside,
And strains wi’ suffocating breath
His grief to hide.

III
Even Philosophic Smellie tries
To choak the stream that floods his eyes:
So Moses wi’ a hazel-rice
Came o’er the stane;
But, tho’ it cost him speaking twice,
It gush’d amain.

IV
Go to your marble graffs, ye great,
In a’ the tinkler-trash of state!
But by thy honest turf I’ll wait,
Thou man of worth,
And weep the ae best fallow’s fate
E’er lay in earth!

PASSION’S CRY
The earlier written part, beginning line 19, “I burn, I burn,” etc., was produced in 1787, after hearing the end of a divorce case in which, on March 7th, the Court of Session decided that the husband might proceed against the lover without divorcing his wife. (The oratorical methods of the leading counsel are quizzed in In the Court of Session, p. 183.) The lady, who was heiress of Skerriotton, Ayrshire, bore a child to Captain Montgomery in November, 1784; and the husband chose not to interfere with the marriage settlements, but punished the lover, and maintained the matrimony as of old. Burns’s sympathies were strongly with the lover and the lady. “O all ye powers of love unfortunate, and friendless woe,” he writes to Gavin Hamilton, “pour the balm of sympathising pity on the grief-worn, tender heart of the hapless fair one!”

MILD zephyrs waft thee to life’s farthest shore,
Nor think of me and my distresses more!
Falsehood accurst! No! Still I beg a
place,
Still near thy heart some little, little trace!
For that dear trace the world I would re-sign:
O, let me live, and die, and think it mine!

By all I lov'd, neglected, and forgot,
No friendly face e'er lights my squalid cot.
Shunn'd, hated, wrong'd, unpitied, unredrest
The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest;
Ev'n the poor support of my wretched life,
Snatched by the violence of legal strife;
Oft grateful for my very daily bread,
To those my family's once large bounty fed;
A welcome inmate at their homely fare,
My griefs, my woes, my sighs, my tears they share:
Their vulgar souls unlike the souls refined,
The fashion'd marble of the polish'd mind.

"I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn
By driving winds the crackling flames are borne."
Now, maddening-wild, I curse that fatal night,
Now bless the hour that charm'd my guilty sight.
In vain the Laws their feeble force oppose:
Chain'd at his feet, they groan Love's vanquish'd foes.
In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye:
I dare not combat, but I turn and fly.
Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallow'd fire.
Love grasps his scorpions—stifled they expire.
Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne.
Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone;
Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
And riots wanton in forbidden fields.

By all on high adoring mortals know,
By all the conscious villain fears below;
By what, alas! much more my soul alarms—
My doubtful hopes once more to fill thy arms—

Ev'n shouldst thou, false, forswear the guilty tie,
Thine and thine only I must live and die!

IN VAIN WOULD PRUDENCE

In vain would Prudence with decorous sneer
Point out a censuring world, and bid me fear:
Above that world on wings of love I rise,
I know its worst, and can that worst despise.
"Wrong'd, injur'd, shunn'd, unpitied, unredrest,
The mock'd quotation of the scorner's jest,"
Let Prudence' direst bodements on me fall,
Clarinda, rich reward! o'erpa ys them all.

THE CARES O' LOVE

HE
The cares o' Love are sweeter far
Than onie other pleasure;
And if sae dear its sorrows are,
Enjoyment, what a treasure!

SHE
I fear to try, I dare na try
A passion sae ensnaring;
For light's her heart and blythe's her song
That for nae man is caring.

EPIGRAMS

The oratorical duel thus cleverly thumb-nailed was between Islay Campbell, Lord Advocate, and Henry Erskine, Dean of Faculty, in a certain divorce case (1787), as to which see ante, p. 182, Prefatory Note to Passion's Cry.
LORD ADVOCATE
He clenched his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist
His argument, he tint it;
He gaped for ‘t, he grasped for ‘t,
He fand it was awa, man;
But what his common sense came short,
He eked out wi’ law, man.

MR. ERSKINE
Collected, Harry stood awee,
Then open’d out his arm, man;
His lordship sat wi’ ruefu’ e’e,
And ey’d the gathering storm, man;
Like wind-driv’n hail it did assail,
Or torrents o’er a linn, man;
The Bench sae wise lift up their eyes,
Hauf-wauken’d wi’ the din, man.

AT ROSLIN INN
Chambers states that Burns breakfasted at the inn after a ramble in the Pentlands with Alexander Nasmyth, the painter. He further relates that the ramble was taken after transgressing “the rules of sobriety” in Edinburgh, and sitting “till an early hour in the morning.” Part of this on the authority of a gossip who “lived at Roslin at the time.”

My blessings on ye, honest wife!
I ne’er was here before;
Ye’ve wealth o’ gear for spoon and knife:
Heart could not wish for more.
Heav’n keep you clear o’ sturt and strife,
Till far ayont fourscore,
And by the Lord o’ death and life,
I’ll ne’er gae by your door!

TO AN ARTIST
Chambers states that Burns, entering a studio in Edinburgh, found the occupant engaged on a Jacob’s Dream, and wrote the lines on the back of a little sketch.

Dear ——, I’ll gie ye some advice,
You’ll tak it no uncivil:
You shouldn’a paint at angels, man,
But try and paint the Devil.

To paint an angel’s kittle wark,
Wi’ Nick there’s little danger:
You’ll easy draw a lang-kent face,
But no sae weel a stranger.

R. B.

THE BOOK-WORMS
Said to have been written on a splendidly bound but worm-eaten volume of Shakespeare in a nobleman’s library.

Through and through th’ inspired leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But O, respect his lordship’s taste,
And spare the golden bindings!

ON ELPHINSTONE’S TRANSLATION OF MARTIAL
James Elphinstone — born 1721, died 1809, — published his egregious translation of Martial’s Epigrams in 1782. “A Mr. Elphinstone,” wrote Burns to Clarinda, “has given a translation of Martial, a famous Latin poet. The poetry of Elphinstone can only equal his prose notes. I was sitting in a merchant’s shop of my acquaintance waiting somebody; he put Elphinstone into my hand, and asked my opinion of it. I begged leave to write it on a blank leaf, which I did.” A facsimile of the inscription — below Elphinstone’s “Rhymed Address to the Subscribers” — was published in The Burns Chronicle for 1894. The epigram was doubtless suggested by the old one which served as a model for On Thanksgiving for a National Victory (see post, p. 190).

O thou whom Poesy abhors,
Whom Prose has turned out of doors,
Heard’st thou yon groan? — Proceed no further!
’T was laurel’d Martial calling “Murther!”

ON JOHNSON’S OPINION OF HAMPDEN
Inscribed on a copy of Johnson’s Lives, presented by Burns to Alexander Cunningham. A comment on Johnson’s remark: “His mother was the daughter of John Hampden of Hamp-
ON SEEING THE ROYAL PALACE AT STIRLING IN RUINS

den, in the same county, and sister to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion."

For shame!
Let Folly and Knavery
Freedom oppose:
'Tis suicide, Genius,
To mix with her foes.

UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF MISS BURNS

Cease, ye prudes, your envious railing!
Lovely Burns has charms: confess!
True it is she had ae failing:
Had ae woman ever less?

ON MISS AINSLIE IN CHURCH

Miss Ainslie was sister to Burns's friend, Robert Ainslie. Burns, on his Border Tour, arrived at Berrywell, Berwickshire, the farm of Ainslie's father, on 5th May, 1787. On the Sunday, as related in his Journal, he accompanied the family to church at Duns, and, being seated next Miss Ainslie, wrote the lines in her Bible, apropos of her search for a text against the impenitent denoted by the preacher. In his Journal he sketches the young lady thus: "Her person a little embonpoint, but handsome; her face, particularly her eyes, full of sweetness and good humour; she unites three qualities rarely to be found together: keen, solid penetration; sly, witty observation and remark; and the gentlest, most unaffected female modesty."

Fair maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue;
'T was guilty sinners that he meant,
Not angels such as you.

ON SEEING THE ROYAL PALACE AT STIRLING IN RUINS

Burns reached Stirling on the afternoon of the Sunday (26th August) which saw him "tirling" at the door of Carron Ironworks. Visiting Harvieston on the Monday, he returned to Stirling that evening. Not improbably these lines were written after the jolly supper mentioned in his Journal. The inscription was published, with the intention of showing Burns up, in James Maxwell's rhymed Animadversions on Some Poets and Poetasters (1788), and it appears in Cunningham (1834). As we learn from a letter to Clarinda, January, 1788, Burns, on applying for a place in the Excise, was severely questioned about it.

Here Stewarts once in glory reign'd,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre fallen to other hands:
Fallen indeed, and to the earth,
Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth!
The injured Stewart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills their throne:
An idiot race, to honour lost —
Who know them best despise them most.

ADDITIONAL LINES AT STIRLING

Published by Cunningham (1834), who states,
but, as usual, without giving his authority, that
Burns wrote the preceding inscription on the
Monday morning, and, being remonstrated with
by Nicol on his return from Harvieston, added
this mock “reproof to the author.”

RASH mortal, and slanderous poet, thy
name
Shall no longer appear in the records of
Fame!
Dost not know that old Mansfield, who
writes like the Bible,
Says, the more 'tis a truth, Sir, the more
'tis a libel?

REPLY TO THE THREAT OF A CENSORIOUS CRITIC

With Aesop’s lion, Burns says: — “Sore I feel
Each other blow: but damn that ass’s heel!”

A HIGHLAND WELCOME

When Death’s dark stream I ferry o’er
(A time that surely shall come),
In Heaven itself I’ll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.

AT WHIGHAM’S INN, SANQUHAR

Envy, if thy jaundiced eye
Through this window chance to spy,
To thy sorrow thou shalt find
All that’s generous, all that’s kind.
Friendship, virtue, every grace,
Dwelling in this happy place.

VERSICLES ON SIGN-POSTS

“The everlasting surliness of a lion and
Saracen’s head,” etc.—thus does Burns pre-
face them—“or the unchanging blandness of
the landlord welcoming a traveller, on some
sign-posts, would be no bad similes of the con-
stant affected fierceness of a Bully, or the
eternal simper of a Frenchman or a Fiddler.”

1
He looked
Just as your sign-post Lions do,
With aspect fierce and quite as harmless too.

2
(PATIENT STUPIDITY)
So heavy, passive to the tempest’s shocks,
Dull on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

3
His face with smile eternal drest
Just like the landlord to his guest,
High as they hang with creaking din
To index out the Country Inn.

4
A head, pure, sinless quite of brain and soul,
The very image of a barber’s poll:
Just shews a human face, and wears a wig,
And looks, when well friseur’d, amazing big.

ON MISS JEAN SCOTT

O, had each Scot of ancient times
Been, Jeanie Scott, as thou art,
The bravest heart on English ground
Had yielded like a coward.

ON CAPTAIN FRANCIS GROSE

The Devil got notice that Grose was a-dying,
So whip! at the summons, old Satan came flying;
But when he approach’d where poor Francis lay moaning,
And saw each bed-post with its burthen a-groaning,
Astonish'd, confounded, cries Satan: — "By God, I'd want him ere take such a damnable load!"

ON BEING APPOINTED TO AN EXCISE DIVISION

The appointment was made in August, 1789.

SEARCHING auld wives’ barrels,
Ochon, the day
That clarty barm should stain my laurels!
But what’ll ye say?
These movin’ things ca’d wives an’ weans
Wad move the very hearts o’ stanes.

ON MISS DAVIES

For Miss Davies, see Prefatory Note to Bonie Wee Thing, post, p. 236.

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because God meant mankind should set
That higher value on it.

ON A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY SEAT

For Maxwell of Cardoness, see post, p. 197, Prefatory Note to On a Galloway Laird.

We grant they ’re thine, those beauties all,
So lovely in our eye:
Keep them, thou eunuch, Cardoness,
For others to enjoy.

THE TYRANT WIFE

Curs’d be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife!
Who has no will but by her high permission;

Who has not sixpence but in her possession;
Who must to her his dear friend’s secret tell;
Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than hell!
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I’d break her spirit, or I’d break her heart:
I’d charm her with the magic of a switch,
I’d kiss her maids, and kick the perverse bitch.

AT BROWNHILL INN

[A play upon the name of the landlord, “honest Bacon” of To William Stewart, ante, p. 146.]

At Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer
And plenty of bacon each day in the year;
We’ve a’ thing that’s nice, and mostly in season;
But why always bacon? — come, tell me the reason?

THE TOADEATER

Of Lordly acquaintance you boast,
And the Dukes that you dined with yestreen;
Yet an insect’s an insect at most,
Tho’ it crawl on the curl of a Queen!

IN LAMINGTON KIRK

The minister was Thomas Mitchell. He was presented (1772) to Kinglassie by the Earl of Rothes; but, as the parishioners were unanimously against him, it was arranged that he should exchange with the original presentee to Lamington. He is described as “an accomplished scholar.” He died 12th March, 1811.

As cauld a wind as ever blew,
A cauld kirk, and in ’t but few,
As cauld a minister’s ever spak—
Ye ’se a’ be het or I come back!
THE KEEKIN GLASS

Written extempore at Dalswinton, and handed by Burns to Miss Miller, his landlord's daughter, on her informing him that one of the Lords of Justiciary had got so drunk the night before that, coming into the drawing-room, he pointed at her, and asked her father: "Wha's yon hoolet-faced thing i' the corner?"

How daur ye ca' me "Howlet-face,"
Ye blear-e'ed, wither'd spectre?
Ye only spied the keekin-glass,
An' there ye saw your picture.

AT THE GLOBE TAVERN, DUMFRIES

I
The greybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures,
Give me with gay Folly to live!
I grant him his calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
But Folly has raptures to give.

2
I MURDER hate by field or flood,
Tho' Glory's name may screen us.
In wars at hame I'll spend my blood —
Life-giving wars of Venus.
The deities that I adore
Are Social Peace and Plenty:
I 'm better pleas'd to make one more
Than be the death of twenty.

(11)
I would not die like Socrates,
For all the fuss of Plato;
Nor would I with Leonidas,
Nor yet would I with Cato;
The zealots of the Church and State
Shall ne'er my mortal foes be;
But let me have bold Zimri's fate
Within the arms of Cozbi.

3
My bottle is a holy pool,
That heals the wounds o' care an' dool,

And pleasure is a wanton trout —
An ye drink it, ye 'll find him out.

4
In politics if thou would'st mix
And mean thy fortunes be;
Bear this in mind: Be deaf and blind,
Let great folks hear and see.

YE TRUE LOYAL NATIVES

The "Loyal Natives Club" of Dumfries was formed in January, 1793. It celebrated the King's birthday on 4th June with a dinner and a ball. Burns's lines were in reply to these:

THE LOYAL NATIVES' VERSES

"Ye Sons of Sedition, give ear to my song,
Let Syme, Burns, and Maxwell pervade every throng,
With Cracken, the attorney, and Mundell, the quack,
Send Willie, the monger, to hell with a smack."

Ye true "Loyal Natives," attend to my song:
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long!
From Envy and Hatred your core is exempt,
But where is your shield from the darts of Contempt?

ON COMMISSARY GOLDIE'S BRAINS

Goldie was President of the Loyal Natives.

LORD, to account who does Thee call,
Or e'er dispute Thy pleasure?
Else why within so thick a wall
Enclose so poor a treasure?

IN A LADY'S POCKET BOOK

Grant me, indulgent Heaven, that I may live
To see the miscreants feel the pains they give!
Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till Slave and Despot be but things that were!
AGAINST THE EARL OF GALLOWAY

Burns went a jaunt through Galloway, with John Syme, in the last week of July, 1793. Between Kenmure and Gatehouse the pair got "utterly wet," and, coming to Gatehouse, Burns insisted on getting "utterly drunk." Next morning, in attempting to get his boots on, he tore them to shreds. "Mercy on us," wrote Syme, "how he did fume and rage! Nothing could reinstate him in temper. I tried various expedients, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of Garlieston, across the bay of Wigton. Against the Earl of Galloway, with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper."

John Stewart, seventh Earl of Galloway, born 18th March, 1736, succeeded to the peerage 24th September, 1775; was a representative Scottish Peer from 1774 to 1790; supported Pitt, and in 1784 was chosen a Lord of the Bedchamber; was created a Peer of Great Britain 6th June, 1796; and died 13th November, 1806. Being of puritan repute and habit, he was a persona ingrata to Burns, who satirised him in The Heron Election Ballads. See ante, p. 166.

ON THE SAME

No Stewart art thou, Galloway: The Stewarts all were brave. Besides, the Stewarts were but fools, Not one of them a knave.

ON THE SAME

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway, Thro' many a far-famed sire! So ran the far-famed Roman way, And ended in a mire.

ON THE SAME, ON THE AUTHOR BEING THREATENED WITH VENGEANCE

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway! In quiet let me live:

I ask no kindness at thy hand, For thou hast none to give.

ON THE LAIRD OF LAGGAN

Written during the same tour as the Epigrams preceding. Having settled Lord Galloway, he afterwards, wrote Syme, "fell on humbler game. There is one Morine whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him." Morine had bought the farm of Ellisland.

When Morine, deceas'd, to the Devil went down, 'T was nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown. "Thy fool's head," quoth Satan, "that crown shall wear never: I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever."

ON MARIA RIDDELL

Inscribed on the back of a draft copy of Scots Wha Hae, now in the possession of Mrs. Locker-Lampson. The heading is, "On my Lord Buchan's vociferating in an argument that 'Women must always be flattered grossly or not spoken to at all.'" For Maria Riddell see ante, p. 178, Prefatory Note to Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell's Birthday.

"Praise Woman still," his lordship roars, "Deserv'd or not, no matter!" But thee whom all my soul adores, There Flattery cannot flatter! Maria, all my thought and dream, Inspires my vocal shell: The more I praise my lovely theme, The more the truth I tell.

ON MISS FONTENELLE

"If Miss Fontenelle," wrote Burns, "will accept this honest compliment to her personal charms, amiable manners, and gentle heart from a man too proud to flatter, though too poor to have his compliment of any consequence, it will sincerely oblige her anxious friend and most devoted humble servant."

Sweet naïveté of feature, Simple, wild, enchanting elf,
Not to thee, but thanks to Nature
Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected,
Spurning Nature, torturing art,
Loves and Graces all rejected,
Then indeed thou 'st act a part.

KIRK AND STATE EXCISEMEN

Written on a window in the King’s Arms,
Dumfries.

Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this
sneering’
‘Gainst poor Excisemen? Give the cause
a hearing.
What are your Landlord’s rent-rolls? Taxing ledgers!
What Premiers? What ev’n Monarchs?
Mighty Gaugers!
Nay, what are Priests (those seeming godly wise-men)?
What are they, pray, but Spiritual Excisemen!

ON THANKSGIVING FOR A NATIONAL VICTORY

The victory was probably Howe’s, off Ushant,
1st June, 1794.

Ye hypocrites! are these your pranks?
To murder men, and give God thanks?
Desist for shame! Proceed no further:
God won’t accept your thanks for Murder.

PINNED TO MRS. WALTER RIDDELL’S CARRIAGE

If you rattle along like your mistress’s tongue,
Your speed will out-rival the dart;
But, a fly for your load, you ’ll break down on the road,
If your stuff be as rotten ’s her heart.

TO DR. MAXWELL

ON MISS JESSY STAIG’S RECOVERY

For Miss Staig, see Prefatory Note to Young Jessie (post, p. 276).
Dr. William Maxwell, son of a noted Jacobite, James Maxwell of Kirkconnell, was born in 1760. He was educated at the Jesuits’ College at Dinant, and afterwards studied medicine at Paris. In 1792 he started a London subscription for the French Jacobins, and he is the Englishman said in Burke’s speech (28th December, 1792) to have ordered three thousand daggers at Birmingham. As a National Guard he was present at the execution of Louis XVI, and is reported to have dipped his handkerchief in the King’s blood. When Burns wrote, he had just returned to Scotland and started a practice in Dumfries. Burns and he became fast friends. He attended Burns during the last illness, when the dying man presented him with his pistols. He died 13th October, 1834.

MAXWELL, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessie from the grave!—
An Angel could not die!

TO THE BEAUTIFUL MISS ELIZA J——N

ON HER PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

How, “Liberty!” Girl, can it be by thee nam’d?
“Equality,” too! Hussy, art not asham’d?
Free and Equal indeed, while mankind thou enchainest,
And over their hearts a proud Despot so reignest.

ON CHLORIS

REQUESTING ME TO GIVE HER A SPRIG OF BLOSSOMED THORN

From the white-blossom’d sloe
Chloris requested
A sprig, her fair breast to adorn:
"No, by Heaven!" I exclaim’d, "let me perish for ever, 
Ere I plant in that bosom a thorn!"

TO THE HON. WM. R. MAULE OF PANMURE

Here¹ published for the first time. Sent to Mrs. Dunlop in a letter of 24th October, 1794. After telling her that the Caledonians had been at Dumfries for the last fortnight, Burns adds: “One of the corps provoked my ire the other day, which burst out as follows.”

The Hon. William Ramsay Maule, the second son of George Ramsay, Earl of Dalhousie, was born 27th October, 1771. He succeeded to Panmure on the death of his uncle, William Earl of Panmure, in 1787, when he assumed the surname of Maule; served for some time in the 11th Dragoons; was chosen M. P. for Forfar in 1790 as a supporter of Fox; on 9th September, 1831, was raised to the British Peerage as Baron Panmure; and died 13th April, 1852. He appears (with his horse) in Kay’s Edinburgh Portraits as "a generous sportsman." In effect, he was ardent in racing and cocking, much given to obstreperous practical jokes, and not too exemplary in his general habits: at the same time that he was generous to his dependants, and liberal in regard to schemes for the public welfare. He bestowed an annuity of £50 on Burns’s widow.

THOU FOOL, in thy phaeton towering, 
Art proud when that phaeton’s prais’d? 
’Tis the pride of a Thief’s exhibition 
When higher his pillory’s rais’d.

ON SEEING MRS. KEMBLE IN YARICO

The lady was Mrs. Stephen Kemble, who appeared at the Dumfries Theatre in October, 1794.

KEMBLE, thou cur’st my unbelief 
Of Moses and his rod: 
At Yarico’s sweet notes of grief 
The rock with tears had flow’d.

ON DR. BABINGTON’S LOOKS

Burns, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, refers to the subject of his satire “as a well-known ² That is, in the Centenary Edition.

character here” — that is, presumably, Dumfries. He explains that it was in answer to one who said “there was falsehood in his looks.”

THAT there is a falsehood in his looks 
I must and will deny: 
They say their Master is a knave, 
And sure they do not lie.

ON ANDREW TURNER

In S’e’ent’eehn Hundred ‘n Forty-Nine 
The Dei gat stuff to mak a swine, 
An’ coost it in a corner; 
But willly he chang’d his plan, 
An’ shap’d it something like a man, 
An’ ca’d it Andrew Turner.

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT

Inscribed by Burns in the Dumfriesshire volume of Sir John Sinclair’s Statistical Account of Scotland, in a footnote to a narrative of the Persecution in Balmaghie parish.

The Solemn League and Covenant 
Now brings a smile, now brings a tear. 
But sacred Freedom, too, was theirs: 
If thou ’rt a slave, indulge thy sneer.

TO JOHN SYME OF RYEDALE

WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER

John Syme, son of a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, was born in 1755. He entered the army in his nineteenth year, but after his father’s death resided on the little estate of Barneailzie, Kirkcudbrightshire. Constrained to sell by the failure of the Ayr Bank, he obtained the office of Distributor of Stamps in Dumfries in 1791. Burns inhabited the floor immediately above his office, and presently got to regard him as his “supreme court of critical judicature” in literary matters. Syme’s rather glowing description of a passage between him and Burns (when, being rebuked for his excesses, the Bard half drew on him) was made the matter of a piece of criticism by Walter Scott in a review of Cromek’s Reliques. In July, 1793, Burns and Syme went touring in
Galloway, (see ante, pp. 188, 189, Prefatory Note to Against the Earl of Galloway, and Prefatory Note to On the Laird of Laggan), and after Burns's death Syme was Alexander Cunningham's chief cooperator in the work of starting a subscription for his friend's family and projecting the publication of his posthumous poems and letters. It is much to be regretted that he did not undertake the editorship, as at one time it was thought he might, instead of Currie. He died 24th November, 1831.

O, had the malt thy strength of mind,  
Or hops the flavour of thy wit,  
'T were drink for first of human kind —  
A gift that ev'n for Syme were fit.

JERUSALEM TAVERN,  
DUMFRIES.

ON A GOBLET

The goblet belonged to Syme.

There's Death in the cup, so beware!  
Nay, more — there is danger in touching!  
But who can avoid the fell snare?  
The man and his wine's so bewitching!

APOLOGY TO JOHN SYME

Published in Currie with the explanation:  
"On refusing to dine with him, after having been promised the first of company and the first of cookery, 17th December, 1795."

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,  
And cookery the first in the nation:  
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit  
Is proof to all other temptation.

ON MR. JAMES GRACIE

Gracie, thou art a man of worth,  
O, be thou Dean for ever!  
May he be damn'd to Hell henceforth,  
Who faunts thy weight or measure!

AT FRIARS CARSE HERMITAGE

To Riddell, much-lamented man,  
This ivied cot was dear:  
Wand'rer, dost value matchless worth?  
This ivied cot revere.

FOR AN ALTAR OF INDEPENDENCE

AT KERROUGHRIE, THE SEAT OF MR. HERON

For Heron, see ante, p. 184, Prefatory Note to First Heron Election Ballad.

Thou of an independent mind,  
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd,  
Prepar'd Power's proudest frown to brave,  
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave,  
Virtue alone who dost revere,  
Thy own reproach alone dost fear:  
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

VERSICLES TO JESSIE LEWARS

THE TOAST

Inscribed on a crystal goblet presented to Miss Lewars.

Fill me with the rosy wine;  
Call a toast, a toast divine;  
Give the Poet's darling flame;  
Lovely Jessie be her name:  
Then thou mayest freely boast  
Thou hast given a peerless toast.

THE MENAGERIE

Written on the advertisement of a travelling show, which in May, 1796, was handed to Burns by Mr. Brown, Surgeon, in Jessie's presence.

I

Talk not to me of savages  
From Afric's burning sun!  
No savage e'er can rend my heart  
As, Jessie, thou hast done.
II

But Jessie's lovely hand in mine
A mutual faith to plight —
Not even to view the heavenly choir
Would be so blest a sight.

JESSIE'S ILLNESS

Say, sages, what's the charm on earth
Can turn Death's dart aside?
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessie had not died!

HER RECOVERY

But rarely seen since Nature's birth
The natives of the sky!
Yet still one seraph's left on earth,
For Jessie did not die.

ON MARRIAGE

That hackney'd judge of human life,
The Preacher and the King,
Observes: — "The man that gets a wife
He gets a noble thing."
But how capricious are mankind,
Now loathing, now desirous!
We married men, how oft we find
The best of things will tire us!

GRACES

A POET'S GRACE

BEFORE MEAT

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For ev'ry creature's want!
We bless the God of Nature wide
For all Thy goodness lent.
And if it please Thee, heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But, whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content.

AFTER MEAT

O Thou, in whom we live and move,
Who made the sea and shore,

AT THE GLOBE TAVERN

BEFORE MEAT

O Lord, when hunger pinches sore,
Do Thou stand us in stead,
And send us from Thy bounteous store
A tup- or wether-head.

AFTER MEAT

1

Lord, [Thee] we thank, and Thee alone;
For temporal gifts we little merit!
At present we will ask no more:
Let William Hislop bring the spirit.

2

O Lord, since we have feasted thus,
Which we so little merit,
Let Meg now take the flesh away,
And Jock bring in the spirit.

3

O Lord, we do Thee humbly thank
For that we little merit:
Now Jean may tak the flesh away,
And Will bring in the spirit.

EPITAPHS

ON JAMES GRIEVE, LAIRD OF BOGHEAD, TARBOLTON

The epitaph is a sort of reversal of that or
Gavin Hamilton, ante, p. 55.

Here lies Boghead amang the dead
In hopes to get salvation;
But if such as he in Heav'n may be,
Then welcome — hail! damnation.
ON WM. MUIR IN TARBOLTON MILL

William Muir, described in the *First Common Place Book* as "my own friend and my father's friend," was born in 1745. His mill at Tarbolton is mentioned in *Death and Dr. Hornbook* (ante, p. 57, stanza v. line 2). Jean Armour, being expelled her father's home, found shelter for a time with the miller's wife (1787-8). Muir died in 1798; and Burns, recalling this piece of kindness, wrote to Gavin Hamilton that, hearing that Mrs. Muir was likely to be "involved in great difficulties" in regard to the settlements, he was ready to "move heaven and earth on her behalf," and would undertake, through his friends in Edinburgh, to get her the best legal assistance free of charge.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with His image blest:  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth:  
Few hearts like his — with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

ON JOHN RANKINE

For Rankine, see Prefatory Note to *Epistle to John Rankine*, ante, p. 50.

Ae day, as Death, that gruesome carl,  
Was driving to the tither warl'  
A mixtie-maxtie, motley squad  
And monie a guilt-bespotted lad:  
Black gowns of each denomination,  
And thieves of every rank and station,  
From him that wears the star and garter  
To him that wintles in a halter:  
Asham'd himself to see the wretches,  
He mutters, glow'ring at the bitches: —  "By God I'll not be seen behint them,  
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,  
Without at least ae honest man  
To grace this damn'd infernal clan!"  
By Adamhill a glance he threw,  "Lord God!" quoth he, "I have it now,  There's just the man I want, i' faith!"  
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

ON TAM THE CHAPMAN

As Tam the chapman on a day  
Wi' Death forgather'd by the way,  
Weel pleas'd he greets a wight so famous,  
And Death was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,  
Wha cheerfully lays down his pack,  
And there blows up a hearty crack:  
His social, friendly, honest heart  
Sae tickled Death, they could na part;  
Sae, after viewing knives and garters,  
Death takes him hame to gie him quarters.

ON HOLY WILLIE

For William Fisher, see ante, p. 109, Prefatory Note to *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay  
Taks up its last abode;  
His sould has taen some other way —  
I fear, the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is as sure's a gun!  
Poor, silly body, see him!  
Nae wonder he's as black's the grun —  
Observe wha's standing wi' him!  
Your brunstane Devilship, I see,  
Has got him there before ye!  
But hand your nine-tail-cat a wee,  
Till ance you've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,  
For pity ye have nane.  
Justice, alas! has gi'en him o'er,  
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, Sir, Deil as ye are,  
Look something to your credit:  
A cuif like him wad stain your name,  
If it were kent ye did it!
ON JOHN DOVE, INNKEEPER

Dove was landlord of the Whitefoord Arms, Mauchline.

I

Here lies Johnie Pigeon:
What was his religion
Whae'er desires to ken
To some other warl'
Maun follow the carl,
For here Johnie Pigeon had nane!

II

Strong ale was ablution;
Small beer, persecution;
A dram was memento mori;
But a full flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
And port was celestial glory!

ON A WAG IN MAUCHLINE

The wag was James Smith. See ante, p. 15, Prefatory Note to Epistle to James Smith.

I

Lament him, Mauchline husbands a',
He aften did assist ye;
For had ye staid hale weeks awa',
Your wives they ne'er had missed ye!

II

Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
To school in bands thegither,
O, tread ye lightly on his grass —
Perhaps he was your father!

ON ROBERT FERGUSSON

ON THE TOMBSTONE IN THE CANONGATE CHURCHYARD

On the 6th February, 1787, Burns applied to the Kirk Managers of the Canongate parish, Edinburgh, for permission to “lay a small stone” over the “revered ashes” of Fergusson, to “remain an inalienable property to his deathless fame;” and his request was unanimously granted on the 22d of the same month. But the mason whom Robert Burn, the architect, employed was so dilatory that the commission was not executed until August, 1789. To be quits with his architect, Burns did not pay the account (£5 10s.) until February, 1792. On the 11th August, 1789, the following notice appeared in The Edinburgh Advertiser, and on the 13th in The Evening Courant: “The Ayrshire Bard, Mr. Burns, has at his own expense erected a monument or headstone in the Canongate Church, over the grave of the late Mr. Fergusson, with the following inscription,” etc. On the reverse of the stone is the declaration: “By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this Burial Place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson.”

HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON
BORN SEPT. 5TH, 1751
DIED OCT. 16TH, 1774

No sculptur'd Marble here, nor pompous lay,
No storied Urn nor animated Bust;
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrow o'er the Poet's dust.

ADDITIONAL STANZAS

NOT INSCRIBED

I

She mourns, sweet tuneful youth, thy hapless fate:
Tho' all the powers of song thy fancy fir'd,
Yet Luxury and Wealth lay by in State,
And, thankless, starv'd what they so much admir'd.

II

This humble tribute with a tear he gives,
A brother Bard — he can no more bestow:
But dear to fame thy Song immortal lives,
A nobler monument than Art can show.

FOR WILLIAM NICOL

William Nicol was born in 1744 at Dumbarton, in the parish of Annan. In early childhood he lost his father; while still a mere youth opened a school in his mother's house; studied, at the University of Edinburgh, first theology and then medicine; took up teaching again; and in 1774 was appointed a classical
master in the High School of Edinburgh. Burns met him in that city as a Crochallan Club man, and in the autumn took him on his Highland tour. His visit to Nicol at Moffat in 1789 is celebrated in O, *Willie Brewed a Peck o’ Maut* (post, p. 229). After Nicol bought the little property of Laggan, in Glencairn parish (1790), he and Burns met often in the holidays, Burns counting him his “dearest friend” after his own brother. In 1795 Nicol, having assaulted the Rector of the High School, resigned his mastership, and started on his own account; but late hours and liquor had already undermined his health, and he died 21st April, 1797.

Ye maggots, feed on Nicol’s brain,
   For few sic feasts you’ve gotten;
And fix your claws in Nicol’s heart,
   For deil a bit o’t’s rotten.

FOR MR. WILLIAM MICHIE
SCHOOLMASTER OF CLEISH PARISH, FIFE-SHIRE

Here lie Willie Michie’s banes:
   O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schulin o’ your weans,
   For clever deils he’ll mak them!

FOR WILLIAM CRUICKSHANK,
A. M.

William Cruickshank was appointed master of the Canongate High School, Edinburgh, in 1770; was promoted to a classical mastership in the Edinburgh High School in 1772; and died 8th March, 1795. His only daughter, Jenny Cruickshank, was a prime favourite with the Poet. See Prefatory Note to *To Miss Cruickshank*, ante, p. 95.

Now honest William’s gaen to Heaven,
   I wat na gin ‘t can mend him:
The fauts he had in Latin lay,
   For nane in English kent them.

ON ROBERT MUIR

Robert Muir, son of William Muir, who had the little estate of Loanfoot, near Kilmarnock, was born 8th August, 1758, and became a wine merchant at Kilmarnock. He subscribed with great liberality to both the Kilmarnock and the Edinburgh Editions, and letters to him are included in Burns’s *Correspondence*. He died of consumption 22d April, 1788.

“Muir, thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart glowed with everything generous, manly, and noble; and, if ever emanations from the all-good Being animated a human form, it was thine.” (R. B.)

What man could esteem, or what woman could love,
   Was he who lies under this sod:
If such Thou refusest admission above,
   Then whom wilt Thou favour, Good God?

ON A LAP-DOG

The lap-dog belonged to Mrs. Gordon of Kenmore. The little beast had died just before Burns visited her during his Galloway tour, and she was importunate that he should write its epitaph.

I

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
   Your heavy loss deplore:
Now half extinct your powers of song —
   Sweet Echo is no more.

II

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
   Scream your discordant joys:
Now half your din of tuneless sound
   With Echo silent lies.

MONODY

ON A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE

The lady was Maria Riddell (see ante, p. 178, Prefatory Note to *Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell’s Birthday*). “The subject of the foregoing,” Burns wrote to Clarinda, “is a woman of fashion in this country, with whom at one period I was well acquainted. By some scandalous conduct to me, and two or three other gentlemen here as well as me, she steered so far to the north of my good opinion, that I have made her the theme of several ill-natured things.” For a fairer statement of the case, see as above, the Prefatory Note to *Impromptu*. 
I
How cold is that bosom which Folly once
fired!
How pale is that cheek where the rouge
lately glisten'd!
How silent is that tongue which the echoes oft
tired!
How dull is that ear which to flatt'ry so
listen'd!

II
If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection
remov'd,
How doubly severer, Maria, thy fate!
Thou diedst unwept, as thou livedst un-
lov'd.

III
Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on
you:
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a
tear.
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Maria's cold
bier!

IV
We’ll search through the garden for each
silly flower,
We’ll roam thro' the forest for each
idle weed,
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none ever approach'd her but rued
the rash deed.

V
We’ll sculpture the marble, we’ll measure
the lay:
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre!
There keen Indignation shall dart on his
prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem
from his ire!

THE EPITAPH
Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's
beam:
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her es-
tem.
For had He said:—"The soul alone
From death I will deliver,"
Alas! alas! O Cardoness,
Then hadst thou lain for ever!

ON WM. GRAHAM OF MOSS-KNOWE

"Stop thief!" Dame Nature call'd to Death,
As Willie drew his latest breath:
"How shall I make a fool again?
My choicest model thou hast taen."

ON JOHN BUSHBY OF TINWALD DOWNS

Bushby, the son of a spirit-dealer in Dumfries, became a lawyer and afterwards a private banker in the same town. Business capacity and a good marriage enabled him to purchase Tinwald Downs. He is severely satirised in two of the Heron Election Ballads, more particularly John Bushby's Lamentation (ante, p. 166).

HERE lies John Bushby—honest man!
Cheat him, Devil—if you can!

ON A SUICIDE

Cunningham says that Burns was seen to write the trash on a piece of paper, and "thrust it with his fingers into the red mould of the grave."

HERE lies in earth a root of Hell
Set by the Deil's ain dibble:
This worthless body damn'd himself
To save the Lord the trouble.

ON A SWEARING COXCOMB

HERE cursing, swearing Burton lies,
A buck, a beau, or "Dem my eyes!"
Who in his life did little good,
And his last words were:—"Dem my blood!"

ON AN INNKEEPER NICKNAMED "THE MARQUIS"

The inn was in a Dumfries close.
HERE lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were shamm'd.
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd.

ON GRIZZEL GRIMME

Mrs. Grizzel Young was the widow of Thomas Young of Lincluden. The ancient nunnery of Lincluden was converted into a college by Archibald the Grim, Earl of Douglas.

HERE lyes with Dethe auld Grizzel Grimme Lincluden's ugly witche.
O Dethe, an' what a taste hast thou
Cann lye with siche a bitche!

FOR GABRIEL RICHARDSON

Inscribed on a crystal goblet. Gabriel Richardson was the chief brewer of Dumfries, and Provost of the burgh in 1802-3. He was the father of Sir John Richardson, naturalist and traveller.

HERE brewer Gabriel's fire's extinct,
And empty all his barrels:
He's bl'est—if as he brew'd, he drink—
In upright, virtuous morals.

ON THE AUTHOR

"Wrote by Burns, while on his deathbed, to John Rankine, Ayrshire, and forwarded to him immediately after the Poet's death." STEWART.

He who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and deid,
And a green, grassy hillock hides his
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed!
The present section consists of songs sent by Burns to Johnson's *Musical Museum* and Thomson's *Scottish Airs*, and duly set forth in these collections. Some he sent which were not used, and some were used which he did not send. These appear in the last section.

Burns's earliest reference to the *Museum* is contained in a letter, written as he was leaving Edinburgh, of the 4th May, 1787. He tells Johnson that he sends a song ("never before own") for his publication, and that had the acquaintance been a little older, he would have asked the favour of a "correspondence." Only two of his songs appeared in Johnson's First Volume, the Preface to which is dated 22d May, 1787; and it is possible to observe in detail neither the growth of his acquaintance with Johnson himself nor that of his interest in Johnson's venture. He seems, however, to have made special arrangements with Johnson during his visit to Edinburgh in the autumn: at any rate, there are indications that he has resolved — entirely as a labour of love — to do his best for both the man and the book. On the 20th October he informs Mr. Hoy, chamberlain to the Duke of Gordon, that, to "the utmost of his small power," he assists "in collecting the old poetry, or sometimes for a fine air" makes "a stanza when it has no words:" on the 25th he confides to Skinner, the parson poet, that he has "been absolutely erazed about" the project, and is "collecting old stanzas, and every information respecting their origin, authors," etc.; and in November he is found asking his friend James Candlish to send him "Pompey's Ghost, words and music," and confessing that he has already it collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen all the songs he could. All this is in the beginning; and of itself it were enough to show that, even had he done no more, still Johnson's debt to him had been considerable.

But there is evidence in plenty that he was very soon a great deal more than a mere contributor, however unwearied and unselfish. Johnson — an engraver, who could neither write grammatically nor even spell — was quite incompetent himself to edit the *Museum*; and at first he was helped by the elder Tytler. Burns was virtually editor of the work from the autumn of 1787 until his health began to fail, is proved (1) by what is left of his correspondence with Johnson; (2) by his annotations on the Hastie MSS. (British Museum); and (3) by certain draft-plans of volumes, lists of songs, and other MS. scraps now in the library of Mr. George Gray, Glasgow, which we have been privileged to consult for this Edition. Thus, in November, 1788, he tells Johnson that he has prepared a "flaming preface" for vol. iii. The tone of it is not exactly that of the Preface to vol. ii.; but Burns was a creature of moods, and he may very well have written both. If he did, he ends the earlier thus: "Ignorance and Prejudice may perhaps affect to sneer at the simplicity of the poetry or music of some of those pieces, but their having been for ages the favourites of Nature's judges, the Common People, was to the Editor a sufficient test of their merit." The next is less humble and more cynical as regards the *Vox Populi*. "As this is not," it runs, "one of those many Publications which are hourly ushered into the World merely to catch the eye of Fashion in her frenzy of a day, the Editor has little to hope or fear from the herd of readers. Consciousness of the well-known merit of our Scottish Music, and the natural fondness of a Scotchman for the productions of his own country, are at once the Editor's motive and apology for the Undertaking; and where any of the Pieces in the Collection may perhaps be found wanting at the Critical Bar of the First, he appeals to the honest prejudices of the Last." Burns's hand is also plain in the Preface to vol. iv., which ends with this pronouncement: "To those who object that this Publication contains pieces of inferior or little value the Editor answers by referring to his plan. All our songs cannot have equal merit. Besides, as the world have (sic) not yet agreed on any unerring balance, any undisputed standard, in matters of Taste, what to one person yields no manner of pleasure, may to another be a high enjoyment." He died before the appearance of vol. v. (there were six in all), but the Preface thereto contains an extract from a letter of his: "You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but alas, the hand of pain and sorrow and care has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural Muse of Scotia. In the meantime let us finish what we have so well begun."

In the September of 1792 he was invited by

1 That is, the Centenary Edition.
George Thomson to contribute to his *Scottish Airs*, a more ambitious and — musically speaking — a more elaborate adventure than the *Museum*. He replied that, inasmuch as it would positively add to his enjoyment to comply with the request, he would "enter into the undertaking with all the small portion of the abilities" he had, "strained to the utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm." "As to remuneration," he added, "you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, etc., would be downright sodomy of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend I shall receive as a favour. In my songs either above or below price; for they unWelcome to his mind.

Misfortunes, hardships, follies, excesses in fact and sentiment, success itself, so barren of lasting profit to him — all these had done some part of their work; and already his way of life was falling into the sere and yellow leaf. Though few, the years had been full exceedingly; and his inspiration was its old rapturous, irresistible self no longer. Moreover, he had to content Thomson as well as to satisfy himself; and Thomson, a kind of poetaster, whose taste in verse was merely academic, persuaded him to write more English than was good for him; being in this matter wholly of his time, he could find nothing to "fire his vocal rage" but the amatory "effusions" of one of the least lyrical schools in letters; and the consequences were disastrous to his art. The Thomson songs, indeed, some distinguished and delightful exceptions to the contrary, are not in his happier vein. They have not the fresh sweetness and the unflagging spirit of his *Museum* numbers. They are less distinctively Scots than these, for one thing; and for another, they are often rapid in sentiment and artificial in effect. Now, his work for the *Museum* consisted largely in the adaptation of old rhymes and folk-songs to modern uses. Some he arranged, some he condensed, some he enlarged, some he reconstructed and rewrote. Stray snatches, phrases, lines, thin echoes from a vanished past — nothing came amiss to him, nor was there anything he could not turn to good account. His appreciation was instant and inevitable, his touch unerring. Under his hand a patchwork of catch-words became a living song. He would take you two fragments of different epochs, select the best from each, and treat the matter of his choice in such a style that it is hard to know where its components end and begin: so that nothing is certain about his result except that here is a piece of art. Or he would capture a wandering old refrain, adjust it to his own conditions, and so renew its lyrical interest and significance that it seems to live its true life for the first time on his lips. Here, in fact, is his chief claim to perennial acceptance. He passed the folk-song of his nation through the mint of his mind, and he reproduced it stamped with his image and lettered with his superscription: so that for the world at large it exists, and will go on existing, not as he found but as he left it. Burns's knowledge of the older minstrelsy was unique; he was saturated with its tradition, as he was absolute master of its emotions and effects; no such artist in folk-song as he (so in other words Sir Walter said) has ever worked in literature. But a hundred forgotten singers went to the making of his achievement and himself. He did not wholly originate those master-qualities — of fresh and taking simplicity, of vigour and directness and happy and humorous ease, which have come to be regarded as distinctive of his verse; for all these things, together with much of the thought, the romance, and the sentiment for which we read and love him, were included in the estate which he inherited from his nameless forebears; and he so assimilated them that what is actually those forebears' legacy to him has come to be regarded as his gift to them. Those forebears aiding, he stands forth as the sole great poet of the old Scots world; and he thus is national as no poet has ever been, and as no poet ever will or ever can be again. Thus, too, it is that, being the "satirist and singer of a parish" — a fact which only the Common Burnsite could be crazy enough, or pigheaded enough, to deny he is at the same time the least parochial — the most broadly and genuinely human — among the lyricists of his race. [Many of the songs contributed to Johnson were afterward sent to Thomson, but in the collection which follows, Johnson's *Museum* is practically the authority for all up to *Wandering Willie*. That and the rest are from Thomson's *Scottish Airs*.]
YOUNG PEGGY

Margaret, daughter of Robert Kennedy, of Daljarroch, Ayrshire, and niece of Mr. Gavin Hamilton, was born 3d November, 1766; fell in love with (and finally succumbed to) Captain, afterwards Colonel, Andrew M'Doual (“Sculdudd’ry M’Doual”) of the second Heron Ballad: see ante, p. 166) in 1784; bore him a daughter in January, 1794; raised an action for (1) declarator of marriage, or (2) damages for seduction; and died in February, 1795, before the case was decided. Meanwhile, M’Doual, who denied paternity as well as marriage, had wedded another lady; but in 1798 the Consistorial Court declared against him on both issues; and the Court of Session, having set aside its judgment as regards the marriage, ordered him to provide for his child in the sum of £3000.

Burns often met Miss Kennedy at Gavin Hamilton’s. His song was enclosed to her in an undated letter: “I have in these verses attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished simple manner of descriptive truth.” This, and not The Banks o’ Doon, (post, p. 243), which it is usual, but erroneous, to suppose was suggested by the lady’s amour, must have been the song “on Miss Peggy Kennedy,” which, with The Lass o’ Ballochmyle, the “jury of literati” in Edinburgh “found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste.” Forbidden to print it (no doubt for the same reason as he was forbidden to print The Lass o’ Ballochmyle, and not because it is not better than nine tenths of the Ramsay songs, of which it is an imitation) in the Edinburgh Edition, the writer sent it to Johnson, where it appears as alternative words to the tune, Loch Errochside.

I

Young Peggy blooms our boniest lass:
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn the springing grass
With early gems adorning;
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o’er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh’ning flower.

II

Her lips, more than the cherries bright—
A richer dye has graced them—
They charm the admiring gazer’s sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them.
Her smile is as the evening mild,
When feather’d pairs are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands dispersing.

III

Were Fortune lovely Peggy’s foe,
Such sweetness would relent her;
As blooming Spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage Winter.
Detraction’s eye no aim can gain
Her winning powers to lessen,
And fretful Envy grins in vain
The poison’d tooth to fasten.

IV

Ye Pow’rs of Honour, Love, and Truth,
From ev’ry ill defend her!
Inspire the highly-favour’d youth
The destinies intend her!
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom,
And bless the dear paternal name
With many a filial blossom!

BONIE DUNDEE

A fragment of folk-ballad, with modifications and additions. Cromek states that Burns sent the draft of his version to Cleghorn with the following note: “Dear Cleghorn,—You will see by the above that I have added a stanza to Bonny Dundee. If you think it will do you may set it going upon a ten-stringed instrument and on the psaltery. — R. B.”

I

“O, whar gat ye that hauver-meal bannock?”
“O silly blind body, O, dinna ye see?
I gat it frae a young, brisk sodger laddie
Between Saint Johnston and bonie Dundee.
O, gin I saw the laddie that gae me ’t!
Aft has he dould’d me up on his knee:
May Heaven protect my bonie Scots laddie,
And send him hame to his babie and me!

II

“My blessin’s upon thy sweet, wee lippie!
My blessin’s upon thy bonie e’e brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie,
Thou’s ay the dearer and dearer to me!”
TO THE WEAVER’S GIN YE GO

The chorus of this song is old, the rest is mine. Here once for all let me apologise for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words, and in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together, anything nearly tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed whose every performance is excellent.” (R. B.)

CHORUS

To the weaver’s gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weaver’s gin ye go,
I rede you right, gang ne’er at night,
To the weaver’s gin ye go.

O, WHISTLE AN’ I’LL COME TO YE, MY LAD

The song has hitherto been held pure Burns. But he found his chorus in the Herd ms.: —

“Whistle and I’ll cum to ye, my lad!
Whistle and I’ll cum to ye, my lad!
Gin father and mither and a’ should gae mad,
Whistle and I’ll cum to ye, my lad!”

CHORUS

O, whistle an’ I’ll come to ye, my lad!
O, whistle an’ I’ll come to ye, my lad!
Tho’ father an’ mother an’ a’ should gae mad,
O, whistle an’ I’ll come to ye, my lad!

O, whistle an’ I’ll come to ye, my lad!

1 That is, by previous editors.
M’PHERSON’S FAREWELL

Tho’ father an’ mother an’ a’ should gae mad,
O, whistle an’ I’ll come to ye, my lad!

I’M O’ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET

“The chorus of this song is old; the rest of it, such as it is, is mine.” (R. B.)

CHORUS

I’m o’er young, I’m o’er young,
I’m o’er young to marry yet!
I’m o’er young, ’t wad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammie yet.

I

I am my mammie’s ae bairn,
Wi’ unco folk I weary, Sir,
And lying in a man’s bed,
I’m fley’d it make me eerie, Sir.

II

Hallowmass is come and gane,
The nights are lang in winter, Sir,
And you an’ I in ae bed—
In trowth, I dare na venture, Sir!

III

Fu’ loud and shrill the frosty wind
Blaws thro’ the leafless timmer, Sir,
But if ye come this gate again,
I’ll auld er be gin simmer, Sir.

CHORUS

I’m o’er young, I’m o’er young,
I’m o’er young to marry yet!
I’m o’er young, ’t wad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammie yet.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDIE

“I composed these stanzas standing under the Falls of Moness at or near Aberfeldy.” (R. B.)

CHORUS

Bonie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go?
Bonie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldie?

I

Now simmer blinks on flow’ry braes,
And o’er the crystal streamlets plays,
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldie!

II

The little birdies blythely sing,
While o’er their heads the hazels hing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldie.

III

The braes ascend like lofty wa’s,
The foaming stream, deep-roaring, fa’s
O’er hung with fragrant-spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldie.

IV

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 Aberfeldie.

V

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 Aberfeldie.

CHORUS

Bonie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go?
Bonie lassie, will ye go
To the birks of Aberfeldie?

M’PHERSON’S FAREWELL

“M’Pherson, a daring robber in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be hanged at the assizes of Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he calls his own Lament or Farewell.” (R. B.)

The reputed son of a gipsy, James M’Pherson, a cateran of notable strength and prowess, was apprehended for robbery by the Laird of Braco, at Keith Market; and, being haled before the Sheriff of Banff on 1st November, 1700, was hanged at the Cross of Banff on the 10th. The tradition that he played the Lament on his violin on the way to the tree, or at the foot of it, is absurd. It has, further, been
pointed out that his legend may derive from an Irish story: of a tune called M’Pherson, with which its composer is said to have played himself to the gallows on the pipes.

There is a set in Herd (1769), but it is plainly a corruption of the old broadside — The Last Words of James Mackpherson, Murderer — (which seems in part an imitation of Captain Johnston’s Farewell: he was hanged at Tyburn in 1690: in the Pepys Collection, v. 523), and opens thus: —

“I spent my time in rioting,
Debauched my health and strength;
I pillaged, plundered, murdered,
But now, alas! at length
I’m brought to punishment condign;
Pale death draws near to me:
The end I ever did project,
To hang upon a tree.”

The most notable lines, however, are the four last: —

“Then wantonly and rantingly
I am resolved to die;
And with undaunted courage I
Shall mount this fatal tree.”

which are the germ of Burns’s refrain. But Burns, while preserving throughout the spirit of his original has expressed it in the noblest terms.

CHORUS

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he,
He play’d a spring, and dane’d it round
Below the gallows-tree.

I

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch’s destinie!
M’Pherson’s time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

II

O, what is death but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I’ve dar’d his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

III

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword,
And there’s no a man in all Scotland
But I’ll brave him at a word.

IV

I’ve liv’d a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:

It burns my heart I must depart,
And not aveng’d be.

V

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dare not die!

CHORUS

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he,
He play’d a spring, and dane’d it round
Below the gallows-tree.

MY HIGHLAND LASSIE, O

“This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My ‘Highland Lassie’ was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the Banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking farewell, before she should embark for the West Highlands to arrange matters for our projected change of life. At the close of the Autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness.” (R. B.)

The “Highland Lassie” was Mary Campbell, daughter of one Archibald Campbell, a Clyde sailor. The year of her birth is uncertain; its place is not beyond dispute; the date of her death is matter of debate; its exact circumstances are not authenticated; there is room for conjecture as to the place of her burial; little or no independent testimony exists as to her person and character — unless she be identified with a certain Mary Campbell of indifferent repute; there is scarce material for the barest outlines of her biography.

A part of My Highland Lassie, O is reminiscent of the chorus of Ramsay’s My Nannie O, which traces back to a blackletter in the Pepys Collection [with the following chorus]: —

“For Katy, Katy, Katy O,
The love I bear to Katy O:
All the world shall never know
The love I bear to Katy O.”
Another ballad, *The Scotch Wooing of Willy and Nanie*, has the same chorus, with "Nanie" for "Katy," and with this one Burns was probably as well acquainted as Ramsay himself. The old song, *Highland Lassie*, suggested to Burns scarcely more than his title; but it faintly resembles *The Highland Queen*.

**CHORUS**

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rashy, O,
I set me down wi’ right guid will
To sing my Highland lassie, O!

I

Nae gentle dames, tho’ ne'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my Muse’s care:
Their titles a’ are empty show —
Gie me my Highland lassie, O!

II

O, were yon hills and vallies mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine,
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O!

III

But fickle Fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow
I’ll love my Highland lassie, O.

IV

Altho’ thro’ foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change;
For her bosom burns with honour’s glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

V

For her I’ll dare the billows’ roar,
For her I’ll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

VI

She has my heart, she has my hand,
My secret troth and honour’s band!
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I’m thine, my Highland lassie, O!

**THO’ CRUEL FATE**

Tho’ cruel fate should bid us part
Far as the pole and line,
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.
Tho’ mountains rise, and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between,
Yet dearer than my deathless soul
I still would love my Jean.

**STAY, MY CHARMER**

I

Stay, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me:
Cruel charmer, can you go?
Cruel charmer, can you go?

II

By my love so ill-requited,
By the faith you fondly plighted,
By the pangs of lovers slighted,
Do not, do not leave me so!
Do not, do not leave me so!

**STRATHALLAN’S LAMENT**

"This air is the composition of the worthiest and best-hearted man living, Allan Masterton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism we agreed to dedicate our words and air to the cause. But to tell the matter of fact; except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of ‘vive la bagatelle.’" (R. B).

The Strathallan of the Lament was James Drummond,—eldest son of William, 4th Viscount Strathallan, killed at Culloden, 14th April, 1746,—who was included in the Act of Attainder, 4th June; and, after staying for some time in hiding, escaped to France, where he died, 27th June, 1765, at Sens in Champagne. The titles were restored in 1824.

I

Thickest night, surround my dwelling!
Howling tempests, o’er me rave!
Turbid torrents wintry-swelling,
Roaring by my lonely cave!
Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
   Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
   Suit not my distracted mind.

II

In the cause of Right engagèd,
   Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour’s war we strongly wagèd,
   But the heavens deny’d success.
Ruin’s wheel has driven o’er us:
   Not a hope that dare attend,
The wide world is all before us,
   But a world without a friend.

MY HOGGIE

“Dr. Walker, who was minister in Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told the following anecdote concerning this air. He said that some gentlemen riding a few years ago through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Mossaul (in Ewesdale); when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called ‘What will I do gin my Hoggie die?’ No person, except a few females at Mossaul, knew this fine old tune, which in all probability would have been lost had not one of the gentlemen who happened to have a flute with him taken it down.”

I

What will I do gin my hoggie die?
   My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
   And vow but I was vogie!
The lee-lang night we watched the fauld,
   Me and my faithfu’ doggie;
We heard nocht but the roaring linn
   Amang the braes sae scroggie.

II

But the houlet cry’d frae the castle wa’,
   The blitter frae the boggie,
The tod reply’d upon the hill:
   I trembled for my hoggie.
When day did daw, and coocks did craw,
   The morning it was foggie,
An unco tyke lap o’er the dyke,
   And maist has kill’d my hoggie!

JUMPIN JOHN

CHORUS

The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin John
   Beguil’d the bonnie lassie!
The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin John
   Beguil’d the bonnie lassie!

I

Her daddie forbad, her minnie forbad;
   Forbidden she wadna be:
She wadna trow’t, the browst she brew’d
   Wad taste sae bitterlie!

II

A cow and a cauf, a yowe and a hauf,
   And thretty guid shillins and three:
A vera guid tocher! a cotter-man’s dochter,
   The lass with the bonie black e’e!

CHORUS

The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin John
   Beguil’d the bonnie lassie!
The lang lad they ca’ Jumpin John
   Beguil’d the bonnie lassie!

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY

“The chorus of this song is old; the two stanzas are mine.” (R. B.)

CHORUS

Up in the morning’s no for me,
   Up in the morning early!
When a’ the hills are covered wi’ snaw,
   I’ m sure it’s winter fairly!

I

CAULD blaws the wind frae east to west,
   The drift is driving sairly,
Sae loud and shrill ‘s I hear the blast —
   I’ m sure it’s winter fairly.

II

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
   A’ day they fare but sparsely;
And lang’ s the night frae e’en to morn —
   I’ m sure it’s winter fairly.

CHORUS

Up in the morning’s no for me,
   Up in the morning early!
When a’ the hills are cover’d wi’ snaw,
I’m sure it’s winter fairly!

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER

Intended to commemorate his visit to Castle Gordon in 1787, and made, seemingly, after the discovery that Castle Gordon (ante, p. 121) did not fit the tune Morag. To the same tune he also wrote, O, Wat ye wha that Lo’es Me (post, p. 284). The “rover” was probably the Young Chevalier.

Loud blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaws the mountains cover.
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where’er he go, where’er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden!
Return him safe to fair Strathspey
And bonie Castle Gordon!

THE DUSTY MILLER

Stenhouse says vaguely that the verses “are a fragment of the old ballad with a few verbal alterations by Burns;” and Sharpe gives a version of the “original” without saying where he got it. It differs comparatively little from the fragment (Herd ms.) upon which Burns based his song:

“O, the Dusty Miller, O, the Dusty Miller!
Dusty was his coat, Dusty was his cullour,
Dusty was the kiss I got frae the Miller!
O, the Dusty Miller with the dusty coat,
He will spend a shilling ere he win a groat.
O, the Dusty Miller.”

Hey the dusty miller
And his dusty coat!

He will spend a shilling
Or he win a groat.
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
That I gat frae the miller!

II

Hey the dusty miller
And his dusty sack!
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck!
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller!
I wad gie my coatie
For the dusty miller!

I DREAM’D I LAY

“These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen; they are among the oldest of my printed pieces.” (R. B.)

I DREAM’D I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam,
List’ning to the wild birds singing,
By a falling crystal stream;
Straight the sky grew black and daring,
Thro’ the woods the whirlwinds rave,
Trees with aged arms were warring
O’er the swelling, drumlie wave.

II

Such was my life’s deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy’d!
But lang or noon loud tempests, storming,
A’ my flowery bliss destroy’d.
Tho’ fickle Fortune has deceiv’d me
(She promis’d fair, and perform’d but ill),
Of monie a joy and hope bereav’d me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

DUNCAN DAVISON

Stenhouse affirms that this song is by Burns, although he did not choose to avow it; also that he (Stenhouse) had “recovered his (Burns’s) original manuscript, which is the
same as that inserted in the Museum.” No doubt Stenhouse is right; but Burns did but act according to his wont in signing “Z,” for not only was his Duncan Davison suggested by a song with the same title and something of the same motive preserved in The Merry Muses — from which his first, second, and fourth lines are lifted bodily — but it is, as regards his last stanza at least, a thing of shreds and patches; while the last half of this said stanza, containing a very irrelevant moral, is merely “conveyed” from a fragment, here first printed, in the Herd ms.:

“I can drink and no be drunk,  
I can fight and no be slain;  
I can kiss a bonie lass  
And ay be welcome back again.”

I

There was a lass, they ca’d her Meg,  
And she held o’er the moors to spin;  
There was a lad that follow’d her,  
They ca’d him Duncan Davison.

The moor was dreigh, and Meg was skeigh,  
Her favour Duncan could na win;  
For wi’ the rock she wad him knock,  
And ay she shook the temper-pin.

II

As o’er the moor they lightly foor,  
A burn was clear, a glen was green;  
Upon the banks they eas’d their shanks,  
And ay she set the wheel between:

But Duncan svoor a haly aith,  
That Meg should be a bride the morn;  
Then Meg took up her spinnin-graith,  
And flang them a’ out o’er the burn.

III

We will big a wee, wee house;  
And we will live like king and queen,  
Sae blythe and merry’s we will be,  
When ye set by the wheel at e’en!

A man may drink, and no be drunk;  
A man may fight, and no be slain;  
A man may kiss a bonie lass,  
And ay be welcome back again!

THENIEL MENZIES’ BONIE MARY

CHORUS

Theniel Menzies’ bonie Mary,  
Theniel Menzies’ bonie Mary,  
Charlie Grigor tint his plaidie,  
Kissin Theniel’s bonie Mary!

Lady Onlie, honest lucky,  
Brews guid ale at shore o’ Bucky:  
I wish her sale for her guid ale,  
The best on a’ the shore o’ Bucky!

A’ the lads o’ Thorniebank,  
When they gae to the shore o’ Bucky,  
They’ll step in an’ tak a pint  
Wi’ Lady Onlie, honest lucky.

Her house sae bien, her curch sae clean —  
I wat she is a dainty chuckie  
And cheery blinks the ingle-gleede  
O’ Ladie Onlie, honest lucky!

CHORUS

Lady Onlie, honest lucky,  
Brews guid ale at shore o’ Bucky:  
I wish her sale for her guid ale,  
The best on a’ the shore o’ Bucky!
THE BANKS OF THE DEVON

"These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James McKitterick Adair, Esqr., physician. She is sister to my worthy friend Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Harvieston in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for the work." (R. B.)

Burns visited Gavin Hamilton's mother and her family at Harvieston on Monday, 27th August, 1787, and wrote to Hamilton on the 28th: "Of Charlotte I cannot speak in common terms of admiration; she is not only beautiful but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good-nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's." In the October following Burns stopped at Harvieston again, and introduced that Dr. Adair whom Miss Hamilton married, 16th November, 1789. She died a widow in 1806. On 2d September, 1787, Burns sent the first draft of his song to her friend, Miss Chalmers: "I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment in the second part of the Museum, if I could hit on some glorious Scotch air. You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper enclosed."

The "small attempt" is a poor enough performance, when all is said — not much above the stall level: but it appears to be pure Burns. [The tune was a Highland air, entitled Phannerach dhon na chri, or The Pretty Milkmaid.]

Charlotte Hamilton may also have been the heroine of the song Fairest Maid on Devon Banks. (See post, p. 288). For Gavin Hamilton see ante, p. 41, Prefatory Note to A Dedication.

I
How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
With green spreading bushes and flow'rs blooming fair!
But the boniest flow'r on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.
Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn, as it bathes in the dew!

II
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew!

O, spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill, hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seized
The verdure and pride of the garden or lawn!
Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose!
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys,
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

DUNCAN GRAY

I
Weary fa'you, Duncan Gray!
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!)
Wae gae by you, Duncan Gray!
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!)
When a’ the lave gae to their play,
Then I maun sit the lee-lang day,
And jeeg the cradle wi’ my tae,
And a’ for the girdin o’it!

II
Bonie was the Lammas moon
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!)
Glowrin a’ the hills aboon
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!)
The girdin brak, the beast cam down,
I tint my eurch and baith my shoon,
And, Duncan, ye ’re an unco loun—
Wae on the bad girdin o’it!

III
But Duncan, gin ye’ll keep your aith
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!),
I ’se bless you wi’ my hindmost breath
(‘Ha, ha, the girdin o’it!).
Duncan, gin ye’ll keep your aith,
The beast again can bear us baith,
And auld Mess John will mend the skaith
And clout the bad girdin o’it.
THE PLOUGHMAN

CHORUS
Then up wi’ a’, my ploughman lad,
And hey, my merry ploughman!
Of a’ the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman!

I
The ploughman, he’s a bonie lad,
His mind is ever true, jo!
His garters knit below his knee,
His bonnet it is blue, jo.

II
I hae been east, I hae been west,
I hae been at St. Johnston;
The boniest sight that e’er I saw
Was the ploughman laddie dancin.

III
Snaw-white stockings on his legs
And siller buckles glancin,
A guid blue bonnet on his head,
And O, but he was handsome!

IV
Commend me to the barn-yard
And the corn mou, man!
I never got my coggie fou
Till I met wi’ the ploughman.

CHORUS
Then up wi’ a’, my ploughman lad,
And hey, my merry ploughman!
Of a’ the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman!

LANDLADY, COUNT THE LAWIN

Set to the tune, Hey Tutti Taiti. “I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce’s march to Bannockburn.” (R. B.) He afterwards wrote Scots Wha Hae (post, p. 285) to it.

The present song is not an original, but a patchwork of assorted scraps, with some few verbal changes.

CHORUS
Hey tutti, taiti,
Wha’s fou now?

I
LANDLADY, count the lawin,
The day is near the dawin;
Ye’re a’ blind drunk, boys,
And I ’m but jolly fou.

II
Cog, an ye were ay fou,
Cog, an ye were ay fou,
I wad sit and sing to you,
If ye were ay fou!

III
Weel may ye a’ be!
Ill may ye never see!
God bless the king
And the companie!

CHORUS
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti,
Hey tutti, taiti,
Wha’s fou now?

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING

“I composed these verses on Miss Isabella Macleod of Rasa, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister’s husband, the late Earl of Loudoun, who shot himself out of sheer heart-break at some mortifications he suffered owing to the deranged state of his finances.” (R. B.)

For Miss Isabella M’Leod see Prefatory Note to On the Death of John M’Leod, Esq., (ante, p. 96), and To Miss Isabella M’Leod, (ante, p. 137).

I
RAVING winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella stray’d deploring:—
Farewell hours that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure!
Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow—
Cheerless night that knows no morn-
II

"O'er the Past too fondly wandering,
On the hopeless Future pondering,
Chilly Grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell Despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to Misery most distressing,
Gladly how would I resign thee,
And to dark Oblivion join thee!"

HOW LANG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT

"I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air of Cauld Kail, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page." (R. B.)

CHORUS

For O, her lanely nights are lang,
And O, her dreams are eerie,
And O, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie!

I

How lang and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

II

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie,
And now what seas between us roar,
How can I be but eerie?

III

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours!
The joyless day how dreary!
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie!

CHORUS

For O, her lanely nights are lang,
And O, her dreams are eerie,
And O, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie!

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN

"I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies." (R. B.)

They are reminiscet of divers Jacobitisms.

I

Musing on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me,
Wearying heav'n in warm devotion
For his weal where'er he be:

II

Hope and Fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to Nature's law,
Whispering spirits round my pillow,
Talk of him that's far awa.

III

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear!

IV

Gentle night, do thou befriend me!
Downy sleep, the curtain draw!
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa!

BLYTHE WAS SHE

"I composed these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray. The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was a well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, who was called, and very justly, 'the flower of Strathmore.'" (R. B.)

She married Mr. Smythe of Methven, who became one of the judges of the Court of Session.

CHORUS

Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she butt and ben,
Blythe by the banks of Earn,
And blythe in Glenturit glen!

I

By Oughtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
Her looks were like a flow’r in May,  
Her smile was like a simmer morn.  
She trippéd by the banks o’ Earn  
As light’s a bird upon a thorn.

Her bonie face it was as meek  
As onie lamb upon a lea.  
The evening sun was ne’er sae sweet  
As was the blink o’ Phemie’s e’e.

The Highland hills I’ve wander’d wide,  
As o’er the Lawlands I hae been,  
But Phemie was the blythest lass  
That ever trod the dewy green.

The blude-red rose at Yule may blaw,  
The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,  
The frost may freeze the deepest sea,  
But an auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, to daunton me,  
An auld man shall never daunton me!

But me he shall not buy nor fee,  
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

He hirples twa-fauld as he dow,  
Wi’ his teethless gab and his auld beld pow,  
And the rain rains down frae his red blear’d e’e —  
That auld man shall never daunton me!

TO DAUNTON ME

CHORUS

To daunton me, to daunton me,  
An auld man shall never daunton me!

We’ll o’er the water, we’ll o’er the sea,  
We’ll o’er the water to Charlie!

CHORUS

Come weal, come woe, we’ll gather and go,  
And live and die wi’ Charlie!

Come boat me o’er, come row me o’er,  
Come boat me o’er to Charlie!  
I’ll gie John Ross another bawbee  
To boat me o’er to Charlie.

I love weel my Charlie’s name,  
Tho’ some there be abhor him;
But O, to see Auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him!

III
I swear and vow by moon and stars
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I'd die as aft for Charlie!

CHORUS
We'll o'er the water, we'll o'er the sea,
We'll o'er the water to Charlie!
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live and die wi' Charlie!

A ROSE-BUD, BY MY EARLY WALK

"This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruickshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr. Wm. Cruickshank, of the High School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, quondam merchant, and now schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the 'Davie' to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of The Cherry and the Slae." (R. B.)

See Prefatory Note to To Miss Cruickshank (ante, p. 95.)

I
A rose-bud, by my early walk
Adown a corn-inclosed bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

II
Within the bush her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast,
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

III
So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning!
So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning!

AND I'LL KISS THEE YET

CHORUS
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
And I'll kiss thee o'er again,
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonie Peggy Alison.

WHEN in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O,
I seek nae mair o' Heav'n to share
Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!

II
And by thy een sae bonie blue
I swear I'm thine for ever, O!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never, O!

CHORUS
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
And I'll kiss thee o'er again,
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonie Peggy Alison.

RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE

"The last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan Corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments." (R. B.)

Dunbar, who became Inspector-General of Stamp Duties in Scotland, died 18th February, 1807. He presented Burns in 1787 with a copy of Spenser, and is often alluded to or addressed in terms of warm regard.

I
O, rattlin, roarin Willie,
O, he held to the fair,
An' for to sell his fiddle
And buy some other ware;
WHERE, BRAVING ANGRY WINTER’S STORMS

The heroine was Margaret, daughter of John Chalmers of Fingland, and a cousin of Charlotte Hamilton, her particular friend. Burns met her in Edinburgh during his first visit, and also in October, 1787, at Harvieston. She married in 1788 Mr. Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.’s Bank; and died in 1843. Thomas Campbell affirmed that, according to Mrs. Hay, Burns had asked her in marriage; but this scarce accords with the tone of his letters to her. Still, he had a particular regard for the lady, and she always called out the best in him. His compliments in verse—or rather his proposal to publish them—somewhat alarmed her: her main objection being, presumably, not to the song in the text, but to My Peggy’s Face, My Peggy’s Form (post, p. 263). “They are neither of them,” he wrote to her, 6th November, 1787, “so particular as to point you out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintance will allow all I have said.”

I
Where, braving angry winter’s storms,
The lofty Ochils rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy’s charms
First blest my wondering eyes:

II
As one who by some savage stream
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish’d doubly, marks it beam
With art’s most polish’d blaze.

O TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY

“‘This song I composed about the age of seventeen.” (R. B.)
Mrs. Begg states that the heroine was one Isabella Steenson, or Stevenson, the farmer’s daughter of Little Hill, which marched with Lochlie. The song itself bears no small resemblance to a song (probably older) called The Saucy Lass with the Beard.

CHORUS
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
Ye wadna been sae shy!
For laik o’ gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

I
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure!
Ye geck at me because I’m poor—
But fient a hair care I!

II
When comin hame on Sunday last,
Upon the road as I cam past,
Ye snufft an’ gae your head a cast—
But, trowth, I care’t na by!

III
I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o’ clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene’er ye like to try.

IV
But sorrow tak him that’s sae mean,
Altho’ his pouch o’ coin were clean,
Wha follows onie saucy quean,
That looks sae proud and high!
THE WINTER IT IS PAST

V
Altho’ a lad were e’er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye’ll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu’ dry.

VI
But if he hae the name o’ gear,
Ye’ll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho’ hardly he for sense or lear
Be better than the kye.

VII
But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice:
Your daddie’s gear makes you sae nice,
The Deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.

VIII
There lives a lass beside yon park,
I’d rather hae her in her sark
Than you wi’ a’ your thousand mark,
That gars you look sae high.

CHORUS
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
Ye wadna been sae shy!
For laik o’ gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

CLARINDA, MISTRESS OF MY SOUL

This song was written when Burns was about
to leave Edinburgh. “I am sick of writing
where my bosom is not strongly interested.
Tell me what you think of the following.
There the bosom was perhaps a little inter-
ested.” (R. B. to Mrs. Dunlop.)

I
CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measur’d time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole
So marks his latest sun.

II
To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie,
Depriv’d of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy?

III
We part—but, by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes,
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise!

IV
She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

THE WINTER IT IS PAST

This song is largely and generously adapted
from a song called The Curragh of Kildare.
Only stanza ii. is wholly his own.

I
The winter it is past, and the simmer
comes at last,
And the small birds sing on ev’ry tree:
The hearts of these are glad, but mine is
very sad,
For my love is parted from me.

II
The rose upon the brier by the waters run-
ning clear
May have charms for the linnet or the
bee:
Their little loves are blest, and their little
hearts at rest,
But my lover is parted from me.

III
My love is like the sun in the firmament
does run—
Forever is constant and true;
But his is like the moon, that wanders up
and down,
And every month it is new.

IV
All you that are in love, and cannot it
remove,
I pity the pains you endure,
For experience makes me know that your
hearts are full of woe,
A woe that no mortal can cure.
I LOVE MY LOVE IN SECRET

Stenhouse affirms that the old song was “slightly altered by Burns, because it was rather inadmissible in its original state;” but apparently he spoke by guesswork. There is no doubt that Burns got his original — here printed for the first time — in the Herd MS.: —

“"My Sandy O, my Sandy O,  
My bonie, bonie Sandy O!  
Tho’ the love that I owe,  
To thee I dare nae show,  
Yet I love my love in secret,  
My Sandie O."

"My Sandy gied to me a ring  
Was a’ beset wi’ diamonds fine;  
But I gied to him a far better thing:  
I gied to him my heart to keep  
In pledge of his ring.""

It will be seen that all he did was to add a stanza to the original set, or what was left of it.

CHORUS

My Sandy O, my Sandy O,  
My bonie, bonie Sandy O!  
Tho’ the love that I owe,  
To thee I dare nae show,  
Yet I love my love in secret,  
My Sandie O!

I

My Sandy gied to me a ring  
Was a’ beset wi’ diamonds fine;  
But I gied to him a far better thing:  
I gied to him my heart to keep  
In pledge of his ring.

II

My Sandy brak a piece o’ gowd,  
While down his cheeks the saut tears row’d;  
He took a hauf, and gied it to me,  
And I’ll keep it till the hour I die.

CHORUS

My Sandy O, my Sandy O,  
My bonie, bonie Sandy O!  
Tho’ the love that I owe,  
To thee I dare nae show,  
Yet I love my love in secret,  
My Sandie O!

1 That is, in the Centenary Edition.

SWEET TIBBIE DUNBAR

O, wilt thou go wi’ me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
O, wilt thou go wi’ me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a car,
Or walk by my side, O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

II

I care na thy daddie, his lands and his money;
I care na thy kin, sae high and sae lordly;
But say that thou’lt hae me for better or waur,
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar.

HIGHLAND HARRY

"The chorus I picked up from an old woman in Dunblane. The rest of the song is mine.” — (R. B.)

CHORUS

O, for him back again!  
O, for him back again!  
I wad gie a’ Knockhaspie’s land  
For Highland Harry back again.

I

My Harry was a gallant gay,  
Fu’ stately strade he on the plain,  
But now he’s banish’d far away:  
I’ll never see him back again.

II

When a’ the lave gae to their bed,  
I wander dowie up the glen,  
I set me down, and greet my fill,  
And ay I wish him back again.

III

O, were some villains hangit high,  
And ilka body had their ain,  
Then I might see the joyfu’ sight,  
My Highland Harry back again!

CHORUS

O, for him back again!  
O, for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land,
For Highland Harry back again.

**THE TAILOR FELL THRO' THE BED**

"This air is the march of the Corporation of Tailors. The second and fourth stanzas are mine. (R. B.)"

I

The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimble an'a',
The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimble an'a';
The blankets were thin, and the sheets they were sma'——
The tailor fell thro' the bed, thimble an' a'!

II

The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill,
The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill;
The weather was cauld, and the lassie lay still:
She thought that a tailor could do her nae ill!

III

Gie me the groat again, cannie young man!
Gie me the groat again, cannie young man!
The day it is short, and the night it is lang——
The dearest siller that ever I wan!

IV

There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane,
There's somebody weary wi' lying her lane!
There's some that are dowie, I trow wad be fain
To see the bit tailor come skippin again.

**AY WAUKIN, O**

**CHORUS**

Ay waukin, O,
Waukin still and weary:
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

I

Simmer's a pleasant time:
Flowers of every colour,
The water rins owre the heugh,
And I long for my true lover.

II

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie,
Sleep I can get nane
For thinkin on my dearie.

III

Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave are sleepin,
I think on my bonie lad,
And I bleer my een wi' greetin.

**CHORUS**

**BEWARE O' BONIE ANN**

"I composed this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Masterton, the author of the air Strathallan's Lament; and two or three others in this work." (R. B.)

The lady married Dr. Derbyshire, physician, of Bath and London, and died in August, 1834.

I

Ye gallants bright, I rede you right,
Beware o' bonie Ann!
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.

II

Her een sae bright like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan.
Sae jimbly laed her genty waist
That sweetly ye might span.

III

Youth, Grace, and Love attendant move,
And Pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonie Ann.

IV

The captive bands may chain the hands,
But Love enslaves the man:
Ye gallants braw, I rede you a',
Beware o' bonie Ann!
LADDIE, LIE NEAR ME

CHORUS
Near me, near me,
Laddie, lie near me!
Lang hae I lain my lane —
Laddie, lie near me!

I
LANG hae we parted been,
Laddie, my dearie;
Now we are met again —
Laddie, lie near me!

II
A' that I hae endur'd,
Laddie, my dearie,
Here in thy arms is cur'd —
Laddie, lie near me!

CHORUS
Near me, near me,
Laddie, lie near me!
Lang hae I lain my lane —
Laddie, lie near me!

THE GARD’NER WI’ HIS PAIDLE

"The title of the song only is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.)

I
When rosy May comes in wi’ flowers
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers,
Then busy, busy are his hours,
The gard’ner wi’ his paidle.

II
The crystal waters gently fa’,
The merry birds are lovers a’,
The scented breezes round him blaw —
The gard’ner wi’ his paidle.

III
When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro’ the dew he maun repair —
The gard’ner wi’ his paidle.

IV
When Day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o’ Nature’s rest,

He flies to her arms he lo’es best,
The gard’ner wi’ his paidle.

ON A BANK OF FLOWERS

The original was written by Theobald, set by Galliard, and sung by Mr. Park in The Lady’s Triumph: —

"On a Bank of Flowers
In a summer’s day,
Inviting and undrest,
In her bloom of youth bright Celia lay
With love and sleep opprest,
When a youthful swain with adoring eyes
Wish’d he dared the fair maid surprise,
With a fa la la,
But fear’d approaching spies."

Burns rather bungles his inspiration, and certainly diverts his motive to a more liberal conclusion. Both original and derivative belong to a type of pastoral in high favour after the Restoration, good examples being Dryden’s Chloe found Amyntas Lying and Beneath a Myrtle Shade. Older and less farded, less artificial and immodest, are As at Noon Dulcina Rested (long attributed to Raleigh) and that charming ditty, The Matchless Maid, in the Second Westminster Drollery (1672).

I
On a bank of flowers in a summer day,
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful, blooming Nelly lay
With love and sleep opprest;
When Willie, wand’ring thro’ the wood,
Who for her favour oft had sued —
He gaz’d, he wish’d,
He fear’d, he blush’d,
And trembled where he stood.

II
Her closed eyes, like weapons sheath’d,
Wore seal’d in soft repose;
Her lips, still as she fragrant breath’d,
It richer dyed the rose:
The springing lilies, sweetly prest,
Wild-wanton kiss’d her rival breast:
He gaz’d, he wish’d,
He fear’d, he blush’d,
His bosom ill at rest.

III
Her robes, light-waving in the breeze,
Her tender limbs embrace;
Her lovely form, her native ease,
All harmony and grace.
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering, ardent kiss he stole:
He gaz'd, he wish'd,
He fear'd, he blush'd,
And sigh'd his very soul.

IV
As flies the partridge from the brake
On fear-inspired wings,
So Nelly, starting, half-awake,
Away affrighted springs.
But Willie follow'd — as he should:
He overtook her in the wood;
He vow'd, he pray'd,
He found the maid
Forgiving all, and good.

THE DAY RETURNS
TUNE: Seventh of November

"I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest couples in the world: Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell, and his lady. At their fireside I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life." (R. B.)

For Captain Riddell, see ante, p. 142, Prefatory Note to Impromptu to Captain Riddell. The song was sent to him in a letter (unpublished) dated Tuesday evening (i.e. 9th September, 1788): "As I was busy behind my harvest folks this forenoon, and musing on a proper theme for your Seventh of November, some of the conversation before me accidentally suggested a suspicion that this said Seventh of November is a matrimonial anniversary with a certain very worthy neighbour of mine. I have seen very few who owe so much to a wedding-day as Mrs. Riddell and you; and my imagination took the hint accordingly, as you will see on the next page."

I
The day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet!
The winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer sun was half sae sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line,
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heav'n gave me more — it made thee mine!

II
While day and night can bring delight,
Or Nature aught of pleasure give,
While joys above my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of Life below
Comes in between to make us part,
The iron hand that breaks our band,
It breaks my bliss, it breaks my heart!

MY LOVE, SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET

CHORUS
My love, she's but a lassie yet,
My love, she's but a lassie yet!
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be half sae saucy yet!

I
I rue the day I sought her, O!
I rue the day I sought her, O!
Wha gets her need na say he's woo'd,
But he may say he has bought her, O.

II
Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet,
Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet!
Gae seek for pleasure whare ye will,
But here I never missed it yet.

III
We're a' dry wi' drinkin o't,
We're a' dry wi' drinkin o't!
The minister kiss't the fiddler's wife —
He could na preach for thinkin o't!

CHORUS
My love, she's but a lassie yet,
My love, she's but a lassie yet!
We'll let her stand a year or twa,
She'll no be half sae saucy yet!

JAMIE, COME TRY ME

CHORUS
Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me!
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me!
I
If thou should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me!

II
If thou should kiss me, love,
Wha could espy thee?
If thou wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me!

CHORUS
Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me!
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me!

THE SILVER TASSIE

"This air is Oswald's; the first half stanza: —

"'Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonie lassie: '")

is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.) Nevertheless, on 17th December, 1788, he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop thus: "Now I am on my hobby horse, I cannot help inserting two other old stanzas which please me mightily."

I
Go, fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink before I go
A service to my bonie lassie!
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the Ferry,
The ship rides by the Berwick-Law,
And I maun leave my bonie Mary.

II
The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready,
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes deep and bloody.
It's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad mak me langer wish to tarry,
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar:
It's leaving thee, my bonie Mary!

THE LAZY MIST

I
The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill.
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear,
As Autumn to Winter resigns the pale year!

II
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown.
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick Time is flying, how keen Fate pursues!

III
How long I have liv'd, but how much liv'd in vain!
How little of life's scanty span may remain!
What aspects old Time in his progress has worn!
What ties cruel Fate in my bosom has torn!

IV
How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
Life is not worth having with all it give:
For something beyond it poor man, sure, must live.

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY

CHORUS

O, mount and go,
Mount and make you ready!
O, mount and go,
And be the Captain's Lady!

I
When the drums do beat,
And the cannons rattle,
Thou shalt sit in state,  
And see thy love in battle:

II
When the vanquish'd foe  
Sues for peace and quiet,  
To the shades we'll go,  
And in love enjoy it.

CHORUS
O, mount and go,  
Mount and make you ready!  
O, mount and go,  
And be the Captain's Lady!

OF A' THE AIRTS
"The air is by Marshall; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. N. B. It was during the honeymoon." (R. B.) The song was no doubt written shortly after his arrival in Ellisland, while his wife was yet in Ayrshire.

I
Or a' the airts the wind can blaw  
I dearly like the west,  
For there the bonie lassie lives,  
The lassie I lo'e best.  
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,  
And monie a hill between,  
But day and night my fancy's flight  
Is ever wi' my Jean.

II
I see her in the dewy flowers —  
I see her sweet and fair.  
I hear her in the tuneful birds —  
I hear her charm the air.  
There's not a bonie flower that springs  
By fountain, shaw, or green,  
There's not a bonie bird that sings,  
But minds me o' my Jean.

CARL, AN THE KING COME

CHORUS
Carl, an the King come,  
Carl, an the King come,
O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS HILL

I
O, were I on Parnassus hill,
Or had o’ Helicon my fill,
That I might catch poetic skill
To sing how dear I love thee!
But Nith maun be my Muses’ well,
My Muse maun be thy bonie sel’,
On Corsincon I’ll glowr and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

II
Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a’ the lee-lang simmer’s day
I couldna sing, I couldna say
How much, how dear I love thee.
I see thee dancing o’er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By Heaven and Earth I love thee!

III
By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o’ thee my breast inflame,
And ay I muse and sing thy name—
I only live to love thee.
Tho’ I were doom’d to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run,
Till then—and then—I’d love thee!

THE CAPTIVE RIBBAND

I
Myra, the captive ribband’s mine!
’T was all my faithful love could gain,
And would you ask me to resign
The sole reward that crowns my pain?

II
Go, bid the hero, who has run
Thro’ fields of death to gather fame—
Go, bid him lay his laurels down,
And all his well-earn’d praise disclaim!

III
The ribband shall its freedom lose—
Lose all the bliss it had with you!—
And share the fate I would impose
On thee, wert thou my captive too.

IV
It shall upon my bosom live,
Or clasp me in a close embrace;
And at its fortune if you grieve,
Retrieve its doom, and take its place.

THERE’S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY

“‘The air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his Lament for his brother. The first half stanza of the song is old; the rest is mine.” (R. B.)
Burns was never above vamping from himself; and the present piece is strongly reminiscent of The Belles of Mauchline (ante, p. 171).

I
There’s a youth in this city, it were a great pity
That he from our lasses should wander awa’;
For he’s bonie and braw, weil-favor’d witha’,
An’ his hair has a natural buckle an’ a’.

II
His coat is the hue o’ his bonnet sae blue,
His fecket is white as the new-driven snaw,
His hose they are blae, and his shoon like the slae,
And his clear siller buckles, they dazzle us a’.

III
For beauty and fortune the laddie’s been courtin:
Weel-featur’d, weil-tocher’d, weil-mounted, an’ braw,
But chiefly the siller that gars him gang till her—
The penny’s the jewel that beautifies a’!

IV
There’s Meg wi’ the mailen, that fain wad a haen him,
And Susie, wha’s daddie was laird of the Ha’,
There’s lang-tocher’d Nancy maist fetters his fancy;
But the laddie’s dear sel he loes dearest of a’.
MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

"The first half stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine." (R. B.)
Burns apparently refers to the first half stanza of the chorus. Sharpe quotes "from a stall copy" The Strong Walls of Derry, one stanza in which is almost identical with the Burns chorus.

CHORUS
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe —
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

I
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

II
Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow,
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below,
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods,
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

CHORUS
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

I
John Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquainted,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snow,
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo!

II
John Anderson my jo, John,
We climb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

AWA', WHIGS, AWA'

CHORUS
Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae guid at a'.

I
Our thrissles flourished fresh and fair,
And bonie bloom'd our roses;
But Whigs cam like a frost in June,
An' wither'd a' our posies.

II
Our ancient crown's fa'n in the dust—
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't,
An' write their names in his black beuk,
Wha gae the Whigs the power o't!

III
Our sad decay in church and state
Surpasses my describing.
The Whigs cam o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

IV
Grim Vengeance lang has taen a nap,
But we may see him waukin—
Gude help the day when Royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin!

CHORUS
Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,
Ye'll do nae guid at a'.
CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES

"This beautiful song is in the true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either the air or words were in print before." (R. B.)

In sending a new version (post, p. 292) to Thomson in September, 1794, he wrote: "I am flattered at your adopting Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes, as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow, a Mr. Clunie, [Rev. John Clunie, minister of Ewes, Dumfriesshire, author of I Loe Na a Laddie but Ane], who sang it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson I added some stanzas to the song and mended others; but still it will not do for you." Stenhouse gives the old words, presumably those taken down from Clunie's singing. It can scarce be affirmed that Burns has improved them. The two last stanzas are his; his two first are expanded from Clunie's first; while his two middles, where they differ from Clunie, differ for the worse.

CHORUS

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
My bonie dearie!

I
As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad:
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

II
"Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The moon it shines fu' clearly."

III
"I was bred up in nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
An' a' the day to sit in dool,
An' naebody to see me."

IV
"Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Caufr-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms thou 'lt lie and sleep,
An' ye sall be my dearie."

V
"If ye 'll but stand to what ye'v said,
I' se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad,
And ye may row me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie."

VI
"While waters wimple to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie,
Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my e'e,
Ye sall be my dearie."

CHORUS

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
My bonie dearie!

O, MERRY HAE I BEEN

"Ramsay, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which I learned on the spot, from the old hostess in the principal Inn there, is: ---

"'Lassie, lend me your braw hemp-heckle,
And I'll lend you my thrrippin kame.'
"'My heckle is broken, it canna be gotten,
And we'll gae dance the Bob o' Dumblane.'
Twa gaed to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
Twa gaed to the wood — three came hame;
An it be na weel bobbit, weel bobbit, weel bobbit,
And it be na weel bobbit we 'll bob it again.'

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote, which I have heard well authenticated. In the evening of the day of the battle of Dumblane (Sheriffmuir) when the action was over, a Scots officer in Argyle's army observed to his Grace that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that they had gotten the victory. 'Weel, weel,' answered his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, 'if they think it nae weel bobbit, we'll bob it again.'" (R. B.)

I
O, merry hae I been teethin a heckle, —
An' merry hae I been shapin a spoon
O, merry hae I been cloutin a kettle,
An' kissin my Katie when a' was done!

O, a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,
An' a' the lang day I whistle an' sing!
O, a' the lang night I cuddle my kimmer,
An' a' the lang night as happy 's a king!
II
Bitter in dool, I lickit my winnins
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave.
Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
And blythe be the bird that sings on her grave!
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
An' come to my arms, and kiss me again!
Drucken or sober, here's to thee, Katie,
And blest be the day I did it again!

A MOTHER'S LAMENT

"The words were composed to commemorate the much lamented and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq., Junior, of Craigdarroch." (R. B.)

In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop (27th September, 1788) Burns states that he made them on a twenty-six mile ride from Nithsdale to Mauchline. The copy sent her is entitled Mrs. Ferguson of Craigdarroch's Lamentation for the Death of her Son. Young Ferguson died 5th November, 1787, just after completing his university course. The only son of Mrs. Stewart of Afton died 5th December, 1787, and Burns inscribed the song in the Afton Lodge Book, which he presented to the bereaved mother, his title this time being A Mother's Lament for the Loss of Her Only Son.

I
Fate gave the word — the arrow sped,
And pierc'd my darling's heart,
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonor'd laid:
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

II
The mother linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravish'd young:
So I for my lost darling's sake
Lament the live-day long.
Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow!
Now fond I bare my breast!
O, do thou kindly lay me low,
With him I love at rest!

THE WHITE COCKADE

CHORUS
O, he's a ranting, roving lad!
He is a brisk an' a bonie lad!
Betide what may, I will be wed,
And follow the boy wi' the White Cockade!

I
My love was born in Aberdeen,
The boniest lad that e'er was seen;
But now he makes our hearts fu' sad —
He takes the field wi' his White Cockade.

II
I'll sell my rock, my reel, my tow,
My guid gray mare and hawkit cow,
To buy mysel a tartan plaid,
To follow the boy wi' the White Cockade.

CHORUS
O, he's a ranting, roving lad!
He is a brisk an' a bonie lad!
Betide what may, I will be wed,
And follow the boy wi' the White Cockade!

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE

"I composed the verses on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoord's leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate." (R. B.) See Prefatory Note to Lines Sent to Sir John Whitefoord, Bart. (ante, p. 88).

I
The Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lea;
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the e'e;
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the while,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang: —
"Fareweel the braes o' Ballochmyle!"

II
"Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies, dumb in with'ring bowers,
Again ye'll charm the vocal air;"
But here, alas! for me nae mair
Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile:
Fareweel the bonie banks of Ayr!
Fareweel! fareweel sweet Ballochmyle!

THE RANTIN DOG, THE DADDIE O'T

"I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at the time under a cloud." (R. B.)
The "young girl" may have been either Elizabeth Paton (see A Poet's Welcome, ante, p. 113) or Jean Armour. It matters not which.

I
O, wha my babie-clouts will buy?
O, wha will tent me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me where I lie? —
The rantin dog, the daddie o't!

II
O, wha will own he did the faut?
O, wha will buy the groanin maut?
O, wha will tell me how to ca't? —
The rantin dog, the daddie o't!

III
When I mount the creepie-chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll seek nae mair —
The rantin dog, the daddie o't!

IV
Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will mak me fidgin fain?
Wha will kiss me o'er again? —
The rantin dog, the daddie o't!

THOU LINGERING STAR

Enclosing this very famous lament — hypochondriacal and remorseful, yet riddled with adjectives, specifically amatorious, yet wofully lacking in genuine inspiration — in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 8th November, 1789, Burns described it as "made the other day." He also asked her opinion of it, as he was too much interested in the subject to be "a critic in the composition." For Mary Campbell see ante, p. 204, Prefatory Note to My Highland Lassie, O. In a letter written to Mrs. Dunlop on 13th December, Burns, groaning "under the miseries of a diseased nervous system," refers with longing to a future life: "There should I, with speechless agony of rapture, again welcome my lost, my ever dear Mary, whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love: —

"My Mary, dear departed shade," etc.

Currie states that a copy found among Burns's papers was headed To Mary in Heaven; but only seeing is believing.

I
THOU ling'ring star with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

II
That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity cannot efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace —
Ah! little thought we 't was our last!

III
Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thickening green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
'Twin'd amorous round the rapturd scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray,
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingéd day.

IV
Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with mis'er-care.
Time but th' impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
O Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?
EPPIE ADAIR

CHORUS
An' O my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?

I
By love and by beauty,
By law and by duty,
I swear to be true to
My Eppie Adair!

II
A' pleasure exile me,
Dishonour defile me,
If e'er I beguile thee,
My Eppie Adair!

CHORUS
An' O my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?

THE BATTLE OF SHERRAMUIR

This song, in which the idiosyncrasies of the fight are summarised with excellent discrimination, is condensed from a ballad by the Rev. John Barclay (1734-1798), Berean minister at Edinburgh: "The Dialogue Betwixt William Luckladle and Thomas Cleeuncow, Who were Feeding their Sheep upon the Ochil Hills, 13th November, 1715. Being the day the Battle of Sheriffmuir was Fought. To the tune of The Cameron Men."

I
"O, cam ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or were ye at the Sherra-moor,
Or did the battle see, man?"
"I saw the battle, sair and teugh,
And reekin-red ran monie a sheugh;
My heart for fear gae sough for sough,
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds
O' clans frae woods in tartan duds,
Wha glaum'd at kingdoms three, man.

II
"The red-coat lads wi' black cockaunds
To meet them were na slaw, man:
They rush'd and push'd and bluid out-gush'd,
And monie a brouk did fa', man!
The great Argyle led on his files,
I wat they glanc'd for twenty miles;
They hough'd the clans like nine-pin kyles,
They hack'd and hash'd, while braid-swords clash'd,
And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
Till fey men died awa, man.

III
"But had ye seen the philibegs
And skyrin tartan trews, man,
When in the teeth they daur'd our Whigs
And Covenant trueblues, man!
In lines extended lang and large,
When baig'nets o'erpower'd the targe,
And thousands hasten'd to the charge,
Wi' Highland wrath they frae the sheath
Drew blades o' death, till out o' breath
They fled like frighted dows, man!"

IV
"O, how Deil! Tam, can that be true?
The chase gaed frae the north, man!
I saw mysel, they did pursue
The horseman back to Forth, man;
And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight;
But, cursed lot! the gates were shut,
And monie a huntit poor red-coat,
For fear amaist did swarf, man!"

V
"My sister Kate cam up the gate
Wi' crowdie unto me, man:
She swoor she saw some rebels run
To Perth and to Dundee, man!
Their left-hand general had nae skill;
The Angus lads had nae good will
That day their neebors' bluid to spill;
For fear by foes that they should lose
Their cogs o' brose, they scar'd at blows,
And hameward fast did flee, man.

VI
"They 've lost some gallant gentlemen,
Amang the Highland clans, man!
I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,
Or in his en'mies' hands, man.
Now wad ye sing this double flight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right,
SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

But monie bade the world guid-night:
Say, pell and mell, wi’ muskets’ knell
How Tories fell, and Whigs to Hell
Flew off in frightened bands, man !”

YOUNG JOCKIE WAS THE BLYTHEST LAD

I
Young Jockie was the blythest lad,
In a’ our town or here awa:
Fu’ blythe he whistled at the gaud,
Fu’ lightly dance’d he in the ha’.

II
He roos’d my een sae bonie blue,
He roos’d my waist sae genty sma’;
An’ ay my heart cam to my mou’,
When ne’er a body heard or saw.

III
My Jockie toils upon the plain
Thro’ wind and weet, thro’ frost and snaw;
And o’er the lea I leuk fu’ fain,
When Jockie’s owsen hameward ca’.

IV
An’ ay the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a’,
An’ ay he vows he’ ll be my ain
As lang’s he has a breath to draw.

A WAUKRIFE MINNIE

“I picked up the old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale. I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland.” (R. B.)
The vamp — if vamp it be, and we have nowhere found an original — is in Burns’s happiest and most “folkish” vein.

I
“Whare are you gaun, my bonie lass?
Whare are you gaun, my hinnie?”
She answer’d me right saucilie:
”An errand for my minnie!”

II
“O, whare live ye, my bonie lass?
O, whare live ye, my hinnie?”

“By yon burnside, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi’ my minnie!”

III
But I foor up the glen at e’en
To see my bonie lassie,
And lang before the grey morn cam
She was na hauf sae saucy.

IV
O, weary fa’ the waukrife cock,
And the foumart lay his crawin!
He wauken’d the auld wife frae her sleep
A wee blink or the dawin.

V
An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o’er the bed she brought her,
And wi’ a meikle hazel-rung
She made her a weel-pay’d dochter.

VI
“O, fare-thee-weel, my bonie lass!
O, fare-thee-weel, my hinnie!
Thou art a gay and a bonie lass,
But thou has a waukrife minnie!”

THO’ WOMEN’S MINDS

“The song is mine, all except the chorus.” (R. B.)
A new set of the Bard’s song in The Jolly Beggars (ante, p. 106). [The verses were clearly suggested by an old Scots song beginning, “Put butter in my Donald’s brose,” and having a similar refrain. See also the song Is There for Honest Poverty, post, p. 294.]

CHORUS

For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
And twice as meikle ’s a’ that,
The bonie lass that I loe best,
She ’ll be my ain for a’ that!

I
Tho’ women’s minds like winter winds
May shift, and turn, an’ a’ that,
The noblest breast adores them maist —
A consequence, I draw that.

II
Great love I bear to a’ the fair,
Their humble slave, an’ a’ that;
KILLIECRANKIE

But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to throw that.

III
In rapture sweet this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love an' a' that,
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that!

IV
Their tricks an' craft hae put me daft,
They 've taen me in an' a' that,
But clear your decks, and here's: — "The Sex!"
I like the jads for a' that!

CHORUS
For a' that, an' a' that,
And twice as meikle 's a' that,
The bonie lass that I loe best,
She 'll be my ain for a' that!

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT

"The air is Masterton's; the song mine.
The occasion of it was this: Mr. Wm. Nicol,
of the High School, Edinburgh, during the
autumn vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan
(who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton)
and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such
a joyous meeting that Mr. Masterton and I
agreed, each in our own way, that we should
celebrate the business." (R. B.)

The meeting took place in the autumn of
1789. The song — a little masterpiece of
drunken fancy — is included in Thomson.
For William Nicol see ante, p. 195, Prefatory
Note to Epitaph For William Nicol. Allan
Masterton was appointed writing-master to
Edinburgh High School 10th October, 1789.
He died in 1799.

CHORUS
We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e!
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we 'll taste the barley-bree!

KILLIECRANKIE

"The battle of Killiecrankie was the last
stand made by the clans for James after his
abdication. Here the gallant Lord Dundee
fell in the moment of victory, and with him
fell the hopes of the party. General M'Kay,
when he found the Highlanders did not pursue
his flying army, said: 'Dundee must be killed,
or he never would have overlooked this advant-
ger.' A great stone marks the place where
Dundee fell." (R. B.) But the fact is that
Dundee got his hurt further up the hill than
the "great stone." The battle was fought on
17th July, 1689.

CHORUS
An ye had been whare I hae been,
Ye wad na been sae cantie, O!
An ye had seen what I hae seen
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O!

I
"Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Whare hae ye been sae brankie, O?
Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killiecrankie, O?"

O, WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see.
Three blyther hearts that lee-lang night
Ye wad na found in Christendie.
"I fought at land, I fought at sea,
At hame I fought my auntie, O;
But I met the Devil and Dundee
On the braes o’ Killiecrankie, O!"

"The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr,
An’ Clavers gat a clankie, O,
Or I had fed an Athole gled
On the braes o’ Killiecrankie, O!"

CHORUS
An ye had been where I hae been,
Ye wad na been sae cantie, O!
An ye had seen what I hae seen
On the braes o’ Killiecrankie, O!

THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE

Enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 2d October, 1788: “How do you like the following song, designed for and composed by a friend of mine, and which he has christened The Blue-Eyed Lassie.” The friend was Captain Robert Riddell.

The “blue-eyed lassie” was Jean, daughter of the Rev. Andrew Jeffrey, of Lochmaben. She married a Mr. Renwick, of New York, and died in October, 1850.

I
I GAED a waefu’ gate yestreen,
A gate I fear I’ll dearly rue:
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa lovely een o’ bonie blue!
’T was not her golden ringlets bright,
Her lips like roses wat wi’ dew,
Her heaving bosom lily-white:
It was her een sae bonie blue.

II
She talk’d, she smil’d, my heart she wyl’d,
She charm’d my soul I wist na how;
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonie blue.
But “spare to speak, and spare to speed” —
She’ll aiblins listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I’ll lay my dead
To her twa een sae bonie blue.

THE BANKS OF NITH

I
The Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command.
When shall I see that honor’d land,
That winding stream I love so dear?
Must wayward Fortune’s adverse hand
For ever — ever keep me here?

II
How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where bounding hawthorns gaily Bloom,
And sweetly spread thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton thro’ the broom!
Tho’ wandring now must be my doom
Far from thy bonie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume
Amang my friends of early days!

TAM GLEN

I
My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len’.
To anger them a’ is a pity,
But what will I do wi’ Tam Glen?

II
I ’m thinking, wi’ sic a braw fellow
In poortith I might mak a fen’.
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

III
There’s Lowrie the laird o’ Dumeller:
“Guid day to you,” brute! he comes ben.
He brags and he blaws o’ his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

IV
My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o’ young men.
They flatter, she says, to deceive me —
But wha can think sae o’ Tam Glen?

V
My daddie says, gin I’ll forsake him,
He’d gie me guid hunder marks ten.
But if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
    O, wha will I get but Tam Glen?

VI
Yestreen at the valentines' dealing,
    My heart to my mou' gied a sten,
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
    And thrice it was written "Tam Glen!"

VII
The last Halloween I was waukin
    My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken —
His likeness came up the house staunkin,
    And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

VIII
Come, counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry!
    I'll gie ye my bonie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
    The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

CRAIGIEBURN WOOD
"It is remarkable of this air, that it is the
confine of that country where the greatest part
of our lowland music (so far as from the title,
words, etc., we can localize it) has been com-
posed. From Craigieburn, near Moffat, until
one reaches the West Highlands, we have
scarcely one slow air of antiquity. The song
was composed on a passion which a Mr. Gilles-
pie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss
Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whepdale. The
young lady was born in Craigieburn Wood.
The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad."
(R. B.) For Jean Lorimer see post, p. 289.

CHORUS
Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
    And O, to be lying beyond thee!
O, sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
    That 's laid in the bed beyond thee!

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE
"I added the four last lines by way of giv-
ing a turn to the theme of the poem, such as
it is." (R. B.)

I
FRAE the friends and land I love
    Driv'n by Fortune's felly spite,
Frae my best belov'd I rove,
    Never mair to taste delight!
Never mair maun hope to find
    Ease frae toil, relief frae care.
When remembrance wracks the mind,
    Pleasures but unveil despair.

II
Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
    Desert ilka blooming shore,
Till the Fates, nae mair severe,  
Friendship, love, and peace restore:  
Till Revenge wi’ laurell’d head  
Bring our banish’d hame again,  
And ilk loyal, bonie lad  
Cross the seas, and win his ain!

O JOHN, COME KISS ME NOW
Altered and expanded from a fragment in Herd (1769): —

"John, come kiss me now, now, now!  
O John, come kiss me now!  
John, come kiss me by and by,  
And make nae mair ado!  

"Some will court and compliment  
And make a great ado,  
Some will make of their guidman,  
And sae will I of you."

CHORUS
O John, come kiss me now, now, now!  
O John, my love, come kiss me now!  
O John, come kiss me by and by,  
For weel ye ken the way to woo!

I
O, some will court and compliment,  
And ither some will kiss and daut;  
But I will mak o’ my guidman,  
My ain guidman — it is nae faut!

II
O, some will court and compliment,  
And ither some will prie their mou’,  
And some will hause in ither’s arms,  
And that’s the way I like to do!

CHORUS
O John, come kiss me now, now, now!  
O John, my love, come kiss me now!  
O John, come kiss me by and by,  
For weel ye ken the way to woo!

COCK UP YOUR BEAVER

I
When first my brave Johnie lad came to  
this town,  
He had a blue bonnet that wanted the  
crown,  
But now he has gotten a hat and a fea- 
ther —  
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your bea- 
ver!

II
Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu’  
sprush!  
We’ll over the border and gie them a  
brush:  
There’s somebody there we’ll teach better  
vaviour —  
Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your bea- 
ver!

MY TOCHER’S THE JEWEL

I
O, meikle thinks my luve o’ my beauty,  
And meikle thinks my luve o’ my kin;  
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie  
My tocher’s the jewel has charms for  
him.
It’s a’ for the apple he’ll nourish the tree,  
It’s a’ for the hiney he’ll cherish the bee!
My laddie’s sae meikle in luve wi’ the  
siller,
He canna hae luve to spare for me!

II
Your proffer o’ luve’s an airle-penny,  
My tocher’s the bargain ye wad buy;  
But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin,  
Sae ye with anither your fortune may  
try.
Ye’re like to the timmer o’ yon rotten  
wood,
Ye’re like to the bark o’ yon rotten tree:  
Ye’ll slip frae me like a knotless thread,  
An’ ye’ll crack ye’re credit wi’ mair nor  
me!

GUIDWIFE, COUNT THE LAWIN

"The chorus of this is part of an old song,  
one stanza of which I recollect: —

‘Every day my wife tells me  
That ale and brandy will ruin me;  
But if gude liquor be my dead,  
This shall be written on my head —  
Landlady, count the lawin,’ etc."

(R. B.)
WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE

CHORUS

Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin!
Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!

I

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 risin sun.

II

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.

III

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o’ care and dool,
And Pleasure is a wanton trout:
An ye drink it a’, ye’ll find him out!

CHORUS

Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin!
Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair!

THERE ’LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME

Burns enclosed a copy (“a song of my late composition”) to Alexander Cunningham, 11th March, 1791: “You must know a beautiful Jacobite air—There’ll Never be Peace till Jamie Comes Hame. When political combustion ceases to be the object of Princes and Patriots it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of Historians and Poets.” No doubt there was an old Jacobite song with this title; but the air and the title were all that Burns knew, and no authentic copy of the thing itself is known to survive.

I

By yon castle wa’ at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho’ his head it was grey,
And as he was singing, the tears doon came:
“There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!”

II

“The Church is in ruins, the State is in jars,
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars,
We dare na weel say’t, but we ken wha’s to blame—
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

III

“My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
But now I greet round their green beds in the yerd;
It brak the sweet heart o’ my faithfu’ auld dame—
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!”

IV

“Now life is a burden that bows me down,
Sin I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same—
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!”

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE

I

What can a young lassie,
What shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie
Do wi’ an auld man?

II

He’s always compleenin
Frae mornin to eenin;
He hoasts and he hirples
The weary day lang;
He’s doylt and he’s dozin;
His blude it is frozen—
O, dreary’s the night
Wi’ a crazy auld man!

III

He hums and he hankers,
He frets and he tankers,
I never can please him
Do a' that I can.
He's peevish an' jealous
Of a' the young fellows —
O, dool on the day
I met wi' an auld man!

IV
My auld auntie Katie
Upon me taks pity,
I'll do my endeavour
To follow her plan:
I'll cross him an' wrack him
Until I heartbreak him,
And then his auld brass
Will buy me a new pan.

THE BONIE LAD THAT'S FAR AWA

It is supposed to refer to old Armour's extrusion of his daughter in the winter of 1788.

I
O, how can I be blythe and glad,
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
When the bonie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa?

II
It's no the frosty winter wind,
It's no the driving drift and snaw;
But ay the tear comes in my e'e
To think on him that's far awa.

III
My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a';
But I hae ane will tak my part —
The bonie lad that's far awa.

IV
A pair o' glooves he bought to me,
And silken snoods he gae me twa,
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonie lad that's far awa.

V
O, weary Winter soon will pass,
And Spring will cloed the birken shaw,
And my sweet babie will be born,
And he'll be hame that's far awa.

I DO CONFESS THOU ART SAE FAIR

"This song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Mary and Anne, Queens of Scotland. The poem is to be found in Watson's Collection of Scots Poems, the earliest collection published in Scotland. I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress." (R. B.)

I
I do confess thou art sae fair,
I wad been o'er the lugs in luve,
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could muve.
I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art so thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favours are the silly wind
That kisses ilka thing it meets.

II
See yonder rosebud rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy,
How sune it tines its scent and hue,
When pu'd and worn a common toy!
Sic fate ere lang shall thee betide,
Tho' thou may gaily bloom awhile,
And sune thou shalt be thrown aside,
Like onie common weed, an' vile.

SENSIBILITY HOW CHARMING

I
SENSIBILITY how charming,
Thou, my friend, can'st truly tell!
But Distress with horrors arming
Thou alas! hast known too well!

II
Fairest flower, behold the lily
Blooming in the sunny ray:
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate in the clay.

III
Hear the woodlark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys;
But alas! a prey the surest
To each pirate of the skies!
IV
Dearly bought the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow:
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS

"The song alludes to a part of my private history which is of no consequence to the world to know." (R. B.)

In July, 1793, he recommended it to Thomson as suitable to the air of *There'll Never be Peace till Jamie Comes Hame*, if he objected to the Jacobite sentiments of that song. It is held by some to refer to Mary Campbell; but Burns occasionally visited a peasant-girl near Covington, Lanarkshire.

I
Yon wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed.

II
Not Gowrie's rich valley nor Forth's sunny shores
To me hae the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors;
For there, by a lanely, sequesterèd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

III
Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath;
For there wi' my lassie the lang day I rove,
While o'er us unheeded flie the swift hours o' love.

IV
She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.

V
To Beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs?
And when Wit and Refinement hae polish'd her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flie to our hearts.

VI
But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond-sparkling e'e
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me,
And the heart beating love as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!

I HAE BEEN AT CROOKIEDEN

I
I hae been at Crookieden—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
Viewing Willie and his men—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
There our foes that burnt and slew—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
There at last they gat their due—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!

II
Satan sits in his black neuk—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
Breaking sticks to roast the Duke—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
The bloody monster gae a yell—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
And loud the laugh gaed round a' Hell—
My bonie laddie, Highland laddie!

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONIE FACE

I
It is na, Jean, thy bonie face
Nor shape that I admire,
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awauk desire.
Something in ilka part o’ thee
To praise, to love, I find;
But, dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

II
Nae mair ungener’rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest:
Content am I, if Heaven shall give
But happiness to thee,
And, as wi’ thee I wish to live,
For thee I’d bear to dee.

MY EPPIE MACNAB

I
O, saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
O, saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
“She’s down in the yard, she’s kissin
the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock
Rab!”

II
O, come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab!
O, come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab!
Whate’er thou has done, be it late, be it soon,
Thou’s welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

III
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
“She lets thee to wit that she has thee
forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock
Rab.”

IV
O, had I ne’er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
O, had I ne’er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
As light as the air and as fause as thou’s fair,
Thou’s broken the heart o’ thy ain Jock
Rab!

WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR

Without any manner of doubt, Burns’s ori-
ginal was Who But I, quoth Finlay, “a new
song, much in request, sung with its own proper
tune.”

I
“Wha is that at my bower door?”
“O, wha is it but Findlay!”
“Then gae your gate, ye’se nae be here.”
“Indeed maun I!” quo’ Findlay.
“What mak ye, sae like a thief?”
“O, come and see!” quo’ Findlay.
“Before the morn ye’ll work mischief?”
“Indeed will I!” quo’ Findlay.

II
“Gif I rise and let you in” —
“Let me in!” quo’ Findlay —
“Ye’ll keep me wauken wi’ your din?”
“Indeed will I!” quo’ Findlay.
“In my bower if ye should stay” —
“Let me stay!” quo’ Findlay —
“I fear ye’ll bide till break o’ day?”
“Indeed will I!” quo’ Findlay.

III
“Here this night if ye remain” —
“I’ll remain!” quo’ Findlay —
“I dread ye’ll learn the gate again?”
“Indeed will I!” quo’ Findlay.
“What may pass within this bower”
(“Let it pass!” quo’ Findlay!)
“Ye maun conceal till your last hour” —
“Indeed will I!” quo’ Findlay.

BONIE WEE THING

“Composed on my little idol — ‘the charm-
ing lovely Davies.’” (R. B.)
Miss Debora Davies, daughter of Dr. Davies
of Tenby, Pembrokeshire, and a relative of
Captain Riddell, was jilted by one Captain
Delany, and died of a decline. See further,
ante, p. 187, Epigram On Miss Davies, and the
song Lovely Davies, post, p. 237.

CHORUS
Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom
Lest my jewel it should tine.
LOVELY DAVIES

I

WISFULLY I look and languish
In that bonie face o' thine,
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

II

Wit and Grace and Love and Beauty
In ae constellation shine!
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!

CHORUS

Bonie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom
Lest my jewel it should tine.

THE TITHER MORN

I

The tither morn, when I forlorn
Aneath an aik sat moaning,
I did na trow I'd see my jo
Beside me gin the gloaming.

But he sae trig lap o'er the rig,
And dawtingly did cheer me,
When I, what reck, did least expeck
To see my lad sae near me!

II

His bonnet he a thought ajee
Cock'd sprush when first he clasp'd me;
And I, I wat, wi' fainness grat,
While in his grips he press'd me.

"Deil tak the war!" I late and air
Hae wish'd since Jock departed;
But now as glad I'm wi' my lad
As short syne broken-hearted.

III

Fu' aft at e'en, wi' dancing keen,
When a' were blythe and merry,
I ear'd na by, sae sad was I
In absence o' my deary.

But praise be blest! my mind's at rest,
I'm happy wi' my Johnie!
At kirk and fair, I se ay be there,
And be as canty's onie.

AE FOND KISS

The germ of Ae Fond Kiss is found in The Parting Kiss, by Robert Dodsley (1703-1764), which was set by Oswald:

"One fond kiss before we part,
Drop a Tear and bid adieu;
The' se sever, my fond Heart
Till we meet shall pant for you," etc.

It finishes with a repeat of the two first lines.

I

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

II

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy:
Naething could resist my Nancy!
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met — or never parted —
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

III

Fare-the-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-the-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

LOVELY DAVIES

For Miss Davies, see ante, p. 236, Prefatory Note to Bonie Wee Thing.

I

O, how shall I, unskilfu', try
The Poet's occupation?
The tunefu' Powers, in happy hours
That whisper inspiration,
Even they maun dare an effort mair
Than aught they ever gave us,
Ere they rehearse in equal verse
The charms o' lovely Davies.

II
Each eye, it cheers, when she appears,
Like Phebus in the morning,
When past the shower, and every flower
The garden is adorning!
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is,
Sae droops our heart, when we maun part
Frae charming, lovely Davies.

III
Her smile's a gift frae 'boon the lift
That mak's us mair than princes.
A sceptred hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances.
The man in arms 'gainst female charms,
Even he her willing slave is:
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering lovely Davies.

IV
My Muse to dream of such a theme
Her feeble powers surrenders;
The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendours.
I wad in vain essay the strain—
The deed too daring brave is!
I'll drap the lyre, and, mute, admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW

CHORUS
The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow!
I think my wife will end her life
Before she spin her tow.

I
I bought my wife a stane o' lint
As guid as e'er did grow,
And a' that she has made o' that
Is ae puir pund o' tow.

II
There sat a bottle in a bole
Beyont the ingle low;
And ay she took the tither souk
To drouk the stourie tow.

III
Quoth I:—"For shame, ye dirty dame,
Gae spin your tap o' tow!"
She took the rock, and wi' a knock
She brake it o'er my pow.

IV
At last her feet—I sang to see 't!—
Gaed foremost o'er the knowe,
And or I wad anither jad,
I'll wallop in a tow.

CHORUS
The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow!
I think my wife will end her life
Before she spin her tow.

I HAE A WIFE O' MY AIN

Made a few days after his marriage.

I
I hae a wife o' my ain,
I'll partake wi' naebody:
I'll take cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to naebody.

II
I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to naebody!
I hae naething to lend,
I'll borrow frae naebody.

III
I am naebody's lord,
I'll be slave to naebody.
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunts frae naebody.

IV
I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for naebody.
Naebody cares for me,
I care for naebody.
O, KENMURE'S ON AND AWA, WILLIE

William Gordon, sixth Viscount Kenmure, took up the Jacobite cause in 1715,—mainly through the persuasion of his wife, Mary, daughter of Robert Dalyell, sixth Earl of Carnwath,—and got Mar's commission to command the forces in the south. After divers ineffectual moves he passed into England, and, being taken prisoner at Preston on 14th November, was beheaded on Towerhill on 24th February, 1716.

I
O, Kenmure's on and awa, Willie,
O, Kenmure's on and awa!
An' Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw!

II
Success to Kenmure's band, Willie,
Success to Kenmure's band!
There's no a heart that fears a Whig
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

III
Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie,
Here's Kenmure's health in wine!
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

IV
O, Kenmure's lads are men, Willie,
O, Kenmure's lads are men!
Their hearts and swords are metal true,
And that their faes shall ken.
They 'll live or die wi' fame, Willie,  
They 'll live or die wi' fame!  
But soon wi' sounding victorie  
May Kenmure's lord come hame!

Here's him that's far awa, Willie,  
Here's him that's far awa!  
And here's the flower that I lo'e best—  
The rose that's like the snaw!

One of the best and the most Burnsian of Burns's vamps, this charming song was no doubt suggested by The Loving Lass and Spinning-wheel in Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, which Ramsay must have imitated from an old blackletter broadside (Pepys Collection), "The Bonny Scott and the Yielding Lass, to an excellent new Tune:" —  

"As I sate at my spinning-wheel  
A bonny lad there passed by,  
I keen'd him round, and I lik'd him weel,  
Gude faith he had a bony eye:  
My heart new panting 'gan to feel,  
But still I turned my spinning-wheel," etc.

O, leeze me on my spinnin-wheel!  
And leeze me on my rock and reel,  
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,  
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en!  
I'll set me down, and sing and spin,  
While laigh descends the summer sun,  
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal —  
O, leeze me on my spinnin-wheel!

On ilka hand the burnies trot,  
And meet below my theekit cot.  
The scented birk and hawthorn white  
Across the pool their arms unite,  
Alike to screen the birdie's nest  
And little fishes’ caller rest.  
The sun blinks kindly in the biel,  
Where blythe I turn my spinnin-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,  
And Echo cons the doolfu’ tale.

The lintwhites in the hazel braes,  
Delighted, rival ither’s lays.  
The craik amang the claver hay,  
The patrick whirrin o’er the ley,  
The swallow jinkin round my shiel,  
Amuse me at my spinnin-wheel.

Wi’ sma to sell and less to buy,  
Aboon distress, below envý,  
O, wha wad leave this humble state  
For a’ the pride of a’ the great?  
Amid their flaring, idle toys,  
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,  
Can they the peace and pleasure feel  
Of Bessy at her spinnin-wheel?

MY COLLIER LADDIE

"I do not know a blyther old song than this." (R. B.)

"O, whare live ye, my bonie lass,  
And tell me how they ca’ ye?"  
"My name," she says, "is Mistress Jean,  
And I follow the collier laddie."

"O, see you not yon hills and dales  
The sun shines on sae brawlie?  
They a’ are mine, and they shall be thine,  
Gin ye ‘ll leave your collier laddie!"

"An’ ye shall gang in gay attire,  
Weel buskit up sae gaudy,  
And ane to wait on every hand,  
Gin ye ‘ll leave your collier laddie!"

"Tho’ ye had a’ the sun shines on,  
And the earth conceals sae lowly,  
I wad turn my back on you and it a’,  
And embrace my collier laddie.

"I can win my five pennies in a day,  
An’ spend it at night fu’ brawlie,  
And make my bed in the collier’s neuk  
And lie down wi’ my collier laddie."
VI
"Loove for loove is the bargain for me,
Tho' the wee cot-house should hand me,
And the warld before me to win my 
bread —
And fair fa' my collier laddie !"

IN SIMMER, WHEN THE HAY WAS MAWN

I
In simmer, when the hay was mawn
And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
While claver blooms white o'er the ley,
And roses blaw in ilka bield,
Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel
Says: — "I'll be wed, come o't what will !"
Out spake a dame in wrinkled eild:
"O guid advisement comes nae ill.

II
"It's ye hae woosers monie ane,
And lassie, ye're but young, ye ken !
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale
A routhie butt, a routhie ben.
There Johnie o' the Buskie-Glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre.
Tak this frae me, my bonie hen:
It's plenty beets the luver's fire !"

III
"For Johnie o' the Buskie-Glen
I dinna care a single flie:
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
He has nae love to spare for me.
But blythe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wad na gie
For Buskie-Glen and a' his gear."

IV
"O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught !
The canniest gate, the strife is sair.
But ay fu'-han't is fechtin best:
A hungry care 's an unco care.
But some will spend, and some will spare,
An' wilfu' folk maun hae their will.
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill !"

V
"O, gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye !
But the tender heart o' leesome loove
The gowd and siller canna buy !
We may be poor, Robie and I;
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and loove brings peace and joy:
What mair hae Queens upon a throne ?"

IN NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME

Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable (1735-1801) was sole surviving child of William Lord Maxwell, son of William, fifth Earl of Nithsdale, who was sentenced to decapitation on Towerhill, 24th February, 1716, for his share in the Fifteen, but escaped the night before the execution. She married William Haggerston Constable of Everingham, and began rebuilding the old family mansion, Terreagles, or Terregles, Kirkcudbrightshire, in 1789. Burns has stated, for the sake of "vive la bagatelle," that his Jacobitism was mostly matter of sport. But, in a letter of the 16th December, 1789, he, as Sir Walter put it, plays "high Jacobite to that singular old curmudgeon Lady Winifred Constable: " roundly asserting that they were "common sufferers in a cause where even to be unfortunate is glorious, the cause of heroic loyalty;" and that his forefathers, like her own, had shaken "hands with ruin for what they esteemed the cause of their King and country."

I
The noble Maxwells and their powers
Are coming o'er the border;
And they 'll gae big Terreagles' towers,
And set them a' in order;
And they declare Terreagles fair,
For their abode they choose it:
There 's no a heart in a' the land
But 's lighter at the news o't !

II
Tho' stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather,
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather;
The weary night o' care and grief
May hae a joyfu' morrow;
So dawning day has brought relief —
Fareweel our night o' sorrow !
FAIR ELIZA

Two copies in Burns’s hand are in the Hastie Collection. In the earlier the lady’s name is Robina. According to Stenhouse, she was “a young lady to whom Mr. Hunter, a friend of Mr. Burns, was much attached.” Hunter died shortly after going to Jamaica. The verses appear, however, to have been written on some lady suggested by Johnson: “So much for your Robina — how do you like the verses? I assure you I have tasked my muse to the top of her performing. However, the song will not sing to your tune in Macdonald’s Collection of Highland Airs, which is much admired in this country; I intended the verses to be sung to that air. It is in page 17th and No. 112. There is another air in the same collection, an Argyleshire Air, which, with a trifling alteration, will do charmingly.” (R. B. to Johnson.)

Johnson set the words to both these tunes.

I

TURN again, thou fair Eliza!
Ae kind blink before we part!
Rew on thy despairing lover —
Canst thou break his faithfu’ heart?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza!
If to love thy heart denies,
For pity hide the cruel sentence
Under friendship’s kind disguise!

II

Thee, dear maid, haie I offended?
The offence is loving thee.
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,
Wha for thine wad gladly die?
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe.
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow!

YE JACOBITES BY NAME

I

Ye Jacobites by name,
Give an ear, give an ear!
Ye Jacobites by name,
Give an ear!
Ye Jacobites by name,
Your fautes I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame —
You shall hear!

II

What is Right, and what is Wrang,
By the law, by the law?
What is Right, and what is Wrang,
By the law?
What is Right, and what is Wrang?
A short sword and a lang,
A weak arm and a strang
For to draw!

III

What makes heroic strife
Famed afar, famed afar?
What makes heroic strife
Famed afar?
What makes heroic strife?
To whet th’ assassin’s knife,
Or hunt a Parent’s life
Wi’ bluidy war!

IV

Then let your schemes alone,
In the State, in the State!
Then let your schemes alone,
In the State!
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone
To his fate!

THE POSIE

"The Posie in the Museum is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs. Burns’s voice. It is well known in the west country; but the old words are trash.” (Burns to Thomson, 19th October, 1794.) “It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his Roslin Castle on the modulation of this air... The old verses to which it was sung, when I took
down the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit. The following is a specimen: —

"There was a pretty May, and a milkkin she went,
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair;
And she had met a young man comin o'er the bent,
With a double and adiew to the fair May,' etc.

and so on for four other stanzas." (R. B.)

I
O, luve will venture in where it daur na weel be seen!
O, luve will venture in, where wisdom ance hath been!
But I will doun yon river rove amang the wood sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain dear May!

II
The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer —
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May!

III
I'll pu' the budding rose when Phæbus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet, bonie mou.
The hayacinth 's for constancy wi' its unchanging blue —
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May!

IV
The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there.
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air —
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May!

V
The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day;
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away —
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May!

VI
The woodbine I will pu' when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her een sae clear!
The violet 's for modesty, which weel she fa's to wear —
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May!

VII
I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remove,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May!

THE BANKS O' DOON

"An Ayrshire legend," according to Allan Cunningham, "says the heroine of this affecting song was Peggy Kennedy of Daljarroch;" and Chambers also supposed the ballad to be an allegory of the same "unhappy love-tale." See ante, p. 201, Prefatory Note to Young Peggy, but even if the "love-tale" were then known, it was not then "unhappy."

For other sets, Sweet are the Banks and Ye Flowery Banks, see post, pp. 309, 310.

I
YE banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou 'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

II
Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause luver staw my rose —
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.
WILLIE WASTLE

The heroine is said to have been the wife of a farmer who lived near Ellisland. A cottage in Peeblesshire, which stood where a muirland burn, the Logan Water, joins the Tweed, was known by the name of Linkumdodie, but probably it was so named after Burns wrote his song. The earliest authenticated appearance of Willie Wastle in rhyme is in Cockburn’s (Governor of Dunse Castle) reply to Colonel Fenwick:

“I, Willie Wastle, Am in my castle; All the dogges in the towne Shall not dinge me downe.”

This same rhyme was, and is, used in the mimic warfare of Scottish children; but whether they were the inspirers of Cockburn, or he of them, it is impossible to affirm.

I

WILLIE WASTLE dwalt on Tweed, The spot they ca’d it Linkumdodie. Willie was a wabster guid Could stown a clue wi’ onie bodie. He had a wife was dour and din, O, Tinkler Maidgie was her mither! Sic a wife as Willie had, I wad na gie a button for her.

II

She has an e’e (she has but ane), The cat has twa the very colour, Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump, A clapper-tongue wad deave a miller; A whiskin beard about her mou, Her nose and chin they threaten ither: Sic a wife as Willie had, I wad na gie a button for her.

III

She’s bow-hough’d, she’s hem-shin’d, Ae limpin leg a hand-breed shorter; She’s twisted right, she’s twisted left, To balance fair in ilka quarter; She has a hump upon her breast, The twin o’ that upon her shouther: Sic a wife as Willie had, I wad na gie a button for her.

IV

Auld baudrans by the ingle sits, An’ wi’ her loof her face a-washin;

But Willie’s wife is nae sae trig, She dights her grunzie wi’ a hushion; Her walie nieves like midden-creels, Her face wad fyle the Logan Water: Sic a wife as Willie had, I wad na gie a button for her.

LADY MARY ANN

Burns got the germ of his song from a fragment in the Herd ms. “Lady Mary Ann” and “Young Charlie Cochrane” are his own, as are the last three stanzas of the ballad.

I

O, LADY MARY ANN looks o’er the Castle wa’, She saw three bonie boys playing at the ba’, The youngest he was the flower amang them a’— My bonie laddie’s young, but he’s growin yet!

II

“O father, O father, an ye think it fit, We’ll send him a year to the college yet; We’ll sew a green ribbon round about his hat, And that will let them ken he’s to marry yet!”

III

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew, Sweet was its smell and bonie was its hue, And the longer it blossom’d the sweeter it grew, For the lily in the bud will be bonier yet.

IV

Young Charlie Cochrane was the sprout of an aik; Bonie and bloomin and straucht was i make; The sun took delight to shine for its sake, And it will be the brag o’ the forest yet.

V

The simmer is gane when the leaves they were green, And the days are awa that we hae seen; But far better days I trust will come again, For my bonie laddie’s young, but he’s growin yet.
SUCH A PARCEL OF ROGUES IN A NATION

I

FAREWEELE to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory!
Fareweel ev'n to the Scottish name
Sae famed in martial story!
Now Sark rins over Solway sands,
An' Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands —
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

II

What force or guile could not subdue
Thro' many warlike ages
Is wrought now by a coward few
For hireling traitor's wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station;
But English gold has been our bane —
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

III

O, would, or I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour
I'll mak this declaration: —
"We're bought and sold for English gold" —
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

KELLYBURN BRAES

The Kelly burn (i.e. brook) forms the northern boundary of Ayrshire, and the ballad has no connexion with Nithsdale or Galloway.

I

There lived a carl in Kellyburn Braes
(Hey and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme!),
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days
(And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime!).
Syne bade her gae in for a bitch and a whore
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o’ his band
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

Turn out on her guard, in the clap o’ a hand
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

The carlin gaed thro’ them like onie wud bear
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

Whae’er she gat hands on cam near her nae mair
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

A reekit wee deevil looks over the wa
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

The Devil he swore by the edge o’ his knife
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

He pitied the man that was tied to a wife
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

And to her auld husband he’s carried her back
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

“\text{I hae been a Devil the feck o’ my life (Hey and the rue grows bonie wi’ thyme!),}
But ne’er was in Hell till I met wi’ a wife”
(And the thyme it is wither’d, and rue is in prime!).

\text{THE SLAVE’S LAMENT}

\text{I}
It was in sweet Senegal
That my foes did me enthral
For the lands of Virginia, -ginia, O!
Torn from that lovely shore,
And must never see it more,
And alas! I am weary, weary, O!

\text{II}
All on that charming coast
\begin{itemize}
  \item Is no bitter snow and frost,
  \item Like the lands of Virginia, -ginia, O!
\end{itemize}
There streams for ever flow,
And the flowers for ever blow,
And alas! I am weary, weary, O!

\text{III}
The burden I must bear,
While the cruel scourge I fear,
\begin{itemize}
  \item In the lands of Virginia, -ginia, O!
  \item And I think on friends most dear
  \item With the bitter, bitter tear,
\end{itemize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item And alas! I am weary, weary, O!
\end{itemize}

\text{THE SONG OF DEATH}

\text{I}
FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the broad 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!

II
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?

SWEET AFTON

Flow Gently, Sweet Afton was sent to Mrs. Dunlop, 5th February, 1789, and in the enclosing letter Burns explicitly declares that it was written for Johnson's Musical Museum, as a "compliment" to the "small river Afton that flows into Nith, near New Cumnock, which has some charming wild romantic scenery on its banks," etc. It seems certain, therefore, that the name Mary was introduced euphonically, or at least that the heroine — if heroine there were — was another than Mary Campbell. Also, the song was clearly suggested by one of David Garrick's, to the Avon, which Burns saw in A Select Collection of English Songs (London, 1763).

I
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!

II
Thou stock dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Yea wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
THE GALLANT WEAVER

Supposed by some to refer to Armour’s visit to Paisley in the spring of 1786, [after the quarrel, and to an unauthenticated story of a flirtation with a weaver named Wilson. The song To the Weaver’s Gin Ye Go (ante, p. 202) is also referred to the same episode, but with little ground.] The Cart flows past Paisley. A song, The Loss of Cartside, which we have found in an old Dumfries chap, may or may not have suggested this one to Burns: —

"Where Cart gently glides thro’ the vale,
And nature, in beauty arrayed,
Perfumes the sweet whispering gale,
That wantons in every green shade,“ etc.

[As published in Thomson (vol. i.), the song is of a gallant sailor.]

WaeErk Cart rins rowin to the sea
By monie a flower and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me —
He is a gallant weaver!
O, I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine,
And I was fear’d my heart wad tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign’d my tocher-band
To gie the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I’l add my hand,
And give it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers,
While corn grows green in summer showers,
I love my gallant weaver.

O, CAN YE LABOUR LEA

The first stanza and the chorus are well-nigh word for word from the Merry Muses set, which, however, may have been retouched by Burns. The rest appears to be his own; though in one of his letters he describes his stanza iii. as a favourite song “o’ his mither’s.”

CHORUS

O, can ye labour lea, young man,
O, can ye labour lea?
Gae back the gate ye came again —
Ye ’se never scorn me!

I

I FEE’D a man at Martinmas
Wi’ airle-pennies three;
But a’ the faut I had to him
He cauldna labour lea.
II

O, clappin’s guid in Febarwar,
An’ kissin’s sweet in May;
But what signifies a young man’s love,
An’t dinna last for ay?

III

O, kissin is the key o’ love
An’ clappin is the lock;
An’ makin’ of’s the best thing
That e’er a young thing got!

CHORUS

O, can ye labour lea, young man,
O, can ye labour lea?
Gae back the gate ye came again —
Ye’se never scorn me!

THE DEUK’S DANG O’ER MY DADDIE

I

The bairns gat out wi’ an unco shout: —
“The deuk’s dang o’er my daddie, O!”
“The fien-ma-care,” quo’ the feirrie auld wife,
“He was but a paidlin body, O!
He paidles out, and he paidles in,
An’ he paidles late and early, O!
This seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
An’ he is but a fusionless carlie, O!”

II

“O, haud your tongue, my feirrie auld wife,
O, haud your tongue, now Nansie, O!
I’ve seen the day, and sae hae ye,
Ye wad na been sae donsie, O.
I’ve seen the day ye butter’d my brose,
And cuddl’d me late and early, O;
But downa-do’s come o’er me now,
And oeh, I find it sairly, O!”

SHE’S FAIR AND FAUSE

The general allusion is to the girl who jilted Alexander Cunningham (see ante, p. 95, Prefatory Note to Song: Anna, Thy Charms; and p. 140, Prefatory Note to To Alexander Cunningham).

I

She’s fair and fause that causes my smart;
I lo’ed her meikle and lang;
She’s broken her vow, she’s broken my heart;
And I may e’en gae hang.
A coof cam in wi’ routh o’ gear,
And I hae tint my dearest dear;
But Woman is but warld’s gear,
Sae let the bonie lass gang!

II

Whae’er ye be that Woman love,
To this be never blind:
Nae ferior ‘tis, tho’ fickle she prove,
A woman has’t by kind.
O Woman lovely, Woman fair,
An’ angel form’s faun to thy share,
’T wad been o’er meikle to gien thee mair! . . .
I mean an angel mind.

THE DEIL’S AWA WI’ TH’ EXCISEMAN

CHORUS

The Deil’s awa, the Deil’s awa,
The Deil’s awa wi’ th’ Exciseman!
He’s dan’d awa, he’s dan’d awa,
He’s dan’d awa wi’ th’ Exciseman!

I

The Deil cam fiddlin thro’ the town,
And dan’d awa wi’ th’ Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries: — “Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o’ the prize, man!

II

“We’ll mak our maut, and we’ll brew our drink,
We’ll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man,
And monie braw thanks to the meikle black Deil,
That dan’d awa wi’ th’ Exciseman.”

III

There’s threesome reels, there’s foursome reels,
There’s hornpipes and strathspeys, man,
But the ae best dance e’er cam to the land
Was The Deil’s Awa wi’ th’ Exciseman.
SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

CHORUS

The Deil’s awa, the Deil’s awa,
The Deil’s awa wi’ th’ Exciseman!
He’s danc’d awa, he’s danc’d awa,
He’s danc’d awa wi’ th’ Exciseman!

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS

I

The lovely lass of Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e’en to morn she cries “Alas!”
And ay the saut tear blin’s her e’e: —

II

“Drumossie moor, Drumossie day —
A waefu’ day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three.

III

“Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growin green to see,
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman’s e’e.

IV

“Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be,
For monie a heart thou hast made sair
That ne’er did wrang to thine or thee!”

A RED, RED ROSE

I

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That’s newly sprung in June.
O, my luve is like the melodie,
That’s sweetly play’d in tune.

II

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a’ the seas gang dry.

III

Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun!

And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o’ life shall run.

IV

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
The’ it were ten thousand mile!

AS I STOOD BY YON ROOFLESS TOWER

The “roofless tower” was part of the ruins of Lincluden Abbey, situate at the junction of the Cluden with the Nith. See ante, p. 198, Prefatory Note to Epitaph On Grizzel Grimme.

CHORUS

A lassie all alone was making her moan,
Lamenting our lads beyond the sea: —
“In the bluidy wars they fa’, and our honor’s gane an’ a’,
And broken-hearted we maun die.”

I

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa’flow’r scents the dewy air,
Where the houlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care:

II

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky,
The tod was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

III

The burn, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin’d wa’,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase roarings seem’d to rise and fa’.

IV

The cauld blae North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi’ hissing, eerie din:
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like Fortune’s favours, tint as win.

V

Now, looking over firth and fauld,
Her horn the pale-faced Cynthia rear’d,
When lo! in form of minstrel auld  
A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd.

VI
And frae his harp sic strains did flow,  
Might rous'd the slumbering Dead to hear,
But O, it was a tale of woe  
As ever met a Briton's ear!

VII
He sang wi' joy his former day,  
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times:
But what he said — it was nae play! —  
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.

CHORUS
A lassie all alone was making her moan  
Lamenting our lads beyond the sea: —
"In the bluidy wars they fa', and our honor's gane an' a',  
And broken-hearted we maun die."

O, AN YE WERE DEAD, GUID-MAN

CHORUS
Sing, round about the fire wi' a rung she ran,  
An' round about the fire wi' a rung she ran:—
"Your horns shall tie you to the staw,  
An' I shall bang your hide, guidman!"

AULD LANG SYNE

Sent to Mrs. Dunlop, 17th December, 1788:
"Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase Auld Lang-syne exceedingly expressive? There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul," etc. To Thomson he wrote: "One song more and I have done—'Auld Lang Syne.' The air is but mediocre; but the following song—the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air." Thomson in Scottish Airs expressed the opinion that Burns thus wrote "merely in a playful humour." It may also be that the story was a device to make sure that he (Thomson) would accept a piece which the writer was far too modest to describe as his own improvement on the earlier sets, the one published in Watson (1711), the other credited to Allan Ramsay. But, after all, it is by no means impossible that he really got the germ of his set as he says he did.

CHORUS
For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne!

I
SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And auld lang syne!

II
And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,  
And surely I'll be mine,  
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne!

III
We twa hae run about the braes,  
And pou'd the gowans fine,
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

IV
We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fier,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne!

CHORUS
For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

LOUIS, WHAT RECK I BY THEE
Probably made soon after his marriage, and certainly before the Revolution of 1795.

I
Louis, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor beggar louns to me!
I reign in Jeanie's bosom.

II
Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me,
Kings and nations — swith awa!
Reif randies, I disown ye.

HAD I THE WYTE?

I
Had I the wyte? had I the wyte?
Had I the wyte? she bade me!
She watch'd me by the hie-gate side,
And up the loan she shaw'd me;
And when I wadna venture in,
A coward loon she ca'd me!
Had Kirk and State been in the gate,
I 'd lighted when she bade me.

II
Sae craffilie she took me ben
And bade me mak nae clatter: —
"For our ramgunshoch, glum guidman
Is o'er ayont the water."
Whae'er shall say I wanted grace
When I did kiss and dawte her,
Let him be pat in my place,
Syne say I was the fautor!

III
Could I for shame, could I for shame,
Could I for shame refus'd her?
And wadna manhood been to blame
Had I unkindly used her?
He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame,
And blae and bluidy bruised her —
When sic a husband was frae hame,
What wife but wad excus'd her!

IV
I dighted ay her een sae blue,
An' bann'd the cruel randy,
And, weel I wat, her willin mou'
Was sweet as sugarcandie.
At gloamin-shot, it was, I wot,
I lighted — on the Monday,
But I cam thro' the Tyseday's dew
to wanton Willie's brandy.

COMIN THRO' THE RYE

CHORUS
O, Jenny 's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny 's seldom dry:
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

I
Comin thro' the rye, poor body,
Comin thro' the rye,
She draigl't a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

II
Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?
III
Gin a body meet a body
Comin thro' the glen,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need the warld ken?

CHORUS
O, Jenny's a' weet, poor body,
Jenny's seldom dry:
She draig'd a' her petticoatie,
Comin thro' the rye!

YOUNG JAMIE

I
Young Jamie, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain,
Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
And reign'd resistless King of Love.

II
But now, wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays amang the woods and breers;
Or in the glens and rocky caves
His sad complaining dovie raves:

III
"I, wha sae late did range and rove,
And chang'd with every moon my love —
I little thought the time was near,
Repentance I should buy sae dear.

IV
"The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree;
While she, my cruel, scornful Fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mair."

OUT OVER THE FORTH

I
Out over the Forth, I look to the north —
But what is the north, and its Highlands
To me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land or the wide rolling
sea!

II
But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers
may be;
For far in the west lives he I loe best,
The man that is dear to my babie and me.

WANTONNESS FOR EVERMAIR

WANTONNESS for evermair,
Wantonness has been my ruin.
Yet for a' my dool and care
It's wantonness for evermair.
I hae lo'ed the Black, the Brown;
I hae lo'ed the Fair, the Gowden!
A' the colours in the town —
I hae won their wanton favour.

CHARLIE HE'S MY DARLING

CHORUS
An' Charlie he's my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie he's my darling—
The Young Chevalier!

I
'T was on a Monday morning
Right early in the year,
That Charlie came to our town —
The Young Chevalier!

II
As he was walking up the street
The city for to view,
O, there he spied a bonie lass
The window looking thro'!

III
Sae light's he jumped up the stair,
And tirld at the pin;
And wha sae ready as hersel'
To let the laddie in!

IV
He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress;
For brawlie weel he kend the way
To please a bonie lass.
SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

V
It’s up yon heathery mountain
And down yon scroggy glen,
We daurna gang a-milking
For Charlie and his men!

CHORUS
An’ Charlie he’s my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Charlie he’s my darling —
The Young Chevalier!

THE LASS O’ ECCLEFECHAN

Burns, in the course of his “duty as supervisor,” was accustomed to “visit this unfortunate wicked little village,” and slept in it on 7th February, 1795 (R. B. to Thomson), about two months after the birth of Thomas Carlyle. It was long a favourite resort of such vagabonds as are pictured in The Jolly Beggars: which may—or may not—account in some measure for Carlyle’s affection for that admirable piece. Thus, in The Trogger, a ballad in The Merry Muses, which may very well be from Burns, the hero and heroine, their business done, proceed to

“Tak the gate,
An’ in by Ecclefechan,
Where the brandy stoup we gart it clink,
An’ the strong beer ream the quaich in.”

I
“Gat ye me, O, gat ye me,
Gat ye me wi’ naething?
Rock an’ reel, an’ spinning wheel,
A mickle quarter basin:
Bye attour, my gutcher has
A heich house and a laich ane,
A’ forbye my bonie sel,
The toss o’ Ecclefechan!”

II
“O, haud your tongue now, Lucky Lang,
O, haud your tongue and jauner!
I held the gate till you I met,
Syne I began to wander:
I tint my whistle and my sang,
I tint my peace and pleasure;
But your green graff, now Lucky Lang,
Wad airt me to my treasure.”

THE COOPER O’ CUDDY

CHORUS
We ’ll hide the cooper behint the door,
Behint the door, behint the door,
We ’ll hide the cooper behint the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

I
The Cooper o’ Cuddy came here awa,
He ca’d the girrs out o’er us a’,
An’ our guidwife has gotten a ca’,
That’s anger’d the silly guidman, O.

II
He sought them out, he sought them in,
Wi’ “Deil hae her!” an’ “Deil hae him!”
But the body he was sae doited and blin’,
He wist na where he was gaun, O.

III
They cooper’d at e’en, they cooper’d at morn,
Till our guidman has gotten the scorn:
On ilka brow she’s planted a horn,
And swearst that there they sall stan’, O!

CHORUS
We ’ll hide the cooper behint the door,
Behint the door, behint the door,
We ’ll hide the cooper behint the door,
And cover him under a mawn, O.

FOR THE SAKE O’ SOMEBODY

I
My heart is sair — I dare na tell —
My heart is sair for Somebody:
I could wake a winter night
For the sake o’ Somebody:
O-hon! for Somebody!
O-hey! for Somebody!
I could range the world around
For the sake o’ Somebody.

II
Ye Powers that smile on virtuous love,
O, sweetly smile on Somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my Somebody!
Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing een o' bonie blue.
Her smiling, sae wyling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe.
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto those rosy lips to grow!
Such was my Chloris' bonie face,
When first that bonie face I saw,
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm —
She says she lo'es me best of a'!

I
Like harmony her motion,
Her pretty ankle is a spy
Betraying fair proportion
Wad make a saint forget the sky!
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her faultless form and gracefu' air,
Ilk feature — auld Nature
Declar'd that she could dae nae mair!
Hers are the willing chains o' love
By conquering beauty's sovereign law,
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm —
She says she lo'es me best of a'!

II
Let others love the city,
And gaudy show at sunny noon!
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon,
Fair beaming, and streaming
Her silver light the boughs amang,
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang!
SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o’ truth and love,
And say thou lo’es me best of a’?

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED

“The Bonie Lass made the Bed to Me was composed on an amour of Charles II. when skulking in the North about Aberdeen, in the time of the Usurpation. He formed une petite affaire with a daughter of the House of Port Letham, who was the lass that made the bed to him.”

I

When Januar’ wind was blawin cauld,  
As to the North I took my way,  
The mirsome night did me enfault,  
I knew na where to lodge till day.  
By my guid luck a maid I met  
Just in the middle o’ my care,  
And kindly she did me invite  
To walk into a chamber fair.

II

I bow’d fu’ low unto this maid,  
And thank’d her for her courtiesie;  
I bow’d fu’ low unto this maid,  
An’ bade her mak a bed to me.  
She made the bed baith large and wide,  
Wi’ twa white hands she spread it down,  
She put the cup to her rosy lips,  
And drank: — “Young man, now sleep ye soun’.”

III

She snatch’d the candle in her hand,  
And frae my chamber went wi’ speed,  
But I call’d her quickly back again  
To lay some mair below my head:  
A cod she laid below my head,  
And serv’d me with due respeck,  
And, to salute her wi’ a kiss,  
I put my arms about her neck.

IV

“Haud aff your hands, young man,” she said,  
“And dinna sae uncivil be;  
Gif ye ha’e onie luve for me,  
O, wrang na my virginitie!”

V

Her hair was like the links o’ gowd,  
Her teeth were like the ivorie,  
Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,  
The lass that made the bed to me!

VI

Her bosom was the driven snav,  
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;  
Her limbs the polish’d marble stane,  
The lass that made the bed to me!  
I kiss’d her o’er and o’er again,  
And ay she wist na what to say.  
I laid her ’tween me an’ the wa’—  
The lassie thocht na lang till day.

VII

Upon the morrow, when we raise,  
I thank’d her for her courtiesie,  
But ay she blush’d, and ay she sigh’d,  
And said: — “Alas, ye’ve ruin’d me!”

SAE FAR AWA

I

O, sad and heavy should I part  
But for her sake sae far awa,  
Unknowing what my way may thwart —  
My native land sae far awa.

II

Thou that of a’ things Maker art,  
That formed this Fair sae far awa,  
Gie body strength, then I’ll ne’er start  
At this my way sae far awa!

III

How true is love to pure desert!  
So mine in her sae far awa,
And nocht can heal my bosom's smart,
While, O, she is sae far awa!

IV

Nane other love, nane other dart
I feel, but hers sae far awa;
But fairer never touched a heart,
Than hers, the Fair sae far awa.

THE REEL O' STUMPIE

I
Wap and rowe, wap and rowe,
Wap and rowe the feetie o't;
I thought I was a maiden fair,
Till I heard the greetie o't!

II
My daddie was a fiddler fine,
My minnie she made mantie, O,
And I myself a thumpin quine,
And dance'd the Reel o' Stumpie, O.

O, WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN

Begun at Ecclefechan, where Burns was storm-stayed, 7th February, 1795. “Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—We'll Gang Nae Mair to Yon Town. I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it; try with this doggrel until I give you a better.”

In the set sent to Johnson, Jeanie—either Jean Armour or Jean Lorimer—is the heroine. In the letter that sent to Thomson, the name is Lucy; and Burns, enclosing a copy to Syme in an undated letter, explains its history: “Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honour to call my acquaintances—the Oswald family, for instance—there is nothing charms me more than Mr. Oswald’s unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman.” The “incomparable woman” was Oswald’s wife. He was Richard Oswald of Anchencruive, nephew of the Mrs. Oswald to whose memory Burns had devoted a savage Ode (ante, p. 81). Lucy, daughter of Wynn Johnston, Esq., of Hilton, according to Sharpe, was at this time “well turned of thirty, and ten years older than her husband; but still a charming creature.” She died at Lisbon in January, 1798.

CHORUS
O, wat ye wha’s in yon town
Ye see the e’enin sun upon?
The dearest maid’s in yon town
That e’enin sun is shining on!

I
Now haply down yon gay green shaw
She wanders by yon spreading tree.
How blest ye flowers that round her blaw!
Ye catch the glances o’ her e’e.

II
How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year!
And-doubly welcome be the Spring,
The season to my Jeanie dear!

III
The sun blinks blythe in yon town,
Among the broomy braes sae green;
258 SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

But my delight in yon town,  
And dearest pleasure, is my Jean.

IV
Without my Love, not a’ the charms  
O’ Paradise could yield me joy;  
But gie me Jeanie in my arms,  
And welcome Lapland’s dreary sky!

V
My cave wad be a lover’s bower,  
Tho’ raging Winter rent the air,  
And she a lovely little flower,  
That I wad tent and shelter there.

O, sweet is she in yon town  
The sinkin sun’s gane down upon!  
A fairer than’s in yon town  
His setting beam ne’er shone upon.

If angry Fate be sworn my foe,  
And suff’ring I am doom’d to bear,  
I’d careless quit aught else below,  
But spare, O, spare me Jeanie dear!

For, while life’s dearest blood is warm,  
Ae thought frae her shall ne’er depart,  
And she, as fairest is her form,  
She has the truest, kindest heart.

WHEREFORE SIGHING ART  
THOU, PHILLIS?

I
WHEREFORE sighing art thou, Phillis?  
Has thy prime unheeded past?  
Hast thou found that beauty’s lilies  
Were not made for ay to last?

II
Know, thy form was once a treasure —  
Then it was thy hour of scorn!  
Since thou then denied the pleasure,  
Now ’t is fit that thou should’st mourn.

O MAY, THY MORN

Supposed to commemorate the parting with Clarinda, 6th December, 1791.

O May, thy morn was ne’er sae sweet  
As the mirk night o’ December!  
For sparkling was the rosy wine,  
And private was the chamber,  
And dear was she I dare na name,  
But I will ay remember.

And here’s to them that, like oursel,  
Can push about the jorum!  
And here’s to them that wish us weil —  
May a’ that’s guid watch o’er ’em!  
And here’s to them we dare na tell,  
The dearest o’ the quorum!

AS I CAME O’ER THE CAIRNEY MOUNT

CHORUS
O, my bonie Highland lad!  
My winsome, weil-faur’d Highland laddie!  
Wha wad mind the wind and rain  
Sae weil row’d in his tartan plaidie!

As I came o’er the Cairney mount  
And down among the blooming heather,  
Kindly stood the milking-shiel  
To shelter frae the stormy weather.

Now Phoebus blinkit on the bent,  
And o’er the knowes the lambs were bleating;  
But he wan my heart’s consent  
To be his ain at the neist meeting.

WHEREFORE sighing art thou, Phillis?  
Has thy prime unheeded past?  
Hast thou found that beauty’s lilies  
Were not made for ay to last?

O, my bonie Highland lad!  
My winsome, weil-faur’d Highland laddie!  
Wha wad mind the wind and rain  
Sae weil row’d in his tartan plaidie!
LOVELY POLLY STEWART

This is chiefly an abridgment of the Jacobite ditty, The Highland Lad and the Highland Lass, published in A Collection of Loyal Songs (1750) and The True Loyalist (1779). The refrain is old; stanza i. is Burns; stanza ii. is substantially stanza i. of the older set; while stanza iii. is composed of the first halves of the older stanzas viii. and ix.

I

The boniest lad that e'er I saw—
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
Wore a plaid and was fu' braw—
Bonie Highland laddie!
On his head a bonnet blue—
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
His royal heart was firm and true—
Bonie Highland laddie!

II

"Trumpets sound and cannons roar,
Bonie lassie, Lawland lassie!—
And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
Bonie Lawland lassie!
Glory, Honour, now invite—
Bonie lassie, Lawland lassie!—
For freedom and my King to fight,
Bonie Lawland lassie!"

III

"The sun a backward course shall take,
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie!
Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
Bonie Highland laddie!
Go, for yourself' procure renown,
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
And for your lawful King his crown,
Bonie Highland laddie!"

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

O, wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul—
That's the love I bear thee—
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie!
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie!

II

Lassie, say thou lo'es me,
Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou 'lt refuse me!
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me!
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me!

LOVELY POLLY STEWART

Polly or Mary Stewart was daughter of William Stewart, factor at Closeburn, to whom Burns addressed To William Stewart (ante, p. 146), and also the lines, You're Welcome, Willie Stewart (post, p. 311). She was married first to her cousin, Ishmael Stewart, and then to a farmer, George Welsh (grand-uncle of Jane Welsh Carlyle). Being separated from Welsh, she fell in love with a French prisoner of war, whom she accompanied to his native Switzerland. She died in Italy at the age of seventy-two. The present song, together with You're Welcome, Willie Stewart, is modelled on a Jacobite number in Collection of Loyal Songs (1750).

CHORUS

O lovely Polly Stewart,
O charming Polly Stewart,
There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May,
That's half so fair as thou art!

I

The flower it blaws, it fades, it fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But Worth and Truth eternal youth
Will gie to Polly Stewart!

II

May he whase arms shall fauld thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart!
To him be given to ken the heaven  
He grasps in Polly Stewart!

CHORUS
O lovely Polly Stewart,  
O charming Polly Stewart,  
There’s ne’er a flower that blooms in May,  
That’s half so fair as thou art!

THE HIGHLAND BALOU

Stenhouse states that it is “a versification, by Burns, of a Gaelic nursery song, the literal import of which, as well as the air, were communicated to him by a Highland lady.” But there are humorous touches in it which the original (if there was an original) could not have shown.

I
Hee balou, my sweet wee Donald,  
Picture o’ the great Clanronald!  
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief  
Wha gat my young Highland thief.

II
Leeze me on thy bonie craigie!  
An thou live, thou’ll steal a naigie,  
Travel the country thro’ and thro’,  
And bring hame a Carlisle cow!

III
Thro’ the Lawlands, o’er the Border,  
Weel, my babie, may thou furder,  
Herry the louns o’ the laigh Countrie,  
Syne to the Highlands hame to me!

BANNOCKS O’ BEAR MEAL

CHORUS
Bannocks o’ bear meal,  
Bannocks o’ barley,  
Here’s to the Highlandman’s Bannocks o’ barley!

I
Wha in a brulyie  
Will first cry “a parley”?  
Never the lads  
Wi’ the bannocks o’ barley!

II
Wha, in his wae days,  
Were loyal to Charlie?  
Wha but the lads  
Wi’ the bannocks o’ barley!

CHORUS
Bannocks o’ bear meal,  
Bannocks o’ barley,  
Here’s to the Highlandman’s Bannocks o’ barley!

WAE IS MY HEART

I
Wae is my heart, and the tear’s in my e’e;  
Lang, lang joy’s been a stranger to me:  
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,  
And the sweet voice o’ pity ne’er sounds in my ear.

II
Love, thou hast pleasures — and deep hae I lov’d!  
Love, thou hast sorrows — and sair hae I prov’d!  
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,  
I can feel by its throbblings, will soon be at rest.

III
O, if I were where happy I hae been,  
Down by yon stream and yon bonie castle green!  
For there he is wand’ring and musing on me,  
Wha wad soon dry the tear frae his Phillis’ e’e!

HERE’S HIS HEALTH IN WATER

I
Altho’ my back be at the wa’,  
And tho’ he be the fautor,  
Altho’ my back be at the wa’,  
Yet here’s his health in water!

O, wae gae by his wanton sides,  
Sae brawly’s he could flatter!
Till for his sake I’m slighted sair
And dree the kintra clatter!
But, tho’ my back be at the wa’,
Yet here’s his health in water!

THE WINTER OF LIFE

Burns sent a copy to Thomson, under the title of The Old Man. The song is included in Thomson (Vol. iii.).

Doubtless suggested by a song with the same title which we have found in The Goldfinch (Edinburgh, 1777): —

“In Spring, my dear Shepherds, your gardens are gay,
They breathe all their sweets in the sunshine of May:
Their Flowers will drop when December draws near —
The winter of life is like that of the year,” etc.

I

But lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoiced the day;
Thro’ 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’.

II

But my white pow — nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of Age!
My trunk of eild, but buss and bield,
Sinks in Time’s wintry rage.
O, Age has weary days
And nights o’ sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o’ youthfu’ prime,
Why comes thou not again?

THE TAILOR

I

The tailor he cam here to sew,
And weel he kend the way to woo,
For ay he pree’d the lassie’s mou’,
As he gaed but and ben, O.
For weel he kend the way, O,
The way, O, the way, O!
For weel he kend the way, O,
The lassie’s heart to win, O!

II

The tailor rase and shook his duds,
The flaes they flew awa in cluds!
And them that stay’d gat fearfu’ thuds —
The Tailor prov’d a man, O!
For now it was the gloamin,
The gloamin, the gloamin!
For now it was the gloamin,
When a’ the rest are gaun, O!

THERE GROWS A BONIE BRIER-BUSH

I

There grows a bonie brier-bush in our kail-yard,
There grows a bonie brier-bush in our kail-yard;
And below the bonie brier-bush there’s a lassie and a lad,
And they’re busy, busy courting in our kail-yard.

II

We’ll court nae mair below the buss in our kail-yard,
We’ll court nae mair below the buss in our kail-yard:
We’ll awa to Athole’s green, and there we’ll no be seen,
Where the trees and the branches will be our safeguard.

III

Will ye go to the dancin in Carlyle’s ha’?
Will ye go to the dancin in Carlyle’s ha’,
Where Sandy and Nancy I’m sure will ding them a’?
I winna gang to the dance in Carlyle-ha’!

IV

What will I do for a lad when Sandie gangs awa!
What will I do for a lad when Sandie gangs awa!
I will awa to Edinburgh, and win a pennie fee,
And see an onie lad will fancy me.

V

He’s comin frae the north that’s to marry me,
He’s comin frae the north that’s to marry me,
A feather in his bonnet and a ribbon at his knee —
He’s a bonie, bonie laddie, an yon be he!

HERE’S TO THY HEALTH

I
Here’s to thy health, my bonie lass!
Guid night and joy be wi’ thee!
I’ll come nae mair to thy bower-door
To tell thee that I lo’e thee.
O, dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear I dinna care
How lang ye look about ye!

II
Thou ’rt ay sae free informing me
Thou hast nae mind to marry,
I’ll be as free informing thee
Nae time hae I to tarry.
I ken thy freens try ilka means
Frae wedlock to delay thee
(Depending on some higher chance),
But fortune may betray thee.

III
I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me,
For I’m as free as any he —
Sma’ siller will relieve me!
I’ll count my health my greatest wealth
Sae lang as I’ll enjoy it.
I’ll fear nae scant, I’ll bode nae want
As lang’s I get employment.

IV
But far off fowls hae feathers fair,
And, ay until ye try them,
Tho’ they seem fair, still have a care —
They may prove as bad as I am!
But at twel at night, when the moon shines
bright,
My dear, I’ll come and see thee,
For the man that loves his mistress weel,
Nae travel makes him weary.

IT WAS A’ FOR OUR RIGHTFU’ KING

[ Suggested by the chap-book ballad of Mally Stewart, circa 1746, of which the first and last stanzas are as follows]:

“‘The cold Winter is past and gone, and now comes in the Spring.
And I am one of the King’s Life-guards, and must go fight for my King.
My dear,
I must go fight for my King.’
The trooper turn’d himself about all on the Irish shore,
He has given the bridal-reins a shake, saying ‘Adieu for evermore,
My dear,
Adieu for evermore.’”

Burns used the last as his own central, grouping his others, which are largely suggested by it, round about it. He was also greatly influenced by the first, which undoubtedly helped him to his own beginning. For the rest, he took the situation and the characters, and touched his borrowings to issues as fine, perhaps, as the Romantic Lyric has to show.

I
It was a’ for our rightfu’ king
We left fair Scotland’s strand;
It was a’ for our rightfu’ king,
We e’er saw Irish land,
My dear —
We e’er saw Irish land.

II
Now a’ is done that men can do,
And a’ is done in vain;
My Love and Native Land fareweel,
For I maun cross the main,
My dear —
For I maun cross the main.

III
He turn’d him right and round about
Upon the Irish shore,
And gae his bridle reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear —
And adieu for evermore!

IV
The soper frae the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main,
But I hae parted frae my love
Never to meet again,
My dear —
Never to meet again.

V
When day is gane, and night is come,
And a’ folk bound to sleep,
I think on him that’s far awa
The lee-lang night, and weep,
My dear —
The lee-lang night and weep.
THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT

[A similar refrain occurs in an old song in Johnson (Vol. i.), said to have been a lament for Glencoe.]

I
O, I AM come to the low countrie —
Ochon, ochon, ochrie! —
Without a penny in my purse
To buy a meal to me.

II
It was na sae in the Highland hills —
Ochon, ochon, ochrie! —
Nae woman in the country wide
Sae happy was as me.

III
For then I had a score o' kye —
Ochon, ochon, ochrie! —
Feeding on yon hill sae high
And giving' milk to me.

IV
And there I had three score o' yowes —
Ochon, ochon, ochrie! —
Skipping on yon bonie knowes
And casting woo' to me.

V
I was the happiest of a' the clan —
Sair, sair may I repine! —
For Donald was the brawest man,
And Donald he was mine.

VI
Till Charlie Stewart cam at last
Sae far to set us free:
My Donald's arm was wanted then
For Scotland and for me.

VII
Their waefu' fate what need I tell?
Right to the wrang did yield:
My Donald and his country fell
Upon Culloden field.

VIII
Ochon! O Donald, O!
Ochon, ochon, ochrie!
Nae woman in the warld wide
Sae wretched now as me!

THOU GLOOMY DECEMBER

I
ANCE mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
ANCE mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care!
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember:
Parting wi' Nancy, O, ne'er to meet mair!

II
Fond lovers' parting is sweet, painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, O farewell for ever!
Anguish unmingleed and agony pure!

III
Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown —
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Till my last hope and last comfort is gone!

IV
Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember:
Parting wi' Nancy, O, ne'er to meet mair!

MY PEGGY'S FACE, MY PEGGY'S FORM

Written in 1787, and sent to Johnson with the following letter: "Dear Mr. Publisher,—I hope, against my return, you will be able to tell me from Mr. Clarke if these words will suit the tune. If they don't suit, I must think on some other air, as I have a very strong private reason for wishing them in the second volume. Don't forget to transcribe me the list of the Antiquarian Music. Farewell.—R. Burns." No reason was given by Johnson for the delay in publishing; but it is probable
that Miss Chalmers (see ante, p. 214, Prefatory Note to Where, Braving Angry Winter’s Storms) objected.

I
My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form
The frost of hermit Age might warm.
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind
Might charm the first of human kind.

II
I love my Peggy’s angel air,
Her face so truly heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art;
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

III
The lily’s hue, the rose’s dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye —
Who but owns their magic sway?
Who but knows they all decay?

IV
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose nobly dear,
The gentle look that rage disarms —
These are all immortal charms.

O, STEER HER UP, AN’ HAUD HER GAUN

The first half stanza is Ramsay’s, from a set founded on an old, improper ditty.

I
O, steer her up, an’ haud her gaun —
Her mither's at the mill, jo,
An’ gin she winna tak a man,
E’en let her tak her will, jo.
First shore her wi’ a gentle kiss,
And ca’ anither gill, jo,
An’ gin she tak the thing amiss,
E’en let her flyte her fill, jo.

II
O, steer her up, an’ be na blate,
An’ gin she tak it ill, jo,
Then leave the lassie till her fate,
And time nae langer spill, jo!
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,
But think upon it still, jo,
That gin the lassie winna do ’t,
Ye 'll fin’ anither will, jo.

WEE WILLIE GRAY

A nursery ditty for the tune Wee Totum Fogg.

I
Wee Willie Gray an’ his leather wallet,
Peel a willow-wand to be him boots and jacket!
The rose upon the brier will be him trouble and doublet —
The rose upon the brier will be him doublet!

II
Wee Willie Gray and his leather wallet,
Twice a lily-flower will be him sark and gravat!
Feathers of a flie wad feather up his bonnet —
Feathers of a flie wad feather up his bonnet!

WE’RE A’ NODDIN

The present ditty is a medley of two old songs with variations and amendments, John Anderson My Jo [not Burns’s, but the sprightly old song that served as his model] — which gives us stanzas iv. and v., the best things in the Burns set, verbatim — and an unpublished fragment in the Herd ms.: —

"Cats like milk, and dogs like broo,
Lads like lasses and lasses lads too;
And they 're a' nodding, nidding, nidding, nodding,
They 're a' nodding at our house at hame.

"Kate sits i' the neuk supping hen broo,
Deil take Kate if she does not know it too;
And they 're a' nodding, nidding, nidding, nodding,
They 're a' nodding at our house at hame."

CHORUS

We’re a’ noddin,
Nid nid noddin,
We’re a’ noddin
At our house at hame!

I
“Guid e’en to you, kimmer,
And how do ye do?”
“Hiccup!” quo’ kimmer,
“The better that I’m fou!”
O, GUID ALE COMES

II
Kate sits i' the neuk,
Suppin hen-broo.
Deil tak Kate
An she be na noddin too!

III
"How's a' wi' you, kimmer? And how do you fare?"
"A pint o' the best o't, And twa pints mair!"

IV
"How's a' wi' you, kimmer? And how do ye thrive?"
How monie bairns hae ye?"
Quo' kimmer, "I hae five."

V
"Are they a' Johnie's?"
"Eh! atweel na:
Twa o' them were gotten
When Johnie was awa!"

VI
Cats like milk,
And dogs like broo;
Lads like lasses weel,
And lasses lads too.

CHORUS
We're a' noddin,
Nid nid noddin,
We're a' noddin,
At our house at hame!

O, AY MY WIFE SHE DANG ME
[Set to the tune of My Wife She Dang Me.]

CHORUS
O, ay my wife she dang me,
An' aft my wife she bang'd me!
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Guid faith she'll soon o'ergang ye.

I
ON peace an' rest my mind was bent,
And, fool I was! I married;
But never honest man's intent
Sae cursedly miscarried.

II
Some sairie comfort at the last,
When a' thir days are done, man:
My "pains o' hell" on earth is past,
I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man.

CHORUS
O, ay my wife she dang me,
An' aft my wife she bang'd me!
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Guid faith she'll soon o'ergang ye.

SCROGGAM

I
There was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
Scroggam!
She brew'd guid ale for gentlemen:
Sing Auld Cowl, lay you down by me—
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum!

II
The guidwife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggam!
The priest o' the parish fell in anither:
Sing Auld Cowl, lay you down by me—
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum!

III
They laid the twa i' the bed thegither,
Scroggam!
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tither:
Sing Auld Cowl, lay you down by me—
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum!

O, GUID ALE COMES

CHORUS
O, guid ale comes, and guid ale goes,
Guid ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon—
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon!

I
I had sax owsen in a pleugh,
And they drew a' weel eneugh:
I sell'd them a' just ane by ane—
Guid ale keeps the heart aboon!
II
Guid ale hauds me bare and busy,
Gars me moop wi' the servant hizzie,
Stand i' the stool when I hae dune —
Guid ale keeps the heart aboon!

CHORUS
O, guid ale comes, and guid ale goes,
Guid ale gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon —
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon!

ROBIN SHURE IN HAIRST

"I am still catering for Johnson's publication, and among others, I have brushed up the following old favourite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humour of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it." (R. B. to Robert Ainslie, January 6th, 1789.)

CHORUS
Robin shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him:
Fient a heuk had I,
Yet I stack by him.

I
I GAED up to Dunse
To warp a wab o' plaiden
At his daddie's yett
Wha met me but Robin!

II
Was na Robin bauld,
Tho' I was a cottar?
Play'd me sic a trick,
An' me the Eller's dochter!

III
Robin promis'd me
A' my winter vittle:
Fient haet he had but three
Guse feathers and a whittle!

CHORUS
Robin shure in hairst,
I shure wi' him:
Fient a heuk had I,
Yet I stack by him.

DOES HAUGHTY GAUL INVASION THREAT?

I
Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir!
There's wooden walls upon our seas
And volunteers on shore, Sir!
The Nith shall run to Corsinecon,
And Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!

II
O, let us not, like snarling tykes,
In wrangling be divided,
Till, slap! come in an unco loun,
And wi' a rung decide it!
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united!
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!

III
The kettle o' the Kirk and State,
Perhaps a clout may fail in 't;
But Deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in 't!
Our fathers' blude the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it,
By Heav'ns! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!

IV
The wretch that would a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-sworn brother,
Who would set the mob above the throne,
May they be damn'd together!
Who will not sing God save the King
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing God save the King,
We'll ne'er forget the People!

O, ONCE I LOV'D A BONIE LASS

"The following composition was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of life, when my heart glowed with honest warm simplicity; unacquainted, and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. The performance is, indeed, very puerile and silly: but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls
to my mind those happy days when my heart
was yet honest and my tongue was sincere.
The subject of it was a young girl who really de-
served all the praises I have bestowed on her.”
(R. B.) In the Autobiographical Letter to Dr.
Moore, he states that the young girl was his
partner in “the labors of harvest.” “Among
her other love-inspiring qualifications,” so he
further relates, “she sung sweetly; and ’t was
her favourite reel to which I attempted giving
an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so
presumptive as to imagine that I would make
verses like printed ones, composed by men who
had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song
which was said to be composed by a small
country laird’s son, on one of his father’s
maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw
no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he,
for except shearing sheep and casting peats,
his father living in the moors, he had no more
scholarcraft than I had.”

His criticism of the song (in the First Com-
mon Place Book) is interesting enough to re-
print in full: “The first distich of the first
stanza is quite too much in the flimsy strain of
our ordinary street ballads; and on the other
hand, the second distich is too much in the other
extreme. The expression is a little awkward,
and the sentiment too serious. Stanza the
second I am well pleased with, and I think it
conveys a fine idea of that amiable part of the
Sex—the agreeables; or what in our Scotch
dialect we call a sweet sonsy Lass. The third
stanza has a little of the flimsy turn in it; and
the third line has rather too serious a cast.
The fourth stanza is a very indifferent one;
the first line is, indeed, all in the strain of the
second stanza, but the rest is mostly an exple-
tive. The thoughts in the fifth stanza come
finely up to my favourite idea, a sweet sonsy
Lass; the last line, however, halts a little.
The same sentiments are kept up with equal
spirit and tenderness in the sixth stanza, but
the second and fourth lines ending with short
syllables hurts the whole. The seventh stanza
has several minute faults; but I remember I
composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion,
and to this hour I never recollect it, but my
heart melts, and my blood sallies at the re-
membrane.”

I
O, once I lov’d a bonie lass,
Ay, and I love her still!
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,
I’ll love my handsome Nell.

II
As bonie lasses I hae seen,
And monie full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu’ mien
The like I never saw.

III
A bonie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the e’e;
But without some better qualities
She’s no a lass for me.

IV
But Nelly’s looks are blythe and sweet,
And, what is best of a’,
Her reputation is complete
And fair without a flaw.

V
She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteeel;
And then there’s something in her gait
Gars onie dress look weel.

VI
A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart;
But it’s innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

VII
’T is this in Nelly pleases me,
’T is this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without controul.

MY LORD A-HUNTING

CHORUS

My lady’s gown, there’s gairs upon’t,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon’t;
But Jenny’s jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair upon’t!

I
My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi’ him are nane;
By Colin’s cottage lies his game,
If Colin’s Jenny be at hame.

II
My lady’s white, my lady’s red,
And kith and kin o’ Cassillis’ blude;
But her ten-pund lands o’ tocher guid
Were a’ the charms his lordship lo’ed.
SONGS FROM JOHNSON’S “MUSICAL MUSEUM”

III
Out o’er yon muir, out o’er yon moss,
Whare gorr-cocks thro’ the heather pass,
There wons auld Colin’s bonie lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

IV
Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music notes o’ lovers’ hymns !
The diamond-dew in her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims !

V
My lady’s dink, my lady’s drest,
The flower and fancy o’ the west;
But the lassie that a man lo’es best,
O, that’s the lass to mak him blest!

CHORUS
My lady’s gown, there’s gairs upon ’t,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon ’t;
But Jenny’s jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks meikle mair upon ’t!

SWEETEST MAY

An imitation, open and unabashed, of Ramsay’s My Sweetest May, Let Love Incline Thee.

I
Sweetest May, let Love inspire thee!
Take a heart which he designs thee:
As thy constant slave regard it,
For its faith and truth reward it.

II
Proof o’ shot to birth or money,
Not the wealthy but the bonie,
Not the high-born but noble-minded,
In love’s silken band can bind it.

MEG O’ THE MILL

I
O, ken ye what Meg o’ the Mill has gotten?
An’ ken ye what Meg o’ the Mill has gotten?

II
A braw new naig wi’ the tail o’ a rottan,
And that’s what Meg o’ the Mill has gotten!

III
O, ken ye what Meg o’ the Mill lo’es dearly?
An’ ken ye what Meg o’ the Mill lo’es dearly?
A dram o’ guid strunt in a morning early,
And that’s what Meg o’ the Mill lo’es dearly!

IV
O, ken ye how Meg o’ the Mill was married?
An’ ken ye how Meg o’ the Mill was married?
The priest he was oxter’d, the clark he was carried,
And that’s how Meg o’ the Mill was married!

JOCKIE’S TA’EN THE PARTING KISS

I
Jockie’s ta’en the parting kiss,
O’er the mountains he is gane,
And with him is a’ my bliss —
Nought but griefs with me remain.

II
Spare my luve, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets and beating rain!
Spare my luve, thou feathery snaw,
Drifting o’er the frozen plain!

III
When the shades of evening creep
O’er the day’s fair gladsome e’e,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly blythe his waukening be!
IV
He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he'll repeat her name;
For where'er he distant roves,
Jockie's heart is still at hame.

O, LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS

CHORUS
O, lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass,
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain!

I
A slave to Love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

II
There's monie a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

CHORUS
O, lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass,
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain!

CAULD IS THE E'ENIN BLAST

I
CAULD is the e'enin blast
O' Boreas o'er the pool
An' dawin, it is dreary,
When birks are bare at Yule.

II
O, cauld blaws the e'enin blast,
When bitter bites the frost,
And in the mirk and dreary drift
The hills and glens are lost!

III
Ne'er sae murky blew the night
That drifted o'er the hill,
But bonie Peg-a-Ramsay
Gat grist to her mill.

THERE WAS A BONIE LASS
A cento of old catch words.

I
There was a bonie lass, and a bonie, bonie lass,
And she loed her bonie laddie dear,
Till War's loud alarms tore her laddie frae her arms
Wi' monie a sigh and a tear.

II
Over sea, over shore, where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear,
And nocht could him quail, or his bosom assail,
But the bonie lass he loed sae dear.

THERE'S NEWS, LASSES, NEWS

CHORUS
The wean wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod,
An' I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a nod.

I
There's news, lasses, news,
Guid news I've to tell!
There's a boatfu' o' lads
Come to our town to sell!

II
"Father," quo' she, "Mither," quo' she,
"Do what you can:
I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a man!"

III
I hae as guid a craft rig
As made o' yird and stane;
O, THAT I HAD NE'ER BEEN MARRIED

CHORUS

Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day!
Gin ye crowdie onie mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

MALLY'S MEEK, MALLY'S SWEET

CHORUS

Mally's meek, Mally's sweet,
Mally's modest and discreet,
Mally's rare, Mally's fair,
Mally's ev'ry way complete.

WANDERING WILLIE

I

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, hand awa hame!
Come to my bosom, my ae only dearie,
And tell me thou bring' st me my Willie the same.

II

Loud tho' the Winter blew cauld at our parting,
'Twas na the blast brought the tear in my e'e;
Welcome now Simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The Simmer to Nature, my Willie to me!

III

Rest, ye wild storms in the cave o' your slumbers—
How your wild howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

IV

But O, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide-roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!
OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, O

BRAW LADS O' GALLA WATER

I
Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
They rove amang the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes nor Ettrick shaws
Can match the lads o' Galla Water.

II
But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I loe him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonie lad o' Galla Water.

III
Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meikle tocher,
Yet, rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla Water.

IV
It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That cost contentment, peace, and pleasure:
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O, that's the chiefest world's treasure!

AULD ROB MORRIS

I
There's Auld Rob Morris that wins in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows and wale of auld men:
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
And ae bonie lassie, his dautie and mine.

II
She's fresh as the morning the fairest in May,
She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay,
As blythe and as artless as the lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

III
But O, she's an heiress, auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has nocht but a cot-house and yard!

A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed:
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.

IV
The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane;
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

V
O, had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me!
O, how past describing had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express!

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, O

I
O, open the door some pity to shew,
If love it may na be, O!
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true —
O, open the door to me, O!

II
Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But cauldier thy love for me, O:
The frost, that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, O!

III
The wan moon sets behind the white wave,
And Time is setting with me, O:
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair,
I'll ne'er trouble them nor thee, O!

IV
She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide,
She sees the pale corse on the plain, O,
"My true love!" she cried, and sank down by his side —
Never to rise again, O!
WHEN WILD WAR'S DEADLY BLAST

I

When wild War's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle Peace returning,
Wi' monie a sweet babe fatherless
And monie a widow mourning,
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

II

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder,
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander:
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
And ay I mind't the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

III

At length I reach'd the bonie glen,
Where early life I sported.
I pass'd the mill and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted.
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling,
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling!

IV

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I:—“Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O, happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang—
Take pity on a sodger.”

V

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever.
Quo' she:—“A sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never.
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it;
That gallant badge — the dear cockade—
Ye 're welcome for the sake o't!”

VI

She gaz'd, she redden'd like a rose,
Syne, pale like onie lily,
She sank within my arms, and cried:—
"Art thou my ain dear Willie?"
“By Him who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man! And thus may still
True lovers be rewarded!

VII

“The wars are o'er and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted.
Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair, we'se ne'er be parted.”
Quo' she: “My grandsire left me gowd,
A mailen plenish’d fairly!
And come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
Thou 'rt welcome to it dearly!”

VIII

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour!
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger:
Remember he's his country's stay
In day and hour of danger.

DUNCAN GRAY

Enclosed, together with Auld Rob Morris, to Thomson 4th December, 1792: “The foregoing I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment; acquit them or condemn them as seemeth good in thy sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of lighthorse gallop of an air which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.”

I

Duncan Gray cam here to woo
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't !)
On blythe Yule-Night when we were fou
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't !)
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

II

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd
(Ha, ha, the wooing o't !),
Meg was deaf as Ailsa craig
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’).
Duncan sigh’d baith out and in,
Grat his een baith bleer’t an’ blin’,
Spak o’ lowpin o’er a linn —
Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’!

III
Time and Chance are but a tide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’):
Slighted love is sair to bide
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’).
“Shall I like a fool,” quoth he,
“For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!” —
Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’!

IV
How it comes, let doctors tell
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’):
Meg grew sick, as he grew hale
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’).
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings.
And O! her een they spak sic things! —
Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’!

V
Duncan was a lad o’ grace
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’),
Maggie’s was a piteous case
(Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’):
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor’d his wrath;
Now they ’re crouse and canty baith —
Ha, ha, the wooing o’ t’!

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE

I
Deluded swain, the pleasure
The fickle Fair can give thee
Is but a fairy treasure —
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee:
The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The cloud’s uncertain motion,
They are but types of Woman!

II
O, art thou not ashamed
To doat upon a feature?

If Man thou would’st be namèd,
Despise the silly creature!
Go, find an honest fellow,
Good claret set before thee,
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory!

HERE IS THE GLEN

“I know you value a composition because it is made by one of the great ones as little as I do. However, I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron of Heron, which she calls The Banks of Cree. Cree is a beautiful romantic stream, and, as her ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it.” (R. B. to Thomson.)

The tune did not please Thomson, who set the verses to The Flowers of Edinburgh. That they made a love-song for Maria Riddell, as some hold, is scarce consistent with Burns’s statement. Moreover, he must have intended that Lady Elizabeth Heron should see them.

I
Here is the glen, and here the bower
All underneath the birchen shade,
The village-bell has toll’d the hour —
O, what can stay my lovely maid?
’T is not Maria’s whispering call —
’T is but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixed with some warbler’s dying fall
The dewy star of eve to hail!

II
It is Maria’s voice I hear! —
So calls the woodlark in the grove
His little faithful mate to cheer:
At once ’tis music and ’tis love!
And art thou come? And art thou true?
O, welcome, dear, to love and me,
And let us all our vows renew
Along the flowery banks of Cree!

LET NOT WOMEN E’ER COMPLAIN

Alternative English words to the tune Duncan Gray: “These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish. I have been at Dun-
can Gray to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid." (R. B. to Thomson, 19th October, 1794.) There is nothing to add to this, except that the song exists (if that can be said to exist which is never sung, never quoted, and if ever read, immediately forgotten) as pure Burns.

I

Let not women e’er complain
Of inconstancy in love!
Let not women e’er complain
Fickle man is apt to rove!
Look abroad thro’ Nature’s range,
Nature’s mighty law is change:
Ladies, would it not be strange
Man should then a monster prove?

II

Mark the winds, and mark the skies,
Ocean’s ebb and ocean’s flow.
Sun and moon but set to rise.
Round and round the seasons go.
Why then, ask of silly man
To oppose great Nature’s plan?
We’ll be constant, while we can —
You can be no more, you know!

ANGER GREGORY

Written, at Thomson’s request, to the air of
The Loss of Lochryan.

Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcott) wrote English verses for Thomson on the same theme. They are frigid rubbish; but “the very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His Gregory is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter — that would be presumption indeed! My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it.” (R. B. to Thomson, 26th January, 1793.)

I

O, MIRK, mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest’s roar!
A waefu’ wanderer seeks thy tower —
Lord Gregory, ope thy door.

II

An exile frae her father’s ha’,
And a’ for sake o’ thee,

At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

III

Lord Gregory, mind’st thou not the grove
By bonie Irwine side,
Where first I own’d that virgin love
I lang, lang had denied?

IV

How aften didst thou pledge and vow,
Thou wad for ay be mine!
And my fond heart, itself sae true,
It ne’er mistrusted thine.

V

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast:
Thou bolt of Heaven that flashest by,
O, wilt thou bring me rest?

VI

Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see,
But spare and pardon my false love
His wrangs to Heaven and me!

O POORTITH CAULD

Gilbert Burns told Thomson that Burns’s heroine was “a Miss Jane Blackstock, afterwards Mrs. Whittier of Liverpool.” But it was probably Jean Lorimer (see post, p. 289, Prefatory Note to Lassie wi’ the Lint-white Locks), who was then contemplating the marriage of which she instantly repented. O Poor-tith Cauld is held to refer to her rejecting a ganger for the man she married (see ante, p. 231, Prefatory Note to Craigieburn Wood). It was sent to Thomson in January, 1793, for the tune of Cauld Kail in Aberdeen; but Thomson thought the verses had “too much of uneasy, cold reflection for the air.” To this Burns: “The objections are just, but I cannot make it better. The stuff won’t bear mending; yet for private reasons, I should like to see it in print.” With a new chorus and other amendments, it was set in the end to I Had a Horse and I Had Nae Mair.

CHORUS

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?
I

O, saw ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther!

II

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
O, nocht but love and sorrow join'd
Sic notes o' woe could wauken!

Thou tells o' never-ending care,
O' speechless grief and dark despair—
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair,
Or my poor heart is broken!

SAW YE BONIE LESLEY

"Bonie Lesley" was Miss Leslie Baillie, daughter of Mr. Baillie of Mayfield, Ayrshire. She married, in June, 1799, Mr. Robert Cumming of Logie, and died in July, 1843. "The heart-struck awe, the distant humble approach, the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting and so pure were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour at Mayfield. Mr. B., with his two daughters, accompanied with Mr. H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse—though God knows I could ill spare the time—and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'T was about nine, I think, that I left them, and riding home I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will cost you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with:—

'My Bonie Lizzie Baillie, I 'll rowe thee in my plaiddie,' so I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy 'unanointed, unannealed,' as Hamlet says;" (R. B. to Mrs. Dunlop, 22d August, 1792.)

I

O, saw ye bonie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther!

II

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,  
And never made anither!

III
Thou art a queen, fair Lesley —  
Thy subjects, we before thee!  
Thou art divine, fair Lesley —  
The hearts o' men adore thee.

IV
The Deil he could na skaith thee,  
Or aught that wad belang thee:  
He'd look into thy bonie face,  
And say: — “I canna wrang thee!”

V
The Powers aboon will tent thee,  
Misfortune sha'na steer thee:  
Thou 'rt like themsel' sae lovely,  
That ill they 'l ne'er let near thee.

VI
Return again, fair Lesley,  
Return to Caledonie!  
That we may brag we hae a lass  
There's nane again sae bonie.

SWEET FA'S THE EVE

I
Sweet fa's the eve on Craigieburn,  
And blythe awakes the morrow,  
But a' the pride o' Spring's return  
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

II
I see the flowers and spreading trees,  
I hear the wild birds singing;  
But what a weary wight can please,  
And Care his bosom is wringing?

III
Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,  
Yet dare na for your anger;  
But secret love will break my heart,  
If I conceal it langer.

IV
If thou refuse to pitty me,  
If thou shalt love another,  
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,  
Around my grave they 'l wither.

YOUNG JESSIE

“I send you a song on a celebrated fashionable toast in this country to suit Bonie Dundee.”

(R. B. to Thomson.)

The lady was Miss Jessie Staig (daughter of Provost Staig of Dumfries), on whose recovery from a dangerous illness Burns afterwards wrote the epigram To Dr. Maxwell (see ante, p. 190). She married Major William Miller, son of Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, and died at twenty-six in the March of 1801.

I
True hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,  
And fair are the maids on the banks of the Ayr;  
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river  
Are lovers as faithful and maidens as fair:  
To equal young Jessie seek Scotia all over —  
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain!  
Grace, beauty, and elegance fetter her lover,  
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

II
Fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,  
And sweet is the lily at evening close;  
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie  
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.  
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;  
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law;  
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger:  
Her modest demeanour 's the jewel of a'.

ADOWN WINDING NITH

“Another favourite air of mine is The Muckin o' Geordie's Byre. When sung slow, with expression, I have wished that it had better poetry; that I have endeavoured to supply as follows. . . Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your Book, as she is a particular Flame of his. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to the 'Bonie Jean' which I sent you some time ago. They are both pupils of his.”

(R. B. to Thomson, August, 1793.)
BLYTHE HAE I BEEN ON YON HILL

Phillis M’Murdo married Norman Lockhart, afterwards third baronet of Carnwath. Before this, Burns had sent Thomson another song on the same lady, *Phillis the Fair*, with which he did not pretend to be satisfied, and which Thomson did not accept (see post, p. 318).

CHORUS

Awa wi’ your belles and your beauties —
They never wi’ her can compare!
Whatever hae met wi’ my Phillis
Has met wi’ the Queen o’ the Fair!

Adown winding Nith I did wander
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring.
Adown winding Nith I did wander
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

The Daisy amus’d my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild:
“Thou emblem,” said I, “o’ my Phillis” —
For she is Simplicity’s child.

The rose-bud ’s the blush o’ my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when ’t is prest.
How fair and how pure is the lily!
But fairer and purer her breast.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne’er wi’ my Phillis can vie:
Her breath is the breath of the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o’ diamond her eye.

Her voice is the song o’ the morning,
That wakes thro’ the green-spreading grove,
When Phebus peeps over the mountains
On music, and pleasure, and love.

But Beauty, how frail and how fleeting!
The bloom of a fine summer’s day!
While Worth in the mind o’ my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.

CHORUS

Awa wi’ your belles and your beauties —
They never wi’ her can compare!
Whatever hae met wi’ my Phillis
Has met wi’ the Queen o’ the Fair!

A LASS WI’ A TOCHER

“The other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody that I admire much.” (R. B. to Thomson, February, 1797.) The “Hibernian melody” was *Balinamona Ora*.

CHORUS

Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me!

Awa wi’ your witchcraft o’ Beauty’s alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms!
O, gie me the lass that has acres o’ charms!
O, gie me the lass wi’ the weel-stockit farms!

Your Beauty’s a flower in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o’ the bonie green knowes,
Ilk spring they’re new deckit wi’ bonie white yowes!

And e’en when this Beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o’ Beauty may cloy when possess’d;
But the sweet, yellow darlings wi’ Geordie impress’d,
The langer ye hae them, the mair they’re carest!

CHORUS

Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi’ a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me!

BLYTHE HAE I BEEN ON YON HILL

Suggested by Fraser the oboist’s interpretation of *The Quaker’s Wife*: “Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that
anan Stream in my hand, when, turning up Allan Water (‘What number shall my Muse repeat,’ etc.), it appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air; and recollecting it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong, but I think it is not in my worst style.” (R. B. to Thomson, August, 1793.)

I

By Allan stream I chanc’d to rove,  
While Phebus sank beyond Benledi;  
The winds were whispering thro’ the grove,  
The yellow corn was waving ready;  
I listen’d to a lover’s sang,  
An’ thought on youthfu’ pleasures monie,  
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang: —  
“O, my love Annie’s very bonie!  

II

“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 monie a kiss the seal imprest —  
The sacred vow we ne’er should sever.”

III

The haunt o’ Spring’s the primrose-brae.  
The Summer joys the flocks to follow.  
How cheery thro’ her short’ning day  
Is Autumn in her weeds o’ yellow!  
But can they melt the glowing heart,  
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,  
Or thro’ each nerve the rapture dart,  
Like meeting her, our bosom’s treasure?

CANST THOU LEAVE ME

Sent to Thomson, 20th November, 1794.  
“Well, I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.” (R. B.)

CHORUS

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie!  
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie!  
Well thou knowst my aching heart,  
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

I

Is this thy plighted, fond regard:  
Thus cruelly to part, my Katie?  
Is this thy faithful swain’s reward:  
An aching broken heart, my Katie?
FAREWELL, THOU STREAM

II
Farewell! And ne’er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katie!
Thou may’st find those will love thee dear,
But not a love like mine, my Katie.

CHORUS
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie!
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie,
Well thou know’st my aching heart,
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE

“...That tune, Cauld Kail, is such a favourite of yours...”

I
Come, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne’er shall sunder,
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The world’s wealth and grandeur!
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone,
That I may live to love her.

II
Thus in my arms, wi’ a’ her charms,
I clasp my countless treasure,
I’ll seek nae mair o’ Heav’n to share
Than sic a moment’s pleasure!

And by thy een sae bonie blue
I swear I’m thine for ever,
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never!

CONTENTED WI’ LITTLE

I
CONTENTED wi’ little and cantie wi’ mair,
Whene’er I forgather wi’ cantie wi’ mair,
I gie them a skelp, as they’re creepin alang,
Wi’ a cog o’ guid swats and an auld Scottish sang.

II
I whyles claw the elbow o’ troublesome
Thought;
But Man is a soger, and Life is a faught.
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my
pouch,
And my Freedom’s my lairdship nae mon-
arch daur touch.

III
A towmond o’ trouble, should that be my fa’,
A night o’ guid fellowship sowthers it a’:
When at the blythe end o’ our journey at last,
Wha the Deil ever thinks o’ the road he has past?

IV
Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte
on her way,
Be’t to me, be’e frae me, e’en let the jade
gae!
Come Ease or come Travail, come Pleasure
or Pain,
My warst word is:— “Welcome, and wel-
come again!”

FAREWELL, THOU STREAM

The second set of a song which originally began:

“The last time I came o’er the moor
And left Maria’s dwelling.”

The heroine was Maria Riddell, to whom Burns sent a copy. To this he added this note (unpublished 1):

That is, before the Centenary Edition.
see it is but a cold, inanimated composition. It will be absolutely necessary for me to get in love, else I shall never be able to make a line worth reading on the subject." In January, 1794, occurred the estrangement from Mrs. Riddell (see ante, pp. 178, 179, Prefatory Note to Impromptu on Mrs. Riddell's Birthday); and in July, 1794, Burns informed Thomson that he meant to set the verses he had sent him for The Last Time I Came O'er the Moor to Nancy's to the Greenwood Gane, and that he had "made an alteration in the beginning."

I

FAREWELL, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O Mem'ry, spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain
And yet in secret languish,
To feel a fire in every vein
Nor dare disclose my anguish!

II

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover:
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But, O Eliza, hear one prayer —
For pity's sake forgive me!

III

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me!
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had sav'd me!
Th' unwary sailor thus, aghast
The wheeling torrent viewing,
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

HAD I A CAVE

"That crinkum-crankum tune, Robin Adair,
has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill
in my last attempt [Phillis the Fair, see post, p. 313], that I ventured in my morning's walk one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea poetic justice, as followa." (R. B. to Thomson, August, 1798.)

See further, Prefatory Notes to Anna (ante, p. 95); To Alex. Cunningham (ante, p. 140); and She's Fair and Fause (ante, p. 249).

HAD I a cave

On some wild distant shore,
Where the winds howl
To the wave's dashing roar,
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more!

II

Falsest of womankind,
Can'st thou declare
All thy fond, plighted vows
Fleeting as air?
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

HERE 'S A HEALTH

"I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired, Here's Health to Them That's Awa, Hinney; but I forget if you took notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more." (R. B. to Thomson, May, 1796.) About a fortnight before his death he sent a copy to Alexander Cunningham: "Did Thomson show you the following song, the last I made, or probably will make for some time ? "

The heroine, Jessie Lewars, sister of John Lewars, a fellow-exciseman, was of great service to the Burns household during the last illness. She is also commemorated in certain complimentary verses (ante, pp. 148, 192), and in that very beautiful song, O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast (post, p. 315). On 3d June, 1799, she married Mr. James Thomson, Writer in Dumfries, and she died 26th May, 1855.

CHORUS

Here's a health to ane I loe dear!
Here's a health to ane I loe dear!
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear,
Jessy —
And soft as their parting tear!
IT WAS THE CHARMING MONTH

I
Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied,
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than ought in the world beside,
Jessy —
Than ought in the world beside!

II
I mourn thro' the gay, gaudy day,
As hopeless I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber!
For then I am lockt in thine arms,
Jessy —
For then I am lockt in thine arms!

CHORUS
Here's a health to ane I loe dear!
Here's a health to ane I loe dear!
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond
lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear,
Jessy —
And soft as their parting tear!

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS

"A song altered from an old English one"
(R. B.), [which begins]:
"How cruel is that parent's care,
Who riches only prizes."

I
How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,
And to the wealthy booby
Poor Woman sacrifice!
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife:
To shun a tyrant father's hate
Become a wretched wife!

II
The ravening hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies:
To shun impending ruin
Awhile her pinion tries,
Till, of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet.

HUSBAND, HUSBAND, CEASE YOUR STRIFE

I
"Husband, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, sir!
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, sir."
"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy!
Is it Man or Woman, say,
My spouse Nancy?"

II
"If it is still the lordly word,
Service and obedience,
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so goodbye, allegiance!"
"Sad will I be so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy!
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse Nancy!"

III
"My poor heart, then break it must,
My last hour I am near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, how will you bear it?"
"I will hope and trust in Heaven,
Nancy, Nancy!
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse Nancy."

IV
"Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you:
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you!"
"I'll wed another like my dear,
Nancy, Nancy!
Then all Hell will fly for fear,
My spouse Nancy!"

IT WAS THE CHARMING MONTH

Meant as English words to Dainty Davie,
and abridged from a song in The Tea-Table Miscellaneous. "You may think meanly of this,
but take a look at the bombast original and
you will be surprised that I have made so
much of it." (R. B. to Thomson, November,
1794.)
All the same, Burns rather selected from than renewed and re-inspired the "bombast original." Practically nothing is his but the repeats and the chorus; and even these have their germs in the Miscellany. The rest of his set is "lifted" almost word for word, and simply edited and rearranged.

Chorus

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe!

I
It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe,
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flow'ry mead she goes —
The youthful, charming Chloe!

The feather'd people you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree!
With notes of sweetest melody
They hail the charming Chloe,
Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
Outrival'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.

Chorus

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe!

Last May a Braw Wooer

I
Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me.
I said there was naething I hated like men:
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me —
The deuce gae wi'm to believe me!

II
He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was diein.
I said, he might die when he liket for Jean:
The Lord forgie me for liein, for liein —
The Lord forgie me for liein!

III
A weel-stocket mailen, himsel for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers —
But thought I might hae waur offers.

IV
But what wad ye think? In a fortnight or less
(The Deil tak his taste to gae near her!)
He up the Gate-Slack to my black cousin, Bess!
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her —
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

V
But a' the niest week, as I petted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock:
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there?
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock —
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

VI
But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neebours might say I was saucy.
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie —
And vow'd I was his dear lassie!

VII
I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet:
Gin she had recover'd her hearin?
And how her new shoon fit her auld, shachl'd feet?
But heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin —
But heavens! how he fell a swearin!
NOW ROSY MAY

VIII
He beggèd for gude sake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi’ sorrow;
So e’en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-
morrow —
I think I maun wed him to-morrow!

MY NANIE’S AWA

“There is one passage in your charming letter. Thomson nor Shenstone never exceeded it, nor often came up to it. I shall certainly steal it, and set it in some future poetic production and get immortal fame by it. ’T is where you bid the scenes of Nature remind me of Clarinda.” (Sylvander to Clarinda [see Prefatory Note, ante, p. 138], 7th February, 1788.) It may be, as some suppose, that this smooth and pleasant ditty represents the theft.

I
Now in her green mantle blythe Nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o’er the braes,
While birds warble welcomes in ilka green shaw,
But to me it’s delightless — my Nanie’s awa.

II
The snawdrap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o’ the morn.
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw:
They mind me o’ Nanie — and Nanie’s awa!

III
Thou lav’rock, that springs frae the dews of the lawn
The shepherd to warn o’ the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis, that hails the night-fa,
Give over for pity — my Nanie’s awa!

IV
Come Autumn, sae pensive in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi’ tidings o’ Nature’s decay!

The dark, dreary Winter and wild-driving snaw
Alane can delight me — now Nanie’s awa.

NOW ROSY MAY

A rifaccimento of The Gard’ner wi’ his Paidle (ante, p. 218), adapted to the tune of Dainty Davie. The original Dainty Davie, on which the chorus is modelled, is preserved in the Herd ms. and The Merry Muses. See also, post, p. 335, Notes to The Jolly Beggars. “The words ‘Dainty Davie’ glide so sweetly in the air, that to a Scots ear, any song to it, without Davie being the hero, would have a lame effect.” (R. B. to Thomson, August, 1793.)

CHORUS

Meet me on the Warlock Knowe,
Dainty Davie, Dainty Davie!
There I’ll spend the day wi’ you,
My ain dear Dainty Davie.

I
Now rosy May comes in wi’ flowers
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in the happy hours
To wander wi’ my Davie.

II
The crystal waters round us fa’,
The merry birds are lovers a’,
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi’ my Davie.

III
When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro’ the dews I will repair
To meet my faithfu’ Davie.

IV
When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o’ Nature’s rest,
I flee to his arms I loe the best:
And that’s my ain dear Davie!

CHORUS

Meet me on the Warlock Knowe,
Dainty Davie, Dainty Davie!
There I’ll spend the day wi’ you,
My ain dear Dainty Davie.
NOW SPRING HAS CLAD

I
Now spring has clad the grove in green,  
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers;  
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen  
Rejoice in fostering showers;  
While ilka thing in nature join  
Their sorrows to forego,  
O, why thus all alone are mine  
The weary steps o' woe!

II
The trout within yon wimpling burn  
Glides swift, a silver dart,  
And, safe beneath the shady thorn,  
Defies the angler's art:  
My life was ance that careless stream,  
That wanton trout was I,  
But Love wi' unrelenting beam  
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

III
The little floweret's peaceful lot,  
In yonder cliff that grows,  
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,  
Nae ruder visit knows,  
Was mine, till Love has o'er me past,  
And blighted a' my bloom;  
And now beneath the withering blast  
My youth and joy consume.

IV
The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,  
And climbs the early sky,  
Winnowing blythe his dewy wings  
In Morning's rosy eye:  
As little reck't I Sorrow's power,  
Until the flowery snare  
O' witching Love in luckless hour  
Made me the thrall o' care!

V
O, had my fate been Greenland snows  
Or Afric's burning zone,  
Wi' man and Nature leagu'd my foes,  
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!  
The wretch, whose doom is "hope nae mair,"  
What tongue his woes can tell,  
Within whose bosom, save Despair,  
Nae kinder spirits dwell!

O, THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE

"This is No My Ain House puzzles me a good deal; in fact, I think to change the old rhythm of the first, or chorus part of the tune, will have a good effect. I would have it something like the gallop of the following." (R. B. to Thomson, June, 1795.) In the first draft of the Chorus he wrote "Body" for "Lassie;" but in August he directed Thomson to substitute "Lassie."

CHORUS
O, this is no my ain lassie,  
Fair tho' the lassie be:  
Weel ken I my ain lassie—  
Kind love is in her e'e.

I
I see a form, I see a face,  
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place:  
It wants to me the witching grace,  
The kind love that's in her e'e.

II
She's bonie, blooming, straight, and tall,  
And lang has had my heart in thrall;  
And ay it charms my very saul,  
The kind love that's in the e'e.

III
A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,  
To steal a blink by a' unseen!  
But gleg as light are lover's een,  
When kind love is in the e'e.

IV
It may escape the courtly sparks,  
It may escape the learned clerks;  
But well the watching lover marks  
The kind love that's in her e'e.

CHORUS
O, this is no my ain lassie,  
Fair tho' the lassie be:  
Weel ken I my ain lassie—  
Kind love is in her e'e.

O, WAT YE WHA THAT LO'ES ME

CHORUS
O, that's the lassie o' my heart,  
My lassie ever dearer!
O, that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her!

I
O, wat ye wha that lo'es me,
And has my heart a keeping?
O, sweet is she that lo'es me
As dews o' summer weeping,
In tears the rosebuds steeping!

II
If thou shalt meet a lassie
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming:

III
If thou hadst heard her talking
(And thy attention's plighted),
That ilka body talking
But her by thee is slighted,
And thou art all-delighted:

IV
If thou hast met this fair one,
When frae her thou hast parted,
If every other fair one
But her thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted:

CHORUS
O, that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer!
O, that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her!

SCOTS, WHA HAE

First published in The Morning Chronicle, May, 1794. Replying to Perry's offer of an engagement on that print, Burns wrote: "In the meantime they are most welcome to my ode; only let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me." Accordingly, the ode was thus ingenuously refaced: "If the following warm and animating ode was not written near the times to which it applies, it is one of the most faithful imitations of the simple and beautiful style of the Scottish bards we ever read, and we know but of one living Poet to whom to ascribe it: " a piece of criticism which, if you reflect that in grammar, style, cast, sentiment, diction, and turn of phrase, the ode, though here and there its spelling deviates into Scots, is pure Eighteenth Century English, says little for the soundness of Perry's judgment, however it may approve the kindness of his heart.

Varying accounts are given of the time and circumstances of its origin. John Syme connects it with a tour with Burns in Galloway in July, 1793: "I told you that in the midst of the storm on the wilds of Kenmure, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army along with Bruce at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride from St. Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell." Burns tells a different tale. After some remarks to Thomson (August or September, 1793), on the old air Hey Tuttie Taitie, and on the tradition that "it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn," he introduces Scots Wha Hae: "This thought, in my yesternight's evening walk, roused me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scots ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning." The two statements are irreconcilable; and we must conclude either that Syme misdated the tour, and that the "yesternight" of Burns was the night of his return to Dumfries, or that Burns did not give Syme a copy until some time after his return, and that, like some other circumstances he was pleased to father, his "yester-night's evening walk" need not be literally interpreted.

Thomson reprobated the "idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur" as Hey Tuttie Taitie, and suggested certain additions in the fourth line of each stanza to fit it to that of Lewie Gordon. To accept these expletives was to ruin the effect; but as in the case of Ye Flowery Banks o' Bonie Doon, accepted they were. Some other suggestions Burns declined: "I have scrutinized it over and over; and to the world, some way or other, it shall go as it is." At the same time, he seems to have been scarce reconciled to the change to Lewie Gordon, for says he: "It will not in the least hurt me, tho' you leave the song out altogether, and adhere to your first idea of adopting Logan's verses." But having agreed to it, he adopted the changes in all such copies as he sent out in ms. After the publication of the Thomson Correspondence, general opinion pronounced in favour of Hey Tuttie Taitie; and Thomson published the ode as written, and set it to the air for which it was made, and to which (as sung by Braham and others) it owes no little of its fortune.
In sending a copy (now in Harvard University Library) to Lord Buchan, Burns was moved to descant on the battle itself: "Independently of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe, to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country or perish with her. Liberty! thou art a prize truly and indeed invaluable, for never canst thou be too dearly bought." Some have concluded therefrom that the writer had mixed his usurpers, and thought that the Edward beaten at Bannockburn was the Malleus Scotorum, the victor of Falkirk and the hangman of Sir William Wallace. But if he did, he was afterwards better informed; for to a copy (now in the Corporation Council Chamber, Edinburgh) presented to Dr. Hughes of Hereford (8th August, 1795) he appended the following note: "This battle was the decisive blow which first put Robert the First, commonly called Robert de Bruce, in quiet possession of the Scottish throne. It was fought against Edward the Second, son to that Edward who shed so much blood in Scotland in consequence of the dispute between Bruce and Baliol." It is also to the purpose to note that, on the poet’s own showing (letter to Thomson), this very famous lyric was inspired, not only by the thought of Bannockburn, but also "by the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature not quite so ancient:" that, in other words, it is partly an effect of the French Revolution.

The stanza, binding-rhyme and all, is that of Helen of Kirkconnel, a ballad which Burns thought "silly to contemptibility: —

"I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
O, that I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirkconnel Lea!"

I

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

II

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power —
Chains and slaverie!

III

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave? —
Let him turn, and flee!

IV

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

V

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins
But they shall be free!

VI

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

THEIR GROVES O' SWEET MYRTLE

"The Irish air, Humours of Glen, is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly verses in The Poor Soldier, there are not any decent words for it, I have written for it as follows." (R. B. to Thomson, April, 1795.)

I

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume!
Far dearer to me you lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang, yellow broom;
Far dearer to me you humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly, unseen;
For there, lightly tripping among the wild flowers,
A-list'ning the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.
II

Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay, sunny vallies,
And cauld Caledonia's blast on the wave,
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they? — The haunt of the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests and gold-bubbling fountains
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain:
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save Love's willing fetters — the chains o' his Jean.

THINE AM I

Intended as English words to The Quaker's Wife. It is possible that the verses had done duty with Clarinda: "I have altered the first stanza, which I would have to stand thus:

"Thine am I, my faithful Fair,
Well thou may'st discover!
Every pulse along my veins
Tells the ardent Lover."

(R. B. to Thomson, 19th October, 1794.) But on 2d August, 1795, being long, long off with Clarinda and very much on with Jean Lorimer, he wants his first line changed to "Thine am I, my Chloris fair:
If you neglect the alteration, I call on all the Nine conjunctly and severally to anathematise you." A parallel case is that of Mr. Arthur Pendennis, thriftily turning his Fotheringay rhymes to account with Miss Amory.

I

THINE am I, my faithful Fair,
Thine my lovely Nancy!
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy!
To thy bosom lay my heart
There to throb and languish.
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

II

Take away those rosy lips
Rich with balmy treasure!
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure!

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning!
Love the cloudless summer's sun,
Nature gay adorning.

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER, JAMIE

Suggested to Thomson (September, 1793) as words for Fee Him Father: "I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune when he plays it slow: in fact, he makes it the language of despair! I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which 'Patie Allan's mither de'ed' — that was 'about the back o' midnight' — and by the leeside of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company except the Hautbois and the Muse."

I

THOU hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever!
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever!
Aften hast thou vow'd that Death
Only should us sever;
Now thou'st left thy lass for ay—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never!

II

THOU hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken!
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken!
Thou canst love another jo,
While my heart is breaking—
Soon my weary een I'll close,
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Never mair to waken!

HIGHLAND MARY

Sent to Thomson, 14th November, 1792:
"The foregoing song pleases myself; I think it is in my happiest manner; you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject
of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I would be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would ensure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition." For Mary Campbell see ante, p. 204, Prefatory Note to My Highland Lassie, O.

I
Ye banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There Summer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry!
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary!

II
How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie:
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

III
Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder.
But O, fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

IV
O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly;
And clos'd for ay, the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

MY CHLORIS, MARK
"On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration) she suggested an idea which on my return from the visit I wrought into the following song." (R. B. to Thomson in November, 1794.) For Chloris see post, p. 289, Prefatory Note to Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks.

I
My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair!
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

II
The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings:
For Nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

III
Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly, lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe in the birken shaw.

IV
The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

V
The shepherd in the flowery glen
In shepherd's phrase will woo:
The courtier tells a finer tale—
But is his heart as true?

VI
Here wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine:
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 't is na love like mine!

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS

Burns's last song. "I tried my hand on Rothiemurchie this morning. The measure is so difficult that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side." (R. B. to Thomson, 12th July, 1796.) As in 1787 he had complimented Charlotte Hamilton in The Banks of the Devon, it may
be that she is the "fairest maid" of the present song, although some refer it to a break in his friendship with Peggy Chalmers, or to her refusal to marry him (see ante, p. 214, Prefatory Note to Where, Braving Angry Winter's Storms). But, although the Devon is real enough, the "maid" in this case may have been pure fiction.

CHORUS

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do?

I

FULL well thou know'st I love thee dear—
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear!
O, did not Love exclaim: — "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so!"

II

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O, let me share,
And by thy beauteous self I swear
No love but thine my heart shall know!

CHORUS

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do?

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS

"I have finished my song to Rothiemurchie's Rant... The piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral; the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded." (R. B. to Thomson, November, 1794.)

The Chloris who did duty as Burns's Muse for some time after his break with Maria Riddell was the daughter of William Lorimer, farmer and publican, Kemmishall, near Dumfries. She was born in September, 1775, at Craigieburn Wood, which her poet has associated with a Mr. Gillespie, a brother gauger (see p. 231), and his passion for her—Gillespie's disappointment, when she eloped to Gretna Green with a prodigal young Englishman, one Wheddale, tenant of a farm near Moffat, being shadowed forth in O Poortith Cauld (p. 274). The lady was still a bride, when her husband fled his creditors across the border; and, her illusion being no more, she returned to her parents and resumed her maiden name. Her misfortunes so touched the Bard that he became exceedingly enamoured of her. He re-wrote Whistle and I'll Come to You My Lad in her honour; on her behalf appropriated part of an earlier song, And I'll Kiss Thee Yet (p. 213), to complete Come, Let Me Take Thee (p. 279); celebrated her illness in a new set of Ay Waukin, O (p. 290, Long, Long the Night); and exalted her in such "reveries of passion" as the present song, as My Chloris Mark (p. 288), as Mark Yonder Pomp (p. 294), as Forlorn, My Love (p. 292), and as Yon Rosy Brier (p. 291), to name but these. He thus described to Thomson her relation to his work: "The lady on whom it [Craigieburn Wood] was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact (entre nous) is, in a manner to me, what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a Mistress, or Friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclavers about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely Friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your Book? No, No! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary in song—to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? Tout au contraire! I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented to the Divinity of Healing and Poesy, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in the regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses." Towards the close of 1795 he (for whatever reason) grew disenchanted with the "adorability" of this particular "fine woman," and would rather, as we have seen, that neither her name nor her "charms" were associated with his fame. The poor lady's later years were unfortunate. Her father lost his money, and, compelled to support herself, she went into service, dying as late as September, 1831.

CHORUS

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
I
Wilt thou wi' me tend the flocks —
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee,
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou 'lt be my dearie, O?

II
The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
The wanton lambs at early morn
Shall welcome thee, my dearie, O.

And when the welcome simmer shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine-bower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

IV
When Cynthia lights wi' silver ray
The weary shearer's hameward way,
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

V
And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
Enclaspèd to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

CHORUS
Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tend the flocks —
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

LONG, LONG THE NIGHT
A rather tawdry set of Ay Waukin, O (ante, p. 217). See ante, p. 289, Prefatory Note to Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks.

CHORUS
Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.
WHERE ARE THE JOYS

I
O Logan, sweetly didst thou glide
That day I was my Willie's bride,
And years sin syne hae o'er us run
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flowery banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

II
Again the merry month of May
Has made our hills and vallies gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers;
Blythe Morning lifts his rosy eye,
And Evening's tears are tears o' joy:
My soul delightless a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

III
Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush:
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile.
But I wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

IV
O, wae upon you, Men o' State,
That brethren rouse in deadly hate!
As ye make monie a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
Ye mindna 'mid your cruel joys
The widow's tears, the orphan's cries;
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan braes!

WHERE ARE THE JOYS

"Saw Ye My Father? is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last I wandered out, and began a tender song in what I think is its native style. ... My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it." (R. B. to Thomson, in his comments on the latter's list of an hundred songs, September, 1793.) The completed song he sent to Thomson shortly afterwards, with the advice to set the air to the old words, and let his "follow as English verses."

I
WHERE are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early sang?
Where is the peace that awaited my wan'd'ring
At e'ening the wild-woods amang?

II
Nae mair a-winding the course o' yon river
And marking sweet flowerets sae fair,
Nae mair I trace the light footsteps o' Pleasure,
But Sorrow and sad-sighing Care.

III
Is it that Summer's forsaken our vallies,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride o' the year.

IV
Fain wad I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet lang, lang, too well hae I known:

YON ROSY BRIER

I
O, bonie was yon rosy brier
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man,
And bonie she — and ah, how dear! —
It shaded frae the e'emin sun!

II
Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure among the leaves sae green!
A’ that has caused the wreck in my bosom
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone!

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Not Hope dare a comfort bestow.
Come then, enamored and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I’ll seek in my woe!

BEHOLD THE HOUR

"The following song I have composed for Oran Gaoil, the Highland air that you tell me in your last you have resolved to give a place in your book. I have this moment finished the song; so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well! if not ‘tis also well!"

(R. B. to Thomson, September, 1793.)

It is from a song sent to Clarinda in 1791; but this itself was little more than a transcript of a certain Farewell to Nicié, to be found in The Charmer and other books (see post, p. 312).

I
BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive!
Thou goest, the darling of my heart!
Sever’d from thee, can I survive?
But Fate has will’d and we must part.
I’ll often greet the surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail:—
"E’en here I took the last farewell;
There, latest mark’d her vanish’d sail."

II
Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I’ll westward turn my wistful eye:—
"Happy, thou Indian grove," I’ll say,
"Where now my Nancy’s path may be!
While thro’ thy sweets she loves to stray,
O, tell me, does she muse on me?"

FORLORN, MY LOVE

"How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour; so much for the speed of my Pegasus, but what say you to his bottom?" (R. B. to Thomson, May, 1795.)

CHORUS
O, wert thou, love, but near me,
But near, near, near me,
How kindly thou would cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love!

I
FORLORN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe,
At which I most repine, love.

II
Around me scowls a wintry sky,
Blasting each bud of hope and joy,
And shelter, shade, nor home have I
Save in these arms of thine, love.

III
Cold, alter’d friendship’s cruel part,
To poison Fortune’s ruthless dart!
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love!

IV
But, dreary tho’ the moments fleet,
O, let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love!

CHORUS

CA’ THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES

SECOND SET

Sent to Thomson in September, 1794, [four years after the appearance of the first set in Johnson’s Musical Museum]. See ante, p. 224, Prefatory Note to Ca’ the Yowes to the Knowes (first set).

CHORUS
Ca’ the yowes to the knowes,
Ca’ them where the heather grows,
Ca’ them where the burnie rowes,
My bonie dearie.
HOW CAN MY POOR HEART

I
Hark, the mavis’ e’ening sang
Sounding Clouden’s woods amang;
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonie dearie.

II
We’ll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro’ the hazels, spreading wide
O’er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.

III
Yonder Clouden’s silent towers
Where, at moonshine’s midnight hours,
O’er the dewy bending flowers
Fairies dance sae cheery.

IV
Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear—
Thou ’rt to Love and Heav’n sae dear
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonie dearie.

CHORUS
Ca’ the yowes to the knowes,
Ca’ them where the heather grows,
Ca’ them where the burnie rowes,
My bonie dearie.

HOW CAN MY POOR HEART

“The last evening as I was straying out,
and thinking of O’er the Hills and Far Away,
I spun the following stanzas for it; but
whether my spinning will deserve to be laid
up in store, like the precious thread of the
silkworm, or brushed to the devil, like the
vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my
dear sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was
pleased with several lines in it at first, but I
own that it appears rather a flimsy business.
.... I give you leave to abuse this song, but do
it in the spirit of Christian meekness.” (R. B.
to Thomson, 30th August, 1794.) Thomson
took him at his word, whereupon he replied:
“I shall withdraw my O’er the Seas and Far
Away altogether; it is unequal, and unworthy
of the work. Making a poem is like begetting
a son; you cannot know whether you have a
wise man or a fool, until you produce him to
the world and try him.”
IS THERE FOR HONEST POVERTY

"A great critic (Aikin) on songs says that Love and Wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song. . . . I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*; for the piece is not really poetry." (R. B. to Thomson, January, 1795.)

In all likelihood the oldest set of *For a' That* is one in *The Merry Muses*. Apparently suggested by the Highlander's imperfect Scots (the hero is specifically some bare-breeched Donald), the phrase was found effective for a certain class of ditty—the ditty which (as Burns says of this one) "is not really poetry." A Jacobite derivative, which he knew likewise, is included in a *Collection of Loyal Songs*, 1750. It begins thus:

"Tho'—reigns in—stead
I'm grieved, yet scorn to shaw that:
I'll ne'er look down nor hang my head
On rebel Whig for a' that:"

and has this chorus:

"For a' that and a' that,
And twice as muckle's a' that,
He's far beyond the seas the night,
Yet he 'll be here for a' that."

Like *Scots Wha Hae*—"the Scottish Marseillaise" (whatever that may mean)—this famous song—"the Marseillaise of humanity" (whatever that may mean)—which, according to Chambers, "may be said to embody all the false philosophy of Burns's time and of his own mind," is very plainly an effect of the writer's sympathies with the spirit and the fact of the French Revolution, and of that estrangement from wealthier loyalist friends, with which his expression of these sympathies and his friendship with such "sons of sedition" as Maxwell (see *ante*, p. 188, Prefatory Note to *Ye True Loyal Natives*, and p. 190, Prefatory Note to To Dr. Maxwell) had been visited.

I

Is there for honest poverty
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by—
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

II

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their tinsel show, an' a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

III

Ye see you birkie ca'd "a lord,"
Wha struts, an' stanes, an' a' that?
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a cuif for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
His ribband, star, an' a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks an' laughs at a' that.

IV

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, an' a' that!
But an honest man's aboon his might—
Guid faith, he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities, an' a' that,
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that.

V

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

MARK YONDER POMP

I

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion
Round the wealthy, titled bride!
But, when compar'd with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.

II

What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay, gaudy glare of vanity and art!
The polish'd jewel's blaze
May draw the wond'ring gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart!

But did you see my dearest Chloris
In simplicity's array,
Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day?

O, then, the heart alarming
And all resistless charming,
In love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown!
Ev'n Avarice would deny
His worshipp'd deity,
And feel thro' every vein love's raptures roll!

O, let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night!
O, let me in this ae night,
And rise and let me in!

I
O LASSIE, are ye sleepin yet,
Or are ye waukin, I wad wit?
For Love has bound me hand an' fit,
And I would fain be in, jo.

II
Thou hear'st the winter wind an' weet:
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet!
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.

III
The bitter blast that round me blaws,
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's:
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my care and pine, jo.

CHORUS
O, let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night!
O, let me in this ae night,
And rise and let me in!

HER ANSWER
CHORUS
I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let ye in, jo.

I
O, TELL me na o' wind an' rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain,
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
I winna let ye in, jo!

II
The snel lest blast at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours
Is nocht to what poor she endures,
That's trusted faithless man, jo.

III
The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed—
Let simple maid the lesson read!
The weird may be her ain, jo.

IV
The bird that charm'd his summer day,
And now the cruel fowler's prey,
Let that to witless woman say:—
"The gratefu' heart of man," jo.

CHORUS
I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let ye in, jo.

O PHILLY, HAPPY BE THAT DAY

"Did you not once propose The Sow’s Tail to Geordie as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in
the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. . . I have just written four stanzas at random, which I intended to have woven somewhere into, probably at the conclusion of, the song.” (R. B. to Thomson, September, 1794.) He finished the duet one morning in November, “though a keen blowing frost,” in his “walk before breakfast.” The portion written in September consisted of stanzas iv. and v.

CHORUS

He and She. For a’ the joys that gowd can gie,
I dinna care a single flie!
The {lad } I love ’s the {lass }
{lad } for me,
{lass } And that ’s my ain dear
{Willy }
{Philly }

I

He. O PHILLY, happy be that day
When, roving thro’ the gather’d hay,
My youthfu’ heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly!

She. O Willy, ay I bless the grove
Where first I own’d my maiden love,
Whilst thou did pledge the Powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

II

He. As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

She. As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes, and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

III

He. The milder sun and bluer sky,
That crown my harvest cares wi’ joy,
Were ne’er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight o’ Philly.

She. The little swallow’s wanton wing,
Tho’ wafting o’er the flowery spring,
Did ne’er to me sic tidings bring
As meeting o’ my Willy.

IV

He. The bee, that thro’ the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the op’n ing flower,
Compar’d wi’ my delight is poor
Upon the lips o’ Philly.

She. The woodbine in the dewy weet,
When ev’ning shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o’ Willy.

V

He. Let Fortune’s wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win!
My thoughts are a’ bound up on ane,
And that’s my ain dear Philly.

She. What’s a’ the joys that gowd can gie?
I dinna care a single flie!
The lad I love’s the lad for me,
And that’s my ain dear Willy.

CHORUS

He and She. For a’ the joys that gowd can gie,
I dinna care a single flie!
The {lad } I love ’s the {lass }
{lad } for me,
{lass } And that ’s my ain dear
{Willy }
{Philly }

O, WERE MY LOVE

The second stanza is a fragment preserved in Herd’s Collection: “This thought is inexpressibly beautiful, and, so far as I know, quite original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether except you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following [Were My Love Yon Lilac Fair, etc.]. The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but, if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place, as every Poet who knows anything of his trade will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.” (R. B. to Thomson, June, 1793.)

In the Herd MS. there is also a set three stanzas in length:

“O, if my love was a pickle of wheat,
And growing upon yon lilly white lea,
And I myself a bonny sweet bird,
Away with that pickle I would flie.

“O, if my love was a bonny red rose,” etc.
THERE WAS A LASS

O, were my love yon lilac fair
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring,
And I a bird to shelter there,
When weariest on my little wing,
How I wad mourn when it was torn
By Autumn wild and Winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

O, gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysel a drap o' dew
Into her bonie breast to fa',
O, there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night,
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa by Phebus' light!

SLEEP'ST THOU

Sleep'st thou, or wauk'st thou, fairest creature?
Rosy Morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud, which Nature waters wi' the tears o' joy.
Now to the streaming fountain
Or up the heathy mountain
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours;
The laverock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day!

Phebus, gilding the brow of morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning:
Such to me my lovely maid!
When frae my Chloris part'd,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
The night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark,
O'ercast my sky;
But when she charms my sight
In pride of Beauty's light,
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart,
'T is then - 't is then I wake to life and joy!

THE THERE WAS A LASS

The heroine was Jean M'Murdo, daughter of Burns's friend, John M'Murdo (see ante, p. 143, Prefatory Note to To John M'Murdo).
To her he sent a copy: "In the inclosed ballad I have, I think, hit off a few outlines of your portrait. The personal charms, the purity of mind, the ingenuous naïveté of heart and manners in my heroine are, I flatter myself, a pretty just likeness of Miss M'Murdo in a cottage."

There was a lass, and she was fair!
At kirk and market to be seen
When a' our fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonie Jean.

And ay she wrought her country work,
And ay she sang sae merrillie:
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she!

But hawks will rob the tender joys,
That bless the little lintwhite's nest,
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen,
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He dance'd wi' Jeanie on the down,
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown

As in the bosom of the stream
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en,
So, trembling pure, was tender love
Within the breast of bonie Jean.

And now she works her country's work,
And ay she sighs wi' care and pain,
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad make her weel again.
SONGS FROM THOMSON’S “SCOTTISH AIRS”

VIII
But did na Jeanie’s heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e’e,
As Robie tauld a tale o’ love
Ae e’enin on the lily lea?

IX
While monie a bird sang sweet o’ love,
And monie a flower blooms o’er the dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And whisper’d thus his tender tale: —

"O Jeanie fair, I lo’e thee dear.
O, canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie’s cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi’ me?

X
"At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee,
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi’ me."

XI
Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na!
At length she blush’d a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

VII
WHEN o’er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin time is near, my jo,
And owsen frae the furrow’d field
Return sae dowf and weary, O,
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi’ dew are hangin clear, my jo,
I’ll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

II
At midnight hour in mirkest glen
I ’d rove, and ne’er be eerie, O,
If thro’ that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O!
Altho’ the night were ne’er sae wild,
And I were ne’er sae weary, O,
I’ll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

III
The hunter lo’es the morning sun
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher takes the glen
Adown the burn to steer, my jo:
Gie me the hour o’ gloamin grey —
It mak’s my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

THE LEA-RIG

“On reading over The Lea-Rig, I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and after all, I could make nothing of it than the following, which Heaven knows is poor enough.” (R. B. to Thomson.) Here he probably referred to The Lea-Rig in Johnson’s Museum. This is his note on it in the Interleaved Copy: “The old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than those inserted, which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson in one of his merry humours. The old words began thus:

‘I ’ll rowe thee o’er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O,
I ’ll rowe thee o’er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.
Altho’ the night were ne’er sae wat,
And I were ne’er sae weary, O,
I ’ll rowe thee o’er the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.’"

A fuller set of the Museum words is in the Herd ms., [which] also contains a fragment, which is, perhaps, the archetypal original.

MY WIFE’S A WINSOME WEE THING

“In the air — My Wife’s a Wanton Wee Thing — if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following I made extempore to it; and though, on further study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air, so well as this random clink.” (R. B. to Thomson, 8th November, 1792.)

CHORUS
She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a lo’esome wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o’ mine!

I
I never saw a fairer,
I never lo’ed a dearer,
And neist my heart I’ll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.
MARY MORISON

This little masterpiece of feeling and expression was sent to Thomson, 20th March, 1793. “The song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it among your hands. I do not think it very remarkable either for its merits or demerits.” (R. B. to Thomson.) And Thomson sat on it for upwards of twenty-five years. Gilbert Burns told him that Mary Morison was the heroine of some light verses beginning: And I’li kiss thee yet, yet (see ante, e)). She has therefore been identified with Begbie. But a Mary Morison, the daughter of one Adjutant Morison, who lived at Mauchline from 1784, is said to have been as beautiful as amiable. She died of consumption, 29th August, 1791.

MISCELLANEOUS SONGS

More than half the verse of Burns was published posthumously; more than a third of it without his sanction. He was especially “unthrifty of his sweets;” bestowing them on all and sundry, as if he had been denied the privilege of publication in any other form. Much of his work was in the strictest sense occasional; written “by way of vive la bagatelle” on window-panes, in albums, in volumes, in letters to friends. He never dreamed, or not until the very last, that the world would cherish any curiosity about these fugitives; and death came to him ere the chance of sifting gold from dross in a final Edition. Thus, his unrealised estate (so to speak) was not only of peculiar bulk: it was also of many qualities, and it was variously dispersed among a crowd of owners; so that he provided the gull with no defence against the gull-catcher, — he left the credulous wholly unarmed and unprepared against the contrivances of them that would deceive. Again, he was accustomed to jot down from recitation, or to copy from letters, or from odd volumes, such lines, such stanzas, or such whole pieces as took his fancy; and more often than not he left his sources undenoted. Withal, he would dispatch songs got in this way — with or without retouches — for publication, especially in Johnson’s Museum; and, inasmuch as he signed not all those envoy’s which were his own, the task of separating false from true is one of very considerable difficulty. Often the probabilities are our only guides; and in these cases we have summarised the evidence, and taken that direction in which the balance seemed to incline.
In others, any sort of evidence is of the scantest; and what there is has been made scantier still by the carelessness—or the romantic humour, to call it by no worse a name—of such Editors as Allan Cunningham, Hogg and Motherwell, and Robert Chambers. The chief exemplar in the other sense is certainly Scott Douglas, who, though he seems to have prepared himself for the work of editing Burns by resolutely declining to read any one else, was zealous in his quest of ms. authorities, and, had he known something of literature, and been less given to putting on what Mr. Swinburne calls “a foolish face of praise” over any and every thing his author wrote, might have gone far to establish a sound tradition in the matter of text. But such a tradition was scarce indicated ere it succumbed to sentimentalism and pretence; the old, hap-hazard, irresponsible convention still holds its own; and editions professing to give the “complete text,” the “true text,” the “best text,” and the like, continue to be issued, which set forth an abundance of proof that they are based—some wholly, all mainly—on the battered, jog-trot hack-authorities of the prime.

MISCELLANEOUS SONGS

A RUINED FARMER

Probably written during the crisis of William Burness’s difficulties at Mount Oliphant: “The farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of Twa Dogs.” (R. B. in Autobiographical Letter.)

I

The sun he is sunk in the west,
All creatures retirèd to rest,
While here I sit, all sore beset
With sorrow, grief, and woe:
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

II

The prosperous man is asleep,
Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep;
But Misery and I must watch
The surly tempests blow:
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

III

There lies the dear Partner of my breast,
Her cares for a moment at rest!
Must I see thee, my youthful pride,
Thus brought so very low? —
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

IV

There lie my sweet babies in her arms;
No anxious fear their little hearts alarms;
But for their sake my heart does ache,
With many a bitter throe:
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

V

I once was by Fortune carest,
I once could relieve the distrest;

Now life’s poor support, hardly earn’d,
My fate will scarce bestow:
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

VI

No comfort, no comfort I have!
How welcome to me were the grave!
But then my wife and children dear—
O, whither would they go!
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

VII

O, whither, O, whither shall I turn,
All friendless, forsaken, forlorn?
For in this world Rest or Peace
I never more shall know:
And it ’s O fickle Fortune, O !

MONTGOMERIE’S PEGGY

“My Montgomerie’s Peggy was my deity for six or eight months. She had been bred, tho’, as the world says, without any just pretence for it, in a style of life rather elegant. But, as Vanburgh says in one of his comedies, ‘my damn’d Star found me out’ there too; for though I began the affair, merely in a gaieté de cœur, or, to tell the truth, what would scarcely be believed, a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a billet doux, which I always piqu’d myself upon, made me lay siege to her; and when, as I always do in my foolish gallantries, I had battered myself into a very warm affection for her, she told me one day, in a flag of truth, that her fortress had been for some time before the rightful property of another; but with the greatest friendship and politeness, she offered me every alliance, except actual possession.” (R. B.) Mrs. Begg stated that the girl was housekeeper at Coilfield House.
THE LASS OF CESSNOCK BANKS

The heroine is supposed to have been the Elison Begbie — daughter of a farmer in the parish of Galston — to whom Burns made what was probably his first offer of marriage, in letters (1780-81), included in his published Correspondence. By some she is also supposed to have been the heroine of And I'll Kiss Thee Yet (ante, p. 213).

I
On Cessnock banks a lassie dwells,  
Could I describe her shape and mien!  
Our lasses a’ she far excels —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

II
She’s sweeter than the morning dawn,  
When rising Phebus first is seen,  
And dewdrops twinkle o’er the lawn —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

III
She’s stately like yon youthful ash,  
That grows the cowslip braes between,  
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

IV
She’s spotless like the flow’ring thorn  
With flow’rs so white and leaves so green,  
When purest in the dewy morn —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

V
Her looks are like the vernal May,  
When ev’ning Phoebus shines serene,  
While birds rejoice on every spray —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

VI
Her hair is like the curling mist,  
That climbs the mountain-sides at e’en,  
When flow’r-reviving rains are past —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

VII
Her forehead’s like the show’ry bow,  
When gleaming sunbeams intervene,  
And gild the distant mountain’s brow —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

VIII
Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,  
The pride of all the flowery scene,  
Just opening on its thorny stem —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

IX
Her teeth are like the nightly snow,  
When pale the morning rises keen,  
While hid the murm’ring streamlets flow —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

X
Her lips are like yon cherries ripe,  
That sunny walls from Boreas screen:  
They tempt the taste and charm the sight —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

XI
Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,  
That gently stirs the blossom’d bean,  
When Phoebus sinks behind the seas —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!

XII
Her voice is like the ev’ning thrush,  
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,  
While his mate sits nestling in the bush —  
An’ she has twa sparkling, rogueish een!
XIV

But it’s not her air, her form, her face,
Tho’ matching Beauty’s fabled Queen:
’T is the mind that shines in ev’ry grace —
An’ chiefly in her rogueish een !

THO’ FICKLE FORTUNE

“An extempore under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned on page 8th [see ante, p. 37, Prefatory Note to A Prayer in the Prospect of Death], and, though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been, since, a ‘tempest brewing round me in the grim sky’ of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will, some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell to pine in solitary, squallid wretchedness.” (R. B.)

He also states it to have been written “in imitation of an old Scotch song well known among the country ingle sides,” and he sets down one stanza thereof to mark the “debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times:”

“When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a’ the storms are past and gone.”

I

Tho’ fickle Fortune has deceived me
(Shes promis’d fair, and perform’d but ill),
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereaved me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

II

I’ll act with prudence as far as I’m able;
But if success I must never find,
Then come, Misfortune, I bid thee welcome —
I’ll meet thee with an undaunted mind!

RAGING FORTUNE

Inscribed in the First Common Place Book, September, 1785, next to Tho’ Fickle Fortune. “’Twas at the same time I set about composing an air in the old Scotch style. I am not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light; and perhaps ‘tis no great matter, but the following were the verses I composed to suit it. . . . The tune consisted of three parts, so that the above verses just went through the whole Air.” (R. B.)

I

O, Raging Fortune’s withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low!

O, raging Fortune’s withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low!

II

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow.

III

But luckless Fortune’s northern storms
Laid a’ my blossoms low!
But luckless Fortune’s northern storms
Laid a’ my blossoms low!

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER

“The following song is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over.” (R. B.) It faintly resembles a song in an old chap at Abbotsford, My Father was a Farmer, and a Farmer’s Son am I.

I

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me in decency O,
He bade me act a manly part, though —
For without an honest, manly heart man was worth regarding, O.

II

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O:
Tho’ to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O.
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education, O—
Resolv'd was I at least to try to mend my situation, O.

III
In many a way and vain essay I courted Fortune's favour, O:
Some cause unseen still stept between to frustrate each endeavour, O.
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd, sometimes by friends forsaken, O,
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O.

IV
Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last with Fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion, O:—
The past was bad, and the future hid; its good or ill untried, O,
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would enjoy it, O.

V
No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil, and labour to sustain me, O!
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early, O:
For one, he said, to labour bred was a match for Fortune fairly, O.

VI
Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doom'd to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber, O.
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow, O,
I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow, O!

VII
But, cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a palace, O,
Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice, O:
I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther, O,
But, as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O.

VIII
When sometimes by my labour I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me, O:
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natur'd folly, O—
But, come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

IX
All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther, O.
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful, honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O!

O, LEAVE NOVELS

I
O, leave novels, ye Mauchline belles—Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel!
Such witching books are baited hooks For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel.

II
Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons They make your youthful fancies reel!
They heat your brains, and fire your veins, And then you're prey for Rob Mossgiel.

III
Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung, A heart that warmly seems to feel!
That feeling heart but acts a part,—'T is rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.

IV
The frank address, the soft caress Are worse than poisoned darts of steel:
The frank address and politesse Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.

THE MAUCHLINE LADY

The Mauchline lady was no doubt Jean Armour.
I
When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was na steady:
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
A mistress still I had ay.

II
But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,
Not dreadin anybody,
My heart was caught, before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.

ONE NIGHT AS I DID WANDER

One night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down to ponder
Upon an auld tree-root:
Auld Ayr ran by before me,
And bicker'd to the seas;
A cushat crooded o' er me,
That echoed through the trees.

THERE WAS A LAD

CHORUS
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin, rantin, rovin,
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin Robin!

I
There was a lad was born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

II
Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five and twenty days begun
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew hankel in on Robin.

III
The gossip keekit in his loof,
Quo' scho: — "Wha lives will see the proof,
This waly boy will be nae coof:
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

IV
"He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',
But ay a heart aboon them a'.
He'll be a credit till us a':
We'll a' be proud o' Robin!

V
"But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on thee, Robin!

VI
"Guid faith," quo' scho, "I doubt you, stir,
Ye gar the lasses lie aspar;
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur—
So blessins on thee, Robin!"

CHORUS
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin, rantin, rovin,
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin Robin!

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES,
MY MARY

Sent to Thomson in October, 1792, as a substitute for Will Ye Gang to the Ewe-bughts, Marion, which Thomson, like the pedant he was, could not approve. "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of Ewe-bughts, but it will fill up this page." Thomson replied that he did not mean to supplant The Ewe-bughts, and that what he wanted Burns to do was to try his "hand on some of the inferior stanzas." Burns took not the hint; nor did Thomson accept his song: "This is a very poor song, which I do not mean to include in my Collection." For Mary Campbell, the supposed heroine (though this is at least doubtful), see ante, p. 204, Prefatory Note to My Highland Lassie, O.

I
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave anil Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic roar?
THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE

II
O, sweet grows the lime and the orange,  
And the apple on the pine;  
But a' the charms o' the Indies  
Can never equal thine.

III
I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,  
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true,  
And sae may the Heavens forget me,  
When I forget my vow!

IV
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,  
And plight me your lily-white hand!  
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,  
Before I leave Scotia's strand!

V
We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,  
In mutual affection to join;  
And curst be the cause that shall part us!  
The hour and the moment o' time!

HER FLOWING LOCKS

I
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!

II
Her lips are roses wat wi' dew—  
O, what a feast, her bonie mou!  
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,  
A crimson still diviner!

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE

Sent to Miss Wilhelminia Alexander in a letter of 18th November, 1786: "The enclosed song was the work of my return home, and perhaps but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene. I am going to print a second edition of my Poems, but cannot insert those verses without your permission." The lady took no notice of the request; but a ms. copy sets forth this note: "The above song cannot be published without the consent of the lady, which I have desired a common friend to ask." In all probability this was the copy submitted to the "jury of literati" in Edinburgh. It went unpublished—not because the writer could not get Miss Alexander's consent, but because it and a song on Miss Peggy Kennedy (Young Peggy, ante, p. 201) were "found defamatory libels against the fastidious powers of Poesy and Taste." In Polyhymnia it is stated to "have been composed by Robert Burns, from the emotions of gratitude and esteem which he felt for the worthy family, for the kindness and attention they had shewn him"—a rather too Platonic theory of its origin.

Miss Wilhelminia Alexander was the sister of Claud Alexander, who succeeded the Whitefoords in Ballochmyle. She is referred to in one of the suppressed stanzas of The Vision:

"While lovely Wilhelminia warms  
The coldest heart."

Later in life she set a higher price than erst upon the compliment designed in Burns's verses. She died unmarried, as late as 1843.

I
'T was even: the dewy fields were green,  
On every blade the pearls hang,  
The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,  
And bore its fragrant sweets alang,  
In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,  
All nature list'ning seem'd the while,  
Except where greenwood echoes rang  
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

II
With careless step I onward stray'd,  
My heart rejoic'd in Nature's joy,  
When, musing in a lonely glade,  
A maiden fair I chane'd 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 of Ballochmyle!"

III
Fair is the morn in flowery May,  
And sweet is night in autumn mild,  
When roving thro' the garden gay,  
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild;  
But woman, Nature's darling child—  
There all her charms she does compile!  
Even there her other works are foil'd  
By the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

IV
O, had she been a country maid,  
And I the happy country swain,
Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotia's plain,
Thro' weary winter's wind and rain
With joy, with rapture, I would toil,
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonie 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 ev'ry day have joys divine
With the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

THE NIGHT WAS STILL

The ms. was given to one of the daughters of Dr. Lawrie of Newmilns, and commemorates a dance—when Burns for the first time heard the spinet—in the manse of Newmilns on the banks of Irvine. (See ante, p. 70, Prefatory Note to Prayer: O Thou Dread Power.)

I
The night was still, and o'er the hill
The moon shone on the castle wa',
The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
Around her on the castle wa':

II
Sae merrily they danc'd the ring
Frae eenin' till the cock did craw,
And ay the o'erword o' the spring
Was:—"Irvine's bairns are bonie a'!"

MASONIC SONG

Said to have been recited by Burns at his admission as an honorary member of the Kilwinning St. John's Lodge, Kilmarnock, 26th October, 1786. "Willie" was Major William Parker, Grand Master. (See ante, p. 139, Prefatory Note to To Hugh Parker.)

I
Ye sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie
To follow the noble vocation,

II
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
To sit in that honourèd station!
I've little to say, but only to pray
(As praying's the ton of your fashion).
A prayer from the Muse you well may excuse
('T is seldom her favourite passion):

THE BONIE MOOR-HEN

CHORUS

I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men!
I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men!
Take some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonie moor-hen.

II
The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a-hunting ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses and monie a glen:
At length they discovered a bonie moor-hen.

II
Sweet-brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells!
Her plumage outlustred the pride o' the spring,
And O, as she wanton'd sae gay on the wing,
THE BONIE LASS OF ALBANIE

III
Auld Phæbus himself, as he peeped o'er the hill,
In spite at her plumage he tryèd his skill:
He level'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae—
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay!

IV
They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill;
But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.

CHORUS
I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men!
I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men!
Take some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonie moor-hen.

HERE'S A BOTTLE

There's nane that's blest of human kind
But the cheerful and the gay, man.

Gilbert Burns expressed to Cromek his doubts of Robert's authorship; but he may have been influenced by a desire to disassociate his brother from the sentiment of the song. In any case it was possibly suggested by The Bottle and Friend, in the Damon and Phillis Garland, included in the Bell Collection at Abbotsford:

“Bright glory is a trifle and so is ambition,
I despise a false heart and a lofty condition,
For pride is a folly, for it I'll not contend,
But I will enjoy my bottle and friend:
In a little close room
So neat and so trim,
O there I will enjoy
My bottle and friend,” etc.

I
HERE's a bottle and an honest man!
What wad ye wish for mair, man?
Wha kens, before his life may end,
What his share may be o' care, man?

II
Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man!
Believe me, Happiness is shy,
And comes not ay when sought, man!

THE BONIE LASS OF ALBANIE

Charlotte Stuart, daughter of Charles Edward, the “Young Pretender,” by Clementina Walkinshaw, was baptized 29th October, 1753 (Mémoire in the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, for an extract from which we are indebted to Mr. Andrew Lang). In the register of baptisms at Liège, the child is entered as the daughter of D. Johnson and the noble dame Charlotte Pitt; and there is other clear evidence that, though at this time Charles treated Miss Walkinshaw as his wife, she neither was married to him nor supposed herself to be his wife. After Charles’s separation from his wife, the Countess of Albany, he sent for his illegitimate daughter Charlotte, who abode with him till his death, 30th January, 1788. In 1784 he made out letters of legitimation, and these were confirmed by the Parlement of Paris, 6th December, 1787, when she took the style of Duchess of Albany. But the legitimation did not imply (as was supposed at the time in England, and as, of course, was credited by Burns) that Miss Walkinshaw had been married to the Prince, but rather that Miss Walkinshaw had not. She died soon after her father.

I
My heart is wae, and unco wae,
To think upon the raging sea,
That roars between her gardens green
An’ the bonie lass of Albanie.

II
This noble maid 's of royal blood,
That ruled Albion’s kingdoms three;
But O, alas for her bonie face!
They hae wranged the lass of Albanie.

III
In the rolling tide of spreading Clyde
There sits an isle of high degree,
And a town of fame, whose princely name
Should grace the lass of Albanie.
IV
But there is a youth, a witless youth,  
That fills the place where she should be:  
We’ll send him o’er to his native shore,  
And bring our ain sweet Albanie!

V
Alas the day, and woe the day!  
A false usurper wan the gree,  
Who now commands the towers and lands,  
The royal right of Albanie.

VI
We’ll daily pray, we’ll nightly pray,  
On bended knees most fervently,  
That the time may come, with pipe and drum  
We’ll welcome hame fair Albanie.

AMANG THE TREES
Written in honour of Niel Gow (1727-1807),  
the famous fiddler, whom Burns met during  
his Northern tour in 1787.

I
AMANG the trees, where humming bees  
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,  
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,  
And to her pipe was singing, O.

'T was Pibroch, Sang, Strathspeys and Reels  
She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O,  
When there cam' a yell o' foreign squeels,  
That dang her tapsalteerie, O!

II
Their capon craws an' queer “ha, ha’s,”  
They made our lugs grow eerie, O.  
The hungry bike did scrape and fyke,  
Till we were wae and weary, O.

But a royal ghast, wha ane was cas’d  
A prisoner aughteen year awa,  
He fir’d a Fiddler in the North,  
That dang them tapsalteerie, O!

THE CHEVALIER’S LAMENT

"Yesterday, my dear sir, as I was riding  
thro’ a track of melancholy, joyless muirs, be-  
tween Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sun-

day, I turned my thoughts to psalms and  
hymns, and spiritual songs, and your favourite  
air, Capt. O’Kean, coming at length in my  
head, I tried these words to it. You will see  
that the first part of the tune must be re-  
peated." (Burns to Cleghorn, 31st March,  
1788.) Only stanza i. was sent to Cleghorn at  
that time. "If I could hit on another stanza  
equal to The Small Birds Rejoice, I do myself  
honestly avow that I think it a very superior  
song." (R. B. to Thomson, 1st April, 1793.)  
He sent no more to Thomson either.

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves  
returning,  
The murmuring streamlet winds clear  
thro’ the vale,  
The primroses blow in the dews of the  
morning,  
And wild scatter’d cowslips bedeck the  
green dale:  
But what can give pleasure, or what  
can seem fair,  
When the lingering moments are  
number’d by care?  
No flow’rs gaily springing,  
Nor birds sweetly singing,  
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless  
despair!

II
The deed that I dar’d, could it merit their  
malice,  
A king and a father to place on his  
throne?  
His right are these hills, and his right are  
those valleys,  
Where the wild beasts find shelter, tho’  
I can find none!  
But ’t is not my suff’ring thus  
wretched, forlorn—  
My brave gallant friends, ’t is your  
ruin I mourn!  
Your faith prov’d so loyal  
In hot bloody trial,  
Alas! can I make it no better return?

YESTREEN I HAD A PINT O’ WINE

The Anna of the song was Anna Park, niece  
of Mrs. Hyslop of the Globe Tavern, Dumfries.  
She bore a daughter to Burns, 31st March,  
1791, which was first sent to Mossgiel, and af-
terwards fostered by Mrs. Burns along with her baby, William Nicol, born ten days after it. According to Chambers it was Mrs. Burns’s plain duty so to do, inasmuch as if she had n’t gone to visit relatives in Ayrshire, and thus provided her spouse with both an opportunity and an excuse, the child would never have been begotten. Be this as it may, nothing is known of the mother’s after-life. Indeed, she is said by some to have died in childbed of this girl.

The song was sent to Thomson in April, 1793: “Shepherds, I Have Lost My Love is to me a heavenly air — what would you think of a set of Scots verses to it? I have made one, a good while ago, which I think is the best love song I ever composed in my life, but in its original state is not quite a lady’s song. I enclose the original, which please present with my best compliments to Mr. Erskine, and I also enclose an altered not amended copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.” (R. B.)

I

YESTREEN I had a pint o’ wine
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast o’ mine
The gowden locks of Anna.

II

The hungry Jew in wilderness
Rejoicing o’er his manna
Was naething to my hiney bliss
Upon the lips of Anna!

III

Ye monarchs take the East and West
Frae Indus to Savannah:
Gie me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna!

IV

There I’ll despise Imperial charms,
An Empress or Sultana,
While dying raptures in her arms
I give and take wi’ Anna!

V

Awa, thou flaunting God of Day!
Awa, thou pale Diana!
Ilk Star, gae hide thy twinkling ray,
When I’m to meet my Anna!

VI

Come, in thy raven plumage, Night
(Sun, Moon, and Stars, withdrawn a’),
And bring an Angel-pen to write
My transports with my Anna!

POSTSCRIPT

I

The Kirk an’ State may join, and tell
To do sic things I maunna:
The Kirk an’ State may gae to Hell,
And I’ll gae to my Anna.

II

She is the sunshine o’ my e’e,
To live but her I canna:
Had I on earth but wishes three,
The first should be my Anna.

SWEET ARE THE BANKS

The first set of a song — of which the second is Ye Flowery Banks (immediately following) while the third — which, being the worst, is naturally the most popular — The Banks o’ Doon, was published in Johnson’s Museum (see ante, p. 243). It was sent in a letter to Alexander Cunningham, 11th March, 1791: “My song is intended to sing to a Strathspey reel of which I am very fond, called in Cumming’s collection of Strathspeys, Ballendaloch’s Reel; and in other collections that I have met with it is known by the name of Camdelmore. It takes three stanzas of four lines each to go through the whole tune.” (R. B.)

I

Sweet are the banks, the banks o’ Doon,
The spreading flowers are fair,
And everything is blythe and glad,
But I am fu’ o’ care.

Thou’ll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough!
Thou minds me o’ the happy days
When my fause Luve was true.

Thou’ll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate,
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o’ my fate!

II

Aft hae I rov’d by bonie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o’ its luve,
And sae did I o’ mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon its thorny tree,
But my fause lover staw my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June,
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd or noon.

YE FLOWERY BANKS

The second set of *Sweet are the Banks*. Sent in an undated letter — probably of March, 1791 — to John Ballantine of Ayr: "While here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger, and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound 'Auld Toon of Ayr' conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine." (R. B.)

I
Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

II
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough:
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause Luve was true!

III
Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate:
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate!

IV
Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

V
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw my rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

CALEDONIA

I
There was on a time, but old Time was then young,
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?).
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would.
Her heav'nly relations there fixèd her reign,
And pledged her their godheads to warrant it good.

II
A lambkin in peace but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred the heroine grew.
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore: —
"Whoe'er shall provoke thee, th' encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were her fav'rite resort,
Her darling amusement the hounds and the horn.

III
Long quiet she reign'd, till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand.
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land.
Their pounces were murder, and horror their cry;
They'd conquer'd and ravag'd a world beside.
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly—
The daring invaders, they fled or they died!

IV
The Cameleon-Savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife.
WHEN FIRST I SAW

Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robbed him at once of his hopes and his life.
The Anglian Lion, the terror of France,
Oft, prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood,
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learned to fear in his own native wood.

The fell Harpy-Raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore;
The wild Scandinavian Boar issued forth
To wanton in carnage and wallow in gore;
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, no arms could repel;
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Longcartie tell.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run,
For brave Caledonia immortal must be,
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:
Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll chuse;
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base,
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse;
Then, ergo, she'll match them, and match them always!

When first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldna tell what ailed me:
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost fail'd me.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay,
She's aye sae blithe and cheerie,
She's aye sae bonie, blithe and gay,
O, gin I were her dearie!

When first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldna tell what aild me:
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost fail'd me.

She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,
All grace does round her hover!
Ae look depriv'd me o' my heart,
And I became her lover.

When first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldn't tell what ailed me:
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost fail'd me.

She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,
Al grace does round her hover!
Ae look depriv'd me o' my heart,
And I became her lover.
Did warlike laurels crown my brow,  
Or humbler bays entwining;  
I’d lay them a’ at Jeanie’s feet,  
Could I but hope to move her,  
And, prouder than a belted knight,  
I’d be my Jeanie’s lover.

III

But sair I fear some happier swain  
Has gain’d my Jeanie’s favour.  
If so, may every bliss be hers,  
Though I maun never have her!  
But gang she east, or gang she west,  
’T wixt Forth and Tweed all over,  
While men have eyes, or ears, or taste,  
She’ll always find a lover.

CHORUS

She’s aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay,  
She’s aye sae blithe and cheerie,  
She’s aye sae bonie, blithe and gay,  
O, gin I were her dearie!

BEHOLD THE HOUR

FIRST SET

I

BEHOLD the hour, the boat, arrive!  
My dearest Nancy, O, farewell!  
Sever’d frae thee, can I survive,  
Frae thee whom I hae lov’d sae well?

II

Endless and deep shall be my grief,  
Nae ray of comfort shall I see,  
But this most precious, dear belief,  
That thou wilt still remember me.

III

Along the solitary shore,  
Where flitting sea-fowl round me cry,  
Across the rolling, dashing roar,  
I’ll westward turn my wistful eye.

IV

“Happy thou Indian grove,” I’ll say,  
“Where now my Nancy’s path shall be!  
While thro’ your sweets she holds her way,  
O, tell me, does she muse on me?”

HERE’S A HEATH TO THEM THAT’S AWA

I

HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,  
HERE’S a health to them that’s awa!  
And wha winna wish guid luck to our cause,  
May never guid luck be their fa’!  
It’s guid to be merry and wise,  
It’s guid to be honest and true,  
It’s guid to support Caledonia’s cause  
And bide by the buff and the blue.

II

HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,  
HERE’S a health to them that’s awa!  
HERE’S a health to Charlie, the chief o’ the clan,  
Altho’ that his band be sma’!  
May Liberty meet wi’ success,  
May prudence protect her frae evil!  
May tyrants and Tyranny tine i’ the mist  
And wander their way to the Devil!

III

HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,  
HERE’S a health to them that’s awa!  
HERE’S a health to Tammie, the Norlan’ laddie,  
That lives at the lug o’ the Law!  
HERE’S freedom to them that was read,  
HERE’S freedom to them that would write!  
There’s nane ever fear’d that the truth should be heard,  
But they whom the truth would indite!

IV

HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,  
An’ here’s to them that’s awa!  
HERE’S to Maitland and Wycombe! Let who does na like ’em  
Be built in a hole in the wa’!  
HERE’S timmer that’s red at the heart,  
HERE’S fruit that is sound at the core,  
And may he that wad turn the buff and blue coat  
Be turn’d to the back o’ the door!

V

HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,  
HERE’S a health to them that’s awa,
Here's Chieftain M'Leod, a chieftain worth gowd,
Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw!
Here's friends on baith sides o' the Firth,
And friends on baith sides o' the Tweed,
And wha wad betray old Albion's right,
May they never eat of her bread!

AH, CHLORIS

I
Ah, Chloris, since it may not be
That thou of love wilt hear,
If from the lover thou maun flee,
Yet let the friend be dear!

II
Altho' I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell,
My passion I will ne'er declare —
I'll say, I wish thee well.

III
Tho' a' my daily care thou art,
And a' my nightly dream,
I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
And say it is esteem.

PRETTY PEG

I
As I gaed up by yon gate-end,
When day was waxin weary,
Wha did I meet come down the street
But pretty Peg, my dearie?

II
Her air so sweet, her shape complete,
Wi' nae proportion wanting —
The Queen of Love could never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting!

III
With linkèd hands we took the sands
Down by yon winding river;
And O! that hour, and shady bow'r,
Can I forget it? Never!

MEG O' THE MILL

SECOND SET

Sent to Thomson, April, 1793, along with There Was a Lass. "I know these songs are not to have the luck to please you, else you might be welcome to them." (R. B.) It was written for Jackie Hume's Lament. Thomson asked him to write another song to this air, but he replied: "My song, Ken Ye What Meg o' the Mill Has Gotten, pleases me so much that I cannot try my hand at another song to the same air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at this; but ilka man wears his belt his ain gait." For the first set see ante, p. 268.

I
O, ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?
An' ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?
She's gotten a coof wi' a claute o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley miller!

II
The miller was strappin, the miller was ruddy,
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady.
The laird was a widdifu', bleerit knurl —
She's left the guid fellow, and taen the churl!

III
The miller, he hecht her a heart leal and loving.
The laird did address her wi' matter more moving:
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear, chainèd bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonie side saddle!

IV
O, wae on the siller — it is sae prevailing!
And wae on the love that is fixed on a mailen!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parl,
But gie me my love and a fig for the warl!

PHILLIS THE FAIR

Sent to Thomson, August, 1793. "I likewise tried my hand on Robin Adair, and you will probably think with little success; but it
is such a damned, crampt, out-of-the-way meas-
ure, that I despair of doing anything better
to it. . . . So much for namby-pamby. I may,
after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse.
There I always find myself at home.” Thomson
replied that he would be glad to see Burns
“give Robin Adair a Scottish dress,” but that
“Peter” was furnishing him with an English
suit.

I

While larks with little wing
Fann’d the pure air,
Viewing the breathing Spring,
Forth I did fare.
Gay, the sun’s golden eye
Peep’d o’er the mountains high;
“Such thy bloom,” did I cry —
“Phillis the fair!”

II

In each bird’s careless song,
Glad, I did share;
While you wild flowers among,
Chance led me there.
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
“Such thy bloom,” did I say —
“Phillis the fair!”

III

Down in a shady walk
Doves cooing were;
I mark’d the cruel hawk
Caught in a snare.
So kind may Fortune be!
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair!

O, SAW YE MY DEAR, MY PHILLY

I

O, saw ye my Dear, my Philly?
O, saw ye my Dear, my Philly?
She’s down i’ the grove, she’s wi’ a new
love,
She winna come hame to her Willy.

II

What says she my Dear, my Philly?
What says she my Dear, my Philly?
She lets thee to wit she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

THE PRIMROSE

Sent to Thomson, 1793: “For Todlin Ha
take the following old English song, which I
dare say is but little known.” (R. B.) “N.B.

’T WAS NA HER BONIE BLUE E’E

I

’T was na her bonie blue e’e was my ruin:
Fair tho’ she be, that was ne’er my undoin.
’T was the dear smile when naebody did
mind us,
’T was the bewitching, sweet, stoun glance
o’ kindness!

II

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.

III

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

WHY, WHY TELL THY LOVER

I

Why, why tell thy lover
Bliss he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

II

O, why, while Fancy, raptur’d, slumbers,
“Chloris, Chloris,” all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?
ALTHO' HE HAS LEFT ME

I have altered it a little." (R. B.) [This "old English song" is Carew's or Herrick's Ask me why I send you here.]

I
Dost ask me why I send thee here
The firstling of the infant year:
This lovely native of the vale,
That hangs so pensive and so pale?

II
Look on its bending stalk, so weak,
That, each way yielding, doth not break,
And see how aptly it reveals
The doubts and fears a lover feels.

III
Look on its leaves of yellow hue
Bepearl'd thus with morning dew,
And these will whisper in thine ears:
"The sweets of loves are wash'd with tears."

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

Written during his last illness in honour of Jessie Lewars (see ante, p. 280, Prefatory Note to Here's a Health), after she had played The Wren to him on the piano.

I
O, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

II
Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

INTERPOLATIONS

[This heading is given to a few verses inserted by Burns in poems written by his contemporaries.]

YOUR FRIENDSHIP

I
Your friendship much can make me blest—
O, why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the only, one request
You know I will deny?

II
Your thought, if Love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought,
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.

FOR THEE IS LAUGHING NATURE

For thee is laughing Nature gay,
For thee she pours the vernal day:
For me in vain is Nature drest,
While Joy's a stranger to my breast.

NO COLD APPROACH

Inserted in the song, The Tears I Shed, by Miss Cranstoun, afterwards the second wife of Professor Dugald Stewart, to complete the last octave, and so fit it for the tune in Johnson's Museum. "This song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranstoun. It wanted four lines to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the first four of the last stanza." (R. B.)

No cold approach, no alter'd mien,
Just what would make suspicion start,
No pause the dire extremes between:
He made me blest— and broke my heart.

ALTHO' HE HAS LEFT ME

ALTHO' he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win:
I rather wad bear a’ the lade o’ my sorrow
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.

LET LOVE SPARKLE
Let love sparkle in her e’e,
Let her lo’e nae man but me:
That’s the tocher guid I prize,
There the luver’s treasure lies.

AS DOWN THE BURN
As down the burn they took their way,
And thro’ the flowery dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was ay the tale,
With:— "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary:— "Love, I like the burn,
And ay shall follow you."

IMPROBABLES
In our judgment few of [the poems that follow] can justly be credited to Burns; and to consider the quality of nearly all is to perceive, and very clearly, that, partial as his Editors were to the use of such epithets as “God-gifted” and “heaven-inspired” and the like, there was no rubbish so poor but they found it good enough to father on the god of their idolatry.

ON ROUGH ROADS
According to Scott Douglas, “it is very familiarly quoted in Ayrshire, as a stray impromptu of Burns’s.” But he says not from whom he got it, and an impromptu which had lived for ninety years without getting written or printed — ça donne furieusement à penser!

I’m now arriv’d — thanks to the Gods! —
Through pathways rough and muddy:
A certain sign that makin’ roads
Is no this people’s study.
Yet, though I’m no wi’ scripture cram’d,
I’m sure the Bible says
That heedless sinners shall be damn’d,
Unless they mend their ways.

ELEGY ON STELLA
Inscribed in the Second Common Place Book: “This poem is the work of some hapless son of the Muses who deserved a better fate. There is a great deal of ‘the voice of Cona’ in his solitary, mournful notes; and had the sentiments been clothed in Shenstone’s language, they would have been no discredit to that elegant poet.” (R. B.) He sent a copy to Mrs. Dunlop in a letter of 7th July, 1789, in which he said that he had met the Elegy in ms., and marked the passages which struck him most. These are stanzas i. iv. xiii. xiv. (last two lines) xvii. xviii. and xix.; and it is worth noting that he does not include with them stanza xv., stanza xvi., or stanza xx.

The theory of Scott Douglas and others, that the verses were suggested by a visit to the West Highlands in June, 1787, when Burns may have visited Mary Campbell’s grave — at Greenock, which, in defiance of geography, appears “at the last limits of our isle” — is sheer sentiment. The truth is, there is no earthly reason, except the existence of that sentiment, for attributing the thing to Burns; and, as it is utterly unlike his work — especially his work in English, which is far less easy and less fluent — as, too, he suggests that another wrote it, we see not why it should ever have been printed as his.

I
STRAIT is the spot, and green the sod,
From whence my sorrows flow;
And soundly sleeps the ever dear
Inhabitant below.

II
Pardon my transport, ome shade,
While o’er the turf I bow!
Thy earthly house is circumscrib’d,
And solitary now!

III
Not one poor stone to, tell thy name
Or make thy virtues known!
But what avails to thee — to me —
The sculpture of a stone?

IV
I’ll sit me down upon this turf,
And wipe away this tear.
The chill blast passes swiftly by,
And flits around thy bier.
Dark is the dwelling of the dead,
And sad their house of rest:
Low lies the head by Death’s cold arm
In awful fold embraced.

I saw the grim Avenger stand
Incessant by thy side;
Unseen by thee, his deadly breath
Thy lingering frame destroy’d.

Pale grew the roses on thy cheek,
And wither’d was thy bloom,
Till the slow poison brought thy youth
Untimely to the tomb.

Thus wasted are the ranks of men —
Youth, health, and beauty fall!
The ruthless ruin spreads around,
And overwhelms us all.

Behold where, round thy narrow house,
The graves unnumber’d lie!
The multitude, that sleep below,
Existed but to die.

Some with the tottering steps of Age
Trod down the darksome way;
And some in Youth’s lamented prime,
Like thee, were torn away.

Yet these, however hard their fate,
Their native earth receives:
Amid their weeping friends they died,
And fill their fathers’ graves.

From thy lov’d friends, when first thy heart
Was taught by Heaven to glow,
Far, far remov’d, the ruthless stroke
Surpris’d, and laid thee low.

At the last limits of our Isle,
Wash’d by the western wave,
Touch’d by thy fate, a thoughtful Bard
Sits lonely on thy grave!
nothing of Theocritus and nothing of Maro; and, had he written of pastoral verse, would certainly have quoted, not Pope but his favourite Shenstone.

I

HAIL, Poesie! thou Nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
'Mang heaps o' clavers!
And och! o'er aft thy joes hae starv'd
'Mid a' thy favours!

II

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage,
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriage?

III

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame!

IV

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches!
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin patches
O' heathen tatters!
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

V

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace,
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian share
A rival place?

VI

Yes! there is ane — a Scottish callan!
There's ane! Come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
A chiel sae clever!
The teeth o' Time may gnaw Tantallan,
But thou's for ever.

VII

Thou paints auld Nature to the nines
In thy sweet Caledonian lines!
Nae Gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell:

VIII

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonie lasses bleach their claes,
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

IX

Thy rural loves are nature's sel':
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell,
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin love,
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF
DRUMLANRIG WOODS

First published in The Scots Magazine for July (1803), where it is stated that the verses had been found "written on the window-shutter of a small inn on the banks of the Nith," and that they were "supposed to have been written by Burns." This is a little vague. Cromek, who didn't print the verses, told Creech that they were written by Henry Mackenzie, but there is nothing beyond this statement to confirm the ascription; though one could credit Mackenzie with them far more easily than one could credit Burns.

I

As on the banks of winding Nith
Ae smiling simmer morn I stray'd,
And traced its bonie holms and haughs,
Where linties sang, and lammies play'd,
I sat me down upon a craig,
And drank my fill o' faney's dream,
When from the eddying deep below
Up rose the Genius of the Stream.

II

Dark like the frowning rock his brow,
And troubled like his wintry wave,
WHY SHOULD WE IDLY WASTE OUR PRIME

I

I MARRIED with a scolding wife The fourteenth of November: She made me weary of my life By one unruly member. Long did I bear the heavy yoke, And many griefs attended, But to my comfort be it spoke, Now, now her life is ended!

II

We liv’d full one-and-twenty years A man and wife together. At length from me her course she steer’d And gone I know not whither. Would I could guess, I do profess: I speak, and do not flatter, Of all the women in the world, I never would come at her!

III

Her body is bestowed well — A handsome grave does hide her. But sure her soul is not in Hell — The Deil would ne’er abide her! I rather think she is aloft And imitating thunder, For why? — Methinks I hear her voice Tearing the clouds asunder!

WHY SHOULD WE IDLY WASTE OUR PRIME

I

Why should we idly waste our prime Repeating our oppressions? Come rouse to arms! 'Tis now the time To punish past transgressions. 'Tis said that Kings can do no wrong — Their murderous deeds deny it, And, since from us their power is sprung, We have a right to try it. Now each true patriot’s song shall be: — “Welcome Death or Libertie!”

II

Proud Priests and Bishops we’ll translate And canonize as Martyrs; The guillotine on Peers shall wait; And Knights shall hang in garters. Those Despots long have trode us down, And Judges are their engines:
Such wretched minions of a Crown
Demand the people's vengeance!
To-day 'tis theirs. To-morrow we
Shall don the Cap of Libertie!

III
The Golden Age we'll then revive:
Each man will be a brother;
In harmony we all shall live,
And share the earth together;
In Virtue train'd, enlighten'd Youth
Will love each fellow-creature;
And future years shall prove the truth
That Man is good by nature:
Then let us toast with three times three
The reign of Peace and Libertie!

THE TREE OF LIBERTY

Chambers gave as his authority a ms. then in the possession of Mr. James Duncan, Morefield, Glasgow. The Tree of Liberty reads like a bad blend of Scots Wha Hae and Is There For Honest Poverty; and as the ms. has not been heard of since 1838, we may charitably conclude that Burns neither made the trash nor copied it.

I
Heard ye o' the Tree o' France,
And wat ye what's the name o't?
Around it a' the patriots dance—
Weel Europe kens the fame o't!
It stands where ance the Bastile stood—
A prison built by kings, man,
When Superstition's hellish brood
Kept France in leading-strings, man.

II
Upo' this tree there grows sic fruit,
Its virtues a' can tell, man:
It raises man aboon the brute,
It mak's him ken himsel', man!
Gif ance the peasant taste a bit,
He's greater than a lord, man,
And wi' the beggar shares a mite
O' a' he can afford, man.

III
This fruit is worth a' Afric's wealth:
To comfort us 'twas sent, man,
To gie the sweetest blush o' health,
And mak' us a' content, man!
TO THE OWL

IX
Without this tree alake this life
Is but a vale o' woe, man,
A scene o' sorrow mix'd wi' strife,
Nae real joys we know, man;
We labour soon, we labour late,
To feed the titled knave, man,
And a' the comfort we're to get,
Is that ayont the grave, man.

DELIA
Wi' plenty o' sic trees, I trow,
The world would live in peace, man.
The sword would help to mak' a plough,
The din o' war wad cease, man.
Like brethren in a common cause,
We'd on each other smile, man;
And equal rights and equal laws
Wad gladden every isle, man.

TO A KISS
Published in a Liverpool paper called The Kaleidoscope, and there attributed to Burns. It, however, appeared originally (and anonymously) in The Oracle, January 29, 1796, long the favoured organ of the wretched Della Cruscan shoal; and it has the right Anna Matilda smack throughout. After all, too, that a thing is bad enough to have been written by Burns for Thomson is no proof that it is Burns's work.

I
HUMID seal of soft affections,
Tend'rest pledge of future bliss,
Dearest tie of young connections,
Love's first snow-drop, virgin kiss!

TO THE OWL
"Found among the Poet's mss. in his own handwriting, with occasional interlinearations such as occur in all his primitive effusions;" but attributed by him to John M'Credie, of whom nothing is known. To our mind, those who give the verses to Burns would give him anything.

I
SAD bird of night, what sorrow calls thee forth,
To vent thy plaints thus in the midnight hour?
Is it some blast that gathers in the north,
Threat'ning to nip the verdure of thy bow'r?

II
Is it, sad owl, that Autumn strips the shade,
And leaves thee here, unshelter'd and forlorn?
Or fear that Winter will thy nest invade?
Or friendless Melancholy bids thee mourn?

III
Shut out, lone bird, from all the feather'd train,
To tell thy sorrows to th' unheeding gloom,
No friend to pity when thou dost complain,
Grief all thy thought, and solitude thy home,

IV
Sing on, sad mourner! I will bless thy strain,
And pleas'd in sorrow listen to thy song.
Sing on, sad mourner! To the night complain,
While the lone echo wafts thy notes along.

V
Is Beauty less, when down the glowing cheek
Sad, piteous tears in native sorrows fall?
Less kind the heart when anguish bids it break?
Less happy he who lists to Pity's call?

VI
Ah no, sad owl! nor is thy voice less sweet,
That Sadness tunes it, and that Grief is there?
That Spring's gay notes, unskill'd, thou can't repeat,
That Sorrow bids thee to the gloom repair!

VII
Nor that the treble songsters of the day,
Are quite estranged, sad bird of night, from thee!
Nor that the thrush deserts the evening spray,
When darkness calls thee from thy reverie!

VIII
From some old tower, thy melancholy dome,
While the gray walls and desert solitudes
Return each note, responsive to the gloom
Of ivied covert's and surrounding woods:

IX
There hooting, I will list more pleased to thee,
Than ever lover to the nightingale,
Or drooping wretch, oppress'd with misery,
Lending his ear to some condoling tale!

THE VOWELS

A TALE

'TWAS where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where Ignorance her darkening vapour throws,
And Cruelty directs the thickening blows!
Upon a time, Sir A B C the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling Vowels to account.

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge he grunted, ai!

Reluctant, E stalk'd in; a piteous case,
The justling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale, he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The Pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.
ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CHILD

The cobwebb'd gothic dome resounded, Y!
In sullen vengeance, I disdain'd reply:
The Pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe:
Th' Inquisitor of Spain the most expert
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art.
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering, U
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
The Pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptiz'd him eu, and kick'd him from his sight.

ON THE ILLNESS OF A FAVOURITE CHILD

It is hard to believe that Burns, though his taste in English was none of the finest, could even transcribe such immitigable rubbish.

I
Now health forsakes that angel face,
Nae mair my dearie smiles.
Pale sickness withers ilka grace,
And a' my hopes beguiles.

II
The cruel Powers reject the prayer
I hourly mak' for thee:
Ye Heavens! how great is my despair!
How can I see him die!

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CHILD

Burns's daughter, Elizabeth Riddell, died in the autumn of 1795. But this fact can scarce be regarded as proof of the authenticity of verses altogether in the manner of Mrs. Hemans.

I
O, sweet be thy sleep in the land of the grave,
My dear little angel, for ever!
For ever? — O no! let not man be a slave,
His hopes from existence to sever!

II
Though cold be the clay, where thou pillow'st thy head
In the dark, silent mansions of sorrow,
The spring shall return to thy low, narrow bed,
Like the beam of the day-star to-morrow.

III
The flower-stem shall bloom like thy sweet seraph form
Ere the spoiler had nipt thee in blossom,
When thou shrank frae the scowl of the loud winter storm,
And nestled thee close to that bosom.

IV
O, still I behold thee, all lovely in death,
Reclined on the lap of thy mother,
When the tear-trickle bright, when the short, stifled breath
Told how dear ye were ay to each other.

V
My child, thou art gone to the home of thy rest,
Where suffering no longer can harm thee:
Where the songs of the Good, where the hymns of the Blest
Through an endless existence shall charm thee!

VI
While he, thy fond parent, must sighing sojourn
Through the dire desert regions of sorrow,
O'er the hope and misfortune of being to mourn,
And sigh for this life's latest morrow.
GLOSSARY

A', all.
Abeigh, at a shy distance.
Aboon, above.
Abread, abroad, in sight.
Acquent, acquainted.
Adle, putrid water.
Ae, one.
Aff, off.
Af-hand, at once.
Aft, oft.
A-gley, off the right line.
Aiblins, perhaps.
Aik, oak.
Ain, own.
Air, early.
Airle, earnest money.
Airns, irons.
Airt, the point from which the wind blows.
Aith, oath.
Aiver, an old horse.
Aizle, a cinder.
Amaist, almost.
Amang, among.
An, if.
Ance, anes, once.
Ane, one.
Anither, another.
An's, and am.
Ase, ashes.
Asklent, aslant.
Auld, old.
Aumous, alms.
Awa', away.
Awe, owe.
Awfu', awful.
Aye, always.
B', ball.
Backet, a box.
Baggie, the belly.
Bainie, bony.
Baith, both.
Ban, curse.
Barm, yeast.
Batts, adds fuel to fire.
Bien, belong to.
Bield, shelter.
Binn, plentiful.
Bis, to build.
Billie, a young fellow.
Bings, heaps.
Birdie, dim. of bird.

Birk, the birch.
Birkie, a spirited fellow.
Bizz, a buzz.
Blasie, a term of contempt.
Blatild, blasted, withered.
Blate, shamefaced, bashful.
Blond, a large quantity, a screech.
Blow, to blow, to brag.
Blown, blown.
Bleert, bleared.
Bleeze, a blaze.
Bleeting, blazing.
Blether, an idle-talking fellow.
Blether, bladder.
Blethering, talking idly.
Blin', blind.
Blink, a look.
Blinkers, spies.
Bletters, the snipe.
Blood, blood.
Blouse, shreds.
Bobbled, curtsied.
Boddle, a small coin.
Boke, bulk, a human trunk.
Bousing, drinking.
Brac, the slope of a hill.
Braid, broad.
Braek, did break.
Brak's, broke his.
Brankie, spruce.
Branks, a curb, a bridle.
Brats, rags.
Bratlett, a scamp.
Braw, handsome.
Brawlie, a brawl.
Breed, behove, must needs.
Bore, bone or rent.
Boulk, bulk, a human trunk.
Bous, bous.
Bowe, a hole.
Bow, a stream.
Bowie, a bower.
Braed, a braid.
Braek, did break.
Braek, a braid.
Breachan, a horse collar.
Brees, breeches.
Brear, a brier.
Brem, straight, smooth, unwrinkled.
Brief, a writ.
Brig, a bridge.
Brother, brother.
Brooke, a badger.
Bront, straight, smooth, unwrinkled.
Bront, straight, smooth, unwrinkled.
Briquet, briquet, a braw.
Brun, hum.
Burdie, damael.
Burn, a stream.
Burnie, dim. of burn.
Busk, adorn.
But, without.
Byke, bee-hive.

Ca', to drive.
Cader, a hawker.
Callan, a boy.
Caller, fresh.
Cam, came.
Canna, cannot.
Cantrip, charm, spell.
Candy, pleasant.
Cape-stone, cope-stone.
Flae, a flea.
Ferlie, a term of contempt.

Flaugh, the greater portion, considera-

Feg, fig.

Fit, foot.

Flae, a flea.

Flaffin, flapping.

Flang, did fling or caper.

Flannel, flannel.

Fleech'd, supplicated.

Fleec'h, fleece.

Fleg, a blow, a scare.

Flewit, a sharp lash.

Fley, scare.

Flitch'n, fluttering.

Flinging, capering.

Fliskit, capered.

Flit, shift.

Flyle, acold.

Fog'd, dumpy.

Foggage, stray vegetable material
used by birds, etc., for nests.

Poor, feared.

Forbears, forefathers.

Forby, besides.

Forfoughten, exhausted.

Forfacer, to make acquaintance
with.

Forgesket, fatigued.

Forgie, forgive.

Forrit, forward.

Fou', tipsy.

Fouth, abundance.

Frae, from.

Fremit, estranged.

Foul, full.

Fud, a short tail.

Fuff', puffed.

Fusionless, pitchless.

Fyke, fret.

Fyle, foul, soil.

Gab, mouth.

Gae, gave, go.

Gaeats, manners.

Gaurs, goes.

Gang, to go.

Gaun, going.

Gaun, yawn.

Gausie, gauie, buxom, jolly.

Gear, wealth, goods.

Geech, sport.

Ged, a pike.

Genty, trim, elegant.

Ghost, a ghost.

Gie, give.

Gif, if.

Giftie, dim. of gift.

Gilpey, a young girl.

Gin, It.

Girn, to grin.

Glaskeit, giddy, foolish.

Glauomed, grasped.

Gled, a hawk.

Glee'd, a coal, a blaze.

Gleit, sharp, quick.

Glinted, glanced.

Glown, to stare.

Glunch, a frown.

Gowvin, mooning.

Gowan, the daisy.

Gowney, daisied.

Gow'd, gold.

Hawd, golden.

Gowdisplait, goldfinch.

Gowf'd, struck.

Gowk, a dolt.

Graft, a grave.

Grant, harness, field implements.

Grane, grain, groan.

Grat, wept.

Grateful, grateful.

Gree, a prize.

Greet, to weep.

Grissie', gristle.

Grouet, gooseberry.

Gruimple, a sow.

Grumble, grunze, the snout, the
mouth.

Grushtie, growing.

Gruiten, wept.

Gude, the Supreme Being, good.

Gude-father, father-in-law.

Guit, good.

Gwad Willie, hearty.

Guilt, a lawyer.

Gunnie, muddy.

Ha', hall.

Ha'-Bible, hall-Bible.

Hae, have.

Hael, a bit, an atom.

Haffett, the temples.

Hajflins, partly.

Hag, a mss, a broken bogg.

Haggiis, a kind of pudding boiled in
the stomach of a cow or sheep, the
national Scots pudding.

Hain, to spare, to save.

Harre, harer, the harvest.

Hal', hold, an abiding-place.

Hale, whole, entire.

Halesome, wholesome.

Hallan, a particular partition wall in
a cottage.

Hall, holy.

Hame, home.

Hamely, homely.

Han', hand.

Hand-y't, hand-picked.

Hansel, a gift.

Hap, a wrap.

Hap-shackled, foot-tied.

Harn, yard.

Hase, a soft, useless fellow.

Hastlock woo, the wool on a sheep's
neck.

Haul, to hold.

Haugh, low-lying rich lands.

Haunt, trail, drag.

Hause, embrace, cuddle.

Haveril, a half-witted person.

Havers, nonsense.

Havens, good manners.

Hawkeie, a cow, properly one with a
white face.

Hearns, hoarse.

Hetch, promise, menace.

Heese, hoist.

Heft, haft.

Herry, harry, plunder.

Herh, herself.

Het, hot.

Hough, a crag, a steep bank.

Hitch, to hobble.

Himself, himself.

Hing, to hang.

Hirpie, hibbie, limp.

Histed, dry, barren.

Hitch, loop or knot.
GLOSSARY

Am, a maker.
Aery, a little.
Ake, a key.
Akeen, an English pint.
Ale, to pay, a little.
Alpillie, a plover.
Ait, to walk.
Ait, a bower.
Aithe, to beset.
Airy, a little.
Alam, a laugh.
Alas, to draw.
Ald, a slave.
Alin, a lion.
Aly, a child.
Al, ever.
Alfo, a little.
Aloof, a little.
Alou, to separate.
All, all.
All, a little.
Allin, to take.
All, a little.
All, all.
All, a little.
All, all.
Alm, a lamb.
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Glossary

Skeigh, to scream.
Skyae, a dash.
Slaps, gates, stiles, breaches in hedges.
Slae, slow.
Slee, sly, ingenious.
Sleekit, sleek.
Smedum, dust, powder.
Smoor'd, smothered.
Snakin', sneering.
Snappar, to stumble.
Sna, snow.
Sned, to hop, to cut.
Sneesin mill, a muffle-box.
Snell, bitter, biting.
Snick, a latch.
Snit, to snigger.
Snood, a fillet.
Snool, to cringe, to submit tamely.
Snooze, to go smoothly.
Sonsie, jolly, comely.
Soom, swoom, to swim.
Sook, to suck.
Soup, a spoonful, a small quantity of something liquid.
Souple, supple.
Souter, a shoemaker.
South, to try over a tune with a low whistle.
Sowther, to solder.
Space, to forecast.
Spair, to splash.
Spak, a stroke.
Spate, a flood.
Spaviet, spavined.
Spean, to wean.
Speel, to climb.
Spence, the country parlor.
Spier, to ask, inquire.
Spier't, inquired.
Spiech, a tobacco pouch.
Spioro, a frolic, a row.
Sprall, to struggle.
Spring, a lively tune.
Spunk, a match, a spark, spirit.
Sprat, to sprawl.
Stacker, to stagger.
Stack, stuck.
Stag, a young horse.
Stane, a stone.
Stank, a ditch, a pool.
Stars, stars.
Staumrel, half-witted.
Statu, stale.
Staig, a young horse.
Stane, a stone.
Staun, stole, a stall.
Steak, a stitch, to close.
Steer, to injure, to meddle with.
Steed, still.
Sten, a leap.
Stibble, stubble.
Stich, limp.
Stirk, a cow or bullock a year old.
Stoller, to stagger.
Stoor, hoarse.
Stours, dust.
Stratch, a stroke.
Strang, strong.
Strath, a Scottish dance.
Streeted, stretched.
Strunt, liquor.
Strunt, to strut.
Sturt, worry, trouble.
Sugh, a rushing sound.
Swall'd, swelled.
Swank, limber.
Swarf, to swoon.
Swats, ale.

Swith, swift.
Swither, hesitation.
Sybow, a young onion.
Syne, then, since.

Tack, a lease.
Taen, taken.
Tak, to take.
Tane, the one.
Tapeless, headless.
Tap, topmost.
Taps, tops.
Tauld, told.
Taufie, a foolish young woman.
Tawed, matted, uncombed.
Teats, small quantities.
Teen, provocation, chagrin.
Tent, to take heed, mark.
Tenlie, needful.
Tough, tough.
Thack, thatch.
Thae, these.
Thairm, an intestine.
Theckit, theched.
Thegither, together.
Themsel, to themselves.
Thiggin, begging.
Thir, these.
Thirt'd, thrilled.
Thole, to suffer, to endure.
Thow's, thou art, thou wilt.
Thowsless, lazy.
Thrang, throng, crowded, busy.
Thrappe, the windpipe.
Thrave, twenty-four sheaves of corn, including two shocks.
Throw, to twist, to turn, to thwart.
Throw, to assert persistently.
Thrifty, thirty.
Thrissle, thistle.
Thummar, a polecat.
Thyiell, thyself.
Tight, prepared.
Till, to, unto.
Till't, to it.
Tine, to go astray.
Tinkler, a tinkler.
Tint, lost.
Tippeny, twopenny ale.
Tips, rams.
Tirt, to uncover, to rattle.
Tocker, a dowry.
Tods, foxes.
Toon, empty.
Tops, tops.
Toun, a hamlet.
Tow, a rope.
Towmont, a twelvemonth.
Towzie, tousie, shaggy.
Tow, a rope.
Toy, an old fashion of female head-dress.
Toye, to totter.
Tozie, tipsey.
Trews, trousers.
Trig, trim, neat.
Trove, to exchange.
Tryste, a fair, a cattle market.
Tulse, a quarrel.
Tua, two.
Tual, twelve.
Twin, twin, to rob.
Tyke, a vagrant dog.

Ulzie, oil.
Unchancy, dangerous.
Unco, very, strange.
Uncoes, strange things, news.
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<th>Unfauld, to unfold.</th>
<th>Waukrife, wakeful.</th>
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<td>Unlawfu', unlawful.</td>
<td>Waur, worse.</td>
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<td>Upo', upon.</td>
<td>Wean, a child.</td>
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<td>Usquebae, usquebaugh, whisky.</td>
<td>Weary fa', woe befall.</td>
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<td>Vauntie, vain, proud.</td>
<td>Wee, little.</td>
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<td>Vera, very.</td>
<td>Weel, well.</td>
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<td>Viris, ferrules, rings.</td>
<td>Weed-hain'd, well-saved.</td>
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<td>Vogie, vain.</td>
<td>Weed, wet.</td>
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<td>Wa', wall.</td>
<td>We'se, we shall or will.</td>
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<td>Wabster, a weaver.</td>
<td>Westin, western.</td>
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<td>Wad, would, wed, wager.</td>
<td>Wha, who.</td>
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<td>Wadset, a mortgage.</td>
<td>Whatisle, to wheeze.</td>
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<td>Wae, woe.</td>
<td>Wham, whom.</td>
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<td>Wae worth, woe befall.</td>
<td>Whang, a large slice, to flog.</td>
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<td>Weir't, spend it.</td>
<td>Whare, where.</td>
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<td>Wele, to choose.</td>
<td>Whaup, the curlew.</td>
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<td>Waitie, ample, large.</td>
<td>Wheep, to jerk.</td>
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<td>Wame, the womb, the belly.</td>
<td>Whid, a fib.</td>
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<td>Wan, won.</td>
<td>Whiddin, scudding.</td>
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<td>Wancheance, unlucky.</td>
<td>Whide, gambols.</td>
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<td>Wanstfu', restless.</td>
<td>Whiles, sometimes.</td>
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<td>Wark, work.</td>
<td>Whingin, whining.</td>
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<td>Warid, world.</td>
<td>Whins, furze bushes.</td>
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<td>Warlock, wizard.</td>
<td>Whistle, whistle.</td>
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<td>Warl'y, worldly.</td>
<td>Whitter, a hearty draught of liquor.</td>
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<td>Warsle, to wrestle, to struggle.</td>
<td>Wit', with.</td>
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<td>Wat, wot, know, wet.</td>
<td>Wt' 'm, with him.</td>
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<td>Wauble, to wobble.</td>
<td>Widdle, a wriggle, a struggle.</td>
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<td>Waught, a deep draught.</td>
<td>Wiel, a whirlpool.</td>
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<td>Wauken, to waken.</td>
<td>Wife, dim. of wife.</td>
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<td>Waukit, horny.</td>
<td>Win, won.</td>
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<td>Winna, will not.</td>
<td>Winnock-bunker, a seat in a window.</td>
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<td>Wins, winds.</td>
<td>Widdle, to wriggle, to stagger.</td>
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<td>Wiss, wuss, to wish.</td>
<td>Woefu', woeful.</td>
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<td>Won, to dwell.</td>
<td>Winner, a wonder, a term of contempt.</td>
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<td>Woo', wool.</td>
<td>Woddie, a rope, the gallows.</td>
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<td>Wordy, worthy.</td>
<td>Worsel, worted.</td>
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<td>Wrang, wrong.</td>
<td>Wud, mad.</td>
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<td>Wyliecoat, a flannel vest.</td>
<td>Wyke, blame.</td>
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<td>Yaud, a jade, an old mare.</td>
<td>Yell, dry.</td>
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<td>Yerl, an earl.</td>
<td>Yestreen, last night.</td>
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<td>Yeu, a gate.</td>
<td>Yew, to itch.</td>
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<td>Yild, ale.</td>
<td>Yirch, the earth.</td>
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<td>Yokin', yoking, a bout, a set to.</td>
<td>Yokin', yoking, a bout, a set to.</td>
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<td>Yont, beyond.</td>
<td>Yont, beyond.</td>
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<td>Yourkers, youngsters.</td>
<td>Yoursel, yourself.</td>
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<td>Yoursel, yourself.</td>
<td>Youthfu', youthful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youthfu', youthful.</td>
<td>Yowe, ewe.</td>
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