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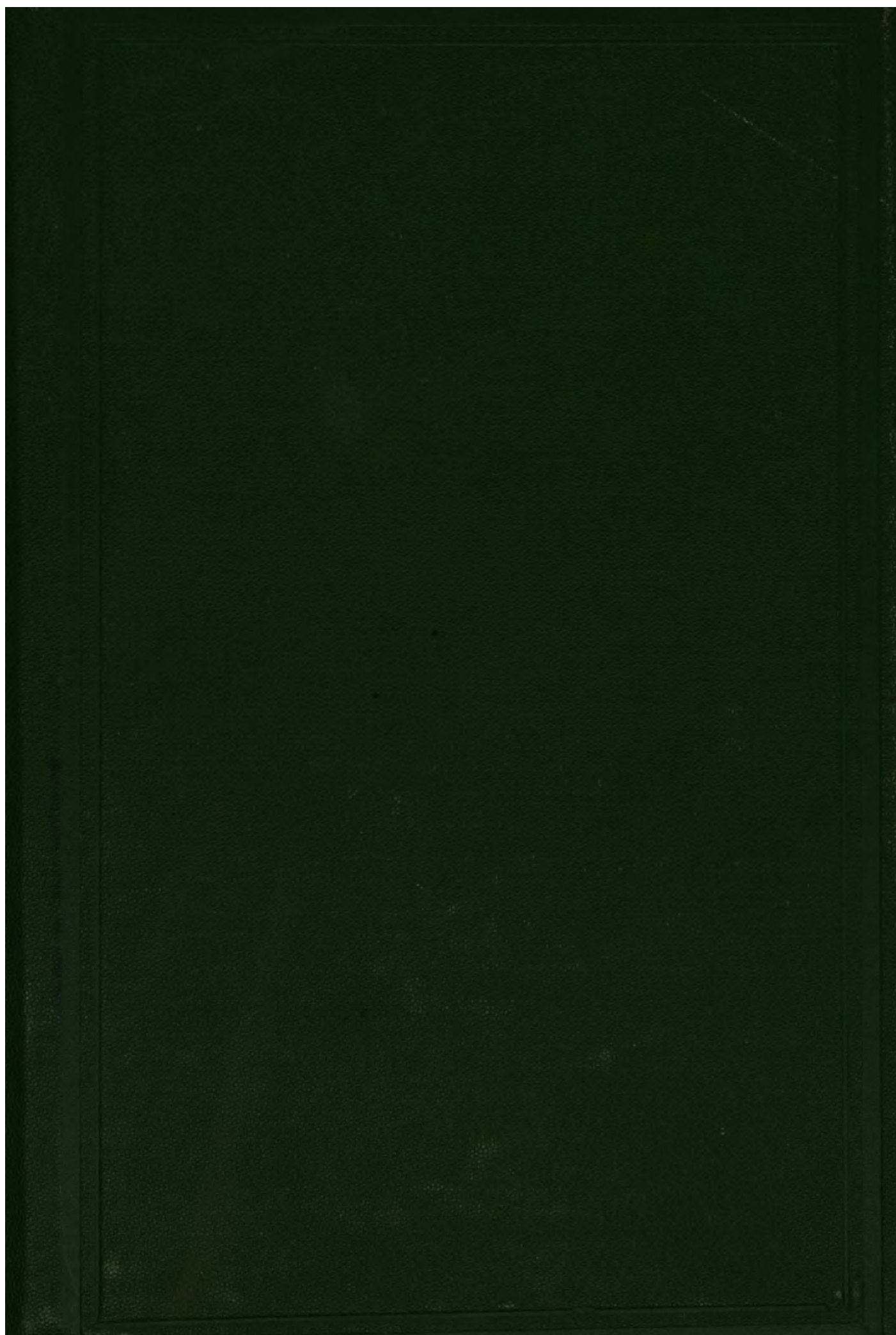
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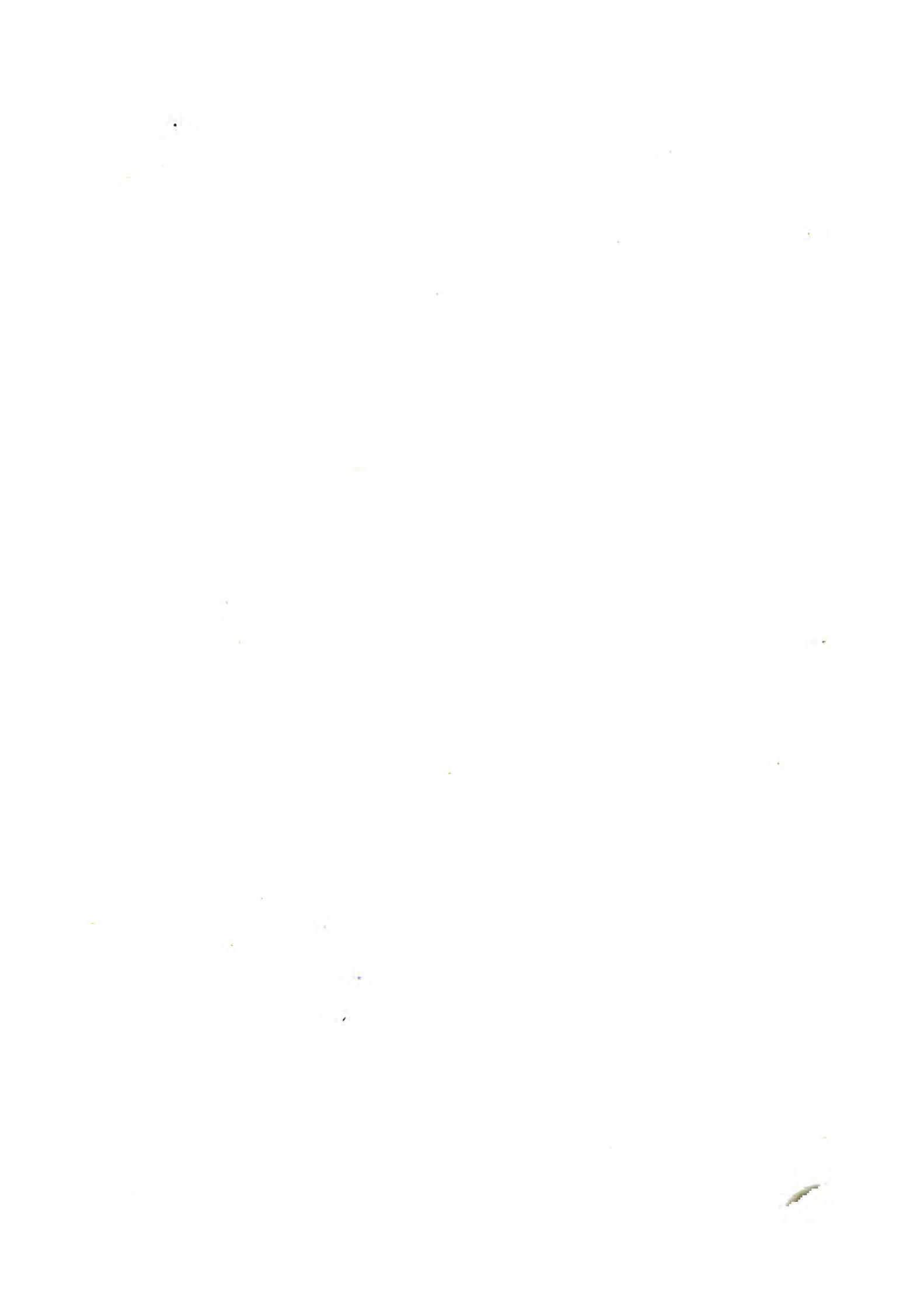
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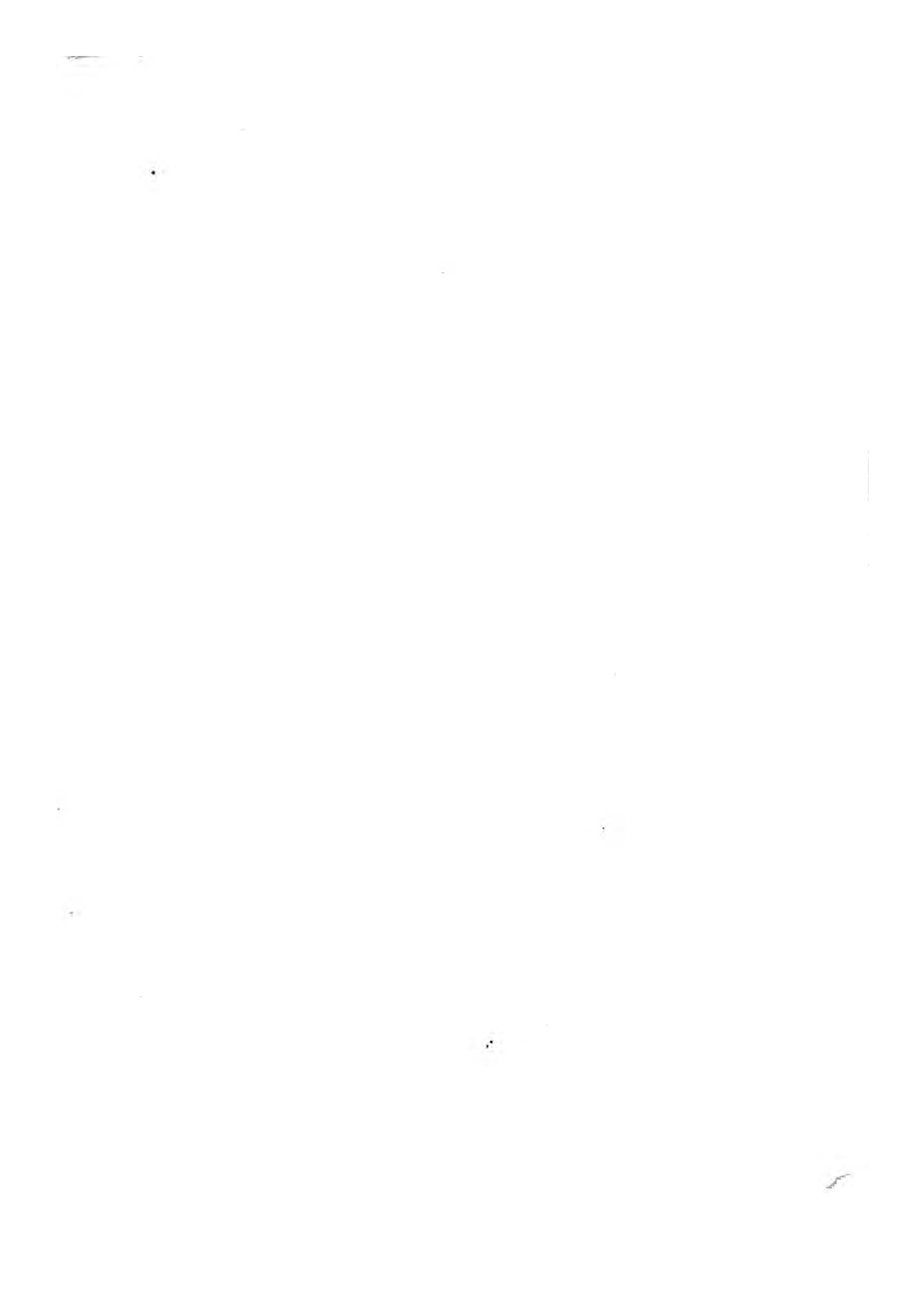


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WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER.





WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER,

BY

JOHN RAMSAY,

KILMARNOCK, AYRSHIRE.

Fifth Thousand.

“ Have I not had to wrestle with my lot ?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven ?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, life's life *lied* away ?”

GLASGOW :

WILLIAM MACRONE, 23 ST. ENOCH SQUARE.

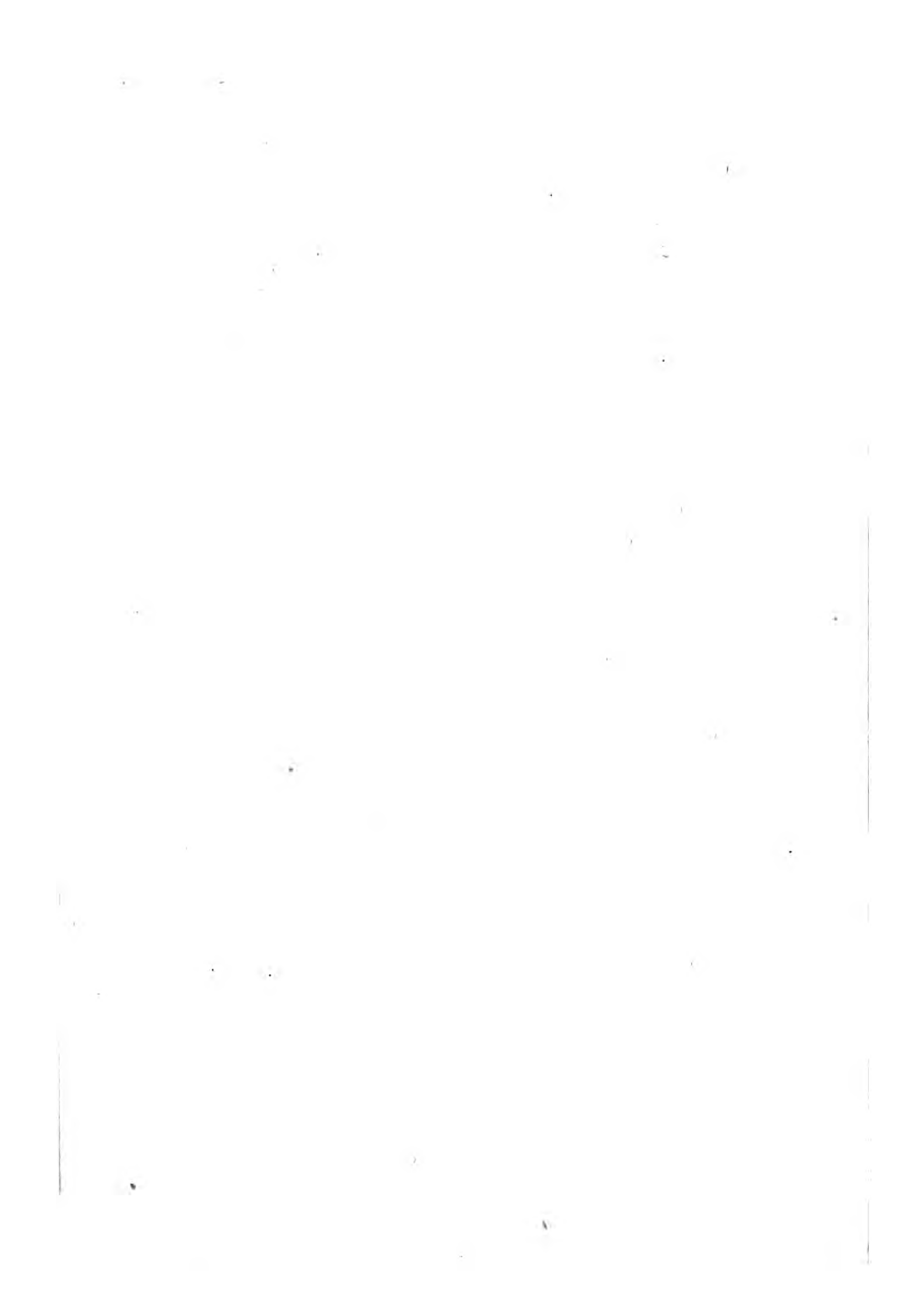
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GLASGOW :

WILLIAM MACRONE, PRINTER, 23 ST. ENOCH SQUARE.



By Druid's cairn, by martyr's stane,
By ruin grey, through churchyard lane,
By river famed, o'er battle-plain,
 The wild, the dread,
The fair, entwined with deathless strain,
 'Twas his to tread,



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BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

JOHN RAMSAY was born in Kilmarnock in the year 1802. His education, like that of most individuals in his sphere of life, was limited. While under the jurisdiction of the "dominie," he resided occasionally with his grandfather at Gulilland, near the village of Dundonald. The ancient castle, and the romantic scenery in the neighbourhood, linked as they are with the stirring events of Scottish history, had, no doubt, an inspiring effect on the ardent mind of Ramsay. Hence it is that we often find him reverting, in his poems, to the enchanting spot, with all the buoyancy of youthful enthusiasm.

He was afterwards apprenticed, in his native place, as a carpet weaver ; and, amidst the din and dissonance of the loom-shop, he occasionally essayed, in fancy's dream, to visit the poet's bower. A subscription paper for a ball was at one time handed through the carpet work, bearing these lines—

“ Every good fellow who wishes to prance,
Come pray take the pencil and sign for a dance.”

and which, as a matter of course, was submitted to Ramsay, who wrote the following *impromptu* on the back of it :—

“ Old Plato once met Father Jove,
And asked the Self-Existent,
' What was in earth or heaven above,
Of all most inconsistent.' ”

“ Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
To Heaven's high tower advancing,
Unveiled this world—' Now ' says the god,
D'ye see yon weavers dancing ? ”

The satire, though it galled the more earnest promoters of the ball, was much appreciated ; and Ramsay was induced to send the lines for insertion to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, a clever periodical, edited by Henry Glassford Bell, Esq. The lines, trifling as they may appear, were inserted in an early number. Emboldened by encouragement, Mr. Ramsay contributed another poem to the

Journal, entitled "Lines to Eliza," which was also received, and highly recommended by the indulgent editor.

When the late Marquis of Hastings visited Loudon Castle in 1823, after his return from India, the Kilmarnock Volunteers and the Ayrshire Yeomanry repaired thither to congratulate him on his arrival. The excitement created in Kilmarnock by the turn out of the volunteers was considerable, and formed the engrossing subject of conversation for several weeks. Ramsay, whose *forte* certainly lies more in the satirical than the pathetic, selected "the march" of the volunteers as a legitimate subject for his pen, and wrote an amusing poem, in which he did ample justice to some of the more eccentric characters in the "dandy corps." The poem, though only in manuscript, was widely known throughout "Auld Killie," at that time ringing with

—————"The great campaign,
Which the brave dandies did sustain."

Mr. Ramsay continued to work at the carpets for a number of years ; but he is now, and has been for a length of time, in business as a victualler and spirit-dealer in Kilmarnock. He is married, and has a rising family.

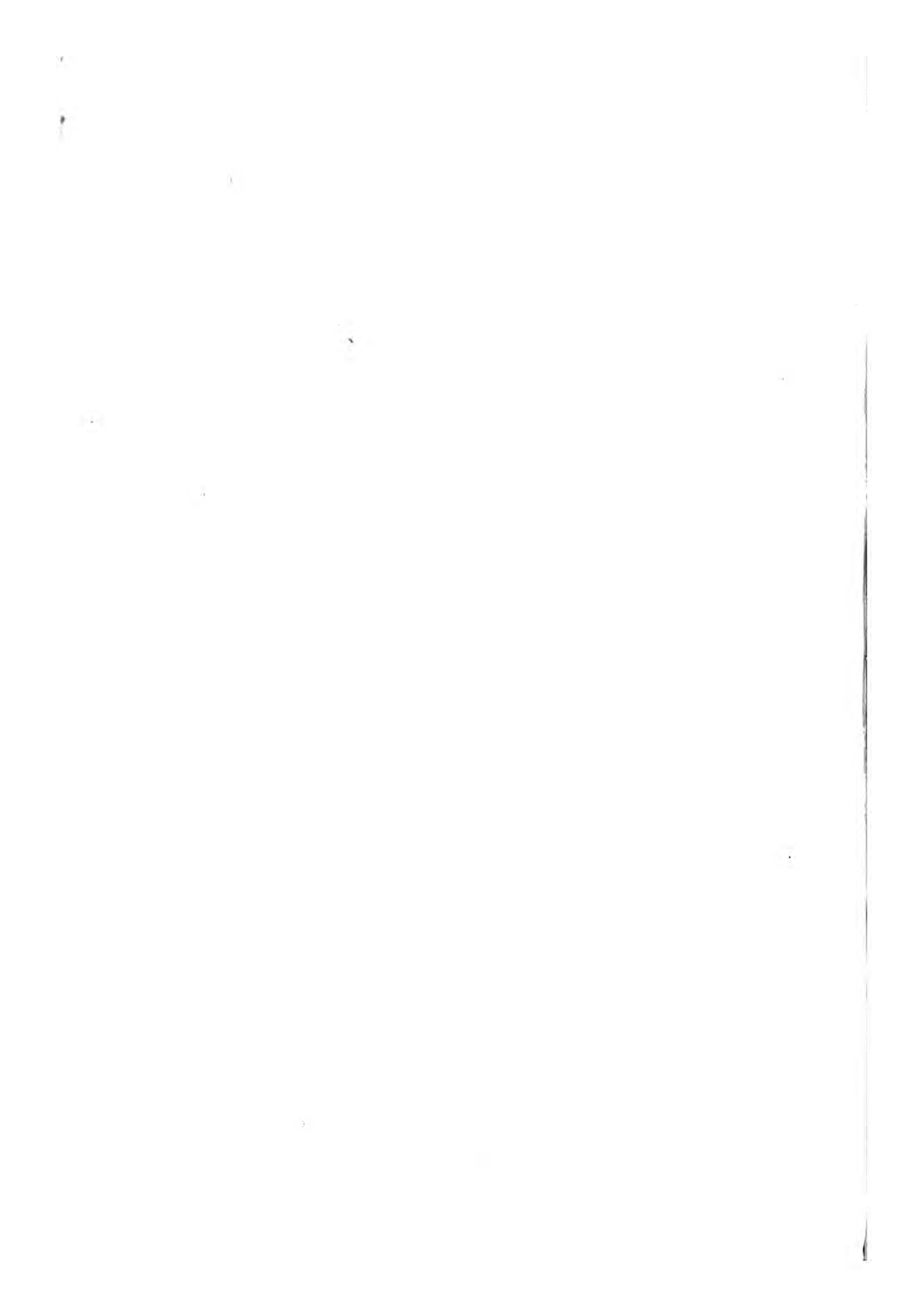
In 1836, after a sufficient number of subscribers had been obtained, he published the first edition of his poems, of

which a thousand copies were printed. In 1839, he was induced to publish a second edition, with emendations and improvements ; and now, we understand, a third edition of a thousand copies is in the press. The volume was favourably noticed in *Chambers's Journal*, and several local and other provincial newspapers.

“The Eglinton Park meeting,” the leading poem in the second edition, is among the latest of his writings ; and, if we may judge from the strong poetical vein pervading it, his genius appears only to require cultivation to undertake a more daring flight. Written in the strain of Tenant’s “Anster Fair,” “The Eglinton Park Meeting” is a running commentary on everything that came within the author’s observation, and is a poem of undoubted merit.

In the “Address to Dundonald Castle,” he is no less felicitous in the selection of material than judicious in its arrangement. The ancient ruin, once the seat of Scottish royalty, is revered by the poet with an ardour, and described with a vigour, that touches and awakens the tender susceptibilities of the heart. We do not envy the man, who, after visiting the sylvan shades and shaggy hills of Dundonald, does not recognise, in the glowing imagery of the poet, the reality and boldness of its representation.—

From "*The Contemporaries of Burns, and the more recent Poets of Ayrshire.*" Published by Hugh Paton, Carver and Gilder to the Queen, and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. Edinburgh, 1840.



POEMS.

EGLINTON PARK MEETING.

“ If Pindar sung horse races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar ?”

BYRON.

I.

THE morning dawned, the glorious source of light
Arose in all his radiant beauty drest,
And bade the seas and rivers sparkle bright,
And cheered afar the lonely mountain's breast,
Whose shaggy top was veiled in vapours white,
Where soared, sublime, the eagle o'er her nest,
Beside the warrior's cairn the lamb and ewe
Grazed 'mong red heath, wild-thyme, and harebell blue.

II.

And on a rock that aged seemed as earth,
Where time had toiled till with his toil turned grey,
The shepherd sat, and eyed, in all her mirth,
Nature rejoice along life's flowery way ;
From blossomed thorn the mavis warbled forth,
The linnet from the broom and birchen spray,
The cushat mourned, and, as the bass to all,
Loud thundered o'er the rock the mighty waterfall.

B

III.

Descending thence, along the misty plain,
On wings of thought th' enraptured eye surveyed
Rich lawns, extending even to the main,
And groves and vales in verdure's pomp arrayed ;
And waving woods, now lost, and now again
The broad bright river, in his strength displayed,
Proud aristocracy's bedazzling bower,
The lone sad remnants of the feudal tower.

IV.

Far other features showed the city's face—
Buildings on buildings piled unto the sky,
The vagrant curs about the market-place,
The high slow-moving wain, the driver's cry,
The bawling sweep, the tippler on the chase,
Of stunted form, pale cheek, and heavy eye ;
Toil's various tribes unto their tasks repair,
The drunkard to his den of frenzy and despair.

V.

O Heaven ! what means this vortex we behold
Of human passions, human joys and woes,
Of vast extremes, and much that is untold
In life's retreats ?—For ever onward flows
Time's tide, on which we rise but to be rolled
As wrecks, with all our transports and our throes,
Down to that deep impenetrable gloom
Which hangs o'er all that lies beyond the tomb.

VI.

But with that God we have begun our song,
 Who swept of old the lyre, and strung the bow,
 And dealt in pills (if Ovid be not wrong,) *
 And played the devil 'mong the dames below ;
 When he had farther sped the heavens along,
 Our streets, lanes, highways, made a glorious show,
 With wains, carts, gigs, cars, studded with blythe faces,
 Still answering to the query—"Are ye for the races?"

VII.

Behold how little lifts the sons of verse !
 I fast got breakfast, faster was arrayed -
 For Poets' garments, like their pounds, are scarce—
 And seldom are on that account mislaid ;
 I cannot say that mine are the reverse,
 And, worse than that, not altogether paid ;
 But soon I mounted by the turnpike post,
 Watching, but not like Hamlet—for a ghost.

* " Mine is the invention of the charming lyre ;
 Sweet notes and heavenly numbers I inspire.
 Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart.
 But, ah ! more deadly his who pierced my heart,
 Med'cine is mine, what herbs and simples grow
 In fields and forests, all their powers I know ;
 And am the great physician called below."

VIII.

A car instanter trundled into sight,
Drawn by a donkey-looking creature vile,
Which in its youth had galloped with delight
On the high hills of some bleak misty isle.
A seat I found, and having sung—"All's right,"
Sober began to measure the first mile ;—
Seat, did I say !—a hanging on the door,
For in the vehicle were already four.

IX.

One was a dominie,* a wag most queer,
As full of mirth as is of meat the egg ;
Another was his daughter, and his dear
Partner in care a third, whom he called Meg ;
The fourth, of whom you heavily shall hear,
In millstones dealt, and wore a wooden leg,
A namesake of the Macedonian chief,
The past world's greatest murderer and thief !

X.

Little occurred worth noting on the way ;
Thronged with all kinds of creatures were the highways.
Of every colour in the light of day,
Crowds still came forth to join them from the byeways,
We took, in Dreghorn village, a short stay ;
For having got, as some say, "kin' o' dry ways ;"

* Schoolmaster.

A place, like all else, where the greatest dunce,
May find the parson's residence at once.

XI.

For I must say, wherever I have been,
This task but little of perception craves ;
O'er other mansions, soon the *manse* is seen,
Like some proud eastern prince above his slaves ;
The pasture's rougher, and of deeper green,
A heavier crop upon the tillage waves ;
The cow is plump, even something spherical
Ye're sure to find grimalkin clerical.

XII.

But, let us on : to Irvine soon we got,
Where swarms were casting fast, and others hiving,
And others sweeping past as hard and hot
As Monsieur Jehu had resumed the driving :
Waiters and ostlers drawing in the groat—
Like bladders blowing were their purses thriving ;
Old Lethe's stream had swallowed up the ills
Of life, crossed loves, duns, and dishonoured bills.

XIII.

By Jupiter ! it is a glorious thing
That there are times when we forget our cares,
Else to the grave they would our craniums bring,
Long, long ere garnished by the hoary hairs

The patriarch spake of ;* but come, trim your wing,
 My Muse and mind more intimate affairs,
 For now the scene of action we are near,
 And best of company in front and rear.

XIV.

Through the deep ruts, and fast fatiguing sand
 Strained little "Charlie," though it was but slow,
 And sunk his hoof where Neptune did command
 The bounding waves a thousand years ago,
 When unexpectedly he made a stand—
 "Broke down," was chanted round, "broke down,
 hallo,"
 And now our precious dominie alighting,
 Leaped up into the air like cock a-fighting !

XV.

And stamped and swore with terrifying mien,
 And cursed each thing that ever went on wheel,
 Since the first day that chariot was seen
 Which had the prophet footman to Jezreel ; †
 All horses, mules, and asses, that have been
 Since Balaam's donkey made her grand appeal ;
 Each soul that ever drove a car a mile,
 Since chariots started in the land of Nile.

XVI.

To every heathen deity for aid
 He cried aloud ; but, suddenly detecting

* Genesis xlii. 38.

+ 1 Kings xviii. 46.

His error, next to all the saints he prayed—
 (When wroth we're nowise given to reflecting);
All fiends of whom e'er Milton mention made
 He next invoked, and, foresaid things collecting
With oaths that never shall escape my tongue,
Down to their den the inventory flung.

XVII.

But oft when rudest storms have ceased to blow,
 Dame Nature will assume her sweetest face.
And after heights are hollows still, we know,
 This with our dominie was just the case.
Perhaps such impious lengths he did not go ;
 For rhymers ever are a lying race;
But on *shanks-naigie*, or the "Independent,"
We gained the race-ground—a scene resplendent !

XVIII.

Yet ere I dare it in descriptive flight,
 My song, dear Nature, shall arise to thee ;
What transports, dreams fantastically bright,
 Thy charms have given me even in infancy !
Thy dewy wild flowers—dawn—and dying light
 Of day, far o'er the wide illumined sea,
Thy hoary rocks, blue hills, and woodlands green,
Where my young soul first talked with things unseen.

XIX.

Eehold the sandy plain here tells a tale
 Of earth's mutations, to the thinking mind,

In silent eloquence ; the westward vale
 Of mighty waters, rising to the wind,
 And glittering in the sun, where the full sail
 Of Industry or Pleasure still we find,
 August Ben-Ghoil,* where evening billows meet,
 And wash with songs the mountain monarch's feet.

XX.

O, ho ! my little sentimental blue,
 You're at your woods, your hills, and streams again ;
 I'd thank you more to turn and take a view
 Of titled Beauty, through the chariot pane,
 The world's wide continents their tribute due
 Have given to her shrine ; and all in vain
 We seek for smiles to describe the fair,
 For Nature's highest, brightest work is there.

XXI.

And many a youth of fair and manly die,
 On charger of our isle's unrivalled breed,
 Swift as the whirlwinds of the desert fly,
 Pricks o'er the plain the snorting fiery steed !
 What splendid equipages glitter by,
 With sober, stately pace, or graceful speed !
 Homer ! all chariots in thy Trojan scenes
 Were mere wheelbarrows unto our machines !

* Ben-Ghoil, the mountain of the winds, is generally known by its English and less poetical name of Goatfell.—*Scott's Lord of the Isles*. It is the highest mountain in the romantic Island of Arran.

XXII.

Now get your spectacles, my wayward dame !
Some self-styled critics say ye're short of sight—
Nay, altogether stupid, blind and lame ;
(It may be)—but we'll canter o'er a height,
Whose very base would paralyse the same ;
And from one page of Nature's book of light
Draw sweets their souls are strangers to: let's hence !
What mastiff minds the messan's impudence ?

XXIII.

Next see our *buirldly* farmers join the throng,
Upon their blacks, and browns, and lumb'ring greys;
Blythe as the larks the morning clouds among,
Hale as the breeze that fans their native braes;
And Clergy, aye, their gowns and faces long,
And other furniture of Sabbath days,
Are off ; and lawyers, beagles* too—that's odd ;
No ! Satan sometimes ranks with sons of God.

XXIV.

Jack squeezes here his quid as in a vice,
And sea-born phrases deals, and oaths wholesale ;
And there are men of garters, thimbles, dice,
While others nuts and gingerbread retail ;
And some with organs, monkeys, and white mice,
While the *light fingers* follow Mammon's trail,
And prove by practice what the Scriptures say,
"That riches oft make wings and flee away."

* Bumbailiffs.

XXV.

Well, I do think, and almost, too, could swear,
They're here from every land beneath the sun,
And moon, and stars, and clouds—from each nook where
The wind has blown, grass sprung, or water run ;
Where'er mankind have felt the thorns of care,
Or loved, or hated, or seen that old one
Called Death, although I miss the Ashantees,
And Cook's old cronies of the southern seas.

XXVI.

And fore and aft, and right and left they drive,
And ride, and walk, and run, condense and scatter,
Numerous as tenants of the busy hive,
Or the small gentlemen in drops of water
Seen by the microscope, a mass alive ;
And joined with this, say, what a fund of matter
For sad reflection may we glean from yon
Neglected churchyard, all so sad and lone.

XXVII.

But to the tents away now we must hie—
The sun's far up, and soon the race will start—
And all things look more brilliant to the eye,
When folks have something got to keep the heart.
To paint this panorama grand when I
Attempt, as vain, as futile is my art,
As 'twould be catching Garnock* in a riddle,
Or playing on the tongs 'gainst Paganini's fiddle.

* Garnock, a small river in the district of Cunningham, Ayrshire.

XXVIII.

With jostling, squeezing, driving, and what not,
We reached at length the vortex of commotion,
And took our seats among a merry lot,
Deeply engaged in Bacchanal devotion;
Pestiferous power! for all that has been wrote,
And said, and seen, we drain thy deadly potion;
And oft yield part by part, till sinks the whole—
Unnerved the system, and unmanned the soul.

XXIX.

And, shade of Hogarth! what a scene was here:
Such eating, drinking, jesting, laughing, courting;
And by the aid of Fancy's fairy gear,
It seemed that meat and drink had ta'en to sporting,
Their riders thirst and hunger, their career
The gullet, and the goal, that all supporting
Organ, ye clept the stomach—ill supplied
In Ireland, and in England deified.

XXX.

Come, truce:—here, as Silenus drunk of old,
Sits Kate M'Killop, erst of Sannox Glen, (¹)
Which modern avarice has turned a fold—
Once the dear homes of happy Highlandmen;
Moulder the rent green walls—the hearths are cold;
Where stood the cradle is the fox's den;
And many of her sons have found a grave
In that far world beyond the Atlantic wave.

XXXI.

But when the midnight moon has climbed the heaven,
 And pale, cold, pure, shines each attendant star,
 To deep, deep vales a deeper tint is given,
 And meeting tides their murmurs send afar—
 The spirits of the forms of days long driven
 Away upon the wheels of Time's swift car,
 Return, and o'er their joys and sorrows gone,
 Moan on the wind around the grey grave-stone.

XXXII.

However, let's go back and see our Kate,
 Who, as the glass and hiccup will allow,
 Holding, with both hands, firmly by the seat,
 To neighbour spins this yarn, with beck and bow:—
 "Our ane an' me was here last year, and great
 "Was the galravagin and fun—hech-how!—
 "Here's luck!—but there was ae race, sic ne'er seen
 "Was in Guid's yirth by ony body's een.*

XXXIII.

"I think there either was some aucht or nine
 "O' ladies, wi' their ponies, this race rade,
 "In tap-boots, breeks, sleeved waistcoats, bonnets fine
 "Buskit wi' ribbons, feathers lang and braid.
 "Here's luck, man, Donald, baith to thee and thine!
 "I ne'er leugh mair sin' ever I was made,
 "Nor I did at an eldren dame that wan it,
 "She leukt sae awfu' queer frae 'neath her bannet.

* A race was run, in 1836, with ladies' ponies, the gentlemen riders being dressed in ladies' Leghorn bonnets. It was won for Miss Boswell of Auchinleck, by Mr. Campbell, Sornbeg.

XXXIV.

“Whether it was the ridin’ brought the bluid
“Into her face, or no, I canna say;
“But every smitch o’t was a kin’ o’ red,
“Or rather somethin’ comin near a blae;
“And lang white whiskers on her face, some said—
“My een’s no what they ance were in a day—
“Eigh, but here’s tae her! be her what she will,
“She showed of horsemanship nae trifling skill.”

XXXV.

With glass in hand now o’er the form went Kate,
Right in a box of pies and gingerbread—
O’erturned a vintner, near about the weight
Of a prize ox; like drowning people, glad
To seize on anything, he fastened straight
Upon a gauntree’s end, completely clad
With casks, and down it came—the host grew pale,
For ’neath it stood a gross of bottled ale!

XXXVI.

The souls and bodies of the bottles were
Sent to destruction, save a precious few—
As Calvin tells us human beings are;
Or “Guards” of Bounaparte at Waterloo:
Ten women fainted—fifteen some aver;
Perished of corset laces twenty-two:
Who doubts the truth of what is written here,
May find it all in the *Dumfries Courier*.

XXXVII.

And is it thus?—O when will ye be wise!
My muse, whene'er you find your favourite regions,
Ye fly like Vulcan hurled from upper skies,
Hume on the pensions, Boswell's* carrier pigeon's;
Nay, pray, Miss, don't affect the least surprise—
The race starts, sure as men of all religions
Deem they are right, and 'tis a pretty omen—
You stand here trifling 'bout a drunken woman.

XXXVIII.

But through the ever-tumbling human sea—
By feeling's gales, by winds of passion tossed—
We've steered with pilot caution to the lee,
And anchor dropt near harbour winning-post.
But, hark! lo, off they to the contest be,
Loud sound the hoofs upon the trembling coast,
And each as anxious is to be the winner,
As Satan watching o'er a dying sinner.

XXXIX.

Enough of this—behold like thought or light
They fly:—but these are similes too bold;—
To have it like the wind were something trite,
And by-the-by, I think a little cold;
To say they fly, or unto distant sight
Appear to fly, with critics e'en may hold;
Though I ne'er yet have heard of flying steed
Save Pegasus, who was not known to breed.

* Sir James Boswell, Baronet, of Auchinleck,

XL.

In ladies, lords, knights, gents of every grade,
Clergy, physicians, lawyers, and cutpurses,
Men of each business, calling, craft, and trade,
'Tis pleasant to behold how high the force is
Of the excitement, at this point displayed ;
Hung in suspense they're—though upon the course is
None quite exact, like Absalom on the oak,
When fled his treach'rous mule, which was no joke.

XLI.

And as the rivals to the goal draw nigh,
Like dying storms in some rock-circled bay
Rises a clamour, or more like the cry
Of crowds when in the electioneering way ;
When men are valued just as they will lie,
The greater fib the louder the huzza !
While others shout, approve, condemn, though heard
Distinct, they've not one solitary word.

XLII.

Ho ! now they come—whatever head, or heart,
Or hand, or heel can do, is deftly done ;
See, see, 'tis past—away the people start,
Scorning each barrier, crying “ Boswell's won ! ”
'Twere surely now a very foolish part,
Should one course-guard attempt to stop the run ;
Though we each day see things more foolish still—
As Owen's schemes—Sir Andrew Agnew's bill.

XLIII.

And, now, most patient reader, if you please,
 We'll have a little soothing relaxation,
 While things are at a kind of "stand at ease;"
 But hark ye first this scrap of conversation:—
 "Well, blow my eyes, since e'er I've cruised the seas,
 "If yet I've looked on better navigation;
 "And though the pilot came too late to port,
 "'Twas but by point of prow, and d—d good sport."*

XLIV.

Now here some antic specimens we'll see
 Of various animals both wild and tame,
 Fit to bring Wombwell's grand menagerie,
 Or even Captain Noah's, unto shame.
 Some making loves, bets, bargains, ardently
 Playing their parts in life's vain subtle game;
 Some slyly take their leave—as of his host
 Did Boney, when o'ercome by General Frost.

XLV.

And some, again, where justice keeps her shop,
 Contrive to hold a most confounded bustle;
 Men of six feet through crevices do pop,
 That scarcely would admit my Lord John Russell.
 Halloo! what's up now! backward, forward, stop—
 'Tis as my grandmother would say, a tussle;
 But who would not risk random treads and squeezes
 To see men tested in a scale like cheeses?

* Wednesday, April 28th, 1837. Match, one hundred sovereigns, h.ft., Sir James Boswell's ch. g. Patriot, 4 years old, 11 st. 4 lb. (Mr. Grant M'Dowall), beat Lord Eglinton's b. g. Pilot, aged, 12 st. 7 lb. One mile. (A splendid race, and won by the nose.)—*Ayr Advertiser*.

XLVI.

Others, before the tabernacle, or tent,
Or what d'ye call't? where all grandees repair,
Stand, showing each expression that e'er went
To form ill-breeding's most accomplished stare.
Some do, what's often done in Parliament,
And that is nothing, though we know that there
Men talk, stamp, stare, shout, shake the very house,
The mountains labour, and out creeps a mouse.

XLVII.

And then some statesman, saviour of the land,
Holds up his mighty mouseship by the tail,
John Bull, delighted with the achievement grand,
Discharges plaudits, till his organs fail;
Suppose there is a subsequent demand
In grant, or loan, legitimate black mail;
John draws his purse with simple stupid smile,
Thinking he's got a lion all the while.

XLVIII.

Four things I know not, Solomon hath said;
Four things there are which I sincerely pity;
But sympathy of bards to none brings aid,
More than the wind's sigh to a famished city;
They want the wherewithal, apt to parade
What brings but small relief, their whole—a ditty;
And like the cuckoo sing, their own affairs
Meantime the object of another's cares.

XLIX.

First, then, a bigot, whose beloved creed
 The world unprejudiced can plainly see
 A bore, a bagatelle, nonsense; indeed,
 What i' the nature of things can never be;
 Life spent in doing nought; he who can plead
 The cause of doctrines, whose absurdity
 He knows full well;—young Beauty, else placed snugly,
 If wed to husband crabbed, old, and ugly.

L.

But what connection, you will doubtless say,
 Have all the figures you've of late been tracing;
 Cuckoos, and clergy, statesmen, beasts of prey—
 Unto the subject you proposed—horse-racing?
 I know my muse is oft, like one next day
 That has been drunk, some fancied meteor chasing;
 And that her brain as pregnant is with *havers*
 As is with specticism a Paisley weaver's.

Scotch

LI.

Hist! what in the name of wonder's coming here?
 'Tis a dog-chariot, forsooth, and three!
 And there's a maniac sweep, who seems to fear
 Water nor wind, nor ought beside does he!
 His head, neck, feet, all want the usual gear,
 Yet wears the happiest visage I can see!
 Nature such minds from care does kindly sever—
 He shouts "Sir James and Eglinton for ever!"

LII.

And, lo ! ranged ready at the starting-post,
 Eight—the crack hunters of the day—appear ;
 Enough to summon to this world the ghost
 Of mighty Nimrod ; and he may be here
 Around upon ærial billows tost ;—
 You can't say no, I'm sure, my reader dear ;
 But to the race (let him who doubts disprove it),
 'Twas won hy Captain Houston's horse, Cognovit. (²)

LIII.

But scenes so similar why dallying sing?
 'Tis my opinion that the muse supposes
 All men are Jobs that listen to her string,
 Or meek as Jewish legislator—Moses.
 Of this and that, and every other thing,
 She deals about such overpowering doses ;
 But after this, which I'll be sworn you'll tire on,
 Just read for regimen a page of Byron.

LIV.

For I have penned much nonsense in my time—
 Volumes in verse, and libraries in prose,
 The first th' antipodes of all sublime,
 Beneath where even your proper critic throws
 His dart ; and now about “ wrought out ” in rhyme,
 As miners say, a halt I should propose ;
 For trash more trashy grows by repetition ;
 See Lockhart's Poems in the third edition.*

* A work published in Ayrshire some years ago, and which reached a third edition, through a process it were both tedious and unpleasant to recapitulate.

LV.

And now a crony of life's early days
We met, and sought the corner of a tent,
Reserve was packed on her penurious ways,
And canker care unto the misers sent ;
We basked a while in friendship's cheering rays,
And to our warmest feelings gave a vent ;
At last the hound, Time, broke us from the cover,
When, lo ! the races for a day were over.

LVI.

Troop after troop was disappearing fast,
Like morning's shadows from the misty lea ;
The wave rose gently to the strengthening blast,
And the blue hills looked sullen on the sea ;
The birds sang sweetly ; in the glowing west
The sun, about into eternity
To roll the day, rode glorious—his smile
Lay lovely on the cliffs of Arran's rocky isle.

LVII.

Much yet remains might be detailed in song,
Ere to their dwellings got the honest folk ;
For steeds stood at the doors of taverns long,
And gigs and cars were, and commandments, broke ;
And some discussed a beverage so strong,
Surprised next morn they in the ditch awoke,
With many a sly admonitory twinge,
For outraged Nature will have her revenge.

LVIII.

We cannot sing, forsooth, we have not seen
 How merrily within the lofty hall
 The feast was held, and youths of noble mein
 And fairy figures mingled in the ball;
 My muse is in the dumps and jaded clean;
 Moreover, won't of dancing sing at all—
 And for this piece of indolence doth plead
 She's steadfast Antiburgher in her creed.*

LIX.

But all must have an end—this day has had,
 The races, we must, and so must this rhyme;
 The world, sin too—of this I'm very glad,
 And think it is a doctrine most sublime,
 And wish it soon (of late I'm grown so bad),
 Betwixt sin and repentance all my time
 Is spent. But, reader, I must close this strain,
 Some other day, perhaps, we'll meet again.

* A sect which was once pretty numerous in Ayrshire, but is now nearly extinct.† They prohibited their members from joining in promiscuous dancing.

SPORTS OF FASTERN'S-E'EN IN KILMARNOCK.

'Tis well at times that toil and care,
Relax their grinding rigour,
It makes us to our tasks repair
With renovated vigour.

I.

THE day was sleety, cauld, and doure,
Dame Nature's face was wan,
The noteless birds wi' dowie cower,
Happed round the bields o' man.
Yet youngsters, wi' their new duds on,
And bawbees gathered lang,
Stood at the doors, while to the town
The folks were skelpin' thrang.

II.

I flang my apron ower the lay,*
And in the water-pail
Soon syned my physiognomy,
And gat a wee drap kail,
Then rigged feat, gaed up the gate
Wi' ane I'd lang ca'd frien',
In happy key, ance mair to see
Our ain auld Fastern's E'en.

* The lay of a loom.

III.

We gained the Laigh Kirk's classic fauld,*
Where aft in youth's fair weather,
We've sat, and mony a truth heard tauld,
And mony an unco blether.(!)
And ere our stride could mete Cheapside
The water-warks were chargin',
And ane the fun had just begun,
And roun' the gear was spairgin'.

IV.

The cross we reached amang a crowd,
As versatile in form
As is the deep, when roarin' loud,
And tumblin' in a storm.
And though there was in mony a face
A sunny smile o' gladness,
On some a shade you weel could trace
O' sufferin' and sadness.

V.

Jock Stewart took a pipe's command,
And dealt the liquor free ;
But, as ye weel may understand,
It wasna barley-bree ;
For had it been, he would I ween
Ta'en rather better care o't,
And his ain bouk, by hook or crook,
Ha'e had the lion's share o't.

* See "The Ordination" in Burns' Works.

VI.

Out-ower the heighest house's tap
He sent the torrent scribevin',
The curious crowd aye nearer crap
To see sic feats achievin'.
But scarcely had they thickened weel,
And got in trim for smilin',
When roun' the pipe gaed like an eel,
And made a pretty skailin'.

VII.

Now here, now there, he took his mark,
Now down, now up he liftit ;
And droukit some unto the sark,
That hadna ane to shift it.
And aye the callans were as keen
To stand and get a blatter,
As they had Roman Cath'lics been,
And it a' holy water.

VIII.

"Now," said my frien', "mark ye yon fish,
"A' bloated, bleared, and blinkin',
"And belly turned like some tun-dish,
"Wi' eatin' and wi' drinkin',
"He's laughin' at the grand stramash,
And thinks he's safe frae harm."
When, whizz ! he got a glorious splash,
That cooled his convex thairm.

IX.

Neist fluttered by a stranger Miss,
In Fashion's finest glare,
Come in to town to taste the bliss,
And show and sell her ware.
But what can a' this din excite,
This universal keckle?
We turned about, and Jock, for spite,
Had spoiled her fishin' tackle.*

X.

'Twere not an easy task to tell
How many got a bathin',
And what to shins and taes befell,
To dogs, and dandies' claithin' ;
How many drones enjoyed the sight—
How safe and snugly seated ;
Or wi' what trifles, vain and light,
Mankind will be elated.

XI.

But surely Killie's sons are blest,
That ha'e sic fine diversions,
And rulers using for the best
Unparalleled exertions.

* In our early days, it was customary on Fastern's-E'en to use the fire-engines, or "water-warks," as described in the text. But, alas! with cock-fighting, once prevalent on that day, and other incontrovertible proofs of the wisdom of our ancestors, it has joined the things that were.

Sic shinin' spires, and streets sae grand
Observatories bonny ;
And burial-grounds, that in the land
Are not surpassed by ony.*

XII.

Now closed this scene—and now the crowd
Dispersed in a' directions ;
While water-warks proclaimed aloud
The pavement's imperfections.
And some gaed aff to slake their thirst,
And get their cargo shippit ;
We took the hint amang the first,
And into Joppa's slippit.

XIII.

There heartily the crack we ca'd
On things baith auld and new ;
But soon another noisy squad
Our hale attention drew ;
Bird Will's(*) successor swaggered by,
And eke his trusty billie,
Surrounded wi' the smaller fry
Frae a' the neuks o' Killie.

* At the time this was written, in proportion to its inhabitants, perhaps no town in the United Kingdom had so limited a place of interment as Kilmarnock, and things of a very revolting nature were often witnessed.

XIV.

The ane a halbert shouldered high,
And purse, breeks, shoon, and bonnet,
The laurels for the victory
Hung gaudily upon it.
The ither beat the row-dow-dow,
A wee, but wickit sinner;
And great temptation they, I trow,
Held out to ilka rinner.

XV.

'Twas gettin' near the hour o' threc,
When frae the Council Ha'
Our vera worthy powers that be
Marched out in stately raw,
And, to the race-course took the gate,
Wi' music in the van,
And nae sma' share o' strut and state
Had this same civic clan.

XVI.

Now cried a waggish cobbler wicht,
Wi' laughter-likin' ee.
Come a' folk here and get a sicht,
For there's a deal to see ;
A self-elected junto trowth !
And sorrow ither thing,
Nae wunner town's weal's short o' growth
In sic a leadin'-string.

XVII.

'Twould take a Lockhart or Will Pum,*
 Some bard of paces new,
 To gie Lang Harvey at his drum,
 And ither things their due ;
 The surgin' crowd, wi' laughter loud,
 And ludicrous expression,
 That round by Mathie's corner rowed,
 In comical procession.

XVIII.

Now to the race they poured alang,
 Frae kintra and frae town—
 The auld, the young, the weak, the strang,
 The black, the fair, the brown ;
 Auld crabbit Care, he wasna there,
 Belike the nasty brat,
 At hame might be to mak' the tea,
 And quarrel wi' the cat.

XIX.

We joined the noisy fickle flock,
 And heard some curious lingo,
 "My heels!" "I say, ye jade, where's Jock?"
 Anither swears by jingo ;
 "Come, mind your frock, there, Meg, d'ye hear ;"
 Faith ! that's just aye the way o't,
 Ye'll never get, as I should swear,
 Anither honest day o't.

* Two rhymesters who have had the honour of founding a nondescript school of verse—NOT POETRY.

XX.

The roads were in a waefu' plight,
 Ae sheet o' livin' glaur,
 And mony a wee short shankit wight
 Came sadly to the waur.
 The ruling passion was—he first ;
 The stream impetuously
 Still ran, till on the course it burst
 Like river in the sea.

XXI.

Then opened full on ear and view
 The congregated "rabble"—
 The varied face, the dress, the hue,
 The mingled gibble-gabble ;
 The blackman-wives,* the gingebread creels,
 The maids for sale in braces,
 And droves o' swankie kintra chiels,
 Wi' round, red, rosy faces.

XXII.

Here callans throwing turf and clay,
 Are scourin' round sae tricky,
 Almanacs for the present day,
 Are bawled by Johnny Mickie.†
 Here's Muirland wi' his plaid and dog,
 And Will M'Web the weaver,
 Right thin, and blue about the lug,
 Puir sapless, stunted shaver.

* Sellers of confections made of boiled treacle.

† A weel-kent dealer in gingerbread, who was wont to attend the Races calling out—"Almanacs for the present day, and if ye canna read them, ye may eat them."

XXIII.

And yonder is a whisky-stand,
Where, drinkin' roun' and crackin',
Are seen a squad; and there a band
Thrang down the fences breakin'.
Anither core are jumpin' keen,
And strainin' nerve and muscle,
While some light-fingered lads are seen
Performin' in the bustle.

XXIV.

Here's Jamie A. baith bien and braw,
Wha's played his cards fu' rarely,
A reaver under sconce o' law,
As weel kens Banker Charley.
Ay, ane that should ha'e raxed a rape,
Had he but had his dues,
Or schemin' been beyont the Cape,
Among the kangeroos.

XXV.

Great flights o' foreigners are come,
Frae Fenwick's far dominions;
Men o' Beansburn—frae Stewarton some,
That dwell neath' Lainshaw's pinions;
And frae beyond where Irvine roars,
The Riccartonians mighty;
And tinkler bodies frae Kilmaurs,
That great and wondrous city.

XXVI.

Newmills' dog-fechters ha'e come down,
 Some squintin' through their glasses ;
 Wi' folks frae Darvel's long-tailed town ;
 Tarbolton's lads and lasses ;
 Wild natives o' the Hurlford ;
 And Galston wabsters lazy ;
 And frae the Crookedholm a horde
 Of woollen-spinners greasy.

XXVII.

And Irvine, auld Kilwinning eke,
 Ha'e sent a guidly share ;
 And Saltcoats, and Ardrossan's beak
 Some weel-sea-seasoned ware.
 (Oh ! how I lo'ed on neighbourin' height
 To sit in days of yore,
 And view beneath the summer light
 That lengthened, sandy shore.)

XXVIII.

The waggon-drivers rough and rude
 Ha'e wauchled frae the Troon ;
 And spirit-merchants, men that should
 Be banished to the moon ;
 And Prestwick lairds, wham our kail-yards
 May bless for evermair ;^{*}
 Wi' Monkton blades, and writer lads,
 Frae ' wickit town o' Ayr.'

* The allotments of the Freemen of Prestwick have long supplied our good town and neighbourhood with "plants," or young hopefuls of the cabbage or colewort family.

XXIX.

A few o' fair Dundonald's stem,
 (Oasis o' the West,
 She sits on Coila like a gem'
 On beauty's heaving breast.)
 Descendants o' the smugglers they,
 Those stalwart men of old,
 In social life so kind and gay,
 In danger's hour so bold.

XXX.

But ilka town, and parish roun',
 Their willin' tributes gie ;
 Auld Killie should be gayen proud,
 For like a queen is she.
 Her squirrels skeigh their fuds may cock,
 And loup like vera fleas,
 They've got as many nits in stock
 As ser'e them a' their days.*

XXXI.

See canterin' like a cork i' the tide,
 Ho! here comes Hughie Vane,
 At Kirk-plate either he'll preside,
 Or head Rab Owen's train ;
 Become a Tory tool or spy
 Within the Chartist camp,
 And dodge, dissemble, scheme, and lie,
 Like ony London scamp.

* *Supporters of the Kilmarnock Coat of Arms.*

XXXII.

And there's the scientific "vet,"
In point he is a case
To prove that blockheads sometimes get
The prize in Fortune's race,
Wi' clap-trap, dodge, and brass, he has
Himsel' pushed weel ahead,
While slighted, slandered genius was
Without her daily bread.

XXXIII.

And Beagle Jamie wi' the "great ;"
Ay, mud will for a time
Wi' water mix, but soon or late
Maun' fin' its native slime ;
It needs, in sooth, nae seer to tell
Wha herds wi' sic a fellow,
Is either little worth himsel'
Or pitifully shallow.

XXXIV.

Yon's "Ringtail" wi' his double phiz,
Although he's frae the *Temple*,
O' Nature's stuff, at best he is
An execrable sample.
The deil has surely miller been,
When made was sic a melder,
Licht wecht" is bad in ony ane,
But odious in an elder.

XXXV.

Hech me ! for mae are here this day
 Than we ha'e time to tell o',
 To sing their names, their tricks and aims,
 Would mak' a young head mellow.
 Here some are seeking *Mr. Nought*,
 And ithers seeking fun ;
 Some what nae mortal ever got,
 Beneath the circlin' sun.

XXXVI.

This group is crackin' loud o' Dunn,
 And that o' ane ca'd Rover,
 And eke Jock Neil, that aft has won,
 But now is fairly over ;
 Ithers o' Brighton, Boyd, and King,
 Discuss the several merits ;
 And ither " bloods " that in the ring
 Ha'e shewn their strength and spirits.

XXXVII.

And this we heard o' female talk—
 " Yon's Leezie Littlein,
 " That last year made in Rumpie's walk*
 " Sic yellochin' and din ;
 " And now she's tied to yon wee chap,
 " Yon poukit-leukin monkey ;
 " And got a young ane in her lap,
 And face as lang's a donkey."

* A shady avenue in the vicinity of Kilmarnock House, better known as the "Lady's Walk." After the death of William, Fourth Earl of Kilmarnock, beheaded in 1746, his Lady, we are told, often retired here to lament his loss. At the time we perpetrated this piece of verse, the "Lady's Walk" was a favourite place of assignation for wooers.

XXXVIII.

There's loopy Robin Clearhead too,
 An ardent devotee
 Of £, s. d., (the age's true
 And only Trinity.)
 In Killie he's a "decent man,"
 But, if this phrase in vogue
 Mine reader thou should'st rightly scan,
 It means—successful rogue!

XXXIX.

Quo' blear-e'ed Meg to fishwife Jean—
 "Is t'at a beast or body,
 "Was ever sic a creature seen
 "Sae tousy and sae duddy,
 "He'll be the king o' crawdiels a'
 "Or, maybe, lass, wha kens,
 "Some tailor's midden run awa',
 "By help o' steam machines."

XL.

"Weel, ye're ae bletherin' guse" quo' Jean,
 "Your middens, and crawdiels!
 "Ye leuk as ye had pawned your e'en
 "For whisky in Tam Neil's.*
 "That's Tammy Raeburn o' the Ark,†
 "Far prouder o' his rags
 "And tautit hair, than ony spark
 "That by sae saucy wags."

* A noted howf of those n cromancers who transform coats, shirts, shoes, &c., into what is falsely termed "cheap whisky."

† A person lately deceased in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock, known as the "Ayrshire Hermit," who, in consequence of losing a law-suit, lived unshaven and unshorn for nearly 'hirty years, nor changed his clothes during that period, with the exception of his linen.

XLI.

"The wee bit fat ventriloquist,
"Gaun waddlin' and pechin',
"I see's won here amang the rest,
"Losh! hear how loud he's laughin'.
"And then his laugh has sic a ring,
"Sae hearty, frank, and cheery,
"While some, as sure as ony thing,
"Ha'e made me perf't eerie.

XLII.

"Weel I ha'e kent for mony a year
"His granny Betty Bone,
"And Duncan, too, before that e'er
"His first breeks he had on.
"And this I will baith say and swear,
"Withouten fear or dread,
"A better-hearted creature ne'er
"Yet brak' the warld's bread."

XLIII.

But Killie's richest oddities
O' character are gane,
We now for sic commodities
Might seek the place in vain;
As Willie Bauchles, Sugary Tam,
Pie Robin, and Pope John,
And Goung as hard's his barrow tram,
Clay Will, and John M'Crone.

XLIV.

Snap Tam, a canny carle was he,
Wha solded the crumpy cake,
And wiled frae mony a Killeen wee,
His stock, yclept a maik.*
Droll David Berry wi' his blade
O' wit that cut sae keen,
And Sawney Sangster, drunk, ill-bred,
In snuff outower the e'en.

XLV.

I'd Cocky Hunter maist forgot,
The queer, sarcastic sinner,
Wha died sae lean, the worms had not
Aff him ae decent dinner.
And Mosey Dabby, English Jack,
And that wee boozin' dodger,
Hight Andy Duffy, that in sack
Was ance passed for a badger.†

XLVI.

Here suddenly the scene is changed,
And, O! what preparation,
To clear the course, and get arranged
The crowd in proper station.
"Stand back! stand back!" is bawled about—
Sic ruggin' and sic rivin'—
The big folks threaten, thump, and shout,
As brutes they were a' drivin'.

* Bawbee.

XLVII.

At length they're in a kind o' square,
And a' the finer cattle
The inner court claim as their share,
Nor mix wi' baser metal.
But if this spot by worth is got,
Some chiels ha'e taen their places,
That in the rear, I rather fear,
Maun show their gaucy faces.

XLVIII.

Now aff his dudds ilk rinner flings,
And hands them to some crony,
While expectation draws her strings,
And maks her motions mony:
She fixes some like Lot's auld wife,
Maks ithers fidgin' keen,
Some hearts sets wi' their holes at strife,
Gars glower baith mouth and een,

XLIX.

Awa' they skelp, the souple chiels,
Like drift before the gale,
Or steam when on her burning wheels
She sweeps the fiery rail.
And aye the drum cries something mair,
As won the tither course is;
And, O! what big important air,
Ha'e a' the stick-armed forces.

L.

But here I really maun confess
Myself somewhat unequal
To sketch, or tell, or sing far less,
Th' excitement o' the sequel.
What shouts came pourin' frae the ring,
How ilka birkie strained,
How at the hindmost bout lang King
Cam' in wi' strength weel hained.

LI.

And how right for the winnin' post
The gatherin' ran pell mell,
As something had been won or lost,
That crowns could buy or sell.
But ance when wi' a crowd we're blent,
It's spirit's a contagion
We catch, whatever be the bent,
Mirth, mischief, or religion.*

LII.

O! sirs, weel Robin Burns might say,
"Mankind's an unco squad,"
A wee thing lifts them up the brae,
A wee thing maks them sad.
The man they idolise this day,
The neist they'll pelt wi' mud,
And stain his name wi' calumny,
And e'en would shed his blood.

* *Vide* those pitiful and pernicious excitements termed "Revivals."

LIII.

The second race might be our sang,
But 'twere a subject tame,
Just as the Psalms of David gang,
"Another of the same,"
And when 'twas ower, how through the yetts
And slaps baith young and auld,
Ran like as mony gimmer-pets
Frae some new-opened fauld.

LIV.

And how some crackit, lang and keen,
'Bout rinners and the race ;
How woovers set the tryst at e'en,
And named the time and place :
How grannies led their oyes in hand
Wi' muckle dauds o' snap,
And wee anes, daubit wi' blackman,
Keeked out o' mammy's lap.

LV.

And had Miss Fancy, fickle fair,
A wee thought kinder been,
And lent us o' her specs a pair,
We ablins might ha'e seen
Some being to whom man is dear
Frae ither constellation,
Look down and shed a pityin' tear,
Ower coming dissipation.

LVI.

But some will sing, and even preach,
Lang after they ha'e done,
And lest the same dry road we reach,
We'll quat, or change the tune.
May Killie's sons and bonny dames
Be strangers lang to hardships,
And better luck attend their aims,
Than ever did my bardship's.



A GLIMPSE OF THE OLD SMUGGLING DAYS IN THE WEST.

We bring again upon the stage,
The actors of another age.

THE gull had left the swelling sea,
The raven sought his roosting-tree,
November's night came darkly down,
On moorland bleak, and mountain brown
November's blast was raving loud,
The naked forest groaned and bowed ;
Even the grey oak's gigantic form
An homage yielded to the storm,
And flung upon the traveller's way
The rifted bough and sapless spray ;
The russet leaves were flickering by—
A generation doomed to die—
Another soon to fill their place :
So with the fragile human race ;
Suggesting to the pensive mind
A problem ne'er to be defined.

Just as the eve resigned her right
Unto the empire of the night,
A smack, that all the afternoon
Hung hovering off the coast of Troon,
Hoisted her sails, and downward bore
Upon the nearest point of shore.

And there were those on shore, who well
The cargo which she bore could tell,
And scouts through all the country side,
Had warned the smuggler band to ride.

The rendezvous was Holmes, a place
Of little note this year of grace,
Yet, not unknown in foreign land,
When flourished Western contraband.
That night, the Irwine, deep and brown,
With drift-wood charged, came tumbling down,
A party reached the ford, and took
Of landmarks known a hasty look ;
Then plunged into the sweeping tide,
And safely gained the other side.

The wonted muster soon was made,
And eke the trusty troop arrayed,
Which numbered twice a score and ten
Well-mounted, ⁽⁶⁾ fearless, stalwart men. ⁽⁷⁾
Such men as Ayrshire bred of yore,
Such men as Ayrshire knows no more.

The leader lacked not strength nor fire,
Rob Fulton, from the Netherbyre,⁽⁸⁾
His chest was deep, his shoulders wide,
Clean-limbed, long-armed, well-knit beside ;
And dexterously he could command
Whatever weapon filled his hand.
His sires were erst of Boortreehill,
As shewn by ancient records still,

For honour, strength, and courage famed,
And the "long-armed" had been surnamed,—
Had shared Drunclog's triumphant fray,
And Bothwell Brig's disastrous day.

Ne'er better matched were horse and man,
Than Rob and's favourite grey mare Scran,*
Sagacious, hardy, and as fleet,
As if the winds had formed her feet.

The route it lay through Shewalton Moss,
A track they well knew how to cross,
Could stank, and flow, and quagmire shun,
At midnight, as in noon-day sun.
A ditch, they oft without delay
Had passed, now stretched across their way,
But Fulton's mare at once aside
Wheeled, snorted,—whip and spur defied.
Cried John McAdam from behind,
"Ho! Rob, what now is in the wind?"
"I cannot tell," said Rob, "but she,
"The wasp, won't take the ditch for me."
Then ruder comrades, in the rear,
Cried, "come, don't keep us standing here."
At length, like something on the wing,
Scran cleared the barrier with a spring,
When Rob a rash acquaintance made
With what is termed an ambuscade.
The sharks! the sharks! was now the cry,—
At once dispersed the smugglers fly.

* Scran, power, or means of accomplishing any purpose.—*Jamieson*.

The "red-coats" had already found
They were on rather treacherous ground,
And thus they left their nimble foes
To scamper off as best they chose ;
Who, like an interrupted train
Of ants, united soon again.

Upon the beach, near where the bark
Displayed of light a fitful spark,
They met, and counsel at his flask
Each made it first a point to ask,
When, after some deliberation,
They came to this determination,—
The cargo instantly to land,
And meet the soldiers hand to hand.

The night was dark, the wind was high,
And ominous the sea-bird's cry,
Yet, in the surf they dashed amain,
Although it swept the bridle-rein.
No time was lost in idle speech,
Again they soon were on the beach,
And each two casks of brandy bore,
Which brought the cargo all ashore.
Brandy ! yes brandy ! but, I hope,
You don't give fancy so much scope,
As deem the villanous compound
In modern times too often found,
A brandy only in the name,
(To sell which is a sin and shame),
Can distant claim of kindred lay
With beverage of the smuggler's day.

Hence shattered nerves, and bated breath,
Delerium tremens, sudden death,
But what of that? by men in trade
And business, fortunes must be made;
Perhaps, 'tis Bluestone's grand intent
To have a seat in Parliament.
One thing, at least, he must retire
Betimes, and turn a country squire,
What grand suburban villa say
Is that across the turnpike way?
Some seat superb it seems to be
Of landed aristocracy.
No, there resides in princely state,
McGin, the rectifier great,
What trimly cultivated grounds;
And hark, forsooth, a pack of hounds!
Is that a crystal palace? No,
A greenhouse only, what a show
Of plants exotic, rich and rare;
And how their perfume loads the air,
So beautiful; and yet to me
They speak of blood and robbery,
And every hound that bays within,
Tells thunder-tongued of death and sin!

But where am I? in this crusade,
Against the legal poisoning trade,
I have forgot the smuggler band
Now cantering along the sand;
Kegs deftly slung, and kent in hand,
Perchance the trusty kent beside,
There were some weapons had been tried

At famed Drumclog, or Rullion Green,
Or had the moor of Falkirk seen ;
Of cognac too they had a fair,
Or might be said, a liberal share,
And were in quite a proper mood
For deeds of daring hardihood.
Not that I wish at all to state,
Nor even would insinuate,
That Ayrshire courage stood in want
Of any foreign stimulant.
In Scotland's long and starless night,
When Wallace well maintained her right,
Still Ayrshire at the chieftain's call
Was prompt to spurn the Southern thrall,
On Bannockburn's eventful day,
Through thickest, hottest of the fray
The Carrick spearmen cleft their way ;
And long Drumclog a light shall be,
Upon the page of history,
While records red of Waterloo
Tell still what Ayrshire men can do.(*)

But, I again must make confession,
I've been indulging in digression,
A thing you'll readily infer,
As being but a wanderer.
Howe'er, allow me just to say,
The smuggling party held their way,
Till Irwine right before them lay ;
By this the moon was sailing through
An ocean of unclouded blue ;
The wind, like brawling child, to rest
Had sobbed itself on Nature's breast,

They took no roads, yeleft the by,
To screen them from the public eye;
No, up the Briggate rode the corps,
And halted at th' exciseman's door.

He was a Campbell, staunch and keen
As any bloodhound ever seen,
And neither fear nor favour knew,
Whenever duty was in view.
And now a loud rat-tat was heard,
The postern hastily unbarred,
And out came honest Mistress C.
And really very sorry she,
That so much company should come,
And Mr. Campbell not at home;
But would be happy to receive
Whate'er commands they chose to leave.
Rob Fulton thanked her, said that they
Had merely just looked in to say—
Should Mr. Campbell be inclined
For taking stock to-night, he'd find
All things were ready to his hand,
Themselves his servants to command.

With wistful eye the dame surveyed
The aspect of the cavalcade.
"He's not at home," she said, "*but I*
Think you will see him by and by,"
And, with significant grimace,
Flung fast the door in Fulton's face.
A roar of laughter now rung out,
A half-suppressed or smothered shout,

And up the High Street they have gone,
And reached the woods of Eglinton.

What huge, unwonted shadows fling
Their arms across the gorse and ling?
An angle turned, at once revealed
A plump of horsemen there concealed;
But small the number thus descried,
Contrasted with the other side;
The soldiers, reckless of that boot,
Resolved the passage to dispute,
And quickly gave the mandate—"Charge!"
When, like an avalanche at large,
The smuggler band came rushing on,
And stroke, and thrust, and shout anon
Upon the ear of midnight broke,
And echoes of the woodlands woke.
Shots were exchanged, and sabres sent
In shivers by the oaken kent.
The onslaught furious was and fell,—
All helter-skelter and pell-mell,
Strong arms were there, heads hard and clear,
And hearts that strangers were to fear.

To Lowrie Cockburn was opposed
The sergeant, but they'd scarcely closed,
When Lowrie on his shoulder laid
A stroke that made him drop his blade,
A voice as loud's an Alpine lynn,
Cried "That's it, weel done, burnewin!"*

* Smith.

Headlong and hot went Basil Blair
To work, and soon unhorsed a pair,
The very chargers seemed to know
That they had met a dangerous foe.
There was a something of portent,
Even in the whistle of his kent,
Basil averred "the de'il a hair
— "For thae steel spurtles did he care,
"While oak grew in Craigbury Bank, ⁽¹⁰⁾
"Or Pilmore Munt, he woundna thank ⁽¹¹⁾
"The best of smith or cutler trade
"For the best tool he ever made."
As wild was Johnny Pettigrew,
And deadly was the stroke he drew,
The rider was his mark, of course,
But missing him, he felled the horse.
Big Davie Andrew of the Troon,
Their Ajax, was disabled soon,
Among his foes he rushed, the fool,
As reckless as a rabid bull—
He said, "'twas but a scrat, nae fear ;"
The scart it made him take the rear,
And for a fortnight after hing
His starboard member in a sling.
John Todd, although a horseman light,
Banged a dragoon six feet in height ;
Will Gibson laughed, "big calves," said he.
"Are not aye best of veal I see."
A splinter of a sabre's edge
In Gibson's kent stuck like a wedge,
But the next bout the arm was broken,
That sent the smuggler this love-token,

For foremost still the brunt to bide,
In skirmish stern was lang Lochside.
Rab Fullerton a Tartar caught,
And several desperate rounds they fought,
The trooper touched him twice, and drew
In trickling drops the purple dew,
But Rab at last put in a blow
That laid him o'er the saddle bow.
The buirdly, bold Will Gibson, known
By sobriquet of "Symington,"
Being rudely jostled in the rush
Encountered in the opening brush,
His broad blue bonnet lost its seat,
And fell among the horses' feet,
Will drove bareheaded on, "guid e'en,"
Quoth he, "my auld Kilmarnock frien',
"Some heavier losses will be here
"The nicht, anse I shall think it queer."
John Urie, better blade than he, ⁽¹²⁾
Ne'er threw a limb o'er saddletree,
He struck so pat, he struck so keen,
Where'er he charged a gap was seen.
His right-hand man went roundly on,
The ready, rough Tam Allison,
As wiry as an eagle's wing,
Nor cared, nor feared he living thing,
Rejoicing in a good melee,
Which o'er his cups he termed "a spree."
Bryson was there (of noted name,
Long afterwards in Eaglesham),
A most redoubted foeman he,
And emptied saddles two or three.

He rode a tall, black, fiery steed,
Of matchless stamina and speed,
That went careering through the fight
Like some grim demon of the night.
Bob Fulton and his light-heel'd mare
Were out and in, now here, now there,
In fine he with the exciseman met,
And at it furiously they set,
Armed with his grandsire's good claymore,
Himself the Campbell bravely bore,
On blood he seemed intent to be,
But Robin watched him warily,
Lifted his mare, and as she fell,
He parried, and struck home so well,
The Gael came headlong to the ground,
With fracture surgeons term—compound.

The military now became
Aware that they had lost the game,
The exciseman's 'Keltonhill' being free,
Shot like a bolt across the lea,
And soon the rout brought up the rear,
Like hunted sheep, or startled deer,
While rose a shout, so loud, so bold,
It swept the listening moonlight wold
From dear Dundonald to Kilbride,
From Dreghorn to the Frith of Clyde.

The outlyer^{*} ox in sheltered nook,
Sprang up, and fled with frightened look ;
The wild-cat started from her lair,

* Outlyer,—this word is generally written Outler, which is evidently a corruption.

With flashing eye and ruffled hair ;
The heron, from her fishing dream
Awoke, and rose with dreary scream ;
And the owl left her lure of prey,
And hastened to the ruin grey.

Tam Fullarton, who hailed from Loans,⁽¹³⁾
A Hector when he took to stones,
Declared, that " wi' a dry stane dyke
" At hand, he would ha'e skailed the byke."
That night Tam was not slack nor slow,
But dealt and warded many a blow.

McAdam got a shot,—I beg
To say, 'twas rather in a keg
He bore, and down o'er horse and man,
Like Gilpin's wine the liquor ran.
John swore it was a mortal pity
To spill so much good aqua-vitæ,
And wished, a wee while, at the hole,
He'd had the chance of taking toll.
'Twas for a time a standing jest,
John lost more blood than all the rest.

A good one was Barassie's steed,
Some held he was of Barclay's breed,⁽¹⁴⁾
The first to clear a ditch or stank,
In fording first to reach the bank,
Or venture to the vessel's side,
When deep and darkling rolled the tide.
But here an ill-directed sword
Had chanced to reach his spinal cord,
And down he dropped, as dead's that pagan

Bucephalus, or Copenhagen,
With moistened eye, said Gibson, "Ane,
"Like him, it will be ill to fin'."

No bipeds met the charger's fate,
Nor was the list of wounded great.
The vanquished learned the victors could
Be generous, though surgeons rude ;
It must be owned they did their best,
And strongly on the patients pressed
The flask,—'twas "come, a wee drap mair,"
And let the saw^c just seek the sair.

When rides were longsome, nights were dark,
While watching by the lone seamark,
Or roystering the fire around,
When fortune had their efforts crowned,
And tongues ran with a loosened rein,
This skirmish oft was fought again.

When smuggling times had passed away,
And gathered to their kindred clay
Were many of that manly band,
The few upon time's shifting sand
That stood, by years though dinted deep,
Like Sherwood oaks, or Border keep,
Yet, when the summer gloaming still
Spread her gray vesture o'er the hill,
Or winter rockings cheered the hearth,
Or harvest-home, or new year's mirth,
Of feats and stratagems they told,
Till even the children waxing bold,
Their grandsire's staff heroic drew,

And foes imaginary slew,
Or on a Fair, or Market night,
When gifted with the second-sight,
In smithy, mill, or souter's stall,
The audience still they held in thrall.
Far be from me the wish or thought,
That those who've set the laws at nought,
Should lauded be, such deeds but can
Demoralize—debase the man.
As in the times of which we tell,
The lives of some but showed too well
Others of different moral mould,
In peaceful industry grew old,
Went calmly down life's evening tide,
Respected lived—lamented died.
One of this remnant lies at rest
In a sweet hamlet of the West,
No sculptured form of Naiad weeps
Where the worthy patriarch sleeps,
Yet o'er the unforgotten dead
Affection's holiest tears are shed,
A pilgrim comes, nor can the days
Of half a century erase
His reverence for that humble tomb :
How dear the wild flowers there that bloom !
Those simple symbols, though decayed,
Apart as sacred relics laid,
Wake thrilling thoughts of days long gone,
That language find in tears alone,
And often has he blessed the power
This yielded in affliction's hour,—
That, trace his line from one he can,
Who well deserved the name of man.

BEWILDERED AMONG CHURCHES, AND CONVERSATION WITH A "CHARACTER."

In passing through life's busy street,
What various minds we chance to meet!

I.

ONE afternoon, as carelessly I strolled
Through Stirling, ancient and romantic town,
Pondering on days when Fortha's waters rolled
Above the rock's now castellated crown,
And merry mermaids would their gambols hold
Whence cannons look so sulkily adown
And pretty little whales took mammy's drop,
Smacking their lips, upon Demyat's⁽¹⁵⁾ top.

II.

Ah! those were times, the good old times said I,
Which all our efforts never can remand,
I felt at once as if about to cry,
(An onion garden was perhaps at hand,)
When bump my precious beaver went awry,
For, lo! a church had ordered me to "stand,"
But not "deliver," though, we know that they,
The churches namely, do so every day.

III.

Of course, obliged to take another route,
I got along some twenty yards or so,
And studious still, again when looking out,
Egad! I found no farther I could go
In that direction, almost led to doubt
My senses, looked a second time, and lo!
Another church; I muttered, there has been
A shower of these things hereabouts, I ween.

IV.

Then west away with pace of postman sped,
And strange to tell, had scarce been blessed with time
To bid my vagrant thoughts with measured tread
Return their faces to the land of rhyme,
When entering a gate whose pathway led
Through flowers, (those handmaids of the "blue"
sublime),
A sexton-looking soul, with bow polite,
Said, "Sir, there is no sermon here to-night."

V.

Another church again! I cried aloud,
And wheeled as sudden as a ghost I'd seen,
And, sallying to the street, beheld a crowd
Of boys run off, as frantic as they had been—
Like star half shaded by a snowy cloud,
Looked many a fair behind her window screen—
Age cried "He's clean gane gyte," while down the street
Dogs ran as whirled on "locomotive" feet.

VI.

Perhaps the worthy people chanced to know
 Some little of the state of my finances,
 Which were, as usual, standing very low
 (A case the same as being out your senses)—
 One thing, the multitude will have it so ;
 And that being poor we break all virtue's fences,
 Is an opinion just about as common
As self in man, or vanity in woman,—

VII.

Strut in a soldier, in a churchman pride,
 Pets with old maids, or money with a miser,
As shipping on the Mersey's muddy tide,
Or puffs in Gray's *North British Advertiser* :
 Sectarians with a haughty moral stride,
 That tells you they're the holier and wiser,
 Which is a fact that stands on stable feet,
 However,—only in their own conceit.

VIII.

But Master *Or*, may go a-packing now
 To see how cabinet counsellors get on,
 Hinting the nation wears a boding brow,
 And asks for bread, nor will receive a stone ;
 Resolved the fiend *monopoly* shall bow,
 Yea, tumble headlong from his high-built throne,
 But ho ! cries father Tempus do proceed,
 Remember, John, this is the age of speed.

IX.

Well, said I to myself, it will not do,
I'm very bad indeed at making faces,
But must look somewhat soberer to view,
Or sure I am to get into such places
As office of police, or jail, or who
Can tell, by this, that simple as the case is,
'Tis not where most unlikely to grow less—
To wit, with some keen canterer for the press.

X.

“And scarce of matter would he be, I ween,”
Reflection whispered with sarcastic sneer,
“In any journal would as soon be seen
Some beetle's death, or butterfly's career ;
However, with a rather starched up mien,
A few yards northward I contrived to steer,
And there quite confidently stood in view!
Without one blush, a church d'ye think, aye—two !

XI.

Now passed with hurried step a stately gent,
Of whom I asked the way to Stirling bridge,
“Just follow me,” he said, and off he went
With rat, tat, tat, along the pavement's ridge.
I'd do so better had old nature lent
Me more, I said, of Mercury, or the midge,
At which he seemed to take an inclination
To do as trains when getting near the station.

XII.

Or rake, when cash and constitution fail,
Canting of "sad depravity" and "sin ;"
Or bard whose fancy's wing must slower sail,
As bright materials are getting thin ;
Or old extortioner, when waxing frail,
And having got his money snugly in,
Makes large bequests, believing he engages
God's special favour with the devil's wages.

XIII.

Next of my new made friend I took a glance,
And one he was I shall not soon forget
Tall, strongly built, yet straight as is a lance,
With noble countenance, curled locks of jet ;
His step was Freedom's ; but, to save the dance
Of words ; there Hercules and Apollo met ;
He raised his hat, exposing such a head
As might bring Gall and Spurzheim from the dead.

XIV.

Perchance you'll say he was of noble birth,
With a long lineage, and a lofty name ;
If so, you're wrong ; his sires had tilled the earth—
At least were farmers—and he was the same,
And nothing owed to framed or fabled worth
Of Heraldry's preposterous acclaim—
That heap of chaffy corn, which, winnowed, will
But turn up things were better to lie still.

XV.

Since shadow will for substance scarcely pass.
So well just now as in a former day,
Mankind are looking through a different glass ;
The gods of gingerbread must pass away
Like Babylon's merchants, cry alas ! alas ! *
And band in vain to quench Truth's potent ray.
We'll soon not be those gulled, rank-ridden things,
Earth's crafty few can keep in leading-strings.

XVI.

Down to the fertile valleys of the Forth
We came, indulging in such titt'e tattle
As "crops" and "weather," which, in south and north,
Is skirmishing in conversation's battle,
Yet often leads to things of greater worth—
A "trotting-out," as Yorkshire says, of cattle,
And bears to serious talk the same relation
As paper unto gold, to love flirtation.

XVII.

I see your land is very good, said I,
And fitly farmed, as Stirling's annals tell,
And, with its vast agrarian supply,
Appears to bring forth churches very well.
"Yes," said my fellow traveller, if high
"Our morals stand not, this protest I shall,
" 'Tis not for want of churches, or more near it
"To come, for monuments of party spirit.

* Revelation xviii. 16.

XVIII.

"I wonder where the mania will end—
"To strangers, sometimes, 'tis a problem hard ;
"A Yankee asked me once, 'did we intend
"To turn old Scotland into one churchyard ?'
"Or lest the guardian angels of the land
"Should ever take a thought to walk the ward,
"We meant for them a church-roof road to keep,
"From the Tweed's margin to the northern deep?"

XIX.

But people still some hobby-horse will ride,
I answered, and in looking o'er their many,
I'm sure you will most readily decide,
A church is as respectable as any ;
Although it sometimes opes its mouth so wide
As fit to make a Scotsman sing out, "canny ;"
And this, I know, some useful institutions
Have suffered much by those "free" contributions.

XX.

"Free!" cried the stalwart yeoman, and behind
He flung his plaid with such an air and force,
Had English cotton-spinner faced its wind,
His task was finished, as a thing of course ;
"Free!" he continued, "to my cost I find
"They have been free, or rather something worse ;
"Indeed, one portion seem not to have known,
"In their hot zeal, their neighbour's from their own."

XXI.

"I lost three hundred pounds the other day—
"A bankrupt business—by a party who
"Had in religious matters much to say –
"To all the points of orthodoxy true ;
"Stood often foremost in the grand array
"Of church subscriptions, dined the reverends, too ;
"But such, I find (a melancholy fact 'tis),
"Do often least of Christian precepts practise."

XXII.

"To judge of people's hearts I will not dare ;
"Besides unfit, 'tis no concern of mine ;
"Maybe devotion has her dwelling there ;
"But of the gas or soda-water line,
"And then, 'tis seldom that the masters care,
"To put the pressure on, or wire t' untwine ;
"But, in their lives, 'tis pitifully plain,
"We almost always look for it in vain.

XXIII.

"I'm sure there never was an age wherein
"Men made about religion so much sound ;
"Nor one, despite of all the deaf'ning din,
"In which true godliness did less abound.
"Each strives to gain his point thought thick and thin ;
"Truth's ties are owned in theory, but found
"Oft, in their inclinations, like the bands
"Of the green whites on mighty Samson's hands."

XXIV.

"The gospel came good-will and peace to spread ;
"But, should we judge of it from what appears,
"Especially of late, we'd think it had
"Been sent to set us fighting by the ears.
"One pulls this way, another that, as glad
"When some pretext for controversy rears
"Its front ; and with malignity and pride
"Inflated, each cries God is on his side.

XXV.

"Some that their cause is that of Deity
"Will, with a calm effrontery maintain ;
"As if the Godhead should a leader be
"In our base feuds, and bigotry insane ;
"In short, be altogether such as we,
"Or even something of a deeper stain ;
"But many causes will such titles claim,
"For which wise Heaven must have a different name.

XXVI.

Well, sir, said I, I really must confess,
Of men and manners I but little know,
Of bickerings for creeds still something less—
The last I have relinquished long ago.
Those duties which the Scriptures on us press,
(Though the frail flesh will sometimes whisper—no),
I strive to practise, and let those who will
Of bootless, wordy warfare take their fill.

XXVII.

Yet one may see this even with half-shut eye,
 If you with priests and people would stand well,
 Profess, support the church, and raise the cry,
 That heretics go headlong unto hell ;
 Ne'er mind that irksome dame Morality,
 She may with Truth among the waters dwell,
 Or turn teetotaler, or get protection
 From Unitarians, or the Quaker section.

XXVIII.

To his own sect, "ye're God's peculiar few,"
 Still sings some well-paid gentleman in black,
 Who, if that sect their Bibles rightly knew,
 Might to the *hod* have bent his sturdy back.
 I hope the dawn will yet break brightly through
 These mists, and bid nine-tenths of them to pack ;
 Though, in all lands, man was, and is a pigeon
 Fond to be plucked in matters of religion.

XXIX.

"'Tis there you're right," returned my stately friend,
 "Let but the clergy once cry 'tallyho,'
 "And off they scour, though what will be the end
 "Requires no gift of prophecy to show.
 "A churchman's movements chiefly one way tend,
 "Contention's bones among the crowd they throw,
 "And, while the strife proceeds, are ever heedful
 "To rule the roast, and gather up the needful.

XXX.

" In darker times, behold a moon-struck monk*
 " Aroused all Europe's chivalry to arms ;
 " Kings left their state, nor even beauty shrunk
 " From war's fatigues, its dangers and alarms,
 ' The church had said—it was enough—and drunk
 " With dire Fanaticism's cup, in swarms,
 " Year after year they gave their bones to shine
 " A ghastly necklace for Dame Palestine.

XXXI.

" And now, for all the turmoil and affray
 " Raised by the reverend founders of the ' Free,'
 " And debt contracted for th' unborn to pay,
 " And discord wrought in many a family,
 " And the vast sums which from all quarters they
 " Have wrung—aye, even the gains of slavery !
 " They'll yet be found beneath the royal wing,
 " Crying ' contentment ' and ' God save the King.' "

XXXII.

The Abbey Craig† now bade us take good night—
 Not that I would be understood to mean
 That staid old gentleman had left his site,
 To step such two vile reprobates between.

* Peter the Hermit, agitator of the first Crusade. —A.D. 1097.

† A well-known rocky height on the northern bank of the Forth, about two miles distant from Stirling. Here the Scottish army was stationed, commanded by Sir William Wallace, previous to the decisive battle of Stirling Bridge, A.D. 1297.

I turned, and as upon the adjacent height
 The gallant agriculturist was seen,
 A contrast wide, thought I, 'twixt this and many
 A pale appendage of the spinning-jenny.

XXXIII.

That hapless class, degenerating still
 From sire to son, and wherefore, that a few
 May live like princes, and what time that bill
 Presented is, which none could e'er "renew ;"
 The world may stare to be informed their will
 Is of that kind most gratifying to
 The hopeful heir's expectant watering gums,
 That dear commodity, a dish of "*plums*."

XXXIV.

But, oh ! ye "Cotton Lords," who've fought so well
 In Free Trade's cause, it surely cannot be
 You wear those very vices which you tell
 So loud against the aristocracy ;
 Yet, should you take the field again to quell
 Oppressors, do it more consistently,
 And let me humbly beg you not to roam
 In search of subjects quite so far from home.

XXXV.

No doubt things glide on very smoothly now,
 At least for those who gather in the gold ;
 Nature may seem beneath their power to bow,
 Her vengeance sleeps, but—and it comes as bold

As torrent from the mountain's shaggy brow,
Or surf that for a thousand leagues has rolled,
Of physical and moral destitution—
Still sad and certain is the retribution.

XXXVI.

'Twas now that hour so silent, and so sweet,
When light's last streak is lingering on the hill,
As if it wooed some passing seraph's feet,
And the soul drinks from Nature's fount her fill ;
And with the pure and beautiful replete,
Soars o'er each sordid aim, and selfish will,
And rises upon thought's celestial wings
From scenes of transient to eternal things.

XXXVII.

Then (whate'er sceptic sophistry may say),
A something tells, with eloquence divine,
When all this glorious structure we survey
Is changed, or blotted from the grand design,
Our better part shall triumph o'er decay,
And with eternity itself entwine—
Thus, like a mountain we, whose base is given
To earth, and yet the summit high in heaven.

XXXVIII.

Before me seemed to pass a godlike train—
Wallace, and Bruce, and all the patriot band,
Who nobly burst the Southron despot's chain ;
Inestimable blessings to our land

Bequeathing ; and the Bard whose lofty strain
Has made us high among the nations stand—
The manly Burns (what spells attend that name),
His country's pride, and everlasting shame.

XXXIX.

Reader (should such a prodigy be found),
When through these lines you work your weary way,
Let patience on the right hand much abound,
And on the left a store of mercy lay.
And yet, I dread in wrath you'll fling around
Their mangled limbs, and stamping, swear that they
Within themselves contain the seeds of death,
Like that grim *spec*, baptized the "*Ayrshire Wreath*." (16)



ADDRESS TO DUNDONALD CASTLE.⁽¹⁷⁾

"Sweet scenes, conjoined with all that most endears
The cloudless morning of my tender years."

LEYDEN.

O, ANCIENT pile ! fast hastening to decay,
Around thy ruins, musing as I stray,
How many mingled feelings do I find,
With pleasing sadness burst upon my mind.
Long hast thou stood beneath the stroke of time,
And all the rigours of a northern clime ;
And changes witnessed ; generations seen
Swept from the earth, as if they ne'er had been.

Oft thou hast seen the morning sun arise,
And spread his glories o'er the eastern skies—
Describe his course, while light and life he gave,
Then sink sublime beyond the western wave ;
And oft his fading beams have cheered thy halls,
And lingered sweetly on thy dark grey walls.

Spring thou hast often seen, with gaudy train,
Of opening buds and blossoms glad the plain :
Along these hills the robes of summer shine,
As oft, like all beneath the sun, decline ;
Their toils, their pleasures, witnessed numbers know,
That now, with all that moved the world, lie low.

Autumn—rich autumn—thou hast seen unfold
Her treasures vast of fading green and gold—
Her bended branches, fields of waving corn—
Her sultry noon, chill eve, and dewy morn—
Her wains returning with their precious boon,
Beneath the glories of her ripening moon ;
How oft, perchance, some lovelorn swain has heard,
Or wandering song-wrap melancholy bard,
As spirit sung with viewless harp his tale
At midnight still, by woodland in the vale.

Fast by the verge of yon sequestered wood,
Where mourns the cushat for her captured brood,
Methinks an ancient reaper-band appears,
Their graves now furrowed with an hundred years ;
The stately forms of Ayrshire's earlier day,
Ere modern luxuries assumed their sway,
Or the foul factory had breathed its pest
To mar the noble peasant of the West.

The grandsire there presides, erect and hale,
Though far advanced in age's dreary vale,
A well-worn bonnet on his hoary head,
Long silver locks upon his shoulders spread ;
Sage is his speech, with strokes of humour sly,
And much he boasts and tells of times gone by ;
His is the richest store in memory's mine,
Of legends of the days of auld lang syne,
That draw the listeners in a circle tight,
And give swift wings unto the winter night.

And now the vale is wrapped in mists of even,
The red moon rising on the verge of heaven ;

Homeward they go, the distant fire displays
Its welcome flickerings through the twilight haze,
What time the redbreast from the rustling tree
Gives to the wind his mournful minstrelsy.

Where are they now? to yon enclosure turn,
That slopes so sweetly to the woodland burn,
Where many a chiseled stone, and verdant mound,
Reveal the churchyard's consecrated ground ;
There, old and young, alike unknown they lie,
Till the last morn shall dawn upon the sky.

Oft hast thou braved the sweeping midnight blast,
The angry spirit of the dark nor'-west ;
Seen red swollen rivers with the ocean rage,
And deep with deep tremendous warfare wage ;
And, like to Faith, from sad Affliction born,
Forth from the darkness come the smiling morn.

While from thy ruined heights my eyes survey
Heaven's mighty arch, and ocean's boundless way,
By Fancy's aid I see the lightning fly,
And hear the thunder roll along the sky ;
O'er the blue void behold impetuous sweep,
On whirlwinds throned, the spirits of the deep ;
Wild, foaming, fierce, the crested billows rise,
Like snow-capt mountains mingling with the skies ;
Now roll afar with loud re-echoing roar,
Now awful burst upon the trembling shore,
Pour gloomy clouds along the affrighted plains
From their dark wombs the desolating rains.
Hark ! o'er the dread abyss the sea-bird screams,
The rocks resound, again the lightning gleams !

Again harsh thunder rends its swaddling cloud,
The forests crash, the rivers shriek aloud ;
Down the black hills, before the torrent's force,
Roll shattered rocks, still gathering in their course ;
Groan, as beneath this whelming host is hurled,
The adamantine pillars of the world.

Lo! far along the deep, the sport of tides
And warring winds, a lonely vessel rides ;
Now on the billow's mighty convex tost,
Now in the whelming surge completely lost ;
The crew's frail remnant on the rigging spread,
Look to the land they never more shall tread.

Weak grows the bark, and shattered with her toil,
As on she labours through the vast turmoil ;
Hope sighs farewell! they shriek—down, down she goes,
Relentless billows o'er their victims close.

Turn my wrapt thoughts, nor dwell upon the scene,
Too far in fancy's fairy land we've been ;
See! calm the ocean spreads itself along,
With mellowing murmur to the zephyr's song ;
Night's purple sky o'erhangs the mighty flood,
Far weltering wide, in trembling waves of blood.

When looked the warder from thy dizzy height,
How widely different was the landward sight,
Primeval woods their giant arms displayed,
And o'er the landscape cast a sullen shade,
Haunts of the bounding deer and bristly brood,
And oft the scene of rapine, and of blood.*

* The ancient Caledonian forest is supposed to have covered a part of Ayrshire.

But cultivated now, till fades the eye,
What varied beauties in rich order lie ;
The distant town beneath its smoky shroud,
With domes and spires that meet the morning cloud ;
The river winding through the fertile dale,
The peaceful hamlet in the sheltered vale ;
The verdant lawns, where greenwoods intervene ;
The lordly hall, the lonely cot serene :
All—all combined, beam full upon the sight,
One heavenly picture of refulgent light.

The cloistered monk, the shrewd designing priest,
With all the trumpery of the Popish beast,
Thou hast beheld, when Superstition hoar
Triumphant spread her wings from shore to shore ;
When banished Truth at times an effort made
To peep affrighted through the dismal shade.
But like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Dawned Reformation on the darkling crowd,
Bade Learning rise, and liberty expand
Her cheering rays, and glad the weary land.
Now Art, now Science on Britannia smile,
And hand in hand dance round the happy isle ;
No more to childish mummary is given
The adoration due alone—to heaven ;
No more the host to tyrants ever dear
Shall curb bright genius in her fierce career.
Away ! away, blind leaders of the blind :
Curse to the earth, and ruin of mankind !

Dire Persecution, with his naked brand,
Hast also witnessed, traversing the land ;

His blood-red standard streaming in the van,
With bearings hostile to the rights of man ;
And ills, and woes, a grim and ghastly race,
Spring in profusion from his sanguine trace ;
Yea, thou repliest, methinks, with hollow groan,
And would have wept could tears have come from stone,
To see old Scotia's sons for conscience sake
Doomed to the rack, the gibbet, and the stake,
Or plunged in noisome cells, or sold to die,
In servile bonds, beneath a burning sky !⁽¹⁸⁾
The home, that Love and Piety had made
Their own, in blood-stained, smoking ruins laid ;
The husband and the father hunted, driven
To shelter with the beasts and fowls of heaven ;
When Zion's songs in many a rude recess
Awoke the echoes of the wilderness,
As musing midnight in her starry zone
Sat listening on the mountain's summit lone,
The guardian angels loved to linger there,
While sainted spirits joined the martyr's prayer.
When feudal bands engaged, and fields were lost,
Thou provd'st a shelter to the vanquished host ;
Oft have thy walls the fierce assault withstood,
And thy green hill been dyed with hostile blood.
But bending now beneath a load of years,
Frail and departing all thy strength appears ;
Loud through thy riven walls the tempests howl,
The dark recesses of the lonely owl,
And sable rock, which tenant the abode
That courtly dames and warriors have trode.
Strange it may seem, yet Scottish records tell
Even regal splendour deigned in thee to dwell ;

How sadly changed !—in thy deserted halls
Rank grow the weeds ; and round thy ruined walls
The ivy creeps ; thine ancient glory's fled ;
Thine ancient tenants numbered with the dead.
Yea, with the stream of time a wave rolls on,
Whose surge shall leave thee not a standing stone ;
The sun shall rise, the waning moon decline,
The night look down, the star of morning shine,
And mark thy towers that long have braved the rust
Of time departed, level with the dust.

Thus things terrestrial wing their rapid flight,
Clouds of the morn, or vapours of the night ;
The sons of men like shadows flee away ;
The mountains fail, the rocks themselves decay ;
The city sinks, and even its site is lost ;
Receding ocean seeks another coast.
Britannia's Isle shall sleep beneath the wave,
And o'er her towers the deep Atlantic rave ;
The moon herself forget through heaven to ride,
And draw from shore to shore the heaving tide ;
Yea, perish shall this great revolving ball,
For change and vanity's enstamped on all !



MUSINGS ON THE CLYDE.

I.

THE morn appears—a lovely morn of June—
All warmly smiling on sweet Nature's face,
Like mother o'er her child that craves the boon,
In cradled beauty, of a warm embrace ;
Each moment carries on its wings some grace
The beauteous blushing goddess to array ;
And every melody resumes its place
In the grand choir, to swell the lofty lay,
And echo waits to wing the anthem on its way.

II.

Adorned with diadem of dawning's cloud,
Majestic Tinto ⁽¹⁹⁾ rises o'er the scene ;
Ten thousand years has he beheld unbowed,
Clyde roll his waves the rugged banks between,
Yet looks as everlasting—as serene
As when the pillars of his strength were laid.
Child of the earthquake ! frequent hast thou seen
Those deeds of darkness, Druid rites displayed,
When Nature stood aghast, and Truth retired dismayed.

III.

And feudal days of darkness and of blood,
Of wasted wealth, and prostituted power,

Substantial evil for a dream of good,
 The lord and serf, the frequent hostile tower,
 A rainbow beauteous, yet without a shower,
 Thy noblest form was ever, like a tree
 Of foliage fair, but fruitless, long thine hour
 Of twilight has descended to the sea,
 We part without regret, preposterous chivalry.

IV.

To whate'er point the pensive eye is cast,
 Lo ! now thy halls are desolation's prey ;
 Subline memorials of the darkening past ;
 And their proud tenants, where, alas ! are they ?
 The wild rose, on the fresh and dewy spray,
 Smiles through the path where deadly shaft has sped ;
 And, where the trumpet summoned war's array,
 The redbreast on the stunted hazel's head,
 Awakes his stealing strains, that seem to mourn the dead.

V.

Where scattered lie beneath the tangled brake,
 On brink of Cartlane's ⁽²⁰⁾ terrible abyss,
 The wrecks of the Castle Qua ; ⁽²¹⁾—now let me take
 One lofty look of this wide wilderness—
 This amphitheatre, whose green walls kiss
 The dazzling summer skies ; and, O ! survey
 How far beneath is stretched its loneliness,
 The Mouss, though rolling with redoubled sway,
 Is heard, like voice of storm, in distance die away.

VI.

And down the dizzy gulf's tremendous bay,
 The giant rocks, in majesty sublime,

Rise through the waving foliage, and display
Their summits silvered with the touch of time,
Here mortal foot has never dared to climb,
The bird of prey her eyry holds secure,
Like ancient reaver in his mountain rime,
Whose raids rapacious, kings were forced t' endure,
And fret beneath the ills not even themselves could cure.

VII.

Again descend this slippery winding way,
But, with no tame emotions mark the spot,
Here Scotland's champion in his adverse day,
And country's ruined hopes, a refuge sought;
And here, 'tis said, were heavy tidings brought (²²)
Tidings that wrung his heart with deepest dole,
But, Wallace heard them as a hero ought;
Blessed with a power his feelings to control,
The noble only know, the truly great in soul.

VIII.

O! justly-famed, transcendant, peerless chief!—
Age has on age long sunk beneath the tide
Of deep oblivion, yet thy laurel's leaf
Is seen to flourish in its pristine pride;
Conquering Death's power, and Time's imperious stride;
The Genius of thy country oft her eye
Lifts, to gain strength when omens dark preside,
To where thou, with her Burns, art seated high—
Twins on the hallowed mount of immortality.

IX.

For in yon vale, where lofty towers of Lee (²³)
O'erlook the wide arms of the mighty oak,

Which, by the voice of sage antiquity,
 A thousand years has braved the tempest's shock;
 There, when her beauteous neck unto the yoke
 Of Superstition, Caledonia bowed,
 From distant parts would weary pilgrims flock,
 To bear the water hence, with charm endowed,
 Art, nature, fate to foil—at least so deemed the crowd.⁽²⁴⁾

X.

In vain, 'twas said, might stern disease assail,
 Where'er the potent water found its way;
 Nor spell of wired infernal might prevail,
 Nor e'en the water-dreading madness slay;
 Such were the dreams of man's untutored day,
 And wizard, witch, wraith, ghost, and goblin drear.
 The spunkie, brownie, kelpie, and the fay—
 A motely troop—have all held revel here,
 All danced on Cartlane Craigs; beheld and heard with fear

XI.

It comes, it comes, the glorious march of mind!
 Children of darkness, whither have ye fled?
 Ride ye supreme on chariots of the wind,
 Whom kindred haste to join with noiseless tread?
 Or, in the land of shadows rest the head?
 If so, Heaven grant your slumbers be profound,
 May silence keep her watch around the bed
 Whereon ye rest—in sacred circle bound—
 Oblivion's curtains closed eternally around.

XII.

Assume not, Bigotry, thy withering look,
 Thy grim, self-righteous smile, or hollow sneer

Nor search for names in Cant's fastidious book,
For what has been believed or practised here ;
Scan thine own creed, thy cherished dogmas dear,
There, wert thou not with prejudices blind,
Things as adverse to reason would appear—
To nature's laws—to interests of mankind—
To all that God in love and mercy has designed.

XIII.

Where have I wandered in my reverie?
List, lo! there Cora⁽¹⁵⁾ strikes the astonished eye ;
In one wild fit of frantic revelry
The waves of Clutha tumble from on high,
And all the deafening echoes round reply ;
And hoary mists their dewy wings expand,
And radiance darting from the azure sky,
Bids o'er the deep an infant iris stand,
A path for fairy feet to trip from either strand.

XIV.

Whate'er of lofty, beautiful, or great,
That either heart, or eye, or ear can crave ;
The foaming waterfall's o'erpowering state,
The threatening rock, the alcove, and the cave,
The rifted tower that frowns above the wave,
The streamlet's song, the breath, the bloom of flowers,
The melody of birds, that gay or grave,
Tell forth their loves or griefs among the bowers—
Are here, and much that wings can lend to langour's hours

XV.

But, musing thus on Nature's wondrous plan,
It seems a source of sadness and of pain,
To note the transitory hours of man,
While meaner things for centuries remain !
Even so Eternal Wisdom did ordain ;
'Tis therefore best, whate'er our state betide,
Let us be wise, nor dare the heavens arraign,
The language shun of discontent or pride,
And where God's hand we trace, let resignation guide.

LANARK, *June* 1840.



MARTHA OF MYRETON, OR "THE MAIDEN
STONE."⁽²⁶⁾

FAIR Martha dwelt by Devon's stream,
Old Myreton's only child,
And lovely as the dewy rose
That blooms in trackless wild ;

And gentle as the summer's breath,
When day has sunk to rest ;
And guileless as the prattler dear
Upon its mother's breast.

And well she loved to ease the load
Of poverty and care,
And smooth the pillow to the head
Of sickness and despair.

And many sought fair Martha's love—
The wealthy and the wise,
The warrior in his panoply,
The courtier in disguise ;

The love-lorn minstrel lingered oft
Around her father's place ;
And deemed it bliss upon the path
Her fairy foot to trace.

But Martha viewed them all with pain,
Her answer still was "nay ;"
For first love's wild delicious throb
Had given her heart away.

Young Beaton, Tullibody's priest,
Of manly beauty rare,
Was learned, but, ah ! his heart was false,
As outward form was fair.

And Martha loved him with that love
Which fixes upon one
Dear object, and bereft of this,
For ever is undone.

Which too, too well the villain knew ;
But here we draw the veil
Above one portion of our dark
And melancholy tale.

And now fair Martha shunned the light,
And every human eye ;
Forgot her gentle cares and joys,
And only wished to die.

The hind beheld her oft, 'tis said,
When dubious was the dawn,
Glide like a spectre through the wood,
Or o'er the dewy lawn.

And pale, pale grew her lovely cheek,
And languid was her eye ;
Her slender form seemed e'en too weak
To heave the deep-drawn sigh.

Yet never would she deign to name
The source of all her woe,
Nor even made a single plaint,
Or bade a tear to flow.

At length, when midnight cold and lone
Was o'er the Ochills spread,
And stars on Devon's teeming vale
Their placid lustre shed.

Round Myreton's grief-struck halls arose
A hymn as sweet as when
The hearts that parted were by death,
Are joined in heaven again.

Her weeping parents Martha called,
While hectic's fatal streak,
Like sunset on the lily's leaf,
Illumed her faded cheek.

"The hour at last is come," she said,
"I long have wished to see,
And soon I hope to find a home
From sin and suffering free.

“ If still you love, or e’en regard,
Your lost, your ruined one,
Oh ! then, let this my last request,
In all be strictly done.

“ That my poor worn and wasted frame
Encoffined be in stone,
And by the church door closely laid,
Nor mould nor turf thereon ;

“ That as *he* passes out and in,
It still may meet *his* view.”
She stretched her small, thin, trembling hand,
And breathed “ a long adieu.”

And like some lovely tender flower,
Of timeless storms the prey,
Stript from its drooping parent stem,
In death fair Martha lay.

Those strange sweet notes again were heard,
But distant more they seemed,
Yet wildly sweet as aught of which
E’er rapt enthusiast dreamed.

Then all around was sadly still,
Like silence of the tomb,
Or that before the livid bolt
Has seamed the desert’s gloom.

And Myreton's age is childless now,
He rends his hoary hair,
For bootless words, or e'en for tears,
Too deep is his despair,

Poor Martha's hest was all fulfilled,
And still the stones we see,
That tell a tale of love misplaced,
And priestly perfidy.

ALLOA, *October 1845.*



ALFRED GRÆME; OR, THE FATAL
LIKENESS.

RETIRED from courtly pomp and power,
In old Dundonald's stalwart tower
The good King Robert dwelt : and e'en
At sylvan sports but seldom seen ;
Nor fleeting years as yet had shed
Their snows upon the monarch's head,
Enough to quench the spirit's flame,
And sap the vigour of his frame.
His early love* was in the grave,
And, like a frozen sunless cave,
The generous monarch's heart became,
When died Rowallan's peerless dame.

Where Shewalton moorland to the west
Expands its bleak and barren breast,
There stood a stately forest then,
Well known to Ayrshire archermen.
For many a gallant stag was there,
And wild boar in his bosky lair ;
And, white as Ailsa's crest of snow,
The mountain bull, a furious foe ;

* The beautiful Elizabeth Mure, daughter of Sir John Mure of Rowallan, Kilmarnock.

Though now degenerate, 'tis the same
At Cadzow seen, and Chillingham :
The first in Scott's high strains has rung—^{*}
The last has been by Foster sung,
With all the graceful ease and fire
That mark the manly Borderer's lyre.†

Stern winter's hand had bound the soil,
And laid the snow on steep Ben-Ghoil ;
Like mirror lay the cold blue sea,
Scarce heard its evening lullaby ;
With graceful sweep the white sea-mew
Sailed to his home in headland blue ;
And island skiffs, their journey made,
Soon lost were in the landward shade.

The monarch, in his secret bower,
Enjoyed the soul-ennobling hour ;
But, ere the woodland and the height
Had sunk in sombre shades of night,
The tapers glimmered o'er the plain,
Like reason on the drunkard's brain,
With something of importance fraught,
His page, De Werter, audience sought.

* The well-known ballad of "Cadzow Castle," by Sir Walter Scott.

† "Chillingham Bull Hunt," a Ballad, by William Air Foster. See the Local Historian's Table Book for Northumberland and Durham, Legendary Division, vol. ii. p. 258. Published by A. Richardson, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1844.

De Werter's infant hours had known
The vales where sweeps the rapid Rhone ;
Of features stern, and sable browed
As pinion of the thunder cloud ;
Yet finer form than his ne'er trode
The surface of earth's verdant clod.

The ranger and De Werter long
Had been at feud from trifling wrong :
The former was of Celtic line,
M'Coll from banks of deep Loch-Fyne,
With amplest quantity supplied
Of the foul fumes of Highland pride,
And nature ne'er more cunning gave
To one designing, sordid slave ;
One aim, and one alone he knew,
Self-interest ever kept in view ;
As for his creed, 'twas of that kind
Which always orthodox we find,
Although the owner chance to go
From Guinea's sun to Lapland's snow.
Fawning and flattering was he
To all above his own degree,—
To equals treacherous, and to all
Dependants as tyrannical ;
Grim envy never in her reign
Held more obsequious serf in chain ;
Nor e'er was human kind disgraced
By aught more basely double-faced.
But why, you'll say, a verse bestow
On one so despicably low ?
Because (although it may seem hard
To be believed) he was a bard ;

Such freaks Dame Nature sometimes plays,
Nor from her laws eternal strays.

Although the King was in that mood
When most he wished for solitude,
With courtesy a little strained,
The artful page an audience gained !
And thus, " My liege, it grieves me I
Should so disturb your privacy ;
And more, since what I wish to state,
Does fellow-servant implicate ;
But duty dictates, and I must
Obey, which pleads excuse (I trust)."

" Ho !" said the King, and waved his hand
Impatient, silence to command :
" De Werter, I have known you now
Since thirteen summers bronzed your brow ;
Though others oft have failed, of you
Have ne'er known aught save good and true ;
But, give your message and begone,
For much I long to be alone."

Somewhat abashed De Werter stood,
Despite his ease and fortitude,—
Fumbled his cap, and fingers ran
Through his long locks, and thus began :

" 'Twas yester morn, at break of dawn,
Returning o'er the westward lawn,
Upon M'Coll by chance I came,
His horse o'erloaded quite with game ;

His finger on his lip he laid,
And scowling, pointed to his blade,
Then took that dangerous path whence we
Can sometimes soonest reach the sea ;
I followed, and at distance stood
On shore, in covert of the wood :
A stranger barque was in the bay,
A boat came dashing through the spray,
Received the game, and backward hied,
Nor swifter aught e'er skimmed the tide."

King Robert started to his feet
As youth's high pulse again had beat ;
The page he bade a moment wait,
Th' apartment paced with pensive gait :

"'Tis strange my lenity should lead
That miscreant still to darker deed !"
He said ; " Nor do I know the times
I've overlooked his faults and crimes ;
What pity ! nor in east or west
Is one of half the skill possessed.
Go, find M'Coll, and tell him, he,
To-morrow, here, at noon must be :
A different turn we'll take ; and, stay,
Bid Alfred Græme, without delay,
Attend, and bring his harp along ;
Perchance the magic powers of song
May bid awhile these pangs depart
That feed upon the fading heart."

There seems but for M'Coll to be
One course, and that the gallows-tree ;

His is a hopeless case indeed,
With whom even mercy can't succeed.

Where Aven's sterile wilds are spread,
The youthful minstrel had been bred ;
His sire had fallen in feudal strife,
Left a young son, and wealthless wife ;
Of gentle lineage was the dame,
Had wed, for love, the handsome Græme ;
And by this foul, imprudent sin,
Incurred the hatred of her kin.

In form, in visage, and in mien,
The bard was what his sire had been :
His features cast in Grecian mould—
His flowing locks like links of gold—
His form erect as lance or spear,
And agile as the bounding deer ;
So good, so wise he was withal,
At once beloved in cot and hall ;
Vice from his presence slunk away,
As from the light the beast of prey ;
Licentious jest, and its acclaim,
Where hushed at sight of Alfred Græme.

The crafty page, and minstrel bland,
Were rivals for a maiden's hand—
The beauteous Mary, called in tale
And toast, "The Flower of Irwindale."

But Mary loved the minstrel youth
With first affection's fervent truth ;
Though hopeful still, the other swain
Had long preferred his suit in vain.

As David charmed with tuneful string
The fiend that troubled Israel's King,
So Alfred Græme possessed the power
To soothe his master's moody hour.

Nor wonder ; for his worthy bard
The monarch held a high regard,—
Had given him lands—a goodly cot,
To smooth his mother's hapless lot.

Attentive still to duty's call,
With harp he soon appeared in hall,
Obeisance made, his hand along
The strings he swept, and raised his song :
He sung Rowallan's hoary towers,
Of Carmel's stream, of Carmel's flowers,
Of mutual love's delightful hour,
Beneath the fragrant greenwood bower.

Awhile the monarch seemed to be
Dissolved in pleasing reverie ;
Anon, and down his visage wan
The big hot tears profusely ran ;
And, ere the song was well essayed,
A signal to the bard he made
To check the unpropitious strain,
Who, heedless of the list'ner's pain,
Was born triumphant by his theme,
Like swimmer on the rising stream.

To war's red page he next did turn,
And sang the field of Bannockburn,—

The hosts embattled on the plain—
 The Royal Bruce—De Bohun slain—
 The shock, the shout, the reeling foe—
 The haughtiest crests of England low,
 Beneath the brand of mountaineer,
 Or red resistless Carrick spear;
 And, through the battle's stormy tide,
 Like angel of destruction ride,
 Fierce Edward Bruce, who, sad to tell!
 At Erin's sceptre grasping—fell;
 And lies on Faughart's* dreary height
 Without a stone to tell the site.

Edina! blush thou at the thought!
 Of all thy wonders art has wrought,
 Not one perpetuates the name
 Of Bruce, of Wallace, or of Græme;
 Yet, statues in thy streets the while
 Stand to the vilest of the vile.

The cold round moon had risen on high,
 In ocean of a cloudless sky,
 With all the glittering orbs emboss'd,
 Of heaven's resplendent, countless host—
 So beautiful, they seemed to be
 Ordained to burn eternally.
 Nor sound the wistful ear could mark
 But gentlest sigh of forest dark;

* The Churchyard of Faughart lies on the top of a hill, about two miles north of Dundalk. Many of the churchyards in Ireland have a very slovenly and repulsive appearance: but that of Faughart is one of the worst in this respect that we met with.

Or bittern's boom, or ban-dog's bay,
As stranger sought the castle's way ;
Or the vexed ocean's mellowed roar,
From some lone island's rocky shore.

Adown a narrow well-trod path
Through clumps of gorse and blasted heath—
In those rude days the only course
To Irwine, or for foot or horse—
De Werter passed with speed of flight,
In cloak with northern furs bedight ;
The dress was Alfred's, and a thing
He prized, as guerdon of the King.
The page in frolic took the loan
And, tittering as he tried it on,
Was heard to say, " This joke may some
More favoured people keep at home ;
And should she me for Alfred take,
Some good discovery I may make."

Nor darkling, e'en might lover's eye
The counterfeit, at first, espy ;
Their stature and their gait the same,
Though not more wide the snow and flame
Than either face—deceit and truth,
Or wrinkled age and rosy youth.

Close by that path the ranger lay,
Like tiger watching for his prey :
He heard the footstep, left his den,
And muttering, " Alfred," crouched again.

An hour had fled, the bard dismissed,
Was free to go where'er he'd list ;

Descending to the hall anon,
He found his favourite cloak was gone ;
At once his rival's round him flung,
And through the outward portal sprung.
His heart was gay, his foot was light,
He gazed on glories of the night,
And every star that beamed above
Drew lustre from his Mary's love.

A hawthorn copse he'd nearly made,
Where still M'Coll held ambuscade ;
Some happy thought had just the while
Rode forth on sunshine of a smile,—
Ah ! little dreamed th' enraptured swain
That never should he smile again.

From that dark ranger's deadly yew,
The shaft in vain but seldom flew ;
And such his strength, nor high, nor low,
In all the west could bend his bow.

His lair the minstrel just had passed,
" I have him now," he said, " at last ;"
Full stretch the keen-winged bolt he drew,
Right to the mark the weapon flew—
Behind the shoulder blade it sunk,
And life's stream at the fountain drunk.

As falls the dove, with pinions broke,
Beneath the falcon's fatal stroke,
So fell the youth—or said, or sighed
His Saviour's name, and, turning—died.

North from the castle's verdant mound,
An unhewn column still is found,
Hard by an arch that spans the way
Where iron-harnessed meteors play,
'Twas here by fell assassin's aim,
Of life was reft young Alfred Græme.

Where once his trim-built cot was seen,
Where neighb'ring swains would blithe convene,
When twilight shades had wrapped the plain,
And rose the harp's entrancing strain ;
Where age would weep, and youth would gaze,
To hear the tales of ancient days ;
Though other trace has long been gone,
As "Harperland" * it still is known.

* A Farm on the Estate of Sir John Cunningham, Bart., of Farlie, Dundonald.



THE LOUDON CAMPAIGN.*

"O! wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us."

ATTENTION! all ye martial band,
The bulwarks of our native land,
On Albion's shores, on foreign strand,
By Ganges' tide,
Or where Canadian forests grand,
Stretch far and wide.

No seas of blood, no hills of slain,
No blazing cities swell my strain;
No widow's tears, nor orphan's mane—
For what are they,
When viewed wi' Loudon's great campaign?
Mere children's play.

When Hastings back frae India came,
The worthy chief to welcome hame
Our "Dandies" had resolved, and Fame
Said wine and wassail
Profuse, should celebrate the same
At Loudon Castle.

* In the summer of 1823, the Marquis of Hastings, after many years spent in the "Land of the Sun," returned to his seat of Loudon Castle, on which occasion a part of the Ayrshire Cavalry and Kilmarnock Volunteers marched thither to congratulate the worthy nobleman.

The cavalry, wi' some persuasion,
 Agreed to serve on this occasion ;
 But, previous, they got intimation
 That nae flesh, but
 Such as was void of animation,
 Was to be cut.

'Twas tauld in Killie a' that week,
 That five large owsen, fat and sleek,
 Were kilt, that Yeomanry might streek
 Their jaws wi' pleasure,
 And "Dandies'" bellies get a keek
 Beyond stay measure.

Besides five score o' sheep, as fat
 As ever walloped in a pat,
 And routh o' drink, the demon that
 Has been man's ruin
 Since e'er auld father Noah's vat
 Was set a brewin'.

There was a chiel, baith lank and lean,
 Wha had at mony a muster been
 In bygane time ; but on the green,
 In war's array,
 The sycophant had not been seen,
 For mony a day.

Whene'er he heard o' the affair,
 He went directly unto prayer :

“O Lord!” said he, “my life but spare
“Till that great day,
“And thine ain servant shall his share
“O’ dainties hae.”

The very thought o’t made him smile ;
He gathered out his kit meanwhile,
And cleaned, wi’ perseverin’ toil,
His firelock rusty ;
The fleas out-flanked in gallant style
On’s garments dusty.

Even in his sleep he couldna rest ;
For fancy out the table drest,
An’ then he’d roar like ane possest,
And starting, cry,
“Slice down the beef ; well, I protest ;
“Fair play, stand by ?”

Anither ane, wi’ Leith-walk face,
A first performer of grimace ;
A patent hand at prayer or grace ;
But ready he
Was aye (when gain was in the case),
Wi’ loop or lee.

As clergy hear o’ coming cash,
As gossips seize some new-hatched clash,
As trembling drunkards face-ward dash
Their *morning* dear,
So did this curious moral mash
The tidings hear.

“ Since cranes and pigmies closed in fight,
 “ Or mice or frogs
 “ Displayed of old their martial might
 In bluidy bogs ?

“ Dear Britain, should it be thy hap
 “ Again to face anither Nap,
 “ Just lea’ thae chiels to tent the crap,
 “ And shoot the crow,
 “ The ‘ Greys’ will better fill a gap—
 “ Or ‘ Forty-twa.’”

Thus having said, the God of War
 Resumed in wrath his blood-stained car ;
 Jove sent his thunderbolts afar
 Till heaven resounded ;
 And every orb and distant star
 Heard quite confounded.

When distant yet a mile and mair,
 His nasal organ in the air
 The drummer raised, and, sniffin, sware
 He fan’ the smell o’t,
 Anither wished himsel’ but there
 To get a spell o’t.

In straggling bands behind them flew
 The carrion birds, they little knew
 That this battalion never drew
 On livin’ boukes,
 Nor ever cut entrenchment through,
 Except the cook’s.

But mony a fly was glad to beat
That day a double-quick retreat ;
And mony a "cleg" the earth did greet
 Before they'd ta'en
The "woods and braes" that glide sae sweet
 In Robin's strain.

As hens besiege the thrashing-floor,
As ducks, in frost, a pond before,
As craws upon a hillside hoar,
 Portending storm,
So by the Castle 'gan the corps
 At length to form.

Out cam' the gentles ane an a',
And, spite of breedin's rigid law,
Scarce was suppress the loud guffaw ;
 And heads were hung,
Lips bitten, faces turned awa',
 Whence bluid maist sprung !

But first impressions being o'er,
They roosed and thanked the foresaid corps—
When laigh's the lintel o' the door
 We needs must stoop it,
Nowhere of this we've samples more
 Than in the poopit.

Young Hastings said, and curled his nose,
"A gang of gipsies, I suppose ;

“Or, people come to scare the crows ;
Look ye, my Lord,
“A drummer ape, how bluff it goes,
Upon my word.”

But 'tis beyond puir simple John
Their bill of fare to venture on ;
Let their ain language speak, anon
'Twill best define—
“Deil haet, except a bawbee scone
“An' glass o' wine.”

Some fainted wi' convulsive roar,
Some uttered oaths ne'er heard before,
The service some for life forswore,
Wi' frantic air,
Some veterans out in handfuls tore
Their thin grey hair.

Ane mair inclined to feast than fight
His puir wee scone wi' a' his might
He hurled o'erhead, clean out o' sight,—
Belike it may
Suffice some comet for a bite,
When scarce o' prey.

A harum-scarum wabster blade,
Wha' laughed at a' things, “even dull trade,”
A toothpick o' his bayonet made,
Then on his nose
The instrument o' death he laid
Wi' look jocose.

"Waesucks, waesucks," the drummer cried ;
"Waesucks," the lengthened glades replied ;
To keep his feet the bodie tried,
 But, quite o'ercome,
He fell, despite his martial pride,
 And brak' the drum.

The birds affrightened couldna sing ;
The young anes in the nest took wing ;
The cattle gathered in a ring,
 As't had been thunder,
The very midges ceased to fling—
 But 'twas nae wonder.

And to their shame, in this sad plight,
Part of the heroes took to flight,
And into Galston, as in height
 Of summer sun,
Maddened wi' heat and insects' bite,
 Whole herds will run.

The bairns and dogs the coming row
Announced, with shout and loud bow-wow,
Auld grannies left their rocks o' tow,
 And cripple bodies
Limpit, and scraiched as on a knowe
 Ye've seen young hoodies.*

Bald-headed men forgot their hats,
Wi' tails like boas ran the cats ;

Fast to the burrows took the rats
 That were a-roamin',
 — Sic was the stoure, it seemed to bats
 The hour of gloamin'.

I've got an honest fellow's word
 For this, or it would seem absurd,—
 The town clock stopped,—an ancient sword
 Frae sheath did drop,
 A fiddle, o' its ain accord,
 Played Johnny Cope! *

The Genius of the stream that day
 To Galston's banks had chanced to stray
 But scenting something like a fray
 His godship fled,
 And stowed in deepest pool away
 His reed-crowned head.

Yet on the warriors strode, as bold
 As hares, or Parthian troops of old,
 Or fleecy tenants of the fold,
 When thunder roars;
 Or the dun deer, when o'er the wold
 The far hunt pours.

And took (how strange!) withouten toil,
 Or fire, or smoke, or battle broil,

* Ancient warriors used to draw omens from their sword blades. When Lord Lovat was born the swords in the mansion-house hall leaped spontaneously from the scabbard.—See *Lady of the Lake*.

The vera Major swore by Gad,
 " It was a shame,
" And brought a stain—an odium bad
 " On Hastings' name."

The drummer raised his plaintive wail,
The rocks gave back the dolefu' tale,
Yea, and the sober evening gale,
 That swept alang,
Bore far away o'er hill and dale,
 His mournfu' sang.

Ye wha this tale of want and wae
May read, should hope some future day,
Her gaudy garniture display,
 Watch ye the cummer,
And mind how far she led astray,
 Our frien' the drummer.



THE FORTUNE TELLER.

It was in eighteen thirty-nine,
The month of June, the weather fine;
But so excessive hot—'bout Ayr
Mad dogs were running here and there—
Mad politicians everywhere.*

One afternoon of this same time,
A brewer, smith, and man of rhyme,
Rather a kind of kittle set,
In the Turf Inn of Irvine met,
And drove the joke a while and tale.
Over a jug of Geordie's ale.

Whether it was the mania then
That in the shire struck dogs and men ;
Or whether 'twas the fumes of ale
That in their craniums did prevail,
Must under covert still remain,
Till some intelligence we gain,
By steam conveyance, or balloon,
From that queer planet called the moon ;

* The Chartist Movement.

Howe'er, to Jenny Hooks* they'd go,
And learn their fortunes—weal or wo!

'Twas fixed upon—a house was got
Contiguous to the beldam's cot;
And soon did Jenny 'mong them stand,
With pregnant look and cards in hand.

His bardship was her first essay—
But Jenny, Jenny, well-a-day!
Thou could'st not have been farther wrong
Hadst thou declared that old was young,
That black was white, that east was west,
That Satan was a heavenly guest.

The roguish rhymster blew her still
With words of wonder at her skill;
And swore by Burns's soul, she'd been
At night with Nick upon the green;
And had she lived in times of old,
When earth was Superstition's fold,
Had been condemned to end her days
Amid the faggot's crackling blaze.

The son of Vulcan next would know
How Fate had laid his lot below,
And cut the cards—whose dirty leaves
First told he was beset with thieves;

* A notorious character of the spaewife sisterhood, to whom persons of all classes resort. So much for the boasted intelligence of the nineteenth century.

Who knows not that;—'tis my belief
 The world is just one giant thief:
 And could with ample demonstration
 Substantiate the observation.

Next, fortune's favours came along
 So quick, so heavy, and so throng,
 They trod each other's heels, and cried,
 "Come, devil take you, stand aside!"
 Things that are like to come to pass
 When o'er the planets grows the grass;
 Or, drunk with tippling overnight,
 The sun forgets the world to light;
 "But time would fail to tell of all,"
 As saith my friend the apostle Paul.

By this the brewer 'gan to think
Sans hops and malt was Jenny's drink.
 He proffered not the powerful pelf,
 When Jenny looked her horrid self;
 With withering glance the group surveyed,
 Rose, tossed the glass—her exit made!

But now the glorious things with which
 The smith's futurity was rich,
 Produced by Jenny's magic slight,
 In all their galaxy of light,
 As wax the man of iron made—
 He home was on a cart conveyed.
 O muse! ye jingling jilt, fie shame,
 Tell truth for once—"the smith was lame."

o o * o
 o * o o

That stately youth, with giant force,
That there restrains the fiery horse;
First at the sports of summer's e'en,
That shake the sod of village green;
And round the glowing winter hearth,
The lifestring of the rustic mirth;
Nor will the precedence yield
To one in labours of the field.

His fair was coy, as fair will prove
Sometimes, when deepest drowned in love ;
Beneath th' eclipse he sought for guide
The wily witch of Irwine side.

And mark that venerable man,
Conspicuous ever in the van
Of those that seek the house of prayer,
And long an office-bearer there—
His goods were stolen. With truth 'tis said,
He sought notorious Jenny's aid,
And rushed against the threefold fence,
Of Scripture, Reason, Common-Sense.

Irwine, the Virtues long have made
Their bowers within thy sheltering shade!
What! sermonising? lift thine eye
And scan that fair one passing by,
In all the pageantry and power
Of youth and beauty's noontide hour.

Yes, Art and Nature both have played
Their freaks to form the matchless maid:

Even on that high brow's beauteous swell
The amorous sunbeams love to dwell;
Or, through the silken shade will peep,
Like lover o'er his idol's sleep:
Those bright blue eyes might be the theme
For life of minstrel's raptured dream,
New charms disclosing day by day,
As fled the swift, sweet hours away.

That swimming majesty of tread,
That air, that symmetry might wed
The misanthrope to ways of men,
The hermit to the world again;
Yea, and beneath that hand of snow,
The bright designs will sometimes glow;
She sings, 'tis as if angel gave
To earth the music of a wave
Of harmony, from that great sea—
Companion of eternity,
Yet, this accomplished, peerless queen,
Hath also with the beldam been.

O man! of all things here we see,
Thou art the greatest mystery;
Thou chaos in contention dipt,
Thou heterogeneous nondescript;
God's word and Nature's law aside
Are set, as inclinations guide;
And spite of every high pretence,
A child art thou of circumstance.

Ye who profess the creed sublime,
That man shall, at some future time,
Divest him of his native will
To shun the good and seek the ill,
And, by his own intrinsic aid,
Arise, in moral light arrayed ;
Turn, in your intellectual pride,
Survey the Witch of Irwine side !



THE MINSTREL'S DEATH SONG.

“The bard was homeless—
All else that breathed beneath the circling sky
Were link'd to earth by some endearing tie;
He only, like the ocean weed, uptorn
And loose, along the world of waters borne.”
—MONTGOMERY.

ON Severn's banks, as tales unfold,
Whilom there dwelt a noble knight,
Renowned alike in peace and war,
“The good Sir Eustace,” he was hight.

His form was stately as the stag
That roams the mountain forest free,
And first he was in battle-broil,
And first in deeds of courtesy.

From England's western coast he came
Among a conqu'ring baron's train,
And won the Lady Lucy's hand,
And eke her rich and wide domain.

And long they lived, and fondly loved,
And many blessed their honoured name.
And many of their line arose
Unrivalled in the rolls of fame.

One night, one dark and stormy night,
When winter reigned in sombre state,
A hesitating knock was heard
To echo from the lofty gate.

'Twas opened, and an aged bard,
A man of noble mein stood there,
Though deeply on his face were wrought,
The lines of grief, the lines of care.

In rustic garb he was attired,
And on his spreading shoulders hung
A homely harp, through which the wind
In melancholy requiem sung.

And partner of his wanderings wide,
A dog stood wistfully behind,
Now old and worn, yet once had been
The best, the goodliest of his kind.

The minstrel told no winded tale,
With mendicant's base and artful whine,
But sought a shelter for the night,
For sake of love, of love divine.

And menials gave a welcome kind,
(Such was their generous lord's behest),
And spread the hospitable board,
And strove to cheer the stranger guest ;

Who breathed a short, but fervent prayer,
And, ere he of the meal partook,
He gave the poor old dog a share,
With kindly word, and kindlier look.

Broad, broad, and lofty was his brow,
For intellect and genius there
A halo shed, time ne'er shall mar,
Nor death e'er darken one more fair.

And long and silvery were the locks
That o'er his shapely shoulders spread,
His arm was long, his arm was strong,
Erect his form, and firm his tread.

In sooth to say, the homeless bard
Was formed on Nature's noblest plan,
On every point her plastic hand,
Had boldly, fairly marked—the man.

The elder menials gazed with awe,
The younger soon repressed their glee,
And the old stag-hound licked his hand,
And leaned its head upon his knee.

Abstemious was the man of song,
His beverage Nature's first and best,
And, when the brief repast was o'er,
Him thus the seneschal addressed :—

"From stranger, way-worn, as you seem,
Perhaps too much I may require,
But, should it please you, gladly we
Would hear you touch th' enliv'ning lyre."

"With pleasure, sir," the bard replied,
"But time has marred my skill, I fear,
Besides, the strains I mostly sing,
Are little formed the heart to cheer."

The spacious hall was crowded soon,
He swept his hand the chords along,
Then rose, like river in its strength,
The melody of matchless song.

'Twas solemn, slow, and wildly sad,
Yet sweet as that to poet given,
When soaring, wrapt on fancy's wing,
He hears the golden harps of heaven.

Love pressed unseen the hand of love,
And whispered vows of lasting truth,
The widow saw in manhood's prime
The long lost husband of her youth.

The gaunt old yeoman, grim and grey,
Recalled the boasted time when far
He led the chase, or stood, a rock
Against the headlong tide of war.

The mother kissed her darling boy,
And felt his arms around her twine,
Although his nameless dust was laid
Afar in land of Palestine.

Misfortune dreamed of happier days,
The good, the pure, of that bright shore,
Illumed with uncreated light,
Where sin and death are known no more.

Oh ! music, magnet of the soul,
In thy mysterious power we see
The shadow of that holy joy
That waits us in eternity.

Sir Eustace loved the minstrel's art,
The mellow numbers caught his ear,
And soon a messenger he sent
Requesting much a song to hear.

The bard obeyed, and rendering meet
Obeisance to the assembled great,
He met with calm undaunted air
The lofty looks and lordly state.

The lay was sweeter, sadder still,
Even veteran valour changed its hue,
Down beauty's cheek the tear-drops stole,
As o'er the rose distils the dew.

He ceased, and silence followed deep,
A spell was o'er the circle flung,
As lingered still in memory's ear
The thrilling notes he last had sung.

At length the chieftain said—"Such strains
Have never blest mine ears before,
Where, minstrel, is your native home,
Whence have you learned such wond'rous lore?"

Full modestly the bard replied—
"Of science I'm no foster child,
From nature comes my simple skill,
My song is but her impulse wild.

"Where winds the rock-bound, limpid Plym
Through fertile vales of Devonshire,
There lies my native nook of earth,
There first I found my woodland lyre."

"Then," said Sir Eustace, "you can tell
The tale of Dartmore's beauteous bride,
The loved, lamented Arabell,
Who hapless at the altar died?"

The minstrel bowed, though all aghast,
Beheld his cheek turn deadly pale!
And his strong frame a moment shake,
As shakes the sapling in the gale.

He sought, but vainly sought to wake
The strain that mem'ry knew too well;
Again a tremor shook his frame,
And o'er the harp he prostrate fell.

They raised, they bore him to a couch,
And deemed that in a trance he lay;
The leech was brought, 'twas bootless all,
The minstrel's soul had passed away!

The poor old dog ran frantic round,
Imploring help whence none could be,
And licked his master's hands and face,
And looked and howled most piteously.

Poor "Plym!" three days beside the dead,
He sat, nor threats would drive him hence,
Nor softest blandishments entice,
Nor bid him taste of sustenance.

The fourth, when "dust to dust" was given,
Unto the bier he closely clave,
And, when the sexton's task was o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs upon the grave.

Twice had the short-liv'd wintry day
Beheld the faithful mourner there;
The third returning saw him still,
But cold and lifeless as his lair.

Full soon the minstrel's tale transpired,
The name his breviary bore
Informed Sir Eustace, they had oft
Been playmates in the days of yore.

He loved, how deeply, fondly loved,
Earth's sordid churls can never tell,
As deeply, fondly, was his love
Returned by beauteous Arabell.

Their bridal morn auspicious dawned,
And peals were rung, and plaudits free,
And gathered in the holy fane
A gay and goodly company.

A moment and the lovely bride
A breathless form before them lay ;
Another, and the bridegroom found
The world was now a blank for aye.

His wealth unto the church he gave,
Forsook his old ancestral hall,
Twice twenty years he restless roamed,
And humbly sung to great and small.

And, at that name beloved, adored,
Rushed on his heart and on his brain
The past, with fell tornado's sweep,
And snapt the silver cord in twain.

Above the heart-struck wanderer's dust
Was raised a monumental shrine,
An aged thorn now blossoms there,
Arrayed in wreaths of eglantine.

And, when the rose is in its bloom,
And bees caress each crimson bell,
In bosom of that fragrant thorn
The live-long night sings Philomel.

And there, 'tis said, at midnight hour,
Slow stealing on the still profound,
The startled peasant sometimes hears,
Of wind-swept harp, the solemn sound !

And, though of that far-distant day
Much lies beneath oblivion's wave,
The passing pilgrim still is seen
To linger by the "Minstrel's Grave."



THE VISION OF JED.

AN ELECTION SQUIB.

I.

DEPARTED in the shadowy west
The last red, lingering streak of day,
And dews were falling thick and fast
On closing flower and verdant spray ;
And o'er the Cheviot's lengthened bound,
Dark thunder-clouds portentous spread,
Whose fitful flash, and sullen sound,
Shed on the heart a pleasing dread.

II.

By shady banks of silver Jed,
I wandered in the sweetest mood
That ever fond enthusiast led,
Or blessed a son of Solitude ;
When, lo ! beneath a giant rock,
That heaved on high its forehead bold,
Crowned with the laurel leaves of oak,
And broom's bright vegetable gold.

III.

I marked a stately matron stand
In deep, deep weeds of wo and wail,
Despair had stamped with master-hand
His signet on her features pale,—

A shivered mace, a sceptre broke,
She held within her dexter hand,—
Her left an empty purse, the joke
Of every breeze, however bland.

IV.

A burden on her back she bore,
That rose abrupt above her ears,
'Twas densely labelled o'er and o'er—
The nation's curses, sighs, and tears.
A pile of papers, huge and high,
Were at her feet in order laid,
Where "bankrupt promises" the eye
Could trace, and list of "bills unpaid."

V.

And things, to tell which would but wage
War with the reader's peace and time,—
The tools, the fruits, in every age,
Of waste, oppression, fraud, and crime.
With interest deep I eyed the dame,
And strong emotions of the breast,
Which may be felt, and find a name,
But ne'er by language be expressed.

VI.

And, as I thus arrested stood,
Upon my ear these accents fell—
"Young man, ne'er leave the paths of good,
"The Melbourne Rule this, note her well."
This said, her hands the matron wrung,
And tore her long dishevelled hair;
With gestures wild, with faltering tongue,
Gave thus her sorrows to the air.

VII.

"O! sad the day be, black the hour,
"That e'er I took the reins of rule,
"To prove myself unfit for power—
"A perfect hoax, a furnished fool:
"Fruits of my folly, waste, and guile,
"Are seen, alas! on every shore,
"Where'er the sunbeams deign to smile,
"The winds to break, the billows roar.

VIII.

"And through this once thrice-happy land,
"Wo, want, and bankruptcy have spread,
"And Party flings her red firebrand,
"And Faction rears its hydra head;
"And nations, from Britannia's eye
"That shrunk, and trembled at her word,
"Address her now in accents high,
"And oft with hand upon the sword.

IX.

"Youth, Beauty, Genius, Worth, have died,
"Before my pestilential breath;*
"And all that's good I still have tried
"To banish from my Sovereign's path.
"And, oh! forgive, may gracious heaven—
"And, oh! forget, may vengeful man,
"The black intrigues, base plots I've driven
"With thee, and thine, thou demon—Dan.

* Lady Flora Hastings.

X.

"But, through the empire's breadth and length,
"Lo! musters a determined band,
"Which all my desperate dying strength,
"No cannot even an hour withstand.
"Say, shall the sea-weed's fragile wreath
"Resist the billows of the main;
"The withered ragwort stem the path
"Of whirlwind dire that sweeps the plain."

XI.

And, now a troop of fiends as foul
As e'er distempered fancy drew
Of him who drains the deadly bowl,
On whistling pinions past me flew;
And blue the living lightning flashed,
And hollow thunders rolled amain,
As on th' infernal phalanx dashed,
And roared, "She's ours, and light the gain."

XII.

A moment passed, and all was gone—
Sailed from the tower the boding owl,
And Jeddart's little dogs anon
Set up an eerie startled howl;
Yet, all night-long, asleep, awake,
The scene still present seemed to be;
Nor e'er its final leave shall take
While ebbs and flows life's sanguine sea.

MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

I.

HIGH on a rock of Mona's rugged coast,
Like mateless seabird, let me sit a while,
Watching the ranks of ocean's snowy host,
And list their music in the dark defile,
As the young morning lends her sweetest smile
To gild these precipices, dark and dun ;
Like Friendship on this world of selfish guile,
Or filial love, that in some beauteous one
Illumes the fevered couch, when sands of life are run.

II.

Thus, were they cast upon creation's morn,
With horrid grandeur hanging on each brow !
Or, by the vengeance of the earthquake torn
Or, by the deluge left as they are now ;
Or, has the thunder taught their heads to bow ?
A deep voice seems to answer solemnly—
“ Frail mortal, dwell not on the why, or how,
“ Behold all fair, and filled with good to thee,
“ And all that lives and moves in earth, in air, and sea,”

III.

Lo ! far around, to utmost range of sight,
How numerous float the inhabitants of air,
Their snowy pinions glittering in the light !
Hark ! their wild cries of transport and of care.
Alike the deep and dizzy height they dare,
Soar on the blast, or plunge into the wave ;
Their lives by Nature's happy laws they wear ;
Whilst man, oft, appetite's or passion's slave,
Diseased, dishonoured, sinks to an untimely grave.

IV.

Go, search the hospital's unwholesome round,
The felon's dungeon, and the maniac's cell,
The workhouse cold, the churchyard's dreary mound,
And learn what suicide's history can tell.
Ask what does most the stream of victims swell,
And truth shall answer with a look forlorn—
“INTemperance, greatest curse since Adam fell ;
“Parent of ills, perdition's eldest born ;
“Dark cloud without a bow—a night that knows no morn.”

V.

Beyond yon shadow on the welkin's verge,
At memory's call, past scenes salute the eye ;
The long black streets of Manchester emerge,
And rivers with the fabled Styx that vie ;
And chimneys numberless that blot the sky ;

The factories pouring human tide on tide,
Stunted and pale, their physiognomy
Of beauty's form and meaning oft denied.
Doomed offerings at the shrine of avarice and pride.

VI.

And note their language as they pass along—
The horrid oath, loud laugh, and jest obscene,
The frequent snatches of the odious song,
The rude remarks on passers-by between ;
And, lo! the gin shop opes its jaws unclean,
And shows a mouthful of its daily meal.
Insatiate! long death's leader thou hast been ;
Earth's other scourges give a time to heal—
Thy giddy hosts still down to dark destruction reel.

VII.

'Tis night—commotion reigns in street and lane,
And mingling sounds come rolling on the blast,
Like the far murmurs of the wintry main,
Or fire, when raging in some forest vast ;
And ever and anon the cab whirls past,
And round reverberates the tavern bell,
And on to ruin crowds are hurrying fast:
Her female finger-posts the pathway tell,
Which Israel's sated king delineates so well.*

* Prov. vii.

VIII.

Where yonder gate unfolds its iron wings,
And yields an entrance to the gay saloon,
Whose light around a dazzling lustre flings,
That mocks the glories of the cloudless moon,
Coach upon coach comes clattering up, and soon
Clink go the steps, descends the mincing fair,
Light as the snow-flake, skims the ground, a boon
Of perfume giving to the smoky air.
What gewgaws, jewels, gems, and frippery are there !

IX.

And, what a cloud of suffering and sin
Has been, ere furnished was this scene of show ?
Vices, and crimes of darkest hue and kin,
All pangs the body and the mind can know—
Hearts broken, floods of tears been made to flow,
And weary limbs through many an irksome hour,
And nakedness, and hunger, all that grow
From selfishness, when backed by Mammon's power—
Youth, manhood, beauty, crushed like to a trodden flower.

X.

That lady, bright as dream of earliest love,
Mark ye the gold upon her bosom shine.
Know that its history's registered above :
The slave's heart burst that dug it from the mine,
Long ere that life had warranted decline—

Scourged, starved, distorted, he had breathed his last,
And that his dying lips had dared repine.
His mangled body to the fowls was cast,
Scarce ratified as man's by those who shuddering past.
* * * *

XI.

Darkening the distance comes a funeral train,
With all the proud appendages of wo.
Is it the scion of some ancient strain
On whom has fallen the inevitable blow?
Fame, through her thousand trumpets, answereth,
"No—
"One that by trade to princely wealth did rise.
"Much to the church he gave at last, although
"Through life this truth once never met his eyes—
"That God will mercy have, and not a sacrifice." *

XII.

Man! what a strange anomaly art thou!
Tyrant or slave, oppressing or opprest,
Fighting for wealth or bread with beating brow,
By wants fictitious, imaged ills distrest,
Now by ambition on through peril prest,
Religion's truths, so beautiful, so plain,
Perverted, mystified, or trimmed, as best
Yield arms to power, or plenitude to gain,
Till what God meant for bliss, at last becomes thy bane.

* Hosea, vi. 6.

XIII.

Thy creed is formed for thee, and stamped in youth,
As is the seal on wax when it is hot ;
And, though around should shine enlivening truth
In after years, alas ! it matters not ;
Thou warr'st thy little hour, art gone, forgot,
And whence come half the ills our life that try ?
Earth's teeming cities, solitudes remote,
In tones of thunder "IGNORANCE" reply,
The deep, the very grave is heard to join the cry.

XIV.

But now the sun has gained meridian height.
And every spot of earth is glad and gay ;
The gloomy cavern's mouth itself seems bright,
Like dark deceit, that welcomes to betray :
Old ocean trolls his merry roundelay,
Life drinks enjoyment's limpid fountain free ;
And, while I thus the happy scene survey,
My soul ! what thrilling thoughts arise in thee ;
An earnest, and a glance of immortality !

CALF OF MAN, *May*, 1844.

A TRUTHFUL SKETCH
OF THE
GATEKEEPERS OF A SLAUGHTERHOUSE
THAT SHALL BE NAMELESS, OR IAGO
AND SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

If they had lived in days of old,
They would have been the tyrant's hacks—
Their tools, the thumbkins, and the boots,
The rack, the gibbet, and the axe.

O! who can look on two such moral blots,
And mourn not man's innate depravity,
To see his Maker's image thus defaced,
So formed in fashion of the master fiend,
False witness bearing, and so gross and foul,
As made their patrons utterly ashamed, *

Whom neither common ties, nor even oaths,
Can bind to truth, disciples of the school

* On one occasion a sub-committee who examined this precious pair regarding the conduct of the superintendent, got a report of such a villainous complexion, that on presenting the monster to the committee, they were so scandalized that they begged to be allowed to withdraw it; although entertaining anything but friendly feelings to the said grossly calumniated official, we hope, for the sake of our common nature, that it was consigned to the fire.

Of Titus Oates, garroters whose grim hands
Are ever on some reputation's throat,
Of ruth and fellow-feeling destitute
As the north pole, or crest of Caucasus.
Sensual, malignant, and revengeful as
The serpent scotched, or trodden rattlesnake ;
In raising strife by covert plots and schemes,
Both artists quite unique, unparalleled ;
In cant, duplicity, prevarication,
Eavesdropping, and such virtues cardinal,
As eminent and as felicitous,
Playing lickspittle, tale-bearer, and spy,
Man-trap, cat's-paw, or anything you please,
To Corporation's minions, and to those
By fortune placed beneath, the grinder stern,
And petty tyrant, reaping their reward,
Marked, hated, and detested, and despised.

But, there is a reward, another still,
That waits you,—one which the unerring hand
Of Heaven shall dispense in its own time.
The wicked sit in places high,—base men,
Who strangle truth, asperse the virtuous,
And varnish o'er the vices of the vile,
Acting as like the judge unjust of old,
They feared not God, nor yet regarded man.
And doubtless you were prompted, might be hired
To fabricate your odious calumnies,
Untruths as great as falsehood ever forged,
Which might a grand achievement have been deemed,
And gained you a pre-eminence in hell.
But can you, will you with impunity

Be suffered to subvert and stigmatize,
Those of your black impeachments, innocent
As man's frail nature possibly can be,
As free from such as those who never saw
The morn of life, who practised virtues that
You never knew, virtues of which your souls,
Sordid and worthless, are incapable.

Though now you are protected, and well screened,
By those whose wretched puppets you have been,
There is a rod in every sin, and yours
Are ultimately sure to find you out.
The time draws nigh when black corruption's reign
Shall pass away, and place and power ; but be
In hands trustworthy, then shall parasites
Unprincipled, time-serving, be esteemed
Of small account, and find their just deserts.
If unrepentant still at latest hour,
And memory faithful to her charge remain,
'Tis then the pangs of conscience shall awake,
To which the deadliest of serpent's stings
Is as a soothing touch, while on the verge,
The trembling, sinking precipice of life
You stand, as deep, unfathomed, dark beneath
Lies the abyss of dread eternity.

EVENING THOUGHTS ON THE HEIGHTS OF DUNDONALD.

I.

How sweet the summit of yon lonely hill,
And naked forest's wild and wintry roar!
The deep-toned music of the vagrant rill,
That leaps from cliff to cliff in fragments hoar;
The sea and sky as far as sight can soar,
And fading landscape's melancholy bloom,
Where, from a thousand hearths, the lights once more
Through the dim shade their wonted paths resume,
And variegate the scene, and twinkle through the gloom.

II.

The peaceful sounds that wait on evening's train,
From rock to rock pass lingering along,
And melt melodious on the sighing main,
That, cold and dark, obstreperous and strong,
Spreads his deep waters; sweet the seabird's song
Strays o'er these shores, that heard, in days remote
From Rome's imperial powers, or feudal throng,
Destruction's trumpet, through her brazen throat,
Pour to contending hosts the war-arousing note.

III.

And list! the anvil's ever-echoing knell,
Broke by the breeze—the village evening hum,
The partridge chirping through the dreary dell,
While loud reports from distant sportsmen come;
Irvine's deep moan, now sinking slowly dumb,
Now rising hoarse, as sudden shifts the gale—
The clattering wheels—and in the dusk still some
Laborious rustic whirls his sounding flail,
And far off tells the deep his everlasting tale.

IV.

Now lost the churchyard, gone the tombstones grey,
That silent, teaching, tributary band,
That 'gainst Oblivion's powers of black array,
O'er the green graves, like watchful sentries stand;
And many a sigh and holy throb command,
When Sabbath summons round the house of prayer
Her crowds promiscuous, and with olive wand
Charms every sound that swims along the air,
And bids each spot around a heavenly aspect wear.

V.

Spring yet shall glad these weary, wasted plains,
This moaning hawthorn deck with blossoms fair,
Call up to keen activity the swains,
And ope the primrose in the noontide glare;
The village youth their summer sports shall share;
Yon sea, so fierce, with dimple scarce be curled,
But to these tombs no change shall tidings bear,
Till earth behold the Archangel's wings unfurled,
And the last trumpet's voice awake a slumbering world.

VI.

Obscure the spot, and far removed from fame,
No regal sepulchre is here arrayed,
Yet, as I pass, a sigh 'twill sometimes claim ;
For here a grandsire's aged dust is laid,
Around whose knees, in infant hours I've played,
And felt beyond the muse's power to sing,
When bowed the hoary patriarch, and paid
His due devotions to the Almighty King,
Or when with heartfelt strains the rustic dome would ring

VII.

O! 'mid those wilds had fortune placed my cot,
And bade me daily 'mong their charms to stray,
Climb the grey hill, from revelry remote,
And mark the morning bursting into day,
The seasons rise and softly steal away,
And oft my harp be tuned at fall of night ;
When age should come—cold age—and dull decay,
To find a grave in yonder solemn site,
With hopes to rise and shine in everlasting light.

VIII.

Ye mighty oaks, that smile at ocean's blast,
With ivy circled, where the ring-dove rears
Her brood secure—ye shaggy mountains, cast
In Nature's throes, where time a thousand years
Has wrote—thou tower that dim afar appears,
Where feudal lords in olden time would dwell :
Ye rocks, that shine with evening's crystal tears,
And mournful echo yonder village bell,
Night calls me to my home—dear scenes of youth, farewell!

ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER,
MRS. R. PARKER.

"Now my days are swifter than a post."—JOB ix. 26.

OUR fellow-pilgrims, one by one,
We lose on life's declining way ;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
With changing looks and tresses grey ;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the word is waxing old.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When hand in hand we went to school ;
Or gambolled on the daisied lea,
Or watched the minnows in the pool :
And bliss from every object drew,
For all was beautiful and new.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When looked we through the churchyard gate,
Our little kindred's graves to see ;
And though we distant deemed the date,
Each other viewed with sob and sigh,
And said "We one day too would die."

It seems of yesterday to be,
When in the long, dark winter night,
Beside our mother's wheel sat we ;
The hearth was clean, the fire was bright,
And she would sing some melting lay
Of men, of things long passed away.

And when the song or tale was o'er,
What simple questions we would start ;
Or on the fire intensely pore,
With tearful eyes and lips apart ;
Alas, that sweet, that soothing strain,
I'll never hear on earth again.

Upon my father's mouldering breast
I've lived my mother's dust to lay ;
The tongue that hushed us both to rest
Is silent and insensate clay ;
That dreary path thou too hast gone,
And we must travel all anon.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When at thy grandsire's knee thou stood,
With blossoms of the hawthorn tree,
And wild-flowers dewy from the wood ;
And soft the good old man the while
Would stroke thy head, and fondly smile.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When through the morning's dewy pane

The summer's golden light we'd see
Gild the green hills and distant main :
Those moments in their bright array,
O! God of goodness, where are they ?

But where is all the bliss, the bane,
The sunny hours, the deeds sublime :
The most that mortals may attain,
In annals of departed time ?
Earth's mightiest ones, forgot at last,
Are swallowed in the boundless past.

And now, within the grave's embrace—
Two little children by thy side—
Thou art; and six hast left to trace
The world's rough shore, and stem its tide,
Through much unkindness, many a snare,
And all without a mother's care.

And should they meet those ills of life
That rend the heart, and blanch the cheek,
Perhaps, unequal to the strife,
With eyes suffused, unseen, they'll seek
The spot where thou liest lone and low,
To tell the senseless turf their wo.

Years shall away on viewless wing,
The sky as bright, the earth as green,
And soon some laughing hour shall bring,
When none shall know that thou hast been;

Perchance some one in passing by,
May say, "This dust once lived as I!"

And, is it all of life we gain,
A gleam to light us to the grave?
A sigh, a tear, upon the main
The crested foam, and ere the wave
On which it rides has drunk the dyes
Of light, 'tis lost to mortal eyes?

Yes, this is all! and 'tis a boon
The Godhead hath in goodness given;
The dawning of that day whose noon
Shall rise beneath his smile in heaven;
And brighter still, and brighter be,
Through ages of eternity?

'Tis ours to adore the Great First Cause,
To practise love to fellow-men;
To steer our course by Nature's laws,
And spend with joy our little span;
The rainbow, butterfly, and flower,
Are beauteous in the fleeting hour.

Our fellow-pilgrims, one by one,
We lose on life's declining way;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
With changing looks and tresses grey;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the world is waxing old.

CHRIST WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it.”

LUKE xix. 41.

JERUSALEM's temple, towers, and bulwarks lay
In all the splendours of the eastern day,
And in the blaze of palaces, embossed
With gems and gold, the astonished eye was lost ;
While the bright tombs of men of ancient days
Shed their far lights and shadows on the gaze ;
And the sad sites of thousand glories gone,
Diffused what sensibility alone
Can gather from the hoary wrecks of time,
And o'er them weep with sympathy sublime.

And there the High Priest to the temple trod,
While far behind his shining garments flowed ;
But, O ! how lacking in the important part,
The inward man—the adorning of the heart ;
Proud, grasping ever both at power and gold,
To all improvements still a barrier bold ;
For the same spirit through the race has run,
Of every creed and clime beneath the sun.

Beauty, sweet beauty, gorgeously arrayed,
Shone in each path—the matron and the maid ;
The tender infant, grasping in its fears
The wall ; the patriot of an hundred years,
Whose furrowed cheek and faded eye were wet
For the far sun of Israel's glory set ;
As sits the watchful spider in her snare,
Sat the shrewd lawyer—and all pompous there
The self-adoring Pharisee—while fleet
The man of business hurried through the street.

And there the war-horse pranced, and rushed amain
To phantom battle o'er the dusty plain,
And formed the hostile squadrons that had known
The stern extremities of every zone ;
Yet the same dauntless and unconquered host,
In Lybia's glow, and Caledonia's frost,
And here to wondering multitudes unfurled
Their arts of war that had subdued the world ;
While by the portal of the strong-built tower—
Shade of their crimes, and shelter of their power—
The sullen sentinel, with tread profound,
Flung the defiance of his looks around.
The city smiled, the melancholy smile
That wretched beauty sheds, yet weeps the while ;
The trace of dignity the prince retains,
Dragged at the conqueror's chariot wheel in chains.
Messiah came !—benignant was his mien,
His followers few—as Truth's have often been ;
Unknown to pomp and pageantry, that wait
Around the form of son of regal state ;
Though his it was salvation to bestow—
Theirs, oft to plunge whole provinces in wo.

He paused ! beheld the dismal scene dilate,
Of Israel's present, past, and future state,
Beheld her love in happier period shown,
When God she followed in a land unsown,
And heartfelt songs amid the desert rose,
Of trust in him and triumph o'er their foes ;
And warnings often given, but given in vain,
And mercies offered ne'er to be again ;
The woës from heaven by obstinacy wrung,
That in thick closing clouds above her hung,
While she beneath infatuated slept,
Till lo ! the Saviour she rejected—wept !

Saying " Hadst thou known, even thou in this thy day,
The things belonging to thy peace, but they
Are now for ever hidden from thine eyes ;
And soon upon thee shall the days arise,
That cast a trench about thee shall thy foes,
Compass thee round, on every side enclose,
And lay thee even with the ground,—thine own
Children within thee,—nor shall leave one stone
In thee above another ; for thou hast
Not known the time when visited thou wast." *

* Luke xix. 42, 43, 44.



LAMENT FOR ROBERT TANNAHILL.

DESCEND in streams let sorrow's rain,
Awake my harp thy saddest strain,
Benignant Nature kindly deign
 To aid my skill ;
Thy warmest worshipper is gane—
 Sweet Tannahill.

Lives there a man that half but knows
A poet's feelings, frailties, woes ;
His heart's wild ebbs and overflows ;
 How melted will
His soul be o'er the life's sad close
 Of Tannahill !

His meed of fame he asked—nor high
His claims were stretched,* yet could deny

* "When the man of taste and discrimination reads these pieces, he will no doubt find passages that might have been better; but his censures may be qualified with the remembrance that they are the effusions of an unlettered mechanic, whose hopes as a poet extend no farther than to be reckoned respectable among the minor bards of his country."—*Preface to Tannahill's Poems.*

The cold, harsh, world with jaundiced eye,
 Adjudging ill;
But "wounded worth forbade reply"
 From Tannahill.

The rustic heel can tread the rose,
The stream soil that in silver flows,
Seduction with a thousand throes
 Sweet beauty kill;
Neglect and Envy crush with woes
 A Tannahill.

O world invidious! loth art thou
The laurels to the living brow
Of lowly minstrel to allow;
 What serves thy skill,
Displayed in lengthened wailings now
 For Tannahill.

Go, in thy selfish, thoughtless pride,
But placed in hall by beauty's side,
While woke by Music's vocal tide
 Is rapture's thrill;
How wronged, thou then may'st there decide,
 Was Tannahill.

His strains are sung, his numbers read
From palace to the lowliest shed,

'Mong burning deserts, mountains clad
 With glaciers chill ;
While, without stone to mark his bed,
 Sleeps Tannahill.

But, as bemoaning minstrels tell,
When spring bedinks " Gleniffer's dell,"
Deep on the " crawflower's early bell "
 The dews distil,
The tears of Nature's " bonny sel',"
 For Tannahill.

When the last sun of summer's shed
On huge Benlomond's lofty head,
And far is sunk in ocean's bed,
 Clouds linger still,
Streaks of deep mourning purple red,
 For Tannahill.

When yields the aged year her pride,
Is heard by planting's sunny side.
Where sweet the " woodland burn " does glide,
 The redbreast shrill,
The voice of Nature's empire wide,
 For Tannahill.

When winter, with resistless power,
Sweeps through the halls of Stanley Tower,

'Tis said at midnight's awful hour,
His tempests will
Mourn with the spirit of the bower
For Tannahill.

And long shall kindred genius come
And linger pensive by his tomb ;
When earth's proud potentates the womb
Of darkness fill,
Verdant the memory shall bloom
Of Tannahill.



A VISIT FROM THE SHADE OF SHAKESPERE.

O ERIN ! hapless Erin ; where
Shall we behold a land so fair,
So fertile, and alas ! withal,
So deeply sunk in misery's thrall ;
God has been good to thee, but man
On all has thrown his baneful ban,
Priestcraft, misrule, and faction's strife,
Have drained the fountain of thy life ;
And like some wretch about to drown,
The longer, still the deeper down.

Such were my thoughts in that man-gin
Of N——, called the "Shakespere Inn,"
'Twas night's unloveliest hour—the dead,
I just had snugly got to bed ;
The fire was burning dim and low,
And shadows flitted to and fro,
Old N——'s close companion—rain,
Loud rattled on the trembling pane,
The leaden god a moment shed
His balmy influence o'er my head

A moment, and his reign was o'er ;
And when my optics sought the floor,
With angry look, and haughty air,
The ghost of Avon's bard stood there.
Preserve's ! had scarcely from me broke,
When thus th' indignant phantom spoke :—

“ Since e'er my life's last scene was played,
And in the dust the Actor laid,
Of all the portraits that have been
O'er tavern, or in printshop seen,
This may be safely said to be
The most consummate mockery ;
Why, we would think that Mr. Quaff
Designed to make the tombstones laugh ;
What has such place, such sham as he,
At all to do with mine or me ?
As much as bear at Almack's ball,
Or donkey in a bishop's stall.

“ By great Apollo's crown of light !
By all that aids the poet's flight,—
By every joy that genius knows,—
By all her pangs, by all her woes,—
If ever you expect to claim
One breathing from the trump of Fame,
Ne'er turn your back upon this town,
Till once you've pulled that sign-board down.

“ Let him get up some such like thing
As Pat, with grunter in a string,

A wolf, a fox, or if he will
Disport it classically still
The jolly Bacchus, or his friend
Silenus, best would suit his end."
Good, good, said I, but save the mark.
What would you think, Sir, of—a shark?
Before the words their wings had known.
The cock was heard, the spectre gone.



EPISTLE TO MR. JOHN STIRLING, DARVEL.

THE dreary hills in snow were clad ;
Cold, dull, and ourie, to his shed
The redbreast, household bird, had fled ;
 And gloamin' grey
Walked the wide world with silent tread,
 To close the day.

Through my dim cabin window, I
Surveyed the vast concave on high,
The cheerless, frowning, winter sky,
 And coming night ;
While days of youth, long gone, passed by
 Before my sight.

O, what is in the hours so sweet,
Loosed from Time's fiery chariot fleet,
And banished to the dark retreat
 Of things forgot,
'That Fancy ever loves to meet
 Their joys remote ?

Whene'er I think on "auld langsyne,"
When days, devoid of care, were mine ;
And life's gay morning sun would shine
 In cloudless sky ;
I linger on the theme divine,
 With watery eye.

But to return ; when night displaced
The day, descending down in haste,
And every ray of light had chased
 Beyond the girth
That bounds the unfathomable waist
 Of mother earth---

I sought the Muse—I sought in vain ;
She turned her back with proud disdain ;
And, though repulsed, to seek again
 I still returned ;
While she as oft my courtship plain
 Indignant spurned.

For oft she is, to say the least,
As lazy as a village priest,
When after fuddle or a feast,
 On snowy morn,
He hears in bed the bell request
 His trusty horn.

When thunders roll—when tempests sweep
The hoary surface of the deep,

And heaven's capacious eyelids weep
 Their watery store,
Till down the mountain torrents leap,
 With thundering roar,—

Then—then she furious mounts her car,
And joins the elemental war ;
Rides the swift blast ; and sees afar
 The maddening wave
Rise, and the shipwrecked shivering tar,
 Imperious crave.

Again she'll wing her wayward flight ;
To ruined turret's mouldering height ;
And, with a frenzied wild delight,
 There sit alone,
And hear the doleful birds of night
 Terrific moan.

Or mark the moon glide slowly through
Her path of deep, dark, cloudless blue ;
While suns and systems round pursue
 Their courses meet.
And the cold moonlight world in dew
 Is slumbering sweet.

And oft on rock's rude summit grey
She'll stand, as westward wheels the day,
And eye round islet, creek, and bay,
 Old ocean's god
Roll, with a wide, resistless sway,
 His purple flood.

To Satire's summit too—you know—
The wicked imp will sometimes go ;
And on the folks that walk below,
 And pass quite civil,
Her bombs and brickbats down she'll throw
 And play the devil.

But if I give her ought to sing
She'll instantaneous droop the wing,
And runs perverse her giddy ring,
 Which makes me marvel;
But some time yet the freakish thing
 May think on Darvel.

Now, fareweel, Johnny; strive to steer
Of vice's various whirlpools clear;
And may thou still be found to bear,
 A Hampden spirit;
Nor e'er rate mankind by their gear,
 But by their merit!



WRITTEN ON OBTAINING A MOST GRACIOUS AUDIENCE

OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS BARD.

FOOFUNGUS OF FEEDERDEN.

I'VE seen some songsters in my day,
And hunted lions many a score,
But, never in the whole survey,
Met such a Bluebeard Bard before.

You may the Muses court, my beau,
But, I'll take care you do not cheat them,
By telegraph I'll let them know
Your only object is to—eat them.

About the stars you fiercely sing,
And yet I have a strong surmise,
That still you'd strike a bolder string
If they were comfits, tarts, and pies.

And poor old Lady Luna, too,
You must into your verses squeeze,
What raptures would she raise in you,
Were she a double Glo'ster cheese.

And how you rave about the sun !
It may be very well in rhyme,
But, I could bet you ten to one,
You think a dumpling more sublime.

To you "the honest sonsie face,"
Were source of deeper inspiration,
Of "chieftain of the puddin' race,"
Than all the planets in creation.

They're plump fine fellows, I dare say,
Those orbs, but not for making kail ;
Would'st like to catch a comet, eh !
And in the soup-pot put his tail.

You've sung the ocean, bah ! what work !
Why, Neptune says you'd like to boil her ;
Then take his trident for a fork,
And of her every fish dispoil her.

Now, do not o'er the martyrs whine ! *
For people need no ghost to tell them ;
If thereby you could better dine,
You'd dig their very bones and sell them.

The panting partridges and hares
Behold you in their troubled dreams,
Commixed with pointers, nets, and snares,
And waken with despairing screams.

*The Feeder singeth delectably of the martyrs.

And many a pound for rope and chain,
The farmer and the cattle-breeder
Have paid, when beasts would start amain
At visions of the dreadful Feeder.

A cabman told me just to-day,
He saw you meet a flock of sheep,
Which turned and fled the other way,
To perish in the mighty deep.

'Tis well about the "Adelphi" known,
That once when you but crossed the yard,
The goat was in a moment gone,
And all the poultry fairly scared.

The stable boys had glorious sport,
At ducks and geese in such sad taking;
And the poor pigeons cut quite short
In middle of their sweet love-making.

In Greenland journals I have read,
And heard the seamen tell the same,
That sucking whales are put to bed
At once with mention of your name.

I own my patience sometimes fails,
Of small birds when I hear you canting,
Could you lay salt upon their tails,
My word you soon would stop their chanting!

The feathered folks had best take heed,
For should they in your clutches fall,
You'd soon exterminate the breed,
And eat them, eggs, and nests, and all.

You Scotland love you say, in brief,
I think she would much dearer be,
If all her rocks were rounds of beef,
And all her streams were barley-bree.

You've much to say in Burns' praise,
I tell you without hesitation,
For such as you to touch his bays
Is only downright profanation.

But, by-the-bye, you may presume
To rant of bards on this pretence,
That you subscribed to raise one's tomb,
The princely sum of eighteenpence !*

O! this was noble, sir, of you !
Munificent! and ages hence
Shall shine oblivion's shadows through
Your bright, immortal eighteenpence.

When pyramids have passed away,
When London's but a myth immense,
Shall live as fresh as new born day,
The odour of your eighteenpence.

* A fact, the committee returned the money.

Ye votaries of the rich and rare,
Would ye the great Foofungus find,
Ne'er to his court the offerings bear
Of things that fertilize the mind.

But, send a spirit-cellar on,
To get a well-stocked larder see,
And, if his favour would be won,
Be sure you catch a brewery.

Then shall the genius be revealed,
In gormandizing glory grand,
Like vulture on the battle-field,
Or shark when wrecks enrich the strand.

And then shall apoplexy bear,
His bardship to th' Elysian shore,
To meet great Epicurus there,
And eat and drink for evermore.



ST. ANDREW'S MESSAGE TO THE SCOTS-
MEN IN LIVERPOOL.

THE star-studded pinions of night waved their last,
And the day of St. Andrew was joined to the past;
When sleep had resumed o'er my eyelids its sway,
And unconscious the soul of her burden of clay—
Methought through the far fields of light's sunny blue,
On a chariot of beams of the morning I flew;
And the sound of earth's cities and ocean had died,
Like the voice of a song on the aerial tide.

Again, I beheld, and earth's cities were gone—
Of her domes, and her temples, and towers there were none;
Not one lofty mountain had ventured to bear
Its crest of lone pride in the empire of air;
And far, far away, like the bright star of e'en,
The sun-gilded breast of the ocean was seen.

Again, I beheld, and lo! distance had thrown
Her pall over all that on earth I had known;
And o'er sun and o'er moon, and the bright milky way
I passed, 'neath the beams of a ne'er-setting day;
Till that city celestial, of gems and of gold,
That St. John first beheld in a vision of old,

In splendour o'erwhelming burst full on my view ;
 The portals revolved, and methought I passed through,
 And stood on the shore of the great crystal sea,
 And heard of the ransomed the sweet melody.

There, entranced as I listened, and dazzled beheld,
 A form slow approached that in beauty excelled,
 All lovely as Mercy and Truth, when they bear
 Their boon to the deathbed of Guilt and Despair.

And, he smiled as he gently on mine laid his hand,
 Saying, "Listen, young bard, and my words understand ;
 "By grace, here, through great tribulation I came ;
 "The patron of Scotland, St. Andrew my name ;
 "While on earth I through faith communed daily with God,
 "And the sweet paths of virtue and wisdom I trod ;
 "And sowed thus the seed that a harvest has given
 "Of fruit everlasting—the bounty of heaven ;
 "And hence, 'mong the great and the mighty, my name—
 "Is blazoned in light by the finger of Fame.

- "Thy countrymen long have the day of my birth
 "Distinguished and welcomed with gladness and mirth ;
 "But lately on banks of the Mersey I've seen
 "What if honour designed me, no honour has been.
 "When the deep bowl is drained until Reason's watchlight
 "Is extinguished—and desperate and dark to the fight,
 "Unmars halled, the armies of Passion arise,
 "And love drops a tear, and sweet Harmony flies ;
 "And man's guardian angels recoil from the sight,
 "While fiends on dark errands look on with delight ;
 "Such scenes may give joy to the base god of wine,
 "And add to his honours, but never to mine.

"Go, bard of the Irwine, and ere thou again
"Shalt mark that fair stream mix its waves with the main,
"To men of the north who sojourn in this land,
"Disclose thou my counsel, and this my command :—

"When Time's hoary pinions again bring the day
"That closes November's cloud-mantled array,
"And far from the face of each well-cherished scene,
"The children of dear Caledonia convene ;
"Let Temperance and Wisdom preside at their boards,
"Love rule all their actions and dictate their words ;
"And thus by kind heaven shall their efforts be blest,
"And with joy shall I hear in these mansions of rest."
I awoke all bewildered—long musing I lay,
And eyed the dawn roll its deep shadows away ;
My trust is discharged to the Saint—and to you,
Ye Scotsmen, that dwell by the Mersey—adieu !

LIVERPOOL, *Dec.*, 1842.



EPISTLE TO MR. CHARLES CLARK,
COTTAGE HILL, LANARK.

WHAT, in the name of all divine,
Apollo, and the glorious nine,
Parnassus' mount, Castalia's stream,
And all the ancient classic dream,
Has ta'en the bard of Cottage-hill,
And set a silence on his quill ?

Is he away with fate and chance
To pay his court to Queen Romance,
On some fantastic, witching theme,
Involved in everlasting dream,
Peopling the tower, all rent and grey,
That threatening hangs on steep and brae,
And linking every hill and dale
With some event of stirring tale ?
Or, has old Isaac Walton's art
Assumed the empire of his heart ;
That, spite of years, amphibious grown,
He's only to the Naiads known ?

By fancy's power, I've sometimes seen
The aged bard with pensive mien,
By some tall rock upon the side
Of winding Mouss, or dashing Clyde,

Courting the ardent, holy power
Of poesy at evening's hour,
While hung the mist upon the vale,
And told the thrush his amorous tale,
And high o'er head, in crevice wild,
On scanty soil, the primrose smiled,
As heaven-taught virtue fair to see,
Victorious o'er adversity.

The dream would change, when far and wide,
The snow appeared on every side ;
And winter sang in leafless bower
His triumph over plant and flower ;
And round thy cot all sadly dumb,
The feathered pensioners would come.*

When loneliness her couch hath spread
Upon the mountain's barren head,
When howls the tempest o'er the heath,
And the deep vale is dark as death,
Nor sound comes from its bosom lone,
But the spent torrent's bubbling moan,
The bird steals heartless to its cave,
Like disappointment to the grave ;
While weary limbs must still be strained,
Before a resting-place is gained.

* My friend is very attentive to the wants of the winged tribe during the severities of winter. I have been much amused, on a frosty morning, to see them hopping about the windows with wistful and expectant looks.

When doomed to prove such dreary scene
My thoughts of thee have often been—
Thy cheering hearth, thy partner kind,
Like halo burst upon my mind,
And might have oft been heard to say,
With a deep sigh, "All far away!"

Our lots as wide asunder lie,
As points opposed of sea and sky ;
Thou with a competency blest,
Has found a fairy place of rest,
As gentle cares, and pastimes hale,
Lead thee serene through age's vale.

Whilst I—but let me not repine,
Nor yet unmanly plaint be mine ;
I've suffered much, can suffer more,
One happy thought 'twill soon be o'er ;
When likely none shall lift my name
But for the purpose to defame ;
At least, of this I've had my share,
Through the past lease of life to bear ;
With vices blamed, with frailties too,
God wot, my nature never knew,
And even of which (but who can tell)
I deem my soul incapable.

Should some dark hour the tidings bring,
That I, poor isolated thing,
By death have lost thy friendship's stay,
My harp shall wake its saddest lay ;

The Past forsake her shadowy throne
To bid me strike a deeper tone,
And generous Nature, weeping, tell
The heart is cold that loved her well.

GLASGOW, *April*, 1845.



HUGHIE SPIERS, OR THE WONDER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

YE sons of song, awake ! arise !
Each power invoke in earth and skies ;
Tune well your harps ;—hark ! hark ! Fame cries,
 “ A bard appears ! ”
“ Give place ! HE comes to take the prize ;
 “ My Hughie Spiers ! ”

Awake ! awake ! or soon ye'll mourn
Your fame eclipsed—your laurels torn—
Your palms away in triumph borne ;
 While, 'mid the cheers
Of thousands, with “ exalted horn,”
 Rides Hughie Spiers !

Bard of the wild Green Island !* thou
Hast got a match—a rival now ;
Campbell lags on Parnassus' brow,
 His hopes turned fears ;
While stumping ower ilk height and howe
 Gangs Hughie Spiers !

* Moore.

Auld England talks wi' timorous cheep
 O' Shakspeare wild, and Milton deep ;
 Greece 'bout her Homer daurna peep ;—
 Were they his peers ?
 Not fit the Pegassus to keep
 O' Hughie Spiers !

In Keat's and Shelly's gaudy ware,
 The "Foambell" Bard need shine nae mair,
 Thence dream o' cake and pudding fair,
 In sad arrears.
 I doubt, *jackdaws* will fin' their share
 Wi' Hughie Spiers !

Nae mair Apollo will give heed
 To Scott, the bard of knight and steed,
 Or bid the bauld Rob Southey speed ;
 But laughs and jeers
 At every sinner o' the breed,
 Save Hughie Spiers !

Venus ance tauld the god, of late
 She heard some mortal had him beat ;
 Urged him to tell, until he flate,
 And said, in tears,
 "Ye wanton jade ! since he maun hae't,
 It's Hughie Spiers !"

Ae night he got upon the spree,
 And roaring like the northern sea,

He sought Fate Atropos ; said he,
Unless your shears
Can send relief, disgraced I'll be,
By Hughie Spiers !

His name on every zephyr scuds ;
'Tis heard in wilds and loneliest wuds ;—
Sweet Irwine—gentlest of our floods !
Fast onward bears,
To tell the ocean's guardian gods
O' Hughie Spiers !

Thou moon ! meek mistress o' the night !
Ye stars that roll in radiance bright !
Ye comets whose revolving flight
Takes up whole years !
Rejoice in our poetic light—
Bright Hughie Spiers !

Sound him, thou sea ! like thunder's roar
Lift thy deep voice along the shore ;
The same let all on earth encore !
Meanwhile, ye spheres,
As through the realms of space ye soar,
Sing Hughie Spiers !

Dogs when they see him wag their tails ;
'Tis said whole packs forget the trails,
Nor aught the huntsman's voice avails ;
And, when he nears
Steam carriages, they gar the rails,
Shriek Hughie Spiers !

The flies that round his bardship bum,
 His wondrous merits daily hum ;
 Auld puss, at " twa threads an' a thrum,"
 Her windpipe clears,
 And bids the chorus rolling come
 In Hughie Spiers !

When meditation leads his shanks
 By sedgy pools and reedy stanks,
 The paddocks lea' their plays and pranks,
 And e'en their dears,
 And come in crowds to gie their thanks
 To Hughie Spiers !

When tempests sweep the welkin wide,
 And hags the broomstick steed bestride,
 Ere forth upon their route they ride,
 Nick cries, my fiers,
 Look out no tricks may ill betide
 Our Hughie Spiers.

At birth of this seraphic bard,
 Things strange, they say, were seen and heard ;
 The sun rose east--grass decked the sward—
 In gossip's ears
 Doors on their oilless hinges jarred,
 " O ! Hughie Spiers !"

He has gi'en vice an unco clip,
 He made Miss Folly naked strip,
 Fast held her in his mighty grip—
 And Reason swears
 She mended 'neath the sounding whip
 O' Hughie Spiers !

Unlike some bards of modern time,
Who string their neighbours' faults in rhyme,
He soars amid the true sublime,
Nor ever veers
To aught that's low; 'twere darkest crime,
Says Hughie Spiers!

Whene'er his mighty numbers flow,
Concord and strength attending go,
Grace, ease, and dignity in Co.,
Jove, stooping, hears
The notes and shouts—"Well done! bravo!
"My Hughie Spiers!"

Come, Scotia! lift thy drooping head,
And leave poor Burns' lowly bed;
In thy best tartans be thou clad;
Dry up thy tears;
Shout! there's a brighter in his stead,
Great Hughie Spiers!



THE TOMBS OF THE DOUGLASES.

"Sae mony, sae guid, as o' the Douglasses hae been
O' ane sirname, were ne'er in Scotland seen."

OLD SAYING.

I.

APPROACH thou reverently, the mighty dead
Are here, whose swords were in themselves a host ;
Who in the cause of sacred freedom bled,
And left their names on history's page embossed,
E'en when they fell, 'twas glorious, as on coast
Of Eastern land descends the orb of day ;
They conquered perishing ; yea, once when lost
His followers seemed, and dead the Douglas lay,
The dread redoubted name was victor in the fray.*

II.

'Tis said, here rests the dust of "Good Sir James,"
If in thy heart there lingers aught that's base,
One thought that with the craven kindred claims,
Hence ! bring not here thy sacrilegious gaze ;
His virtues far transcend the loftiest praise,

* Battle of Otterburne, fought 21st July, 1388.

To Southron yoke he never deigned to yield ;
The land's first ornament in peaceful days,
War's hottest thunderbolt in battle-field,
In dark, in dangerous times poor Caledonia's shield.

III.

And Beauty, haughty, high-born Beauty, here
Disclaims the boasted triumph of her eyes ;
Lo ! in that tomb, where carvings quaint appear,
Perhaps the theme of ancient minstrel lies—
The pride of courts, who gave the envied prize
To valour's hand, and led the radiant dance
With steps of harmony, in all the dyes
That form the rainbow's dazzling expanse—
Her frown more dreaded far than sternest foeman's lance.

IV.

O ! for one hour of midnight's deepest noon,
When twinkling orbs their solemn vigils keep ;
And mourns the watch-dog to the waning moon ;
And weary winds through rents of ruin creep ;
And mellowed comes the music of the deep,
Disturbed at times by owlet's dreary scream—
Here left to thought sublime, unseen to weep
O'er human grandeur's sublunary dream,
And gather lore to guide rapt Passion's wayward team.

DOUGLAS, *June*, 1840.

ON 'THE DEATH OF MR. HUGH ADAM.

FAIR morn awakes, and from the opening sky
The vanquished shadows of the dawning fly;
She comes, new-born ! and from her purple wings
A thousand beauties o'er the welkin flings;
She comes!—proud perched among his listening dames
Shrill through the sleepy town the cock proclaims ;
With waning splendour shines the morning-star,
The watch-dog's voice howls mournful from afar,
The zephyr sullen sighs above the dead,
As o'er the churchyard pensively I tread.

O Time ! what changes wait on every wave,
As roll thy billows to their boundless grave !
Things of a day, we deck thy destined shore ;
Thou mov'st—we perish, and are seen no more ;

The lowly tenant of yon humble sod
Youth's flowery vales and sunny mountains trod ;
Enchanting Hope her prospects spread around,
Wide as the deep in sky-formed circle bound ;
But all is fled, like phantom of a dream,
Or midnight meteor's transitory gleam.

Cold is that breast where Independence dwelt,
Where Reason ruled, and conquered Passion knelt,
Where love to mankind reigned without control,
And every noble feeling of the soul.
And closed in death, and dim as sister clay,
The eye that beamed with friendship's purest ray ;
Silent the tongue whence sweet instruction flowed,
Or harmless mirth, as duty marked the road.

We'll meet around the evening fire no more,
The weekly cares and weekly labours o'er,
There search some page of modern work sublime,
Or records rescued from the wrecks of time ;
And bid, before the intellectual eye,
The men, the things of other days, pass by ;
Or Vice behold pourtrayed in picture true,
Stript of her charms, and naked to the view ;
Produce, for general weal, whate'er of lore
The closing week had added to our store ;
Bid all our sparks in one combustion glow,
And in one stream our little streamlets flow ;
While hours that ushered Sabbath's solemn day,
With pleasure winged, fled unperceived away.

No more on soothing summer's eve we'll stray,
Through pleasing scenes of childhood's early day,
While time departed flung a fairy hue
O'er all that rose on retrospective view,
No more with weary feet we'll scour the plain,
The forests green, the margin of the main,
No more recline upon the mountain's breast,
With love of distant landscape deep impressed.

But O! how passing sad to wander o'er
The dear, dear past, and add to all—no more;
Is aught so poignant in life's vain sojourn,
As tell of joys that never shall return?

But, when dark sorrow's train at length has passed,
And this grief-laden heart has throbbed its last,
To meet in new existence may be ours,
Nearer to God, with more exalted powers.



A FRAGMENT.

'Twas April—bright and genial was the day,
Young dazzling clouds on azure pillows lay
Along the margin of the ethereal plain,
Like sea-birds sleeping on the summer main ;
The infant primrose reared its dewy head
With modest beauty from the mossy bed ;
Not far removed, on springlet's margin green,
The eldest daisy of the year was seen ;
Buds the mild breeze with balmy odours blest,
And bright wings twittered round the half-formed nest.
The burn, from Winter's iron bondage free,
Leaped, laughed, and sang to join the mighty Dee,
That down impetuous from the mountains rolled,
And his wild strength in haughty murmurs told ;
For Spring had called, and Nature heard her voice,
And bade all subjects of her realms rejoice.

Where Cairnsmuir lifts its hoary head on high,
Oft crowned with snow beneath the summer sky,
And ofttimes halts the General of the storm,*
The dreadful phalanx of his strength to form ;

* " When Cairnsmuir gets on his hat,
Crifle he soon will hear of that."

OLD PROVERB.

Ere fiery messengers have given the host
Command to scour the Gallovidian coast ;
I passed, a pilgrim to that sacred height*
Whence Lowe's rapt spirit plumed her wings for flight,
To soar with Fancy through her boundless sway,
And earn a crown impervious to decay.

And, when meridian beams began to fail,
And lengthening shadows intersect the vale,
Embossed in sterile hills of darkest hue,
The loch of Kenmure burst upon the view,
A giant gem, by nature rudely set,
When all her hostile energies were met.

NEW GALLOWAY, *April*, 1842.

* Airds, parish of Kells, stewartry of Kirkcudbright, some time the residence of Lowe, author of "Mary's Dream."



WRITTEN IN WHALLEY ABBEY,
LANCASHIRE.

O'ER the wide ocean of departed Time,
Imagination takes her lonesome flight,
And lo ! the past in majesty sublime
Appears, arrayed in hues of life and light,
'Tis vesper hour, and wold, and woodland height,
And shadowy hills are waxing dimly grey ;
The convent gathers to the solemn rite—
Beneath the lofty roof they bend, they pray—
Now, hark ! the music swells, now softly dies away.

Of ghostly fathers, what a goodly band !
Some forms to fasting little are allied ;
And some the learned, the pious of the land,
Some that have stemmed the battle's stormy tide,
Some look with less of piety than pride ;
Some gallants, too, despite their locks of snow,
For whatsoe'er we choose to be our guide,
Whatever gilding o'er ourselves we throw,
'Tis human nature, oft unchanged, that lies below.

But, who is she beside yon marble tomb
That kneels, a study for the sculptor's art ?
Though but in opening of her beauty's bloom,
Grief bade the splendours of the rose depart.
Her laden eye, tells anguish of the heart,
That well of soul of azure's purest hue,
Like violet in wilderness apart,
The harebell filled with morning's mountain dew,
Or summer's cloudless sky, o'er ocean's boundless view.

The lady weeps ; a ringlet o'er her brow
Falls like a sunbeam through an April shower ;
And, lo ! a lovely boy is with her now,
Her only child :—a chief of rival power
Slew her loved lord, and fired his stately tower,
His lands laid waste, his vassals forced to flee,
And, unattended in the midnight hour,
Save by the light that made her homeless—she,
With infant in her arms, fled to the sanctuary.

And mark that worn, attenuated fair,
Glide like the mist of eve along the vale :
And now she stands, the statue of Despair,
And now a smile lights up her visage pale.
Her knight was brave as ever girded mail,
But fell at last beneath the Turkish brand.
She loves the place of graves when night winds wail,
Raves of a cloven crest, and bloody hand,
And bones all bleached and bare, on desert's burning sand.

And hark ! a clash of arms and trampling steeds,
For know a warlike chieftain comes to-day

To yield the Church his gold, and tell his beads,
So that to-morrow he may burn and slay.
The spell is broke ;—behold the swallows play
Through yawning arches ; on the mouldering stone
The wild flower hangs ; the ivy finds its way
O'er columns fallen, and battlements o'erthrown ;
And all is sadly grand, and all is Ruin's own.

June, 1843.



THE WANDERING PIPER.

THIS is of strange phenomena the age,
Of hope-destroying Whigs and watchful Tories,
Of banded sweeping Radicals, that wage
War with both church and state, and which a bore is
From front to rear, they tell us ; while from cage
Of royalty, to flutter in the glories
Of petticoats imperial, new made
Peers and knights fly, like midges on parade ;—

But, 'tis beyond all note and comprehension,
Clubs, dinners, working-men's associations,
Bills of coercion, schemes of church extension,
Chaps that indulge in pleasing speculations,
Of man's perfectibility, suspension
Railways, balls, banquets, duels, agitations,
The church, the charter, and repeal—it licks ought
Ere madman dreamed—John Bull has turned Don Quixote

Old Caledonia's rampant for her " Kirk "—
At least, so I've been given to understand—
The subject seems to me a little *mirk* ;
In things divine I'm but a sorry hand ;
Howe'er, I hope she'll never draw her dirk,
Or seek the hills again, with book and brand ;
And being church-building 'mong a starving people,
Will give each house a bread and butter steeple.

“Man in the moon” is getting something old;
“The wandering Jew” hath pitched his tent with Death;
Johanna Southcote, too, has caught a cold
(Poor body) which has ta’en away her breath;
And by the sons of scepticism we’re told,
Lost half his terrors even the Devil hath;
And, as the world’s wild fancy is grown riper,
What has she got now?—Oh! “a wandering Piper!”

Of whom the trump of Fame has sounded loud,
That talismanic touchstone. In all ages
To which the common sense of man has bowed,
In stamping kings, priests, heroes, saints, and sages,
Who are but pipers all, although allowed
Of higher character in history’s pages.
’Tis true they differ something in their keys,
As also in the mode they manage fees;

Besides, they sometimes with their piping mix
A little of the homicide and juggler;
At other times, again they play such tricks
As savour of the liar, bandit, smuggler.
It seems the world must yield her tale of bricks
Without straw, still to fascinate and bogle her,
Have something, and appears, for aught yet shown,
Just made for kings and clergymen alone.

This man of mystery—but who is he?
Numbers pretend the secret to impart,
Yet know no more than preachers what we’ll be,
When fails to flow the fountain of the heart;

Some luminary fallen, he looks to me,
Of gaming table or the sporting mart—
A class that Ruin's comet seldom fails to
Treat as the insects cattle with their tails do.

But soft, I think I've heard some people say,
'Tis quite the same whatever the attraction,
Provided you are pleased in your own way,
Or can attain a certain satisfaction ;
Life is, even at its longest summer day,
As we all know, a business-like transaction ;
But while it lasts, alike are blest to tarry on—
The bees their flowers, the beetles on their carrion.



BAILIE ALEXGANDER.

"The hidden, the awful Wisdom, which apportions the destinies of mankind, is pleased so to humiliate and cast down the tender, good, and wise ; and set up the selfish, the foolish, and the wicked."

THACKERAY.

CLIQUE-MADE Justice, stand in view,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Candidates were surely few,
When the honour fell on you ;
Devil's-dust the whole web through,
Bailie Alexgander.

Though your tailor is not "slow,"
Bailie Alexgander ;
Yet, through all will Nature show
Where she's written "mean and low,"
Like some broken-down "old clo,"
Bailie Alexgander.

Little, little sense have ye,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Less of principle, yet we
Here a problem solved will see ;
Maniacs magistrates may be,
Bailie Alexgander.

Yet, we all must own your skill,
Bailie Alexgander ;
That's in cooking up a bill,
If you cannot cure you'll kill,
" Death and Doctor Hornbook " still,
Bailie Alexgander.

Shuffling, juggling underhand,
Bailie Alexgander ;
That's the thing you understand ;
Ruthless as a pirate's brand,
Rotten as a rope of sand,
Bailie Alexgander.

Like aye draws to like degree,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Swindling, lying, Gammongee,
Suits you to a very T ;
Sooth ! a pretty pair are ye,
Bailie Alexgander.

Ye sit where justice *should* be given,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Ye sit where justice should be given,
In falsehood steeped, and malice-driven ;
Fit to bring down fire from heaven,
Bailie Alexgander.

Your advent has been too late,
Bailie Alexgander ;
To Second James's tools of State
You'd been an acquisition great,

With grim Judge Jeffreys for a mate,*
Bailie Alexgander.

Such as you should never be,
Bailie Alexgander,
In a land where men are free ;
Seek some spot beyond the sea—
Some dark den of slavery,
Bailie Alexgander.

There without or dread or fear,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Ye might run your grand career,
Plot, and dodge, and domineer,
Make the very devils sneer,
Bailie Alexgander.

Things are in a sorry state,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Things are in a sorry state,
When such *morale*, with such a pate,
Win their way through honour's gate,
Bailie Alexgander.

Honest men march on to fame,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Mark the issue of your game !
Obloquy, contempt, and shame.
Make a proverb of your name,
Bailie Alexgander.

* Sir George Jeffreys, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

Schemes may now be working sweet,
Bailie Alexgander ;
Worth and truth beneath your feet,
But an hour comes you must meet ;
There is *One* you cannot cheat,
Bailie Alexgander.



EPISTLE TO MRS. HAMILTON OF
PARKHILL.

MADAM,—I have received your note,
Besides my scroll of ragged coat ;
And, 'tis enough for all I've wrote,
 To know that one
Enlightened mind has pleasure got
 From aught I've done.

If e'er in print I try my gear,
Among the very first ye'll hear ;
And, for the part, I learn, ye'll bear
 At that sad crisis,
I send to you my thanks sincere,
 And warmest wishes.

But, as the Ephesian town-clerk said,
" Let us do nothing rash," for aid
Old Time shall bring ; and Fate has played
 A trick as queer,
As call me from the workshop's shade
 And discords dear.

Perhaps my lot she yet may lay
Beneath the glorious blaze of day,
Where wood, and vale, and mountain grey,
Are spread around ;
And rocks that roll the deep away
With voice profound.

Then far as Nature's wide expanse
Exceeds a workshop's stinted glance ;
And far as Nature's notes advance
Above the din
That wounds and stupifies the sense,
Our cells within !

As far my song shall then transcend,
That which now labours through my hand !
Converse with nature will extend
My strength and skill,
And point the steps by which t' ascend
The sacred hill.

Meantime, in life's steep rugged road,
Obscure, unknown, I grave-ward plod,
Cheered on beneath the present load
By Hope's faint light,
Which often has deceitful glowed,
To set in night.

Hark ! hark ! I hear the critic corps
Behind, with loud invidious roar ;

And lo! Oblivion's gulf, before,
Is yawning wide;
The bard's launched in—nor rises more
Above the tide.

But, hold my wild imagination!
I see, ma'am, you've got information
That I, since at your habitation,
To Hymen's altar
Have paid the usual visitation,
And got his halter!

Yes! lang Jack danced about the light,
Rejoicing in its radiance bright,
With frolicsome, incautious flight,
Nor feared the gin,
Till, like some insect of the night,
He tumbled in.

Mony a weary mile he trottit,
O'er mony a stane and hillock stottit,
Or wet to skin, wi' dirt bespottit,
Or laired in snaw;
The very next night he forgot it,
And scoured awa'.

But aft he viewed, with rapture high,
The silent, starry, moonlight sky,
And earth asleep beneath it lie;
While on the gale

Arose the river's mighty sigh,
Far down the dale.

And aft the howlet, flichtering hame
Through the still morn, cried out—"Fie shame!"
The very collies did exclaim!
And even the craik
Would rant, till rocks returned the same,
"Ye rake! ye rake!"

But now the chiel maun toil and sweat,
'Neath scorching sun, or tempests' beat,
Nor e'er approach the muse's seat,
For's very nose;
Or get a curtain lecture by 't,
And lumpless brose.

But hush, my harp! May peace be still
Within the mansion of Parkhill;
May ye your course with joy fulfil
And then arise
Triumphant o'er this world of ill,
Beyond the skies.

This leaves us both, and our relations,
In health, and at our occupations;
And while my heart-strings their vibrations
And tone maintain,
Your much obliged, through all mutations,
Ma'am, I remain.

ON VISITING LANERCOST PRIORY, AND
NAWORTH CASTLE.(27)

My homely harp, though locks are turning grey,
Slower the step, and shrunken is the limb—
Though spirits have forgot their wonted play,
And faded sight tells distant objects dim—
Though *poortith* flings o'er all its sadd'ning sway,
And friends are few, while, through the prospect grim,
I'm left alone, lost kindred to bewail,
On confines dark of age's dreary vale.

Awhile forgetful, on this mouldering stone,
Shaped by some hand whose history is lost,
Again I'll wake thy melancholy tone
On Irthing's banks, in dale of Lanercost.
Here Superstition reared her Stygian throne,
And shackled thought, aye, heaven's own purpose crossed,
Extinguished truth's fair light—led man astray—
His life, his soul, and substance made a prey.

And yet thou, Lanercost, demand'st a tear ;
Here lie the good, the beautiful, the brave ;
Their gorgeous monuments, defaced, appear
Unwise attempts to triumph o'er the grave.

198 LANERCOST PRIORY, AND NAWORTH CASTLE.

E'en the big rain-drops speak in sadness here,
And moaning winds, that through the long weeds rave,
A something to the pensive mind unfold
That may be felt, but never can be told.

And Naworth, relic of the olden day,
(By fools and fanatics misnamed "the good,")
The suns of centuries have passed away,
And left thine ancient strength still unsubdued.
How sweet along thy galleries to stray,
And, in their deep and solemn solitude,
Behold, with mixture of delight and dread,
The forms and features of th' illustrious dead.

But, there is one o'er all the rest we scan,
Nursed in the lap of stern adversity,
Whose lofty presence gives at once the man,
The scholar, hero, and the patriot he.
Nor less his fame for milder virtues ran—
Domestic love and passing courtesy ;
O'er Naworth seems thy spirit lingering still,
First of a noble line, immortal "Belted Will."

NOVEMBER 16, 1850.



ON THE DEATH OF MR. GEORGE OSBORNE.

THE storm o'erhangs the barren hill,
And cold winds sweep the moorlands bleak,
While nature stands with tresses torn,
And tears congealed upon her cheek ;
And lifts the wood its lonesome voice,
Nor seen is living creature, save
The dismal owl, while sad and slow
I follow Irwine's winding wave.

Again, again, another tie,
That bound me to the vision vain
Of life and every phantom joy,
Is all untimely snapt in twain ;
A light that o'er my weary path
Has often shed a cheering ray,
Till brighter prospects rose around,
Is set, alas ! and set for aye.

That deep, dark eye, so rich in soul ;
Oh, is its magic ever gone ?
How in the social hour it glowed,
How o'er the page of genius shone.

And is that heart now still and cold
In the dark kingdom of Decay,
Once open as the breath of morn,
And generous as the dews of May ?

Yes, gone to join the things that were,
Yet still at Memory's magic call,
In holy garbs of vanished days,
Arise in her ærial hall.
Lo, they advance, and numbers there,
That once with me life's pathway trod,
Pass, and, with sad and warning air,
Point to the church-yard's pregnant sod !

The hedgerow bank, and mossy brae,
Remain the same as when we prest
Their verdant sides, and sought the flower,
Or treasure of the wild bee's nest.
The hoary trunk of ancient tree,
Still stands conspicuous in the wood,
Where first, with fluttering hearts, we viewed
The little songster's tender brood.

Sweet scene of many an hour of bliss,
The tiny brook, the wimpling burn,
Their waters still flow on the same,
Their banks the same at every turn.
Still as eternal seems the cliff,
As when the ivy first we drew
From its proud base, or gathered there
The ring-dove's feathers wet with dew.

But now upon the blighted heart,
Their varied charms are faintly traced,
Like sunbeam of a wintry dawn
Upon the dreary moorland waste.
With never, never ceasing speed
We travel to some unknown shore,
And all the dear delightful dreams
Of early days return no more.

Again, again, another tie,
That bound me to the vision vain
Of life, and every phantom joy,
Is all untimely snapt in twain ;
A light that o'er my weary path
Has often shed a cheering ray,
'Till brighter prospects rose around,
Is set, alas ! and set for aye.



EPISTLE TO MR. ROBERT BROWN, KIRK-
HILL, CRAIGIE.

How get ye on, my auld fere, "Kirkie?"
Wee, gleg, auld-farrant, cockin' birkie,
Is fortune's sky grown dim and murky,
Or dazzling bright,
Like sunset on the shores of Turkey,
A sea of light?

Does e'er the Muse now come to see you,
And climb the hill o' Barnweil wi' you,
And there sic lifts, sic visions gi'e you,
That things of Time
And sense for ever seem to lea' you,
In thoughts sublime?

Or has she on you turned her back
And doomed you to a catch-the-plack,
To tread the sordid gin-horse track,
Down to the grave:
When o'er your head Oblivion black
Shall roll her wave?

But, "Kirkie," auld enough's your horn,
 To ken the Muses saw nae corn,
 Nor spin a thread that can be worn
 To face the cauld,
 And lea' their votaries aft forlorn,
 When frail and auld.

Na ; for sic things they never care,
 But croon and canter here and there,
 Nor teach for a' their heathenish lear,
 A bairn its carritch,
 Nor e'er o' saut ae spoonfu' spare
 To mak' the parritch.

Nae wonder, then, ere life's short day
 Has measured half its joyless way,
 Bards o'er some precipice should gae,
 Wi' a' their bays,
 And furnish many a tale o' wae
 To after days.

Should e'er I see Apollo's face,
 I'll tell 'im, if he disna place
 His household gear in tense and case,
 He's nae grammarian :
 Why lag behind this railroad race,
 Utilitarian ?

He must get hands, nor frail, nor few,
 To spin, weave, cook, distil, and brew,

Or what else name Divinity
Shall deem mair kindly.

To gie the jilts, howe'er, should they
Gang linkin' down the wished-for way,
My wandering bardship hopes to ha'e
The pleasure soon
Your hand to shake, some market day
In Killie toun.

Meanwhile, 'tis mine to trace a land,
Where wide tracks scorn the tiller's hand ;
Yet in my heart's hall Rapture's brand
Will kindle bright
At gloamin', as I take my stand
On some lone height

And see afar the moorland waste
The tarn, the mountain russet-drest,
The forest groaning in the blast,
The sea-fowls soar,
The whelming wave, with snowy crest,
Assault the shore.

But hark ! one—two ; guid morn, my frien',
May ne'er ye see what I hae seen,—
Grim Ruin face to face, and keen
Detraction's blade,
Drawn first by those that should have been
The first to shade.

Domestic peace and comfort fly,
Hope gone, no friend beneath the sky,
The arm unstrung, the dark'ning eye,
 And half-seared brain,
And even the desperate wish to die.
 But wished in vain.

Enough, and mair; be sure that ye
To Mrs. Brown remember me ;
And to the lyric Elder, he
 " O' Barnweil brae,"
So guid society that see
 For ance I may.

WIGTOWN, *January, 1842.*



HANNAH HEDGEHOG.

O love-destroying, cursed Bigotry!

POLLOK.

HERE Hannah Hedgehog's won to rest,
A guid and godly dame,
Although her word maun be the test
To this superior claim.

She practised aye the moral law
Wi' firm determination,
When it would wi' her interest draw,
Or wi' her inclination.

But itherwise, to loup the dyke,
Atweel she wasna laith ;
Wha needs wi' morals mak' a fyke,
That "soun' is in the faith?"

Twa facts she constantly could see
As clear as noonday light—
To wit, her neighbour aye aglee,
Hersel' for ever right.

Wha squared not wi' her "question beuk,"
Was in a "sad condition ;"
And, oh ! wi' what complacent leuk
She sent them to perdition !

Wi' bible like a kitchen hearth,
She duly took her place
In meeting-house, nor kent the dearth
O' sighin' and grimace ;

But parish kirk—ere she'd gane there—
She'd of her head been shorn ;
For know she was that jewel rare—
An Antiburgher born !

And kent by lug-mark every ane
Upon whose lot was poured,
For his or predecessor's sin,
The judgments o' the Lord.

But a' that unto her befell,
" By Providence was sent,"
" A father's care and love to tell."
" A healin' chastisement."

And aften she was heard to say,
That a' the true elect
Were just hersel', and twa three mae,
That formed her favoured sect ;

That a' the human race beside
Were given to seduction
O' Sautan, that God glorified
Might be in their destruction !

And this, she said, was " tidings glad,"
A message from above
Of mercy, from that Being shed,
That goodness is and love !

Her deil was of the darkest hue,
But that need not be matter
Of wonder, for the God she drew
Was very little better.

Yet Hannah still excused maun be,
For she was not her lane,
Besides, the subject's ane where we
Are easily mista'en.



TO THE HAREBELL.

NATURE's sweetest, loveliest child,
Tenant of the trackless wild,
Or in some sequestered lane
Leading to the ruined fane ;
Or in holy garland now
Wreathed around that ruin's brow ;
Or on mossy bank or brae,
Where the living waters play ;
Or on breezy mountain's breast,
By the foot of wild deer prest ;
Or by cairn or Druid's stone,
Telling tales of days long gone,
Nodding o'er the moorland stream,
Pure as childhood's holiest dream ;
Or in unfrequented wood,
'Neath the old oak's solitude,
Where unseen the cushat dear
Pours her plaint in morning's ear ;
Where the thrush his vigil keeps
Warbling till the twilight weeps ;
Or beside the martyr's grave,
Where the purple heath-bells wave,
And 'tis said that strains are sung
Sometimes by immortal tongue.

I've met thee in the south and north,—
By Tweed and Yarrow, Tay and Forth,
By Dee, by Don, on banks of Spey,
In merry England's valleys gay,
On Cambria's cliffs, and mountains hoar,
Sweet Mona's Isle, green Erin's shore,—
Wherever seen thou could'st impart
A glimpse of sunshine to the heart,
And, in a single glance would'st speak
What words to tell were all too weak.

Sweet gem ! I've loved thee from the hour
That taught me first to prize a flower ;
O! in that vision may'st thou be
The last of this fair earth I see ;
And, often on my lowly grave
In fragrant winds of autumn wave,
And there may oft the redbreast stay
To celebrate the dirge of day ;
And friendship sometimes through the tear
Behold the sainted past appear,
And glean a thought from death to guide
The barque of life through time's rough tide.

ON THE DEATH OF MY BROTHER.

ROBERT RAMSAY, BORN IN KILMARNOCK, Ayrshire, 1st JUNE, 1806.

DIED THERE, 17TH JUNE, 1850.

My mind is like sepulchral fane
Filled with memorials of the dead,
Where ruin holds his dreary reign
And foot of man forgets to tread.

OH! brother, dear brother, where, where art thou gone?
And left me in life's weary journey alone:
Is thy home o'er the Eastern portals of heaven,
Where shines yon sweet star on the bosom of even,
Or rather beyond the gold gates of the West,
The place of all others thou lovedst the best.

Thy dear little flock that had all trod the path
Before thee, the vale of the shadow of death,
Have ye met where the waters of life ever flow?
Where the flowers amaranthine of holiness grow?
Where the shadows of night never darken the skies,
And God himself wipes away tears from all eyes?

And distant was I from thy death-bed, nor knew
Of grief the sad solace, a long, long adieu;

But thy last hours were cheer'd with a light from above,
And smoothed was thy pillow by woman's best love.

From spots that we haunted in life's morning dream,
The hill-side, the woodland, the bank of the stream,
Thy favourite flowers I have gathered, and spread
Them mingled with tears, o'er thy cold narrow bed,
And deemed (though the worldling and heartless may
sneer),
That thou mightst behold me, that thou mightst be near.

When far from lov'd scenes, and the graves of my kin,
And all from the past that remembrance would win,
I hear the old songs that our dear mother sung,
O'er which we so fondly in infancy hung,
The stare of the stranger from reverie deep,
Awakens me oft-times to find that I weep;
What visions will rise my rapt fancy before!
At "Flowers of the Forest," "Lochaber no more."

Though art yield her beauties, though Nature be fair,
And hoary antiquity's relics are there,
How vainly! while still the keen thought wrings my brow,
Alas! I have no one to tell of them now.

The redbreast, the cushat, the bonny harebell,
The wild rose, the foxglove, which thou lovedst so well,
Sweet children of Nature, once gladsome to see,
They now bring but sadness from memory of thee.

When morn gilds the mountains, at daylight's decline,
Or still starry midnight, my thoughts are aye thine,
In deepest of solitudes, life's wildest streams,
Or sleep-borne I roam through the cloudland of dreams,
Oh ! low will my head be, and lonely my lair,
And cold my heart's chamber when thou art not there.

Whate'er was of beautiful, gen'rous, or true,
Thou lovedst with an ardour but known to a few,
Wert manly, affectionate, kind, and sincere ;
Yet short was thy sojourn in life's desert drear,
Yea, evil and few were the days of thy years,
A thick cloud of sorrow dissolving in tears.

When deeply the gloom of adversity fell,
Or glimpses of sunshine that gloom would dispel ;
A part in the one thou wert ready to bear,
And still wert as ready the other to share.

Age comes on me dark as the storm-brooding night
On pilgrim, with no friendly shelter in sight,
Bereft of my substance, deceived—where the dart
Of guile gives the deepest of pangs to the heart,
And those that should first been to shelter my name,
Have been but the foremost to foully defame ;
Yes, charged me with sins of an odious hue,
Which, heaven is my witness ! I never once knew.

The tree they have planted may now flourish fair,
Its fruit will be ashes, the vintage—despair ;

Man may be deluded, but All-seeing Eyes
Can pierce through the veil of "the refuge of lies."

But fortune, though dealing deep ills to my share,
Has left me the courage—the manhood to bear,
And friends that are true, while the false, and the vile,
And selfish, have fled with her treacherous smile ;
A few days of sorrow I'm destined to see,
Then, dearest departed, I'll come unto thee.



LINES TO ELIZA.

THERE comes an hour, Eliza, when we must
Bid all farewell, and sink into the dust ;
There comes a sun, that shall behold us laid
Beneath the turf, forgotten and decayed ;
There comes a morning, at whose vernal voice,
Earth shall revive, and nature shall rejoice,
But see us sleeping in the dewy sod,
And all unconscious as the kindred clod.
There comes a day, diffusing life and light,
With all that summer gives of warm and bright,
And as away its beams of sunshine pass,
They'll shade us deeper in the long green grass.
There comes a day when autumn shall descend,
Dispensing blessings with an open hand ;
And o'er these fertile vales, youths yet unborn
Shall wield the sickle in the waving corn ;
Join in the jests and simple pranks, that goad
The hours along—and lighten labour's load :
And when the dews of evening deck the blade,
And the lone redbreast tops the mellow shade,
In love's embrace they'll hail the twilight scene,
Even in retreats where thou and I have been ;
While we, to love and all things else unknown,
Mix our cold dust with generations gone.

There comes a day, whose dull and dreary close
 Shall see the world a cheerless waste of snows,
 Whose farewell beam and setting crimson streak,
 Purpling yon mountain's far ascending peak,
 Shall view the mantle of grim winter spread
 Even o'er the stones that mark our narrow bed ;
 But these will pass, and ages will roll on,
 And we remain unconscious they have flown.
 Then comes a day, when dark shall grow the sky,
 The sun in mid-course, close his dying eye,
 The sea stand still, deep smitten with dismay,
 And every isle and mountain flee away ;
 Then shall our mortal put the immortal on,
 And meet ETERNAL JUSTICE on his throne.



B E E F .

A LAY OF THE SHAMBLEE.

WHEN ocean, earth, and realms of air
Produce their stores for man's relief,
However grand the bill of fare,
We find still foremost stands—the Beef.

Old Troy fell by a wooden horse ;
So Homer says, but, from the chief
Of bards I must dissent perforce,
For Troy was lost for want of—Beef.

And Carthage is another case ;
Historians talk such stuff! in brief,
To Rome she ne'er had given place,
If properly supplied with—Beef.

The bulls that Layard brought to light
In Babylon's remains, give prief,
When her great star was at its height,
How firmly she believed in—Beef.

And Egypt in her ancient day,
Of this same viand was more leef,
Forsooth her hieroglyphics say,
She deified and worshipped—Beef.

The Russian winter nipped old Nap,
And cost him meikle care and grief,
But, that was not his grand mishap;
He lost the game for want of—Beef.

Sebastopol was rather "slow,"
And erst appeared a lifetime fief,
But, there was something wrong we know
In that important point—the Beef.

Sir Robert Peel, who overthrew
The Corn Law, that giant thief,
Showed by his Tariff that he knew
The power, the precedence of—Beef.

Our *honest friend* across the brine,
Has turned a breeder, in belief
By sundry hints from auld langsyne,
That frogs can never conquer—Beef.

Even *Punch* the arch-wag likes his steak,
And, though his jokes as autumn's leaf
Fly thick, he ne'er was known to break
A single one against—the Beef.

Young Mrs. Mousetrap left her lord ;
Folks said 'twas***pooh ! the whole mischief,
Arose, for I was at the board,
About a dinner minus—Beef.

Then, if you would not be henpecked,
Or run upon that dangerous reef,
Domestic discord, don't neglect
The indispensable—the Beef.

'Tis said, "like leather there is nought,"
But, facts and arguments a sheaf,
Could very easily be brought
To prove that there is nought like—Beef.



THE DOG AND THE COCK—(NOT A FABLE.)

WITHIN the shelter of a rising wood,
Fast by a brook, a homely cottage stood ;
And well the songsters in the bowers repaid
The crumbs that kindness 'mong the snow had laid.
Beside each window grew a rose-tree tall,
And clumps of daffodil against the wall ;
Intruding sunbeams shewed the husband's chair,
And puss was dozing comfortably there.

And, neighbouring also was a little mill,
Turned by the brawling torrent of the hill ;
And down the scanty, rough, rock-skirted road,
The whistling peasant drove the heavy load.

Pausing, I searched the storehouse of the brain,
To find some emblems of the rustic twain ;
Whilst musing thus, two heralds of the morn,
With bloody crests, and snowy plumage torn,
I marked at distance, on a verdant height,
Engaged in doubtful, but determined fight ;
But, scarce had time to note the hostile pair,
When a poor sheep-dog, with an anxious air,

Between them rushed, and gently down the hill
His master's drove, until he reached the mill ;
Then, with reproof on his sagacious face,
Compelled the culprit to his roosting-place.

Who studies well the brutal kind
In some the qualities will find,
Which he, whatever his estate,
Would oft do well to imitate ;
And many more of equal worth,
Kindness and culture would bring forth,
That latent are through life, or die,
Or by neglect or cruelty.

CARSPHAIN, *May*, 1842.



LINES TO MY ELDEST SON.

THE Passions, reckless of command,
As steed that spurns the desert's sand,
And bounds away in Freedom's bliss,
Proud tenant of the wilderness ;
May Heaven forbid that thou should'st own,
With all their pangs that I have known.
The eye to see Truth's happy way,
With heart still prone to turn astray,
And seek, perverse, the winding path,
That leads to shame, destruction, death.
Taught from my earliest hours, to prove
A parent's most indulgent love ;
And blest in manhood's dawn a while
With Fortune's fair but treacherous smile,
Then sent upon the world adrift,
Of each, at once, of all bereft;
And doomed to meet the gorgon stare
Of the grim demon of Despair.
But, if proud Passion's wildest wave,
Thy tranquil breast should never lave;
And all my weary wanderings past,
And gained the bed of lasting rest ;

While Sabbath's deep bell flings around
Its thought-awakening, solemn sound,
And thou hast left the crowd to pay
One tribute to parental clay ;
If, on the path of Time gone by,
My erring steps should meet thine eye,
O, let not then one thought severe
A moment check the rising tear !
The whirlwind, and the zephyr bland,
Fulfil alike the great command.



ON SEEING A RED BREAST SHOT.

ALL ruddy glowed the darkening west,
In azure were the mountains drest,
Her veil of mist had evening cast
O'er all the plain,
And slowly home the reapers passed,
A weary train.

On old Dundonald's hills I lay,
Watching the landscape fade away ;
The owl come from the turret grey,
And skim the dell,
While leaves from autumn's sapless spray
Down rustling fell.

While on a thorn that widely spread
Its moss-grown lowly bending head,
Where long the winter's storm had shed
Its baneful power,
And oft returning summer clad
In leaf and flower ;

A redbreast sang of sunshine gone,
And dreary winter coming on ;
What though his strains had never known
 The rules of art,
They woke to notes of sweetest tone,
 The trembling heart.

Bade days return that far had fled,
And hopes long laid among the dead,
And forms in fairy colours clad,
 Confused appear ;
While melting Feeling kindly shed
 Her warmest tear.

When, lo ! a flash, a thundering knell,
That startled Echo in her cell,
At once dissolved the pleasing spell,
 And hushed the song ;
The little warbler lifeless fell
 The leaves among.

'Tis thus the slanderer unclean,
Perchance behind religion's screen,
With dagger dipped in devil's spleen,
 Sends home a blow,
That lays both worth and genius sheen,
 For ever low.

ON THE DEATH OF MY ELDEST SON.

JAMES RAMSAY, BORN IN KILMARNOCK, Ayrshire, JULY 7, 1829;
DIED AT DETROIT, MICHIGAN, U.S., OCTOBER 8, 1853.

“I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”—2 Sam. xii. 23.

'Twas dead of night, the silent city lay
Like to a slumbering child o'ertired with play ;
Heaven's starry host serenely looked as though
There were no sin nor suffering below ;
Far from my pillow grief had banished sleep ;
A watch with nature I resolved to keep ;
And rising, sought a path full often traced,
Along a bleak uncultivated waste,
By many a wave-worn rock, and cavern hoar,
That skirt the long, long, solitary shore.

The moon was wrapt in clouds, and dark and deep
The ocean rolled ; while round the headland steep
The wrestling surge raised ever and anon
In night's still ear, its melancholy moan ;
With solemn flight, and lengthened dreary cry,
Dim seen, the sea-birds passed like spectres by.

To minds absorbed in grief, the voice of glee
Sounds like a sad—a fearful mockery ;
And even the cheerful warbling of the bird,
So welcome once, now painfully is heard ;
While scenes of gloom and desolation please
The wounded spirit, and give transient ease.

My kindred from the earth, still one by one
Have passed, till I am all but left alone,
Like some sequestered tree the traveller finds
Bleached by the sun, and blasted by the winds.
Another now has crossed the Atlantic wave,
To find an early doom, a nameless grave.

My son ! so full of health, so full of hope,
So nerved with life's vicissitudes to cope ;
Thy early lot was stern, yet, unsubdued,
Thou met'st it with a manly fortitude,
Pursued thy aim with earnest steady eye,
Obtained it, and obtained it but—to die ;
To die—when it is hard with life to part,
To yield to death a strong, young, hopeful heart ;
To die—involved in worldly cares and schemes ;
To die—indulging fortune's golden dreams ;
To die—when fertile fancy's plastic aid
In rainbow tints had coming years arrayed ;
To die—where there was none to sympathise,
Nor one kind hand at last to close thine eyes.
Thine eyes ! how oft a throb of transport wild
Shot through my breast whilst thou wert yet a child,
As gazing on those orbs of glossy blue,

Thy cheek, where health was writ in fairest hue,
And mouth like to a rosebud wet with dew,
And thy long sunny locks, so soon to be
Defiled in dust where no one cared for thee.

In thy last hours, perchance thy thoughts would roam,
With anguished yearnings, to thy far off home,
To Irwine's banks, and happy days spent there,
And all thy grandam's kindness and her care,
And dear, dear forms and faces, with the pain
To know ye ne'er should meet on earth again ;
And none can tell but those who've felt the throe
How deeply sinks the solitary's wo,
How hard the pillow to the aching head,
When friendless, homeless, is the sick man's bed.

Oh ! had but even thy humble grave been near,
That there at times I might have dropped a tear,
And bade the flowers thou lovedst, and often drest,
To breathe their fragrance o'er thy mouldering breast.
But, undistinguished, unregarded lie
Thy dear remains beneath a distant sky.
No pendant plant, nor chiselled stone shall grace
The poor young stranger's last, long-resting place ;
No mourner's step shall ever linger there
At eventide, or holy hour of prayer.

But, through the shade there shines a strengthening beam,
Shed from the land beyond death's darksome stream,
Where the bereaved at last shall find their own,
And grief and pangs of parting be unknown.

MEETING THE GRAND TORY ON HIS ROUNDS :

AN ELECTION SQUIB, 1852.

“ And even the verra deils they brawly ken them.”

LAST Monday night, a little just before
The hour of twelve, for Sheffield I was bounc,
And got to Endcliffo, musing deeply o'er
The party struggles of the “iron town ;”
When suddenly the winds began to roar,
And skies wore something savouring of a frown ;
Though here and there the stars, the pretty dears,
Kept winking slyly at their sweet-heart spheres.

I said the winds began to roar,—they did!
And, as I took a glance adown the way,
I saw a figure dark, with monstrous head,
And hasty stride approaching,— and you may
Be sure I felt a slender touch of dread,
And gladly would have been in blanket bay ;
But, there was no retreat, for up it came
As quick as thought, or light, or steam, or flame.

But all description here must sadly fail,
 'Twas tall, and swart, and ugly as a toad—
 Aye, as ten thousand toads,—and such a tail!
 With which it whirled the dust along the road;
 And horns beside, that might a fort assail,
 Or help to storm a bishop's snug abode;
 I only once have met with such a pair,—
 Seek Rodgers' warehouse, and you'll find them there.

For 'twas old Beelzebub,—perchance you'll stare,
 And so did I, and something more, 'tis true;
 But, when I'd shaken off this young nightmare,
 Oh! oh! said I, old fellow, how d' ye do?
 We've met before, I think,—He answered "Where?"
 In Methodist conventicle, Sir Mew!
 "O yes," he cried, with laughter, "'twas in that
 Same place I came in semblance of a cat." (2^s)

"I find too late in Sheffield I have stayed,
 Electioneering yields me sport so rare;
 But, of all the cards that ever I have played,
 This Derby-Dizzy is the worst I swear;
 Perhaps 'tis grown too sharp—the Sheffield blade,
 Old Elliot helped to sap my interest there;
 But, never mind, we'll see, I have a friend;
 A staunch one too, dear Mr. O * * * *."

Is Mr. O * * * * your friend? asked I.
 "He's more," said Nick, "for he's my proxy too.
 To all reform opposed most heartily,
 His politics of Mede and Persian hue.

O ! for a host of such black chivalry,
 I soon would see earth's whole detested crew
 Starved, hoodwinked, gulled, priest-ridden, and life past,
 Come hurling headlong to my den at last."

Indeed, said I—I rather thought you'd been
 To get a "wyttle" to curtail your corns ;
 Or, seized with a spirit of retrenchment keen,
 Were seeking out a merchant for your horns.
 "You rascal!" cried the old one, "what d'ye mean?"
 And looking eastward, "Ah!" he said, "the morn's
 Approaching," stamped his foot, when with the speed
 Of lightning, sprang from earth a mighty steed.

His hue was darker than the midnight's wing,
 When tempests muster their artillery ;
 His mane and tail twin thunder-clouds, that fling
 Their ragged terrors o'er the raging sea ;
 His eye-balls living fire, and vomiting
 Blue sulphury vapours from his nostrils, he
 Stood snorting,—like a locomotive, brass
 His burnished hoofs, that scorched the shrinking grass

Bravo ! my Castlereagh, the arch-fiend said,
 Hast ever been a servant stout and true ;
 And, when on earth, you gloriously sped,
 And beat this hated country black and blue :
 Again the game is up, and plots are laid,
 To grind the many for the favoured few.
 And, vaulting on his courser, cried away !
 And like a whirlwind swept the welkin's bay.

SKETCH ON THE WATER OF LYNE,
PEEBLES.

THE autumn sun was sinking red and low,
And o'er the landscape spread a golden glow,
The songsters warbling sweetly—yet it fell
On the sad bosom like a long farewell.
The bleating flocks were roaming far and wide
Along the sun-lit, shaggy mountain's side,
And housing cattle's sonorous descant rung,
The shepherd whistled, and the milkmaid sung ;
And many a pane shed on the aching sight
Its long, rich, dazzling lines of dying light.

Through a deep vale where Lyne glides calmly by,
Like humble worth concealed from public eye,
I passed, a while of sorrow and distress
Beguiled by Nature's lonesome loveliness.

Within the bosom of that pastoral vale,
Far from the noisy world's polluted pale,
In simplest style that human hands may raise,
There stood a little church of ancient days;

A rude fence ran irregularly round
Its small, but verdant spot, of burial ground ;
Rich wreaths of wild-flowers blossomed sweetly there,
Diffusing fragrance on the ambient air ;
While lingering pensive by the rustic fane,
Methought I heard this tributary strain :—

“ Sleep on, ye noteless and neglected few,
“ The paths of fame were never known to you !
“ Small were your riches, simple was your fare,
“ And knowledge dealt you but a niggard share ;
“ The charms of power were ne’er to you revealed,
“ And the wide world was but a fountain sealed ;
“ But doubly blest, ye ne’er were doomed to feel
“ As genius writhing on detraction’s steel,
“ Nor owned the Nabob’s curse of conscience sold,
“ And peace eternal bartered for base gold ;
“ Nor bitter pangs the slaves of luxury bear,
“ Nor the dark doubt whose shadow is despair ;
“ The cares, the fears, with sleep-dispelling stings,
“ That wait on statesmen, and encompass Kings ;
“ Or wide experience that leaves behind
“ The trace *that leads us to distrust our kind.*
“ No, these were never yours ; if tears ye shed,
“ They were affection’s for the humble dead,
“ Or hapless love when told in ancient lay,
“ Or Scotia’s brave in battle ‘ wede away ;’
“ Such tears are born of Nature’s purest spring,
“ Chaste as the pinions of an angel’s wing.
“ Sleep on ! though man to slight you may be prone,
“ To God himself are all your goings known,

“And, when departed are the heavens and earth,
“And Nature beauteous bursts from second birth,
“In being’s scale you may superior rise,
“To many noble, and to many wise”



UNCLE AND NEPHEW;

OR, THE VICTIM OF MAMMON.

OF this Ayrshire Nabal the public showed their disapprobation and contempt, by some of the characteristic epithets which they bestowed on him, as "Roughie," "Bluster," "The Bear," &c. When his nephew's grave was being filled up, three of the funeral party went forward to him, and after speaking in high terms of the deceased, told him that he was his murderer, and as justly guilty of taking his life as if he had thrust a dagger through his heart.

AGAIN the voice of spring was heard,—
Again the early flower
Was peeping forth on southern bank,
And in the fostering bower ;
Yet, noteless was the naked wood,
And winter's mantle chill
Still lay on moorland solitude,
And tipt the northern hill.

The village bell, with mournful tone,
Had caught the distant ear,
And in the ancient cemetery
There stood an humble bier ;
The mourner was a stripling sad,
O'erlaboured, bent, and wan,
Yet, Nature there, though thwarted, still
Gave promise of a man.

His only brother was the dead,
And ne'er since earth's young day
Had two been joined in brother-bands,
More hard to part than they ;
And he that was, ere manhood's prime,
Thus early lowly laid,
Had been beside a brother's prop,
A parent's sheltering shade.

And manly beauty had been his,
And mind of high degree,
For there had Nature strongly stamped
Her own nobility ;
And born with symmetry, and strength
To bear the rugged way
Of life, and see its sun go down
At latest, longest day.

But, ah! in boyhood's tender tide,
That all important hour,
Domestic discord gave him to
A niggard uncle's power ;
Where ill supported, and opprest,
The seeds of stern disease
Were gendered, in as healthy a form,
As e'er met morning's breeze.

And he that had this ruin wrought,
The yawning grave stood by,
In panoply of self-esteem,
With frigid, tearless eye ;

A heartless and cold-blooded boor,
Whose Deity was pelf,
His loftiest thought could never rise
Beyond the sink o. self.

The sexton's callous task is o'er,
The little train is gone,
And that young injured form is left
Among the dead unknown ;
And there is one hearth desolate,
One heart in which the steel
Of grief has left a rankling wound,
That time can never heal

O! mammon, curst of God and man,
What myriads hast thou slain !
How far and wide thine ills have spread,
For individual gain !
In every age, in every land,
An ever-flowing sea
Of human blood and tears are shed,
To nurse thine Upas tree.

Go, churl into thy household gods,
Go, seek the worshipped gold,
And bid before thy gloating gaze
Some ounces few be told ;
Contemplate well th' insidious bane,
And think that thou hast one,
To death for this poor pittance sold,
And he—thy sister's son.

No, blind and unrepentant still,
Arises loudly there,
Profaning evening's holy hush,
The Pharisaical prayer,
Hell heard, and through her drear domain,
She laughed with horrid glee,
And heaven's fair brow grew dark to list
The dreadful mockery.

EDINBURGH, 1857.



ARRAN, FROM THE SEA.

As quits some soul her tenement of clay,
Behind yon hills retires the orb of day ;
Yon gloomy hills, in awful grandeur piled,
Where clouds and tempests hold their empire wild ;
Yon hills, whose dread magnificence unfold
What dire convulsions shook the world of old,
Yon hills, that rise a monument sublime,
Betwixt the future and departed time.
Wake, Contemplation ! 'tis thy favoured hour :
The time to prove thy salutary power ;
The huge grey cliffs suspended insecure—
The peaceful dwellings of the mountain boor—
The deep, dark vales—the torrent's rugged way—
The forests tall, that skirt the winding bay—
Rise on the sight and captivate the eye ;
Woods, rocks, hills, streams, in grand confusion lie ;
How great the power, how potent the decree
That formed the whole with only—"LET THERE BE."

THE VETERINARY AVATAR, OR
PROFESSOR SHAMGEE.

HE was a quack of adamantine face,
A dastard sprung from Jesuit and Jew,
As hungry as a horse-leech,—one that would
Outlie the Devil, and so coolly too,
That Falsehood sometimes blushed to own her son.
His Deity was self—a Juggernaut
To whom he'd sacrifice both friend and foe,
All adverse objects, human or divine;
Nor faith, nor hope, had he in aught beside;
Yet, as a lure, had ever in his mouth
That cant of knaves,—“The-Pub-lic-In-ter-est.”
In him the wile—the shuffle—and the dodge—
The scheme—the plot—and the device—all met
In full perfection—incarnate clap-trap—
Munchausen—with a dash of Dousterswivel—
And a cross of Barnum; nor had been worse,
Though Satan and his senate had him made
From th' hot hell-broth of a witch's cauldron.
He dealt in slander, wholesale and retail,
Discharging venom as the mountebanks,
His friends, disgorge their ribbons; but in sooth,

On all he touched he left the serpent's slime ;
Denounced all, right and left, front rank and rear.
All either wrong, or rotten was, and he
Th' Avatar come to work deliverance !
The spotless sun, in whose refulgent beams
All were to bask, and flourish, and find light
To guide them to the heights of immortality !
His high pretensions, for a time, deceived
And warped the public mind, while worthy men,
And influential, gave encouragement.
But ah ! they found him out at last, and dubbed
Him charlatan—a dreaming empiric—
A patent humbug—and a sham of shams—
A public nuisance and a private pest—
And left him in his nothingness despised,
To perish like a thunder-stricken tree,
The gaunt and ghastly spectre of the wood,
On which the rains and dews descend in vain.
Nor songster there will rest its weary wing,
But gibbet-haunting bird of omen foul,
Dreams out the winter night—another proof,
(If proofs were wanted), that Heaven's fiat has
Gone forth 'gainst all who walk in crooked ways ;
That what we sow we reap—that he who for
His neighbour digs a pit—himself shall fall therein.

Epitaph for the same.

One lie my life was—and though changed am I
By death, yet still it is my lot—to lie ;
My soul was found a sad equivocation,
Not worth the compliment of condemnation.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. THOMAS M'QUHAE.

THE WELL-KNOWN LANDLORD OF THE "OLD COCK
INN," SHEFFIELD.

THE waning moon so sharp and chill,
Had sunk behind the distant hill,
And chanticleer with clarion shrill
 Announced the day,
While on my tear-stained pillow still
 I sleepless lay.

Where'er affection's tendrills twine,
Wherever friendship's ties combine,
The luckless lot is ever mine
 To see the blight
Of Death descend, till nought benign
 Remains in sight.

In this cold calculating age,
When grovelling mammon is the rage,
And self pollutes life's every page,
 With sordid greed,
To see the generous quit the stage,
 Is sad indeed.

Misfortune's children now may blend
 Their tears, they've lost a helping hand ;
 And social circles will suspend
 At times their joys,
 When memory whispers of a friend
 That lowly lies.

He was not one that coldly said
 To want, "depart, he warmed and fed,"
 Nor ostentatious, gave to spread
 Abroad his name —
 A holier spring his actions had,
 A higher aim.

He loved his country, loved his kind,
 Her sons of song, her great in mind,
 By no sectarian feelings blind
 Was turned aside,
 Flowed in his bosom unconfined
 The generous tide.

O ! why should he whose god is gain,
 Whose avarice has thousands slain,
 And fell ambition's gory train
 Pollute the earth,
 While falls like rose in thunder's rain,
 The man of worth.

But earth-born honours soon decay.
 Riches make wings, states lose their sway ;

While virtue's fruits till earth's last day
 Shall stand sublime,
Yea, flourish, in celestial ray,
 O'er wrecks of time.

Where'er my wandering footsteps tend,
Where'er my pilgrimage may end,
Life's day in darkness must descend,
 Ere I forget
The courteous landlord, and the friend
 In him I met.

SHEFFIELD, 1852.



A FRAGMENT.

WHEN spring to earth has paid her grateful vow,
And hung her chaplet on the mountain's brow
'Tis sweet to mark the opening bud, the stream
Dissolved, run glittering in the noontide beam,
To list the wintry silence of the grove,
Broke by the notes of melody and love.

'Tis sweet in drowsy summer morn to rest,
Far from the world, in some lone mountain's breast,
Where simple wild-flowers spread their blossoms fair,
The beauteous nurslings of the desert air,
The daisy in its dew-gems richly set,
Forget-me-not, and scented violet,
Where clumps of fern, and clustering foxglove wave,
Their locks luxuriant o'er the warrior's grave,
And balmy wreaths of eglantine adorn,
The moss-grown branches of the patriarch thorn.

There, stretched at ease, the subject plain survey,
Its rural charms, and hamlet far away,
Where lies the dust of those that once could claim,
Of all on earth, the most endearing name,

Where the last heart that loved us has been laid,
The dear, dear hands, our infant steps that staid,
The lips that often kissed us while we slept.
The eyes that watch o'er all our troubles kept,
Saw through affection's tears our early ways,
The tongue that taught us first our Maker's praise.

And, O! how sweet, when in her heavenly vest
Of stainless snow, is slumbering nature drest,
When all is hushed at twilight's solemn hour,
High on the summit of some mouldering tower,
To mark the red round sun of winter sink
Far on the ocean's melancholy brink,
There to indulge in meditation deep,
Till raptured feeling lift her voice and weep.



ON LEAVING AYRSHIRE.

ADIEU! lovely Irwine, my dear native river !
We part, and it may be we part now for ever ;
And deep are the pangs that my bosom are wringing.
As sad thoughts to long cherished objects are clinging.

I've gathered thy wild-flowers in life's sunny morning.
When dreams of delight were the pathway adorning,
And little I recked of the suffering and sorrow
Reserved for my lot in the distant to-morrow.

Ye dear dead, that fostered and nursed me so kindly
Whose love viewed my faults and my failings so blindly.
What grief had been yours, had ye known what before me
Was brooding, to burst when the grave had closed o'er you.

The light of the landscape of life is fast waning,
And things, but of painful remembrance, remaining ;
My brother ! when Fate had of all else bereft me,
Oh ! could'st not e'en thou, my last comfort, been left me ?

Adieu! lovely Irwine, my dear native river !
We part, and it may be we part now for ever ;
And deep are the pangs that my bosom are wringing,
As sad thoughts to long-cherished objects are clinging.

KILMARNOCK, 1850.

ON THE DEATH OF MY ONLY DAUGHTER,
MRS. G. D——

“ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Rev. xxi. 4.

AGAIN the unseen shaft has flown
Among the fated hapless few ;
And weeping infants round are drawn,
Their mother's lifeless corse to view.

The old, the young, all pass me by,
A lonely mourner o'er the tomb,
A lingering, living, death to die,
Is my predestinated doom.

Unfit to mingle in the joys,
That other men are wont to share,
I tread life's painful, weary round,
Beneath a load of grief and care.

Whate'er I love, whate'er I trust,
Wherever hope has placed her stay,
Where'er I would set up my rest,
Is ever—ever swept away.

Three, from my little flock of four,
 Now in the silent city dwell ;
 Nor was the sad, sad solace mine,
 To take a last—a long farewell.

Thy fate was hard, like all thy race,
 Life one short, dark, and stormy day ;
 Yet, like some days of cloud and storm,
 Enjoyed a peaceful parting ray.

Our heavenly Father knows our cross,
 And, when the burden has become
 A load beyond our strength, He takes
 His injured, suffering children home.

Repose at last, dear, weary one,
 Thy guiltless baby on thy breast,
 Perhaps from evil days to come,
 Removed to an eternal rest.

But, hard to close the eyes so soon,
 On this fair world of light and life,
 And sever all the tender ties
 That bind a mother and a wife.

On things long, early, deeply loved,
 To turn a retrospective view,
 And hear a solemn voice within
 That warns us we must bid adieu.

Adieu ! a last, long, long adieu ;
And leave in this sad vale of tears,
The objects of affection deep,
In interesting tender years.

To think they may be called to bear,
Affliction's load when we are low,
Be wronged and grieved, when there is none
To wipe the tear, or ward the blow,

My day is sinking in the west,
But, while it lasts, I'll bear in mind
Thy memory, nor e'er forget
The helpless orphans left behind.

We meet no more beneath the sun,
But Reason—Revelation tell
There is a land where kindred souls
Unite to know of no farewell.

EDINBURGH, 1861.



FRAGMENT.

THERE'S something awful in the midnight hour,
When, starting sudden from a transient sleep,
We see the moonbeams in a silvery shower
Fall on our chamber floor, and dark, and deep,
The giant shadows of the mountains lower,
And hear the moaning night-wind's sullen sweep,
And see the trees around like spectres stand,
When distant far from friends and Fatherland.

Then seem the forms that gladdened life's young day,
Around our couch to come with smiles of love,
And eyes all-eloquent, albeit that they
Have ceased earth's sad vicissitudes to prove,
But stern Remembrance wings her envious way
Through Reason's circuit, and, like Noah's dove,
Returns unwelcome tidings to declare
That these are fancies, false as they are fair.

That all who loved us are for ever gone,
And in the dark and rugged road of life,
Of the once numerous circle there is none
To share our joys, or soothe our sorrows rife,
Now doomed to struggle with the world alone,
And unsupported, brave its bitter strife,
That those we loved, and trusted most have been
Perfidious as the quagmire' surface green.

ON BEING PRESENTED WITH A HAND-
SOME GOLD CHAIN,

BY THE JOURNEYMEN FLESHERS OF EDINBURGH.

WHEN friends are few, when foes prevail,
When Gammongee and all his tail,
Or clique, or corps, or gang, or crew,
Of Reputation's doubtful hue,
Shams, dodgers, quacks, and add to these,
Gate-keepers—or *false-witnesses*,
Ride rampant rough-shod over right,
Turn white to black, and black to white,
When truth and justice quashed we see
By senseless, worthless magistracy
When, strange ! so ticklish are the times,
We lose our bread by making rhymes,
When quackery is patronized,
And public servants sacrificed,
To please a pestilent foreign scamp,
A candidate for hulks, or hemp,
It is refreshing, elevating,
And, certes ! too, exhilarating,
To find some landmarks on life's way,
The mud-tide has not swept away,

A remnant left that dare, and can
Still act the good Samaritan,
For, by the Gods! with all your leaves,
I've fallen most surely among thieves!
Aye, thieves, the worst too, I aver,
Who steal not cash but character.
Meantime, my generous friends to you
My very warmest thanks are due,
Yes, rest assured your presentation
Meets with a just appreciation,
And, while remembrance shall remain,
We're joined—and by a golden chain.

A WINTER EVENING.

LIKE dying saint's was seen the sun's last smile,
On mountain top, and venerable pile,
The deep looked darkly, and the rising breeze
Sung a sad requiem through the leafless trees,
Stiffened with cold, and clogged with wet and soil,
The labourer left his ill-rewarded toil,
The rooks that long had winged their weary way,
Alighted clamorous on the bending spray,
The twilight failed, and waxing in her might,
Descended deep, the dark, and lonesome night.

ON VISITING THE GRAVE OF HARDIE AND
BAIRD, IN STIRLING CHURCHYARD.

AWAY! ye streams that wind in sullen pride,
Or dash impetuous down the mountain's side ;
Ye fragrant groves that shade the rifted steep,
And wave your tops like dimples of the deep ;
Ye glittering villas, whence the noonday light
Returns in beams insufferably bright ;
Ye ramparts rude that on the cliffs have hung,
When yon far hills, and even time was young ;
Yon far, far hills that skirt the welkin round,
Where slumber morning's lazy mists profound ;
Where Freedom had of old her sacred home,
And bade defiance to the hosts of Rome ;
Whate'er can yield the glowing heart delight,
Or burst in glory on the ravished sight.
Away, away ! and let destruction fling
Her bolts of vengeance from the whirlwind's wing ;
The heavens be dark as demons of Despair,
And deeply furrowed by the lightning's glare ;
Ye giant thunders in your strength awake,
Till earth astonished to her centre shake ;
And let the spirits from the realms of light,
That stood of old for Caledonia's right,
Descend indignant, and, in name of heaven,
Ask, where's the boon their victories have given ?
My soul should have a scene congenial then,
To weep—to ponder o'er these murdered men.

ON BEING OVERTAKEN BY A STORM.

THE rack flies like troops from the lost battle-plain,
And dark round the shore heaves the wide troubled main ;
The seabirds seek land with an ominous wail,
And grey oaks of ages are bent in the gale.

Night comes, doubly mantled in darkness and dread,
The herd and the flock unto shelter have fled,
The hind, looking round him, hies hastily on,
And leaves me the prey of the tempest alone.

In yon dreary valley, dim seen through the gloom,
The tall rock that stands o'er the warrior's tomb,
Might seem of some spectre the gaunt grisly form,
Or demon appointed to lead on the storm.

What voice in my ear rung ? it follows me still,
When o'er the past grieving, or threatened with ill,
It comes from the dear dead, and solemn its tone,
" Our counsels you scorned, and must reap as you've sown."

YORKSHIRE, *March*, 1847.

ON MEETING A PYTHAGOREAN ON
BOSWORTH FIELD.

I.

FROM Lei'ster town, one sweltry summer day,
I made a pilgrimage to Bosworth field,
And there turned Mistress Fancy out to play,
And, sooth, some strange illusions she did yield :—
Around me seemed to roll the mortal fray,
The victors triumphed, and the vanquished reeled ;
And Richard cried, with stentrophonic force,
“ A horse, a horse ! my kingdom for a horse ! ”

II.

But no horse came, nor even an honest cow,
A thing most shocking, and, indeed, a shame ;
At last a *sheep* appeared, and on its brow
A single horn, the creature, too, was lame ;
A dog pursued it, with its loud bow-wow,
And eke young Hodge, and antiquated dame,
When off the martial phantoms flew, pell-mell,
And, lo ! I stood beside “ King Richard's Well.”⁽²⁰⁾

R

III.

Three large black frogs were sitting on the brink,
 A fourth, of stunted growth, and hunchbacked too ;
 The first leaped in as fast as you could wink,
 And gave their heels most cleverly to view;
 I'm spinning yarn, Sir Reader, you may think,
 Things less entitled to the term of true
 Have drawn the sword, made cripples fight with crutches,
 Cost kings their crowns, and grandmothers their *mutches*.*

IV.

The small, bumped gentleman still kept his place,
 With two most wicked, serpent-looking eyes,
 He stared defiance, and though in his face
 I shook my stick, he still refused to rise ;
 A rustic passing, tickled with the case,
 Said, grinning, "whoy, it would not un surprise,
 "If it sud be King Dick, the bludy dog,
 "Performin' penance now in that 'ere frog."



* Caps.

TO MY DOG, WATTY.

WATTY, my wee dautit dog,
Droll, sagacious, romping rogue,
Whiles, though tears ha'e filled my ee,
I've been forced to laugh at thee,
Trying with thy tricks to chase
Care and sorrow from my face,
Scraping, drumming on my knee,
Worrying in mockery.
Sure I am that master never
Had a dog mair true, or ever
Was old maiden's "poll" or "catty,"
Better lo'ed than my wee Watty.

Watching thee in gamesome mood,
Often will the thought intrude,
Sadly changed thy lot may be
When I'm not to hear or see,
Could thy bed be, scant thy fare,
Kicks and cuffs thou doomed to bear,
Thy wee kindly heart be sair,
"Goosey," "totum," and such names
As a fond affection frames,
Yield to some coarse appellation
Coupled with an execration.
But, while I am to the fore,
Though in basket, or in store,
Little should there be to spare,
Watty, thou shall get thy share,
Shouldst thou live to see my bier.
I'll one mourner have—sincere.

A SKETCH.

FAIR falls the cold and ineffectual beam
On frozen path, and ice-encrusted stream,
The chimney's fumes in lengthened lines ascend,
And from the eaves long icicles depend,
While sonorous bells bid ambient ether call
To distant echo in her woodland hall :
With motives various as the garbs they wear,
To church the lieges orderly repair,
Many their light religion there to find,
Again to leave it with the church behind.

One of that class behold amid the throng,
That steps with some slight consequence along ;
Pale is his face, the prominences bold,
And badly formed to stand the piercing cold ;
Blank and unmeaning, to the world displayed,
In all the pomp of vacancy arrayed.

The church is gained—the text is read—he winks,
Nods, till in sleep contentedly he sinks,
Or with a stupid, rude, and wandering gaze,
The place, the preacher, and the crowd surveys.

When sermon 's o'er, elate he homeward hies,
As much improved, as penitent, as wise
As when he came ; nor sentence can he tell
More than he could at ringing of the bell.
"Fine man ! fine man ! sound doctrine !" he will say,
As great achievement, mark the text he may,
And though he own the creed and Christian name,
'Tis but because his fathers did the same ;
And had his lot been cast in eastern clime,
Where Ganges pours his sacred tide sublime,
To that dread deity had learned to kneel,
Or dragged the idol's murdering chariot-wheel.
Mere child of form ! yet steadily inclined
To that which dawned upon his youthful mind ;
Sordid of soul, of spirit mean and poor,
To pride or power a stepping-stone secure.

O ! how unlike of old the warrior wight,
Who pricked his thundering charger to the fight,
Whirled the bright braud, and dealt the deadly blow,
That told like lightening on the blasted foe ;
And bade the waters of the mountain flood,
Sweep to the vale the fierce invader's blood !
My fancy soars, I see his stately form,
Firm as the oak, that mocks the winter's storm ;
Fire in his eye, and valour in his arm,
A soul alive to Freedom's every charm :
Mark, with a free-born air he bears his head,
The mist-clad mountain echoing to his tread.
Such were thy sons, dear Caledonia ! thine
The guards of freedom at her lofty shrine

In ancient days, for life nor death would yield
One foot of Right's invulnerable field ;
But fled upon the wings of Time, again
We seek for such, but seek the land in vain.

WRITTEN AT "THE BONNY BUSH ABOON
TRAQUAIR."

STERN winter's voice is on the hill,
And summer's glory swells the wave
Of troubled Tweed, and loud, and chill
The gusts through "birks" of Yarrow rave,
Her "braes" in mourning weeds are clad
For children of the sunshine—dead.

Aweary, pensive, and alone,
Like tree upon the trackless waste ;
Or storm-beat solitary stone,
That points to where the mighty rest—
I stand beneath thy branches bare,
Thou "bonny bush aboon Traquair."

Song-sainted re'ic of the past,
How many hearths have heard thy name ?

How many hearts whose lots were cast
In foreign lands, with holy flame
Have burned, while rose their native air,
The "bonny bush aboon Traquair?"

Years come like e'ening on the dell,
And gone are Yarrow's bards of yore ;
And Tweed, and Ettrick, weeping tell,
That Scott and Hogg are now no more ;
And something says again, I ne'er
Shall see the "bush aboon Traquair."

TRAQUAIR, *November*, 1840.

LINES WRITTEN NEAR KILMARNOCK
HOUSE.

YON aged beech, all crimsoned with the ray
Of weary light that forms the winter day,
Calls to remembrance, with a pleasing pain,
The days I never shall behold again ;
And joys that seem by memory displayed,
To veil the present with a denser shade.
While nature stands in a dejected state,
And on the sun eve shuts the western gate,
I'll pause alone! and drop a tribute tear
O'er what is now, and what has once been here.

Within that ancient but neglected place,
When life was sweet, there dwelt another race ;
But all they felt, and acted there is past,
And gone to Time's accumulating waste.
No trace is left, no vestige can be found,
Nor of themselves, nor household gods around.
Yet, still in Fancy's shadowy dream appears
The watch-dog, terror of my younger years ;
The hoary hind, that travelled daily all
These mansions round, at duty's various call ;
The well-remembered cattle, that would wait,
And *low*, impatient for the opening gate ;
The roofless houses, where I climbed in quest
Of the small treasures of the songster's nest ;
The garden, sleeping in the morning dew,
With its rich fruits, and flowers of every hue ;
And charms, which vainly words attempt to trace,
That hung in storm and sunshine round the place,
All that once awed or made my young heart gay,
Change has removed, and Time has swept away.



WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF ROBIN HOOD.

How seemly sleeps the forest king
Beneath the greenwood's spreading bough,
Where round the merry minstrels sing,
And fresh and free the breezes blow ;
And dark yews shade, with sombre grace,
The noble hunter's resting-place !
Long sacred may thine ashes be,
England's first archer, bold, and free ;
Thy times were dark, but yet the fire,
Imparted by our common Sire,
Burned brightly in thy manly breast,
Despite the tyrant's stern behest ;
The churchman's wile, the despot's chain,
For thee were forged alike in vain ;
Blythe dancing 'neath the greenwood tree,
Thy partner—glorious liberty !

When sceptered wretches are no more,
When priestcraft's iron age is o'er,
When conqueror's have found their right
Legitimate, the land of night ;

When marts where life's resistless wave
Now swells, are voiceless as the grave,
And forests rise where cities stood,
In song shall live "bold Robin Hood."

KIRKLEES, YORKSHIRE, *Sept.* 1843.

ON BEING ASKED WHAT FIGURE WAS
MOST DESCRIPTIVE OF A POET.

WHEN long, long shadows of the midnight fall
From the rent towers of yonder ruined wall,
And the bright sentinels of heaven are seen,
Each in his post, around their peerless queen ;
The winds are pillowed on the mountain's breast,
And woods and waters are in waveless rest ;
Hast thou not seen the meteor on its way,
Diffusing round a secondary day ?
But scarce upon the eye its beams had shone,
When the fair phantom was for ever gone.



ON SEEING A CLUMP OF FOXGLOVE ON
A CLIFF IN DERBYSHIRE.

DEAR talisman ! how rich a ray
Thou sheddest o'er my lonely way !
At sight of thy flower-circled wand,
What visions rise of fatherland !
Old Caledonia's mountains stern,
The deep blue loch, the warrior's cairn,
The torrent in its headlong pride,
The rifted rock, the moorland wide,
The battle-field, the martyr's grave,
The rugged strand, the breaking wave,
The ancient tower of song and tale,
The shieling in the sheltered vale,
The river gliding broad and clear
Through classic scenes, to memory dear,
And all to which the exile turns—
Of Wallace, Bruce, of Scott, and Burns !

Dear talisman ! but other things
Thou shakest from thought's entrancing wings !
Of warm, kind hearts, that now are cold,
Of stately forms beneath the mould,
Of voices ever silenced here,
Once more than music to the ear ;

Of hearths where we have strangers grown,
Of homes where we are no more known;
Of trust betrayed, of love misplaced,
Of fame by slander's blight defaced ;
Of that dark step, the final close
Of earthly joys and earthly woes !

CHATSWORTH, *July*, 1852.



L I N E S .

WENDING down the vale of years,
Worn with poortith's cares and fears,
Grief that flings its saddening shade
O'er each scene by life displayed,
Isolated and alone,
Fortune, home, and kindred gone,
Slandered and misunderstood,
Forced to bear with natures rude,
Nought to love and nought to hope,
Reft of every earthly prop,
Whither shall the weary go ?
Whence shall peace and comfort flow.

"Seek the Rock of Ages: there
Bring thy sorrow and thy care.
Come thou humble, meek, and mild,
Come thou as a little child;
All thy wants shall be redrest ;
Thine be comfort, peace, and rest."

EDINBURGH, 1856.

ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER.

"All, all are gone, the dear familiar faces."

LIKE some worn column on a lonely strand,
Where sits the solemn shadow of the past,
For ever pointing with invidious hand
To wrecks and ruins of his empire vast,
I'm left, of all my fated race the last
On the dread shore of dark eternity,
A weary vigil, till some boisterous blast
Or whelming billow seal my destiny,
And lay me where the lost, where the lamented be.

When aliens in our native spot we've grown,
And even on the old paternal hearth
Strange faces meet us, and cold looks are shown,
And loved one's graves are undistinguished earth,
And the dear haunts of infancy give birth
To pangs that bring perforce the bitter tear,
When hope can call no ray of promise forth,
Nor fancy gild again the coming year,
'Tis meet that from the paths of man we disappear.

EDINBURGH, 1856.

ON VISITING THE LAKE OF WINDERMERE.

WHEN Sabbath's holy calm was breathing round,
And every spot seemed consecrated ground ;
And the young thoughts were robed in colours bright,
Fresh from the Fountain of all life and light,
I've laid my head upon my mother's knee,
And, wondering, listened eagerly, while she
Discoursed of that far world, beyond the sway
Of the dire ills that vex life's fleeting day;
While infant fancy dazzling pictures drew,
For ever beautiful, and ever new ;
And oft, when dreaming of that land of bliss,
Methinks I've imaged such a scene as this.

BOWNESS, *August*, 1843.

WRITTEN IN MELROSE ABBEY.

BRIGHT as the beams of everlasting day,
On sapphire palaces of heaven that play;
Or tide eternal of effulgence rolled
On crystal battlements, and streets of gold ;
And gem-built cities of celestial dyes,
But to be looked on by immortal eyes ;
Unnumbered images at once appear,
Yet find no breath, no language, but a tear.

October, 1840.

A SUMMER EVENING.

BEYOND the abyss that leads its hoary files
Of warrior waves around our western isles,
The day went down, and evening o'er the dale,
Shed her soft tears, and spread her silver veil ;
The noisy village, by the sheltering hill,
Was hushed to rest, and all was sweetly still,
Save where the blackbird, in the darkening brake,
An anthem warbled for his partner's sake ;
Or rustling pinions and discordant sound
Of watchful lapwing wavering around ;
Or faint, far off, the river's rapid sweep,
Fast journeying on to join the mighty deep ;
The dark blue mountains to the west were seen,
And seemed as penciled on the sky serene ;
Around whose tops were hung in bright array
The robes that decked the orb of parting day ;
All had conspired to fill the pensive breast
With things too great, too sweet to be expressed.

HELP'S ELEGY.

WHAT's this that happened on the knowe?
Vexed is ilk heart—fashed ilka pow,
An' down the big saut, saut tears row,
 Like laumer bead;
Lass! Mary, sabbin', tauld me how
 That Help was dead!

Even she, that made the bargain sad
If bucklin' wi' the rhymster lad,
Wha has, O sirs! turned out sae bad
 In point o' creed,
Forgot it a' when heard she had
 That Help was dead!

The auld gudewife cam' to the town,
(And, shame to tell, in tartan gown),
She brought the news made Bessie soun'
 Her plaintive reed;
And aye the chorus o' the tune
 Was, Help is dead!

I heard her brither say of late,
Whene'er he saw the parritch plate,

It brought poor Help's untimely fate
 Into his head ;
The scartins gang anither gate
 Sin' Help is dead.

But what think ye, the sinner would
The corpse commit unto the flood,
And bid it to the ocean scud,
 The fish to feed !
But mair respect the auld folk had
 For Help that's dead.

The auld gudeman (sad sight to see)
His grave dug deep beneath a tree,
And laid him in, and cannily
 He clapt his head ;
The robins there sing mournfully
 Ower Help, that's dead.

Nae mair, when gloamin' cluds the plain,
And woosers come, he'll rack his chin,
And scauld them sair, or mak' a mane
 At midnight dread ;
The trees sough ower his dwelling lane—
 Puir Help is dead.

At times when Fortune set him free,
He was inclined a sheep to pree,
But just that single faut had he
 O' antrin greed ;
Maist folk an' dogs hae twa or three ;
 Hech ! Help is dead.

Lately, as day began to fail,
I heard a sad and solemn tale,
Sung by twa maidens at the pail,
 In tartan weed ;
And ower their notes would this prevail,
 O ! Help is dead.

They sang his coat was bonny brown ;
His paws were sleekit, white, and soun' ;
His voice sae strong, it rang aroun',
 Through grove and mead ;
The brawest dog e'er Death laid down,
 Was Help, that's dead.

They sang his toils and troubles past,
The deeds that spoke his wisdom vast,
And gied their claes, while tears fell fast
 The tither screed ;
Then raise, deep, wild as winter's blast,
 An' Help is dead.

But, O, dear sirs ! what's this that's wrang ?
I fin' my Muse has lost the fang—
She says, nae farther wi' her sang
 She can proceed,
But bids you keep in memory lang
 Puir Help that's dead.

EPITAPH FOR
THOMAS DROUTHYBROUGH, ESQ.

“ On each side walk the wicked, when
Vile men are high in place ;”

“ And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.”

HERE drunken Tam the brewer lies,
Like cask that needs the cooper ;
A councillor he was ; that swilled
And swore like any trooper.

His glory in the tavern was,
Surrounded by his leeches ;
As drink-bought plaudits rose, while he
Rehearsed his Council speeches.

On gala days, O! what a treat
It was to see the rat
Parading with his pudding-face,
Beneath a cockit hat.

For pique, or whim, or clique, or dram,
O'er Justice and o'er Truth
He drave like wheels of Juggernaut,
Without remorse or ruth.

The thief and scoundrel he whitewashed ;
Would compass earth and sea,
With machinations, dark and deep,
To tarnish honesty.*

Of feeling and philanthropy,
He had as great a load,
As any lamp-post in the town,
Or mile-stone on the road.

He looked on candour as the badge
Of simpletons and flats ;
And knew as much of principle,
As one of his own vats.

Tam sometimes of religion heard,
But ne'er made her acquaintance ;
And only conscience knew in shape
Of public-house repentance.

He walked in ways of his own heart,
With quite as much amount
Of coolness, as there were no God
To call him to account.

In short, was what we now-a-days
May see in many a stamp ;
"Respectable," in common phrase,
And yet, *an arrant scamp*.

* "All which I saw, and part of which I was."

Beyond all doubt he genius had,
Rare qualities of mind !
But then, we must confess them of—
The Canty Muckle* kind.

But Tam was quite a paragon,
The pink of all creation ;
Though, reader, *only in the light*
Of his own estimation.

* A late "character" of the city of Edinburgh, who was much better known than esteemed, and of whom it will never be said that he was "righteous over much."



A FRAGMENT.

WHEN flowers, dew-burdened, hang the weary head,
And morning mists are on the mountains spread ;
When smoky pillars, curl on curl, arise
From cottage chimneys, towering to the skies ;
When rooks slow journeying through the morning air
To fields afar in sable crowds repair ;
And, through the silent morn, far, far away,
Harsh clattering wheels the heavy loads betray ;
Then let me linger where I've plucked the flower,
Or chased the bee in childhood's sunny hour ;
Recount its pleasures past, its joys decayed,
And mourn the change that ruthless time has made.

SCRAP.

Far, far away a sunny spot is seen,
In flowers and verdure of perennial green,
That spot is childhood's sweet but transient hour,
The spirit-land of memory's magic power,
Which all in hues fantastical arrayed,
Flings o'er the present an invidious shade.

TO ROBERT ROSE, Esq.,

"The Bard of Colour."

ON HEARING THAT HE WAS ENGAGED IN A POEM ON THE
OCEAN, AND FREQUENTLY SPENT THE NIGHT IN STUDY,
AND THE DAY IN THE ARMS OF SOMNUS.

THE god of the ocean, one bright summer day,
Reposed on a rock in a sweet little bay,
A beautiful sea-nymph was placed by his side—
The crown of his kingdom, his glory, and pride.
With aspect benignant, said Neptune, "My dear,
"The news of our latest gazette did you hear?
"That Rose, 'bard of colour,' is chanting a strain,
"The subject no less than our mighty domain?"

"I did," said the beauty, "and heard with surprise,
"Aware that in slumber still sealed are his eyes,
"Till the flock seeks the fold, and the bright stars arise."

"By Styx, then," cried Neptune, "'twill all end in smoke,
"As sure as the walls of old England are oak ;
"All nature renounces the bard that would scorn
"The charms of the beautiful goddess of morn."

The maid of the deep, "Sire, with you I agree ;
" But, what a strange species of plant he must be !
" I've heard much of *roses*, but never of one
" Would keep its leaves shut in the face of the sun !"

THE SUNFLOWER AND PINK.

THE morn was June's, and passing fair,
I walked along a gay parterre,
Where flowers of every scent and hue
Arranged in tasteful order grew ;
A limpid streamlet sang its song
The bright inhabitants among,
Diffusing round its genial powers,
Like truth on childhood's golden hours.

By sunflower just begun to feast
On grateful bounties of the east,
Methought I heard this speech addressed
To pink of gaily mottled breast—

" Sweet little friend, here all but you
" Are graced with coronet of dew,
" Which gilded by my patron's dyes,
" The haughtiest monarch's crown outvies ;
" Pray how is this ? since dewdrops fall
" As showers and light alike on all."

The pink replied, and as it said,
Appeared to take a deeper red—
“ Dear neighbour, since you condescend
“ To ask for me by name of friend,
“ The cause I’ll tell of this my lot,
“ Though, sooth to say, would rather not ;
“ While yet the morning’s eye was grey,
“ The beauteous Harriet came this way,
“ Whether ’twas love denied her rest,
“ Or that devotion warmed her breast,
“ I know not, but as here she stood
“ All statue-like in musing mood,
“ Her pretty foot beneath my stem
“ She placed, I stooped to kiss the gem,
“ *And thus I lost my diadem.*”



THE LORRY.

This vehicle, so very unpopular with the citizens of modern Athens, was set up by the then dominant clique in the Town Council, for the purpose of removing the goods and chattels of such parties as refused to pay the Annuity Tax. It was the subject of a series of lyrical effusions, which appeared as "Lays of the Lorry."

OPPRESSION and tyranny's manifold schools
Have produced some dread engines and terrible tools ;
Yet ne'er could I find in their whole ancient story
A trace of that instrument christened the—Lorry.

The cross erst in Rome held its horrible sway,
And the boots and the thumbkins have here had their day,
The gibbet in England, the guillotine gory
In France ; but 'twas left to Edina the—Lorry.

Ye destined Dissenters in mice-holes go creep,
And lull that old lady dame Conscience asleep
Come down with your dust, for now in their glory
Ride rampant and rough-shod the clique of the Lorry.

One night, it was lately, I dreamed that I met
A personage dark I would rather forget,
And asking what news ? why, quoth the old Tory,
Of course, I suppose, you've heard of my—Lorry.

When churches established are built, let there be
Henceforth in their windows no stale heraldry,
Nor representations from e'en sacred story ;
On each ample pane be emblazoned a—Lorry.

The dignified dame and her two pretty deer,
As arms of our city may eke disappear ;
And instead, Messrs Caw, with their band predatory,
Escorted, snpported, and graced by the—Lorry.

EDINBURGH, 1865.

ON SEEING THE PORTRAIT OF A TALENTED
AND BEAUTIFUL GIRL, DECEASED.

Too good, too beautiful on earth to stay,
And only lent by Heaven to point the way
To future destiny, for who on thee
Could look, and doubt his immortality ;
Thus have I seen when stormy day was done,
The parting clouds disclose the setting sun,
And nature, though in deep eclipse erewhile,
Assume a sweet, but transitory smile,
Yet the glad glimpse, that died when scarcely born,
Gave glorious promise of the coming morn.

BURTON-ON-TRENT, *March, 1854.*

TO IRWINE.

I have always regarded a river with deep reverence—with feelings something akin to devotion, especially one that was celebrated in song. I well remember with what wild and undefinable emotions I first looked on some of the classic streams of Scotland,—the Tweed, the Yarrow, &c.—themes of song in ages long past, murmuring their sweet music to the wild flowers of summer, or mingling their loud roar with the voice of the tempest, witnessing changes innumerable, themselves unchanged, emblems of time, sources of joy and sorrow to thousands yet unborn. No wonder that the nations which knew not God should have made their rivers objects of adoration.

Sweet stream, the song thou sang in other days
Is heard no more, the song of love and joy—
Of hope bedecked in fancy's fairy hues,
Alas! too fair fruition e'er to find,
In aught beneath the circle of the sun,
Thy waters warble still melodiously.
But not to me; they tell a saddening tale—
A tale of death, and deprivation deep;
Of grief and loneliness, of all things gone,
That made thy banks once beautiful, so formed
To kindle rapture in the youthful breast.
And now life's evening hour comes on apace,
The limit of our weary pilgrimage,
What has it been? an ordeal of fire,
Save a few moments of the morning tide,
And not unwelcome is the voice that calls
Us whence we never, never shall return.

KILMARNOCK, 1866.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

[IN the summer of 1838, Mr. J. INGLIS (brother to the Rev. Mr. INGLIS, of Craigie, Ayrshire), an amiable young man, and one of the best amateur singers in Edinburgh, was killed by a fall from a drosky. The "Flowers of the Forest" was his favourite song, which he sang with great pathos and effect. His remains were interred in the cemetery of the West Church, contiguous to the Castle Rock. As the body was being lowered into the grave, the band stationed in the Castle accidentally struck up the "Flowers of the Forest," which created a deep sensation among the funeral party. The following verses were written on hearing of this singular coincidence.]

PERCHANCE the spirit, lingering nigh
To bid its fellow-dust farewell,
Had woke with mystic sympathy
The strain—how fit a funeral knell
For one who sung so sweet that lay,
Himself untimely "wede away!"

Yes, there were in that mournful band,
Nor few, that oft had felt the power,
The magic, of that music bland,
That sweetly stole the social hour,
Who wept, as closed the dull cold clay
O'er him untimely "wede away."

And there was one by stronger ties
 Affectioned, and whose every sense
The tide of feeling in its rise
 Suspended, as it rushed intense :
So deep the tribute good men pay
To kindred spirits "wede away."

The strain how grateful, yea, how dear,
 That gives us back our early days,
Sublimed through many a parting year,
 All dazzling in immortal rays !
But doubly thus, should memory say ;
It speaks of loved ones "wede away."

Methinks I see in foreign land,
 Far from Edina's "honoured shade,"
Some friend by woodland pensive stand,
 While, mellowed through the twilight glade,
Come those dear notes, in happier day,
He heard from thee, long "wede away."

And oft, dear youth, when friends are met,
 And mirth and music float around,
As cloud on some green sunny plat,
 Shall silence spread her spell profound,
When thou, within the circle gay,
Art named untimely, "wede away."

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. TEMPLETON,

RELICT OF MR. JOHN TEMPLETON, LATE FARMER IN NETHERCRAIG.

“She was—but words are wanting to say what :
Think what a wife *should* be, and she was that.”

Rest, thy work is nobly done,
Faithful and devoted one,
Ere the morning's earliest beam,
When the late stars gemmed the stream,
Still in duty's varied round,
Persevering, patient found—
Anxious still for man and beast,
Thinking of thyself the least.
Well the cold and hungry poor
Knew thy hospitable door,
Closed should other places be,
There were sure of sympathy.
By the bed where waning life
Waged with death unequal strife,
Thine the mission to impart
Comfort to the faint in heart ;
Point the weary and distressed
To the land of lasting rest.
But, in dark affliction's hour,
Strongest reigned religion's power ;

Then the grace—the gift was thine—
Of an influence divine ;
Resignation, fortitude,
Faith, transforming all to good ;
Trusting all at length would prove
Tokens of a Father's love,—
Gathering, like the mountain oak,
Vigour from the tempest's stroke ;
As a wife, or as a mother,
Where shall we find such another ?
Victor in the world's strife,
Heroine in humble life :
Rest, thy work is nobly done,
Faithful and devoted one.



WRITTEN IN A TIME OF DARKNESS AND
MISGIVING.

GOD of my Fathers! be my stay,
My guide in life's declining day;
All darkly comes the evening hour,
Beyond the aid of human power:
The props where age should lean are gone,
The hopes that age should feel—unknown:
The evils all that age betide,
Unsheltered it is mine to bide.
O! why should our affections be
The sources but of misery?
Why should the fondest, warmest heart,
Be doomed with all it loves to part?
Till earth becomes a loathed abode,
And life an overwhelming load.

TROON, 1866.

A DREAM.

METHOUGHT as I floated on sleep's tideless main,
The sweet days of childhood returned back again ;
The season was summer, all cloudless the sky,
And morn was awaking in beauty and joy ;

And there was the woodland, so deep and so lone,
Where ofttimes indulging day-dreams I had gone,
Unconscious how fleetly the moments had fled,
Till round me the shadows of twilight were spread.

And there was the thunder-rent ruin sublime,
A relic revered of the far distant time,
The stately old tree with its lone raven's nest,
Whose moan in the tempest oft lulled me to rest.

And there was my grandsire, erect in his gait,
Though laden with all but a century's weight ;
And strong as the torrent, or oak of the height,
My father, in manhood's meridian might.

My mother, all kindness, and order, and love,
My brother, so proud of his little pet dove ;
And beauteous as eglantine bathed in the dew,
My sweet infant sister, with bright eye of blue.

How fair were the wild-flowers ! how clear were the
streams !
How laughed they, how flashed they in morning's glad
beams !
And Nature, in language I long had forgot,
Called up from her fountain the fresh glowing thought.

But soon the wild throb of emotions so deep
Dispelled those delightful illusions of sleep ;
Again o'er my spirit rolled sorrow's dark wave,
As memory returning, sighed—" all in the grave."

NOTTINGHAM, 1854

ON THE DEATH OF MY SON.

JOHN RAMSAY, BORN IN KILMAHNOCK, Ayrshire, JUNE 2, 1831,

DIED THERE, MARCH 23, 1856.

MY former griefs have found, in plaintive strains,
A voice that served to mitigate their pains ;
But here, untold, the poignant pangs corrode,
For language proves unequal to the load.

A WAYSIDE GLEANING.

THE moonlight is sleeping on Severn's wide vale,
And waters to midnight are whisp'ring their tale;
And shades from yon ruin fall dark o'er the scene,
Like thoughts from the proud heart that broken has been.

With slow step of sorrow, and head on her breast,
Like some guilty thing which in death cannot rest,
That form is still keeping a watch on the lea,
O'er the pathway that leads to the old "trysting tree."

'Tis Ellen, once fair as the glad streak of blue
That first the dark frown of the tempest breaks through;
The fell blight of falsehood has fallen on her bloom,
That aching head early shall sink in the tomb.

WORCESTERSHIRE, 1846.

ON VISITING ONE OF THE ROUND TOWERS
OF IRELAND.

As some lone rock upon the ocean's side,
O'er which in vain long swept the angry tide,
Upon the present still thou stand'st sublime,
A stately triumph o'er the tide of Time;
The hands that reared thee, and the head that planned,
The lord that owned thee, and the strength that manned,
The eyes that from thee watched the shining spheres,
Sleep in the shadow of a thousand years;
And mind of thy dark history in quest,
Returns but like the dove, that found no rest;
This simple lesson teaching, vainly we
From aught on earth seek immortality.

ANTRIM, 19th August, 1847.

ON VISITING AYRSHIRE.

I.

LAND to which still remembrance fondly clings,
Through all vicissitudes of time and place,
And, which even years of absence only brings
With transformation of a fairer face.
How loves the way-worn wanderer to trace
His early cipher on the ancient tree,
Or seeks the banks and braes, that now in space
Seem circumscribed so much, and changed since he
There gathered flowers, or chased the butterfly and bee.

II.

Or, by the river's windings takes his way;
Those banks with many a stirring memory fraught,
There first he learned the swimmer's part to play,
There first enjoyed the dawning of deep thought;
And there, it may be, felt his bosom wrought
With something words but weakly could pourtray,
Till the warm tear was from its fountain brought,
While in the vale the mists were gathering grey,
And melted o'er the hills the glow of dying day.

III.

Land still the foremost in the roll of fame,
For deeds of valour—precedence of song;
There is a moving magic in the name,
Rousing thy sons' fraternal feelings strong,
Whether he roams where Ganges rolls along,
Or, in the hyperborean clime sojourns,
The Ayshire man, whatever scenes among,
To fatherland instinctive ever turns,
The land where Wallace fought, the land of Bruce and
Burns.

AYR, 1862.



ON THE DEATH OF MY DOG WATTY.

Watty was a small, handsome, thorough-bred, brown terrier—one of the most sagacious and affectionate of the canine species.

“O destiny! hardly thou deal'st with me.”—HOME.

It seems that every living thing on which
I set my heart is doomed, or man, or beast,
A blight descends upon them all alike!
And thou, my dear wee Watty, too, art gone,
And registered among my many griefs;
Thy fairy form, thy gambols, tricks, and joys,
The numerous ways in which thy deep, deep
Love for me was shown, alas! I'll see no more.
I've marked it in thine eyes so eloquent,
So ardent, that my own would fill with tears!
Dogs many I have had, and many pets
Of birds and beasts, from early infancy,
But never, never one that wound itself
So thoroughly around my feelings all,
As thou didst, Watty; and though parted long,
The distance only made thee still more dear.
Thy name was on my lips while others slept,
And, when I met thy semblance on the street,
I named it “Watty,” and passed on more pleased.

O ! I had little left to love, and few
My lights upon the downhill path of life,
Yet thou couldst not be spared ! Henceforth no dog
Shall ever fill thy stead, or more be mine !
Perchance the place that I had given to thee
In my affections, sinful was, and thus
Have been rebuked and chastened. Yet one small,
One solitary comfort still remains,
Although, 'tis but a sad one : whatsoe'er
My lot may chance to be in after days,
No hardship, no maltreatment shall be thine !
I know that there are men, good, christian men,
Who hope there is a future for the beast,
Nor from my mind can I divorce this thought,
And we may destined be to meet again.



WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF THE AUTHOR
OF "THE COURSE OF TIME."

How bright, yet sadly brief was thy career,
Too pure an essence of the fire divine,
To yield thy light on earth's unhallowed sphere,
Till the cold verge of age's dull decline ;
Truth and her ardent sister Genius, here
With gentle Piety shall oft combine,
Drop the warm tear, and sit with sorrow dumb,
Till Time shall cease the fleeting hours to sum.

MILLBROOK, HAMPSHIRE, *Nov.*, 1846.

WRITTEN DURING ILLNESS.

Now life's lamp is burning too feebly to last,
While cruel remembrance o'erturns all the past,
But care, disappointment, and sorrow, and pain,
No vapour, no shadow, more fleeting or vain.

Yet Nature, dear Nature ! in my misery
My lorn spirit still has had glad hours with thee ;
Thy deep woods, and waters, thy high mountains hoar,
Clear streams, and sweet wild-flowers, shall I see no more ?

DUNDEE, *August*, '89.

AN IDIOSYNCRACY OF YOUTH.

In early life I loved a flower
That grew upon a ruin grey,
And watched it in the sun and shower,
At rising and at closing day.

And Oh ! it was a beauteous thing,
And kindled in the youthful breast
A dreamy, wild imagining,
A something ne'er to be expressed.

Perchance it gave the soul again
To taste of joys she held with God,
Ere soiled by sin's corroding stain,
And cumbered with her earthly load

But soon a spoiler came and reft
My lovely talisman, yet still
The golden memories it left
At times will wake a transient thrill.

EPITAPH FOR BAILIE ALEXGANDER.

He lived an atheist life, but fast
Held by the altar's horns at last,
With less of principle than he,
More malice, more duplicity,
There never yet existed one
Beneath the empire of the sun.

EPITAPH FOR MR. ROBERT CUMMINGS.

WHOE'ER thou art that hither turns an eye,
Where the cold ashes of a mortal lie ;
If in the headlong chase of worldly gain,
To pause a moment may not be in vain.
He that beneath is still and silent now,
Was once as ardent in pursuit as thou,
And, as a man contending in a race
Flings all aside that may impede his pace,
So every nobler quality of mind
As Feeling, Principle, he left behind,
Gained his wished aim, and from the strife retired,
To nurse the gold, *when God his soul required.*

ON SOME ILL-BRED AGRICULTURAL
APPRENTICES.

WHATE'ER his pupils Brown has taught
Of ploughing, sowing, feeding ;
'Tis plain, some little hints he ought
To give them yet, on—BREEDING !

But Oh ! may gracious heaven his skill
From such a task exempt aye,
Namely, attempting *that* to fill
Which nature has made--EMPTY.

ON MR. J. INCH COMPLAINING OF THE
SMALL SIZE OF MY VOLUME.

My book, the grasp of such a man,
For quantity might pinch ;
I'm sure it is at least a span,
And thou art but an *Inch*.

SATAN'S REJECTED.

LONG Davie died, and down below
His spirit took the route ;
Nick barred the gates, and strange to show,
He shut the lawyer out.

“ Such characters I can't admit,”
Said Nick, “ 'tis very true,
“ My corps is bad, but better yet—
“ *Than company for you.*”

ON HEARING THAT MR. LAMB HAD DECEIVED MR. SHEPHERD.

SOME say a Lamb is harmless, yet
I have an instance known
Of one that has a *Shepherd* lit—
Aye, bit him to the bone !

ON SEEING THE EFFIGY OF A BIBLE
ABOVE A BOOKSELLER'S DOOR.

SIR Mammon's votary o'er his trap
The Bible's form has got ;
As Satan for his selfish ends
Will sometimes Scripture quote.

SINGULAR PHENOMENON ON THE INTER-
MENT OF AN INSIDIOUS INNKEEPER.

JAMES cleekit in many, and justly the grim
Old Chap with his own snare has cleekit in him ;
The sexton declares since he's got him in keep,
His pasture is blighted, and starved are the sheep ;
E'en such the effect of his villanous trunk,
The worms in the churchyard are all getting drunk.

IMPROMPTU.

TO T. HUTCHISON.

No man can more abominate than I
The theory of Darwin ; yet I ne'er
Thy face behold, O Hutchison ! but on
My mind the thought, unwelcome, will intrude,
That thy progenitors, perchance, have been
The rat, the polecat, or the sneaking fox,
For verily thou hast the vermin look.

EPITAPH FOR J. W. DYER.

Here rests of Johnny White the clay,
Who long had *dyed* for pelf ;
But at command of Fate one day,
He, *gratis*, *died* himself !

EPITAPH FOR MR. INGRAM, ARTIST.

BENEATH this strange turf where the long ragweeds tremble,
And ghosts of the churchyard all nightly assemble,
Lie, for ever relieved from each earthly tenter,
The canvas and frame of John Ingram, the painter ;
But the lights and the shades that composed the design,
Have long since returned to their Fountain Divine ;
By degrees they withdrew, and when death did attend
To blot out the picture—'twas done to his hand.

ON A CARPET FACTORY SUBSCRIPTION BALL.

OLD Plato once met Father Jove,
And asked the Self-Existent,
“ What was in earth or heaven above
“ Of all most inconsistent ?”

Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
To heaven's high towers advancing,
Unveiled this world—“ Now,” says the god,
“ D'ye see yon weavers dancing ?”

TO A PERSON WITH VERY LARGE FEET.

WHEN Paton came to heaven's gate,
Saint Peter looked quite saucy,
And cried, "Stand back—your feet's so great
Ye'll crack our crystal causeway."

M'Adam passing on survey,
Said, "Pate, my lad, ye're wrang;
Braid wheels but half the duty pay
Where'er they chance to gang."

EPITAPH FOR J. COWAN.

HERE lies, 'neath the gowan, the corpse of Jack Cowan,
To tell what he was would require something quaint,
But what he was not, may be easily got;
Of one thing, I'm sure that he was not—a saint.

EPITAPH FOR MR. T. GUNN.

AN engine this was that much service did once,
Beneath the black banner of King Defamation.
Jack Malice was gunner, its site was the sconce
Of Envy, and played upon fort Reputation.

At length the commander-in-chief, Monsieur Fate,
An order despatched by his aid-de-camp, Time,
To old Sergeant Death, who acting in straight
Accordance with that in the mandate sublime,
Dismounted and spiked the said engine, and lent
The wreck to Sir Grave, till earth's last troops appear,
When recast it shall be by the MAKER, and sent
To the arsenal grand of the first Cannonier.*

TO MR. G****E C****R.

C****R, you need no more inspect
The horse, the cab, or chariot,
You'd make a fortune just to sit
For portraits of Iscariot.

* *Vide* Milton.

ON HEARING THAT DR. L*****N HAD
INSPECTED THREE CARCASSES OF BEEF.

ERE L*****n would beef inspect,
He ought to know his own vocation,
At least be able to detect
The palsy from—*intoxication*!

EPITAPH FOR MR. JAMES GIBB,
PROVISION MERCHANT.

HERE lies a sprout of Adam's rib,
Whilom yclept Jacobus Gibb,
As town Directories unfold
Provision goods sometime he sold,
But, now released from business forms,
Supplies his customers—the worms.

IMPROMPTU.

Within a mile o' Embro' toun,
The deil met Monsieur Dizzy,
Said he, "My multi-faced wee loon,
I'm glad to see you busy.
Ye're gaun tae Embro',—that's a' richt,—
For ance the truth to tell,
Ye'll fin' the feck o' Embro' folk
Are something like yoursel'."

EPITAPH FOR R. D.

ONE OF THE BEST SPECIMENS OF DUPLICITY EXTANT.

HERE betting Bobby's laid at rest,
Earth, what a dose thou'st gotten !
Truth, when she brought him to the test,
Cried rotten ! rotten ! rotten !

TO A CORRESPONDENT,

WHO SAID THAT EDINBURGH CASTLE WAS A FRIEND OF HIS.

THE Castle is your friend, you say,
Which I must frankly own,
For both your heads are cracked and grey,
And both your hearts are stone.

ON SEEING SOME SEVERE CRITICISMS ON MY FIRST EDITION,

BY A MR. PATRICK KNOX.

BOTH friends and foes, *Pat*, gives a thwack,
And *Knox* are bruisers everywhere ;
No wonder my poor lines are black
And blue on facing such a pair !

ON READING VOLUME V. OF "THE
MODERN SCOTTISH MINSTREL."

BY THE REV. CHARLES ROGERS, LL.D.

THE Doctor in this horrid shape
Our northern pearls has strung,
So donkeys masticate the flowers,
And send them forth in—dung.

IMPROMPTU.

AULD Killie, taken as town,
Is surely not a slow one,
And yet her 'Standard,' we must own,
Is but a very low one.

I D E M .

AULD Killie's 'Standard,' on a day,
Being half insane, half drunk,
She called the River an old pest,
A nasty, dirty punk.
The River—"Friend, we're much alike,
"Here does the difference lie.—
"A literary blot you are,
"A sanitary I."

EPITAPH FOR MR. JOSEPH M'INTYRE,
ARTIST.

ON HIS PAINTING A VIEW OF SHEFFIELD.

BENEATH lies Joseph M'Intyre,
A painter of great fame,
Whose *holy* life to mortals seemed
A higher fate to claim.

But, Sheffield, town of soot and fire,
He had pourtrayed so well,
That Satan got him down below
To take a sketch of h—ll.⁽³⁰⁾

EPITAPH FOR D. R., ESQ.

HERE lies sweetie Davie, Death's played him a shavie,
A councillor was he, *of qualities rare!*
An animal strange, as in Nature's whole range,
A boor, with the cross of the ass and the bear.⁽³¹⁾

OLD SWAN.

When old Swan went down to the regions below,
The Devil was holding a grand *Cattle Show*;
So Swan was reported, and entered instanter,
And took the first prize at a quite easy canter :
Indeed, said the Devil, I'll now take the shelf,
Since at last I have seen something worse than myself!

ON RECEIVING SOME VERY RUDE TREAT- MENT FROM MR. D., COUSIN, ARCHITECT.

TO HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE EMPRESS OF THE NORTH.

To find what D. is cousin to
Is not an arduous job,
For soon his conduct brings in view,
The genus is the—*snob*.

HANGIE M'PHAIL, OR THE MODERN ISHMAELITE.

TUNE—"Rory O' More."

WE'VE all heard of Haggart, of Burke, and of Hare,
Of Thurtell, and Palmer, and Minnie, the rare,
Of birds of the gallows, and birds of the jail,
But ne'er one would mate wi' old Hangie M'Phail.
His heart it is black, and his liver is white,
His father was Malice, his mother was Spite ;
He sucked a she dragon, the rattlesnake's tail
A gumstick supplied to young Hangie M'Phail.

He talks of Trafalgar, it's all in my eye,
He served as a Calcraft, a pimp, and a spy ;
But *ghosts* grew so thick he could no longer sail,
So next a deserter turned Hangie M'Phail.
He's been a bear-leader, bum-bailiff, pig-feeder,
A trough and a sink for the whisky and ale,
Now all the six days teetotaller he plays,
And drunk every Sunday gets Hangie M'Phail.

He tried body-snatching, but that would not do,
His courage could ne'er to the digging-point screw,
And slugs in his rump made him bounce like a whale,
Away roaring "murder," ran Hangie M'Phail.

'Twas said he was lying, 'twas said he was dying,
 Nick heard, and he shook to the tip of his tail,
 Crying, ne'er such a bore came this way before,
 O! what will we do wi' old Hangie M'Phail.

A bawdy-house bully one time he became,
 But having much more of the "dung-hill" than "game,"
 A shark at the trencher, in rows but a snail,
 They over the window threw Hangie M'Phail.
 Syne shoe-ties, and laces, matches, and braces
 He sold; but one night, at least, so runs the tale,
 He got so dead drunk, that his breath, like a spunk,
 Set fire to the stock of old Hangie M'Phail.

Jackall he was next to a card-sharper pack,
 And sold them to justice when business grew slack,
 He feared the survivors, and gave them leg-bail,
 But caught and well-lynched was old Hangie M'Phail.
 They plucked him, they ducked him, soaked him, and
 smoked him,
 They gave him a ride on the back of a rail,
 They tossed him, and flung him, shook him, and swung him,
 Then deep in a dung-hill left Hangie M'Phail.

Black-balling, impeaching, and slandering foul,
 Are daily the work of this horrid old ghoul,
 Wherever he breathes reputation grows pale,
 And sickens at sight of old Hangie M'Phail.
 There is no one secure, the rich or the poor,
 However high-tempered be their moral mail;
 The sinner, the saint, the bold, and the faint,
 Must all feel the dagger of Hangie M'Phail.

We've heard of the Sepoys, we've heard of the Sikhs,
The sneaking Chinese, and their treacherous tricks,
And ticket-of-leave men in lengthened detail,
All mere sucking pigeons to Hangie M'Phail.
For most ills of life we have antidotes rife,
But one sad exception are left to bewail,
For nothing can save, not even the grave,
From that deadly scorpion, Hangie M'Phail.



DODGING WILLIE.

TUNE—" *Kate Dalrymple.* "

EDINA fair has things most rare
Upon her site so grand and hilly,
Nor last, nor least, is that queer beast,
By some folks known as dodging Willie.
Oh ! canting, ranting, loopy Willie,
Shuffling, scuffling, clap-trap Willie,
E'en Barnum's sel' might yield the bell
To jingling, hedging, dodging Willie.

In Penycuik his youth was spent,
Where yet its odour sweetly lingers,
About the town he praying went,
While butter stuck in pounds to his fingers ;
For a hypocrite is dodging Willie,
A Pharisee complete is Willie,
No jesuit could e'er acquit
Himself with better tact than Willie.

His stock-in-trade's a bullet head,
Where " number ten " so wild protrude does,
A brow of brass, a smirking face,
As treacherous as the kiss of Judas.

And dominoes, and masks has Willie,
 Besides "ten thousand casks,"* has Willie,
 He'll preach, he'll pray, do ought but pay,
 Or work, will scheming dodging Willie.

Of temperance warp his cloak is made,
 Its woof the moonshine of religion,
 In this equipt he makes a raid
 Successful on the public pigeon.
 For a low self-seeking grub is Willie,
 A sordid sneaking scrub is Willie,
 The only aim throughout the game,
 Is number-one with dodging Willie.

An anti-war man, too, is he,
 Our penal code, would like to clip it,
 But rogues were never known to be
 Believers in the "hempen tippet."
 But, 'tis a mere pretence with Willie,
 A bait to catch the pence with Willie,
 For not one thing in life's whole ring,
 But sordid self cares dodging Willie.

He advocates each liberal view,
 And preaches up amelioration,
 But greater tyrant, grinder, screw,
 Has ne'er deserved decapitation.

* Ten tho-sand ca-sks for e-v-er dri-bb-ling o-ut th-eir ba-se con-tents,
 tou-ched by the Mi-das fin-ger of the st-ate bl-eed go-ld for min-i-sters to
 spo-rt a-way.

The constant burden of Willie's speeches of temperance bosh.

Oh ! a domineering dog is Willie,
An overbearing plague is Willie,
But small's the power, and short's the hour
Of would-be despot, dodging Willie.

Through life the stage denounced has he,
In public, private, hotly, coolly,
Yet, every passenger may see
A play-bill in his door hung duly.
For none can jump Jim Crow like Willie,
None the hatchet throw like Willie ;
That turn-coat grand old Talleyrand
Was quite a " brick " compared with Willie.

Sometimes with beef-grease on his lips,
He stands professed a vegetarian,
In short, in every shade he dips,
But still comes up a nothingarian.
For its all a cram with dodging Willie,
Its all a sham with clap-trap Willie,
No greater bit of counterfeit,
E'er walked the world than dodging Willie.

The Edinburgh B. Society,
He chanced to get his cod-fish eyes on,
A prize ! a prize ! he instant cries,
It's all my own, I'll do the boys soon.
Right to work went dodging Willie,
Fib, and trick, and quirk tried Willie,
But 'twould not do, they soon saw through
The hollow humbug, dodging Willie.

Edina fair, has things most rare
Upon her site so grand and hilly,
Nor last, nor least, is that queer beast,
By some folks known as dodging Willie.
Oh! canting, ranting, loopy Willie,
Shuffling, scuffling, clap-trap Willie,
E'en Barnum's sel' might yield the bell,
To jingling, hedging, dodging Willie,



BAULDY M'SHANE.

Anglice, ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON.

TUNE—"Bannocks o' Barley Meal."

THE wind it was wild, and the welkin was grey,
There was snow on the mountain, and foam in the bay,
Yet old Caledonia was frisky and fain
When over the border went Bauldy M'Shane.
She tossed off a glass of her best usquebae,
Threw up her blue bonnet, and shouted huzza,
My sister that dwells on the southern plain
Is heartily welcome to Bauldy M'Shane.

But Bauldy was off ere the morning's first gleam,
The cats were a-courting, the cocks in a dream,
The looks of old collie said leave us alane,
Your back is the best o' you, Bauldy M'Shane.
Was't snatching o' bodies, or stealing o' sheep,
Or poaching, or smuggling, ha! ha! Johnny Peep,
A something, a something, we'll tell unto nane,
That over the Border sent Bauldy M'Shane.

In Yorkshire our hero took up his abode,
Where "bite" is the word over life's busy road,
But, all their attempts were abortive and vain,
The biters were bitten by Bauldy M'Shane.

He carries of slander the well poisoned blade,
Prepared in a smithy that shall not be said ;
Meet friends, or meet foes, there is quarter to nane,
A true son of Ishmael is Bauldy M'Shane.

His birth it was strange, as a birth well could be,
For a Galloway witch being one time at sea,
The carlin fell sick when with many a long grane,
She out of her stomach threw Bauldy M'Shane.
He sucked with the whelps, and he fed with the pigs,
The rats on his sleeping face often danced jigs,
The marks of their trotters both pointed and plain,
You'll trace in the visage of Bauldy M'Shane.

He first joined the sweeps, but they soon made him tramp,
The gipsies, who next drummed him out of their camp,
But Fortune here took a queer freak in her brain,
And into a flunkey made Bauldy M'Shane,
Here's luck to the "Scotch trade," besouth of the Tweed,
To old Caledonia and all her brave breed,
But sad's the misfortune that such a black stain,
Should tarnish her scutcheon as Bauldy M'Shane.



TO IRWINE WATER.

AIR—" *The Old Head of Dennis.*"

OH! Irwine, dear Irwine, though far, far away,
I see in the sunshine thy glad waters play—
The bird flitting fond round its neat little nest,
The bee buried deep in the wild rose's breast.

And blue bells that waved in the soft summer wind,
Or, laden with dew of the morning, reclined,
And looked in thy clear deeps, as beauty's bright eyes
Appear in the mirror, when tears round them rise.

When the lamb had lain down, and the lark left the sky,
And dewdrops were kissing the bean-flower's black eye,
And youngsters, released from their toils and the school,
All laughing and shouting, plunged into the pool;
Oh, then it was sweet in thy wide holms to stray,
While music in some distant wood died away!
And listen the voices of joy and of love,
Rise, mingled, the song of thy waters above.

KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE,

April, 1844.

TAMMY M'QUHAE.

AIR— "*The Campbells are comin'.*"

YE slee norlan billies that trudge wi' the pack,
Should steel-vexin' Sheffield e'er come on your track,
And shelter be wantin' at close o' the day,
Be sure that ye speir for aye Tammy M'Quhae,
His sign is the "Auld Cock in Paradise-square,"
And routh o' the comforts o' life ye'll get there ;
Prince Albert himsel', "on his wife's washing day,"
Might safely tak' pat-luck wi' Tammy M'Quhae.

He never gets sulky, he never gets dool,
Can crack wi' the wise, and can counsel the fool ;
Ye'll travel the length o' a hale simmer day,
Nor meet wi' a landlord like Tammy M'Quhae.
And lang in the square may the "Auld Cock" be seen,
And aye be his cavie baith cozie and bien ;
And lang may auld Fate unto Death answer, nay,
When Baneshanks seeks leave to tak' Tammy M'Quhae.

SHEFFIELD, Nov., 1843.

JEANIE O' THE FIEL'.

AIR—"Willie was a wanton wag."

SAE lightly fa's my lassie's fit,
That silence owns the sound as kin,
While music says its a' her ain—
And fain they baith the prize would win.

She's pure as pearly draps that fa',
Frae een o' joy for ithers weel,
Or harebell on yon castle wa',
My winsome Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

The guileless look, the witching smile,
The gracefu' air unkent to art,
In Jeanie meet, unconscious she
O' a' her power to win the heart.

Wi' smiles upon her sordid band,
Let fortune set her gowden seal,
Gi'e me the heart, gi'e me the hand
O' bonny Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

THE HAPPY FIVE.

SONG, WRITTEN FOR FIVE BACHELORS.

AIR—" *Joseph Tuck, the Tailor's Son.* "

Now, since we've met, let's merry get,
And bid the song arise, Sir ;
And, for a while, our cares beguile,
For swift the moment flies, Sir.
Nae wives we dread, our shins to bleed,
Our hair to rug and rive, Sir ;
Old Hymen's switch shall never touch
The free—the happy five—Sir.

CHORUS—Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Though fair anes sly the fishing try,
And shining bait prepare, Sir,
We'll lift the hook, and only look
To see what's lurking there, Sir ;
To see what can puir simple man
Of happiness deprive, Sir ;
But keep aloof, for arrow proof
Are all the happy five, Sir.

Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Auld Adie crouse took up his house,
And Madam square began, Sir ;
But soon the jilt his pleasure spilt,
And ruined the honest man, Sir ;

And, since his day, nae man, they say,
Can e'er in wedlock thrive, Sir ;
But never shall her chains enthrall
The free, the happy five, Sir.

Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When simmer sweet, wi' flowery feet,
Comes whiddin' o'er the braes, Sir,
To cleed the wood, and deck the sod,
And langer spin the days, Sir ;
While married fools tug at the tools,
And toil till scarce alive, Sir,
As unconfined as mountain wind
Shall rove the happy five, Sir.

Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When winter hoar, frae shore to shore,
Spreads out the biting snaw, Sir ;
The married men, sae blue and thin,
Can scarce come oot ava, Sir ;
Alang the ice, wi' caution nice,
The channel-stane we'll drive, Sir,
And nightly sing, till echoes ring,
The sporting, merry five, Sir.

Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Now, let them blow and make a show,
About the married life, Sir ;
'Tis, at the best, if right confessed,
But drudgery and strife, Sir.

THE HAPPY FIVE.

Let those who may become a prey,
And right to ruin drive, Sir,
We'll sport about, and wag it out,
The free, the happy five, Sir.

Fal, lal, lal, &c.



SANDY THAT WONS IN THE AIRD.

AIR—"Logie o' Buchan."

O! WAS ye whare Cessnock rows roun' the stey brae, —
Whare the gowd gowan glints 'neath the snaw-blossomed
slae ;

And, lo'ed by ilk bodie, frae duke to the caird,
Say, met ye wi' Sandy, that wons in the Aird?
He's nae cantin' loon wi' a bass-fiddle face,
Aye talkin' o' sin, condemnation, an' grace ;
But he's what is far better, an' waur can be spared,
He's an honest man, Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

Where a prank's to be played, or a cuff gi'en to care,
Or some doughty deed done, he is sure to be there ;
Yet his rigs are weel till'd, an' fu' bien his stackyard,
Sic a fell chiel is Sandy, that wons in the Aird.
When the wee drap gi'es life to the laugh an' the joke.
He's whiles in a corner enjoying his "smoke ;"
But mark, when his weapon o' satire is bared,
Few care to meet Sandy that wons in the Aird.

O! wha ower the lea like the swallow has passed ;
Or drift, when 'tis driven by December's bauld blast ;
Was e'er horse and rider sae happily paired :
"Creepin' Kate" an' blythe Sandy, that wons in the Aird?
Lang, lang may he wag roun' the tap o' yon brae,
Wi' a pouch never wantin'—a heart never wae ;
Mony tears 'll be shed, when, beneath the cauld swaird,
Are the banes laid o' Sandy, that wons in the Aird. ~

SANDY THE BOOKMAN.

AIR—" *Paudeen o' Raffarty.* "

As passin' a cabin
Where time was prevailin',
With tempest, in quickly
Its "union repailin',"
The darlint young Judy,
"What kased 'im to lave me,
Dear Sandy the bookman."
How could he decave me."

In ould pratee basket
A little black dear sat,
Still munchin' a number
Of "*Bell's Gazeteer*" at,
While Judy kept sobbin'
"What kased 'im to lave me,
Dear Sandy, the bookman,
How could he decave me.

"The Poteen he took whiles,
And ca'd me a *randy*,
And blue was his beard,
Yet a jewil was Sandy;
But Och! did I think
That he ever would lave me,
Dear Sandy the bookman,
How could he decave me.

“Bad luck to ye steamboats!
St. Patrick, may ne’er ane
Again see the coast of
Your own blessed Erin;
For wasn’t it them that
Alone made ’im lave me,
Dear Sandy, the bookman,
Ne’er mint to decave me.”



FAREWELL TO CRAUFURDLAND.

Set to Music by Mr. JAMES INGHAM, Lay Vicar of Exeter Cathedral.

THOU dark stream slow wending thy deep rocky way,
Ye grey towers that rise o'er the daffodil brae,
I've viewed you with pleasure, but now must with pain,
Farewell! for I never may see you again.

Ye woods where in life's gladsome morning I strayed,
When all was in sunshine and beauty arrayed ;
That dream has departed, how fleeting and vain,
Farewell ! for I never may see you again.

O'er moss, and o'er moorland, my path soon shall be,
The cloud-covered mountain, and wide stormy sea,
Your beauties will gladden some happier swain,
Farewell ! for I never may see you again.

ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR ON HIS VISIT TO EDINBURGH IN 1851

BY JOHN HARRISON.

BARD of the tuneful lyre we greet thee well ;
Edina bids thee welcome to her "shade,"
Where deathless Genius wreaths her mystic spell
Around her favourite sons—the living and the dead—
And, where she decks, within her classic bowers,
Their brows with bays, their tombs with living flowers.

Here, "Wanderer," rest, and let thy woodnotes fling
Their cadence on the fresh'ning breeze of Spring,
For, as the glorious ancient minstrels' strains,
Unbend the heart to other's joys or pains,
So, Ramsay, thine, with sympathetic glow
Commands the smile to rise, or pitying tear to flow.

Then, hie thee on thy prosperous path to fame,
And bid thy woodnotes ring in every land,
Where vice reigns rampant, raise thy vig'rous hand
With Satire's scorpion-whip reprove,—reclaim ;
But, where on any spot of this green earth,
In cot, or ha', in rags, or silk attire,
You meet the man of modest sterling worth,
The Deity is there !—give honour, and admire !

SONNET.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER," &c., &c.

BY JAMES CREASE.*—JUNE, 1851.

WANDERER through many lands, thy "woodnotes wild"
Soothe the lorn spirit with resistless power,
And gild the gloom of Sorrow's saddest hour,
Although, from all we love on earth, exiled ;—
Hail to thee, Ramsay ! may the time to come
Brighten and smile upon thee. May the days
Already past, have borne away the sum
Of all thy griefs ; and may thy pleasing lays,
Bright with the undying ray which Genius flings
Around her, meet their due desert, and may
That power from whence our every blessings springs,
Guide and direct thee till life's closing day ;
Then, in a higher strain, thy voice shall raise
A rapturous "note" of gratitude and praise.

* Author of "The Child of Poverty," and other poems.

NOTES.

NOTES.

1. A beautiful glen in the north of the Island of Arran, in the bosom of which a number of happy families had for centuries resided, till the year 1830, when they were expelled by the agent of the lord of the soil, and the grounds converted into sheep-walks—the greater part of the ancient tenants emigrated to North America. The name of M'Killop may still be traced on some of the rude stones that there mark the dust of men of other days.

2. Wednesday, April 26, 1837. The Trial Stakes of 5 sovs. each, P.P., with 20 sovs. added by the Club, for Hunters. Half-a-mile five-year-olds, 11 st. 11 lb.; six ditto, 12 st. 3 lb.; aged, 12 st. 3 lb.

Captain Houston's Cognovit, aged,.....	(Owner) 1
Mr. Ramsay's b. g. Tamworth, by Canteen, 6 years,	2
Mr. A. Campbell's Guess, by Champignon, aged,	3
Earl of Eglinton's Pilot, aged,	0
Sir James Boswell's Læona, by Jupiter, 5 years,	0
Mr. D. Davison's Vingt-un, aged,	0
Sir D. Baird's ch. g. The Bird, aged,.....	0
Mr. Kerr's The Kitten, aged,	0

—*Ayr Advertiser.*

3. To some this expression may appear irreverent, or rather impious; but when I recall parts of the discourses of a late eloquent, though ultra-Calvinistic, and highly conservative preacher, I consider myself fully warranted in making use of it, or even of stronger terms. Among the last sermons that I heard him preach, was one during a season of great commercial distress. The text was in Lamentations of Jeremiah, chap. iii. ver. 39.—“Wherefore doth a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sins.” On the following Sabbath, his colleague preached another of the same spirit from Philipians, chap. iv. ver. 11.—“Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.” Of these sermons I shall only say, that they were the means of making me a very young dissenter.

4. William Gemmell, *alias* "Bird Will," one of the notabilities of auld Killie. He obtained this nickname in his youth through being a zealous ornithologist. G. was long Town's Officer, where his worthy father had been a magistrate. His figure is still a prominent one in the memories of auld ang syne.

5. Andy Duffy. This, our townsman of the olden time, was a manufacturer of hats in the Tankerha' Brae, he was a person of a rather facetious cast of character, and a zealous patron of the cap-yill of those days. For the era of this incident we cannot vouch, and must just say, as wiser men have done before us:—Once upon a time a party of soldiers were stationed in Kilmarnock, the officers of which were much addicted to the savage sport of badger-baiting. They were then in quest of a victim, and had offered a good price. Andy, who was of diminutive proportions, being on the fuddle with his cronies, consented to be put into a sack, and taken to headquarters on sale as a badger. On reaching the Sun Inn and intimating their business, the officers were surprised at the bulky nature of the burden, saying that he was surely a very large one. Yes, said the bearer, depositing his fardel on the floor, he is a gey big ane, gentlemen, and proceeded to unloose the sack. One of the military men objected to this, saying that perhaps the monster might bite them. But Andy's friends affirmed that he was a canny creature, and would bite naebody.

"And full before their sight

Produced the beast, and lo!"—

peal after peal of laughter followed, and soon all the inmates and hangers-on of the Inn had crowded into the room to see the "brock." The officers expressed their relish of the joke, by giving Andy and his supporters five shillings to drink, which, we may safely conclude, were devoted to that purpose.

6. As a good deal depended on their horses, expense was not spared in procuring animals fitted for the purpose; and there was nothing on which the veterans delighted so much to dwell as the feats of their favourite steeds. There was one bay mare especially, of unrivalled speed and bottom, whose achievements were long the theme of conversation; indeed, some of them still linger in the memory of "the oldest inhabitant." In a case of emergency, a messenger was despatched on this mare from Holmes to the farm of Lauriston, upwards of two miles, which he accomplished in so short a time, as almost to lead us to believe that his partner in this exploit was descended from the famous "Skewball." My grandfather's mare was a "trump"—a better never lifted leg. Her refusing to take the ditch, and, when forced over, coming in contact with a party of soldiers, is no poetical

fiction. It was a family stock-anecdote, and among the first things which I heard in the annals of smuggling. The sagacity of the horse, in picking out his path in the dark, is well known to all equestrians; and which, I believe, is in a great measure, owing to his acute sense of smell. From my earliest years I was fond of the horse, and a close observer of his habits and character. His strength and speed, fortitude, docility, patience, and gratitude, should render him an object of our deepest regard; and I am of opinion, that the law is too lenient which allows the man to escape with fine or imprisonment, who is convicted of cruelty to such a noble animal. He should get a taste of the cat-o'-nine-tails. That the horse has the faculty of reason, I am fully convinced; and that the difference, in this point, betwixt him and his rider or driver is only in degree. My friend, the late Alexander Rodger "of poetic brief," said, that when he met a Glasgow carter and his horse, he generally found that the latter was the more rational animal of the two.

7. In the beginning of this century, when we were familiar with all the woods, banks, and braes of the parish of Dundonald, and with not a few of its parishioners, the men who had mingled in the busy times of the smuggling were mostly "wede away." But of the few that were left, their tales, and *personnel*, are so deeply impressed on our memory, that they must remain there as long as that faculty retains her seat. And we are convinced from their physique (worn though they were with years and infirmities), as also from the many well-authenticated stories which we have heard of their feats of strength, and capabilities of enduring fatigue, that for such men we would now seek the country in vain. They were brave, even to temerity, and being complete adepts at handling the "kent" - a stick about five feet long, generally of well-seasoned oak, and sometimes loaded, that though only armed with this weapon, they were often a match for the soldiers. However, some of them occasionally carried arms more effective than the "kent." In those days some doughty deeds were done, deeds that would have done honour to a better cause; deeds that savoured more of the times of Wallace and Bruce, than of the close of the eighteenth century. At one time, a heavy seizure of brandy had been made at Holmes, as much as to load three carts. The excise officers, supported by a strong body of infantry, were on their way to Ayr with the prize; but a numerous party of smugglers had been collected, and were lying in ambush in Rosemount Planting, whence they suddenly sallied, and, taking the soldiers by surprise, defeated them, broke their guns and bayonets, and recaptured the brandy. A keen battle or skirmish was once fought near Dundonald, on the road leading to Irwine, at a place called Roddlerig, a short distance beyond the Winehouse yett. This contest was maintained with great obstinacy on both sides for

some time, and several severe wounds were given. At last the defenders of the revenue were forced to yield. The leader or chief of the smugglers was a most formidable antagonist. Possibly, such another man could not have been found in the county of Ayr, or, perhaps, in broad Scotland. From the following passage, it will also appear that, when excited, he had something of a savage temper. On this occasion he encountered an excise officer whose weapon offensive was a sword, the smuggler had only his "kent," yet he soon unhorsed his foe, and, as he lay on the ground, rode his horse over him, with the intention of treading him to death, but the horse leaped over the fallen man; the smuggler a second time sought to accomplish his purpose, but was again foiled by his generous steed. At this he was so exasperated, that he drew his "kent" and felled the noble animal, which had thus acted so much superior to its master.

8. This genuine specimen of the Ayrshire peasant of last century, was my maternal grandfather. He was not a man of high stature, but particularly well formed, energetic, and active. As regards his strength, I need only mention what was well known, that at the age of sixty-four, he carried a "lade" or sack of meal, weighing 280 lbs., an English mile. After retiring from the ranks of the smugglers, he farmed part of the lands of Corsehill, Dreghorn, and afterwards took a lease of the farm of Gulilland, Dundonald, where he died in 1817, at a very advanced age; but too many of those engaged in the contraband trade fell into intemperate habits, to this my grandfather was an exception. He had an almost perfect constitution, walked in the simplicity of Nature's ways, and he had his reward. He died without any previous illness, and apparently without pain, or rather fell asleep, coming "to the grave like a sek of corn in its season." My grandfather had much to tell of 1745, or the Hielanman's year, as he called it; also, of the Rinderpest or "Murrain" of that period. He was of good family, which he never forgot; his forefathers having been at one time proprietors of the estate of Bourtreehill, Irwine. They were noted as men of strict integrity, great strength and length of arm; and, to distinguish them from another family of that name, were called "the long-armed Fultons." Robert, the laird, and his brother John were out with the Covenanters in 1679. On the day being lost at Bothwell Brig, they fled to Irwine, and took shelter in an inn, the landlord concealing them in a rack among the hay. A party of the royal dragoons pursued them hot-foot, tracked them to the inn, and having found their horses, swore that the riders must be somewhere on the premises. Several places were searched without success. At length, coming to the rack, they thrust their swords down amongst the hay. The Covenanters were both severely, but not mortally, wounded. However, they had nerve enough to suffer in silence, and when the soldiers had left

the town, they got their wounds dressed, and sailed for Holland. This anecdote, with others which I heard in my grandfather's, tended much to form the strong sympathy which I still entertain with the Covenanters. I can yet remember with what indignation I first read "Old Mortality." The work was not mine, otherwise, I should certainly have burned it.

4. (Page 47) Sergeant Charles Ewart, of the 2d Royal N.B. Dragoons, or Scots Greys, who took an eagle at Waterloo, was a native of Kilmarnock. In 1842 I met him at Davy Hulme, near Manchester, spent the afternoon, and took tea with him and Mrs. Ewart. He then ranked as an ensign of the 5th Royal Veteran Battalion, was seventy-three years of age, and in height, I should say, at least, six feet three. Mr. Ewart was a man of large bony frame—one of those who even in youth would have no superfluous flesh about him, all nerve and sinew. In short, was the remains of a once very powerful man, and, being "Master of Fence" to the regiment, would be a foe that neither lancer, guard nor cuirassier would have much chance with—

"Clap in his wallee a blade,
He'll mak' it whistle;
An' arms, an' legs, an' heads will sned
Like taps o' thrissle."

He spoke of Waterloo, but feelingly and modestly, and seemed not much inclined to fight his battles over again. One incident related was rather amusing. On entering Brussels after the engagement, he met Mrs. Ewart, who saluted the horse first, by throwing her arms round its neck. This piqued the sergeant a little, who exclaimed with a strong expletive—"It seems, Maggie, that ye think mair o' the horse than ye do o' me." Mr. Ewart informed me that he was born in Waterside, Kilmarnock, and bred a barber; "but," said he, "the shaving didna suit me at a'. I stood ower heigh aboon the folks' heads." A few days after, I met Mr. Ewart again in Manchester; he asked when I was coming down to see him. I said, "I will take the boat and be down some day soon." "Mr. Ewart, if you need a boat to come to Davy Hulme, ye're not o' the richt Ayrshire breed."

10. Craighurig Bank, a precipice forming the background of Dundonald Castle in a view from the east. It is skirted by a fine old natural wood, which had once some strong attractions for the lover of scenic beauty. The oak of centuries stood there, richly covered with ivy, which formed a secure retreat for the cushat, whose sweet wailings were often heard to echo through the grove. It was a preserve for game, and its well-protected tenants were ever and anon making themselves heard and seen. Birds of song were also numerous, and the stately foxglove, and other wild flowers, grew there in

the greatest luxuriance; while the grey ruin, with its legends of the past, threw a solemn grandeur over all. The axe of the spoiler has of late years been busy in Craighury Bank, and it is now sadly shorn of its ancient honours.

11. "Pilmore Mount," an extensive tract of old woodland on the margin of the farm of Gulilland. It was also a preserve, and well stocked with game and other representatives of the various feathered tribes. No sweeter or lonelier spot could the young enthusiast have found to hold his communings with things unseen. There was something so awfully solemn in its gloaming hour, that I have said, "surely the spirits of the dead are here."

"And there was the woodland, so deep and so lone,
Where oftimes indulging day-dreams I had gone,
Unconscious how fleetly the moments had fled,
Till round me the shadows of twilight were spread."

The Gothic axe has also been here, and the dear old trees which had so long been a shelter to bird and beast, shed fragrance and beauty o'er the landscape, basked in the sunshine, and wrestled with the storm, live now but in painful remembrance.

12. John Urie was, possibly, one of the most expert in the use of his weapons of all the men who were engaged in the contraband trade of that time. In his latter years he resided in Loans, and, when far advanced in life, sometimes, to the great amusement of his friends and neighbours,

"The old man would shake his years away,
And act his young encounters."

13. TAM FULLARTON.—On one occasion a smuggling party, of which Tam was a member, had come from the coast of Troon through a defile in Dundonald hills, leading by the bottom of the Awt or Aut, now forming a fine hanging wood of most picturesque appearance. They were about to emerge on the high road, within a short distance of the village, when they perceived a detachment of dragoons ready to intercept them. Tam was a man of great bodily strength, courage, and dexterity, and, from this incident, it would appear, not deficient in generalship. He requested his comrades to take charge of his horse, and retrace their road, while, he said, "he would taigle the red anes a wee, till they got out of danger." Placing himself behind an uncemented stone wall, he hurled huge fragments of rock with such force and precision, that not one of the soldiers would venture forward. Tam never slackened fire till such time as he thought his comrades were safe, when, with a shout of triumph, he disappeared in the bush. The soldiers were

16. An Annual published in Kilmarnock in 1843, and for the two succeeding years; it was projected chiefly from pecuniary motives, and conducted in a manner worthy of its origin. We contributed gratis to the first edition, and also induced some of our friends to lend their assistance, yet paid a higher price for a copy of the *Wreath* than the stipulated subscription. Besides, had the vexation to find the following line inserted in our verses, charging the revelry we had denounced, upon a class of the community who had no participation in it—

“What, alas! to the *toil-worn* no honour has been.”

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, {
January, 1846. }

17. Dundonald Castle is a ruin of great celebrity, and occupies a commanding situation in the district of Kyle in Ayrshire. It was originally the property of Robert Steuart, who, in right of his mother, Marjory Bruce, succeeded to the Scottish throne, under the title of Robert II.; and who here wooed and married his first wife, the beauteous Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan. Dr. Johnson, on being conducted to the place by Boswell, is said to have made the ruin ring with laughter at the idea of a Scottish monarch being contented with the narrow accommodation of a slender tower of three storeys, each storey containing only one apartment.—*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland*.

18. The houses of the peaceable were garrisoned by a soldiery to whom spoliation and even murder were familiar; the gaols were filled with prisoners, stripped, and huddled together in crowds, amidst filth, privations, and pestilence, from which they were only released by being shipped as slaves to the West India plantations.—*Reign of Charles II., History of Scotland by the Rev. Thomas Thomson, F.S.A., Scot.*

19. Tinto, a lofty mountain at the head of Clydesdale, lying on the boundaries of the parishes of Carmichael, Weston, and Symington. The word *Tinto* signifies “The Hill of Fire,” and derives this appellation from its summit having, in an early age, been a place whereon the Druids lighted their fires in heathen worship. From its isolated character and great height Tinto may be seen from almost every part of Clydesdale, and even Dumbartonshire. Its highest part rises like a great dome above the other eternal edifices of nature. In clear days the Bass may be seen on one side of the island, and the Firth of Solway on the other. There is a cairn of stones upon the summit, the top of which is elevated 2351½ feet above the level of the sea.—*Chambers*.

20. Cartlane Crag, a deep chasm, supposed to have been formed by an earthquake, through which the Mouss Water (remarkable a little farther up for Roman antiquities on its banks) seeks its way to the Clyde, instead of following a more natural channel, which everybody seems to think it should have followed, a little farther to the east. A bridge of three arches was thrown, in 1825, across the narrow profound, its two piers being at least a hundred feet high, while the whole length is little more. The building has an exceedingly striking effect. At a little distance below may be seen one of those narrow old bridges, with an arch precisely semi-circular, supposed to be of Roman structure. In the western face of the chasm of the Crag, a few yards above the new bridge, a small slit in the rock is pointed out by tradition as having been the hiding-place of Wallace, after he had slain Heselrig. It is still termed Wallace's Cave.—*Chambers*.

21. Castle Qua lies on the east side of Cartlane Crag. It is supposed to derive its name from the Gaelic word *Cuaeh*, a drinking cup (the *Quech* of the Lowlands), to which shape the chasm of the Mouss, when seen from the Castle, has a striking resemblance.

22. A female attendant is said to have conveyed the melancholy intelligence to Wallace, who had retreated to Cartlane Crag. There, in the midst of his followers, he heard the heart-rending recital of his bereavements with a behaviour worthy of himself, and becoming the occasion.—*Life of Sir William Wallace, Knight of Ellerslie, and Guardian of Scotland*. Published by Richard Griffin & Co., Glasgow, 1825.

23. LEE.—The environs of Lee, an elegant modern castellated edifice (Lockhart, Baronet) contain a remarkable natural curiosity, in the shape of a large oak tree, whose trunk is thirty feet in circumference, and which having become rotten through age can hold in its hollow inside nine persons standing upright. It is called, reason unknown, the Pease Tree, and is supposed to be a relic of the ancient Caledonian Forest. Under its venerable shade charters connected with the family are said to have been written, and it has been entailed by written deeds for fourteen generations.

24. THE LEE PENNY.—This curious heir-loom, of talismanic celebrity, was acquired by an ancestor of the present possessor of the estate of Lee, Sir ——— Lockhart. When Sir Simon Locard accompanied the good Sir James Douglas to Palestine, bearing the heart of Bruce in a locked case, on this account his name was changed to Lockhart, and he obtained for his armorial bearings a heart attached to a lock, with the motto, "*Cords serrata pando*." Engaged in the wars of the Holy Sepulchre, this hero had the good fortune to make a Saracen of rank his prisoner. The lady of

the warrior came to pay his ransom, and was counting out the money, when she happened to drop from her purse a small jewel, which she immediately hastened to pick up with an air of careful solicitude. Lockhart eagerly inquired the nature of the jewel, and learning that it was a mendicatory talisman, refused to deliver up his captive, unless it was added to the sum previously stipulated. The lady was obliged to comply, and Simon brought it home to Scotland, where it has ever since continued in the possession of his descendants, perhaps the only existing memorial of the Crusades in this country. It is called THE LEE PENNY, on account of its being set in the centre of an old English coin. Triangular, or heart-shaped, it measures about the third of an inch each way, and is of a dark red colour, but perfectly transparent. The nature of the stone cannot be determined by lapidaries, being apparently different in all respects from any known in this quarter of the world. To the edge of the coin a small silver chain has been attached; and the whole is deposited in a gold box, which the Empress Maria Theresa presented to the father of the late Count Lockhart. The Lee Penny did not lose its talismanic property on being transferred to a country of Christians. On the contrary, it has been all along, even to the present day, remarkable for medical virtue, especially in the diseases of horned cattle. The mode of administering it is this:—Holding it by the chain, it is three times plunged into a quantity of water, and once drawn round,—*three dips and a swail*,—as the country people express it,—and the cattle and others drink of this water, for the purpose of being cured. In the reign of Charles I., the people of Newcastle being afflicted with the plague, sent and obtained the loan of the Lee Penny, leaving the sum of £6000 sterling in its place, as a pledge; and so highly impressed were they with an opinion of its sovereign virtues, that they proposed to keep it, and forfeit the money; but the Laird of Lee would not consent, for any consideration, to part with so venerable and gifted an heir-loom. About the beginning of last century, it is said to have cured Lady Baird of Saughtonhall, who having been bit by a mad dog, exhibited all the symptoms of hydrophobia. In his fine chivalric tale of “The Talisman,” Sir Walter Scott has made an admirable use of this curious relic of antiquity. Strangers from all quarters still resort to Lee to view this celebrated gem; and the present worthy proprietor has adopted the idea of keeping an album, in which the names of visitors are recorded.—*Chambers*.

25. CORA LINN.—The uppermost fall is Bonniton Linn, a cascade of about thirty feet in height. The next below is Cora Linn, where the water takes three distinct leaps, each apparently as high as that of Bonniton. Between these two falls the course of the water is prodigiously rapid and perturbed. Its channel is contracted among rocks and precipices, and in

some places it struggles through a chasm of not more than four feet in width. Its sides consist of walls of rock, equi-distant, and wonderfully regular, the jutting points of which are covered with natural shrubbery, and in whose crevices nestle numerous flocks of birds. Upon a rock above Cora Linn, on the southern bank of the river, stands a ruined castle, behind which is a middle-aged mansion, and behind which again there is a still more modern and splendid mansion-house, called *Corehouse*. A pavilion, erected above a century ago, stands on the opposite bank of the stream, as a station for observing the fall.—*Chambers*.

26. This striking relic lies in the churchyard of Tullybody, Clackmannanshire, within a few feet of the church wall, and is still in good preservation, although the melancholy event with which it is connected, is said to have taken place about 400 years ago. Part of the lid or covering, however, has been removed: what remains is a stone nearly two feet thick, and wrought like the coping of a roof. The church is a little low building, and is now used as a place of sepulture by the noble family of Abercromby, and bears a tablet to the memory of the hero of Alexandria. There is no door on that side of the church where the "Maiden Stone" lies, which, according to tradition, was built up at the instance of the Reverend Seducer.

27. Lanercost Priory is situated about eleven miles N.E. of Carlisle, in the beautiful vale called St. Mary's Holm, on the banks of the river Irthing. It is built in the usual cruciform; the style is what is termed the early English. The nave has been fitted up as a parish church; and in the eastern part of the building, which is in a ruinous state, the tombs of several distinguished persons may be seen. It was founded A.D. 1116, by Robert de Vaux, the second Baron of Gilsland, to atone for the murder of Gilles Fil Bueth, whom he treacherously slew at a conference held for the adjustment of their respective claims to the property. Fil Bueth was the rightful Baron of Gilsland, the land having been alienated at the Norman Conquest. So lax were the laws at that period, especially when the Church had been propitiated, that De Vaux not only escaped public justice, but was afterwards appointed a judge of assize by Henry II. It was noted that he died childless, and the estate passed to another family.

Naworth Castle is situated in the parish of Brampton, about a mile S.W. of Lanercost Priory. It is the baronial residence of the lords of Gilsland, and a seat of the Earl of Carlisle. Naworth was built by Ralph, Lord Dacre, about the year 1335, and has much to render it an object of interest, particularly its having been the residence of the illustrious Lord William Howard, generally denominated "Belted Will."

28. Being at one time in Manchester, we were induced by some friends to attend a Methodist meeting. During the services a black cat came in, leaped on the back of one of the kneeling devotees, and seated itself on the nape of his neck, where it sat some time, taking a deliberate survey of the congregation. On speaking of this incident to one of our friends afterwards, he observed, "the devil is always busy," and that he believed the black cat to be either the foul fiend himself, or one of his emissaries.

29. There is a small spring on Bosworth Field, known by the name of "King Richard's Well," at which the tyrant is said to have quenched his thirst during the battle. It is covered with a column of rubble-stone, containing a tablet with the following inscription from the pen of the late Dr. Parr:—

Aqva . Ex . Hoc . Pvteo . Havsta .
 Sitim . Sedavit .
 Ricardvs . Tertivs . Rex . Angliæ .
 Cvm . Henrico . Comete . De Richmondia .
 Acereme . Atqve Inferissime . Prælians .
 Et . Vita . Pariter . ac . sceptro .
 Ante . Nocem . Caritvrva .
 2 Kal. Sept. A.D. 1485.

30. Being of opinion that this Epitaph requires an apology, I beg to say that it was written as a retort for a joke of the same stamp which was made at my expense by my much esteemed friend the painter, a man of genius, and the prince of good fellows to boot; but who, in his sarcastic sallies, spared neither friend nor foe.

We were in a railway carriage, in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, when a lady asked the wag if he did not feel a strong smell of sulphur. "Indeed," said Mr. M'Intyre, "I do," at the same time signifying, by a movement of his nasal organ, that it was anything but agreeable. "And what do you think, sir, can be the cause," inquired the fair one. "I can easily settle that question," said Mac., in a manner that would have done credit to Joe Grimaldi, "We have got the devil amongst us, madam; he sometimes appears on this line in the shape of a tall Scotchman, with large red whiskers." I need scarcely say that a roar of laughter followed. On going out at the station, one of the passengers remarked that my feet were not cloven.

31. We will not specify the locality where D. is a member of the Town Council, otherwise than by saying, that it was somewhere in broad Scotland betwixt the Troon and Peterhead; but shall give one specimen of him in his official capacity, which we trust will be a sufficient index to his character

The Superintendent of Slaughter-houses there being once before that detachment of the Council, yeleted the Market Committee, of which body D. was a member, and present at the time. The convener asked a question, which the Superintendent answered, and which he alone could answer, although the question was not put directly to him. On which D. vociferated, "Hold your tongue. we'll let you know when we want you to speak." It was not the words so much, as the smiting tone of contempt in which they were delivered—something like that in which a rude huntsman would chide a straggling hound, or the keeper of a menagerie bully his refractory charge. We were going to say that the poor Superintendent was taken all aback; but, unfortunately, he was of the "genus irritable," or rather endowed with a good share of the sensibilities of our nature, besides a pretty strong sprinkling of the spirit of independence, and was therefore taken back and front, up and down, at the same time; his brain set a-throbbing, and his blood raised near the boiling point. At last, after a sleepless night, he took the precaution to open the safety-valve of verse, which possibly prevented another being added to the many well-authenticated cases of spontaneous combustion.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Eglinton Park Meeting," the leading poem in the second edition, is amongst the latest of his writings; and, if we may judge from the strong poetical vein pervading it, his genius appears only to require cultivation to undertake a more daring flight.—*From 'The Contemporaries of Burns and the more recent Poets of Ayrshire.'*

"Mr. Ramsay's muse, unlike many of our minor poets, is bold and versatile. The descriptive, the pathetic, the humorous, and the satirical, flow in turns from his pen; and in thoughts and expression he is often forcible. * * * Some of his smaller pieces, though less meritorious, display the characteristics of a vigorous mind."—*History of Kilmarnock, by A. M'Kay, published in 1858.*

"Woodnotes of a Wanderer, by J. Ramsay, Kilmarnock,' is a really spirited and clever volume of poems, written by a self-taught individual."—*Rev George Gilfillan, in Hogg's Instructor, March, 1850.*

"Mr. Ramsay's volume may take an honourable place on the library shelves, and bear the jostling of Robert Nicoll and William Thom fearlessly. We earnestly hope that the gifted author will reap some substantial everyday wheat from his fine show of Parnassian flowers, for he richly merits a ray or two from the sunny side of Fortune's face."—*Eliza Cook's Journal, 1852.*



