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ROBERT BURNS IN STIRLINGSHIRE.



BUST OF ROBERT BURNS, BY D. W. STEVENSON, R.S.A., IN
NATIONAL WALLACE MONUMENT. *From photograph by
Valentine & Sons, Limited, Dundee.*

ROBERT BURNS

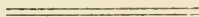
IN

STIRLINGSHIRE.

BY

WILLIAM HARVEY,

Author of "Kennethook: Some Sketches of Village Life;" "Scottish Life and Character in Anecdote and Story;" etc., and Editor of "The Harp of Stirlingshire."



STIRLING:

ENEAS MACKAY, 43 MURRAY PLACE.

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P R E F A C E.

STIRLINGSHIRE has many connections with literature, but few are of greater interest than that which exists between it and the National Bard. "Robert Burns in Stirlingshire" is an attempt to gather together the various associations of the county with the poet.

In his tours to the north, Robert Burns included Stirlingshire, and left behind him some memorials of his visit—notably his "Lines Written on the Window of the Inn at Carron," and his famous "Stirling Lines." The places he visited, and the persons he associated with, come in for treatment in the present volume, and it is believed that the facts set forth will be read with interest by every admirer of the National Poet.

In connection with the county, Burns's muse was called into service, and one has but to name his immortal "Scots Wha Hae" in this connection. A history of the song, gathered from many sources, and undoubtedly the most complete that has yet been published, is presented in the following pages. There are also notices of other effusions of county interest.

One of the chief of his correspondents was Dr. John Moore, a "Son of the Rock," and father of the hero of Corunna. To that gentleman the poet penned his famous

autobiographical letter, and from the important place which Moore occupies in the Burns world it has been deemed fit to present the correspondence between the bard and him *in extenso*.

Stirlingshire has ever been among the foremost admirers of Burns, and in view of that fact, and also to give a certain completeness to the work, chapters have been added containing notices of county "intimates" of the poet, county contributors to Burns literature and art, the county's celebrations of the centenaries of the poet's birth and death, and the placing of his bust in the Hall of Heroes in the National Wallace Monument near Stirling.

While these sheets were in the press, an interesting county landmark connected with Burns was swept away. The change-house at Alva, kept by Betty Black (see page 34), and locally known as "No. 5," suffered demolition, and as another structure was proposed to be erected in its stead, the Alva Burns Club arranged to place a memorial tablet, commemorating the tradition of the poet's visit, in the wall of the new building. The ceremony of handing over the tablet took place on Friday, September 29, 1899, in presence of a large gathering of members of the Alva Burns Club and others interested.

Throughout the book the author notes his obligations to various sources of information. Here he would thankfully acknowledge the assistance generously given him on local points connected with Burns by Messrs. David B. Morris and W. B. Cook, Stirling; Wallace Maxwell, Carron; and John T. Yule, Alva.

5 BRUCE STREET,
STIRLING, October 1, 1899.

ROBERT BURNS

IN

STIRLINGSHIRE.

ROBERT BURNS'S FIRST VISIT TO STIRLING-
SHIRE: AUGUST, 1787.



IT was in the early autumn of the year 1787 that Burns passed through Stirlingshire in the course of his Highland tour. Some short time before—in the month of May in the same year—he had left Edinburgh to journey in the south. Beyond its scenic beauty and historic associations, however, the Borderland did not present then (although that is little more than a century ago) the attractions it does to-day. Scott and Hogg were youths of seventeen summers at the time, and had given no indication of the work they were to accomplish. If the national bard had been a later-day traveller, how full his diary might have been of this, that, and the other place and scene connected with the Wizard of the North and the Ettrick Shepherd! But these men were to achieve distinction in what

was to Burns the future : if they had lived before him he or they would have been to some extent impossible.

In his tour to the West Highlands, undertaken apparently in the end of June, 1787, and regarding which we have so very scanty information, the poet doubtless touched the western fringe of Stirlingshire. He tells us he saw "the glorious lamp of day peering o'er the towering top of Ben Lomond," and spent a day on Loch Lomond, but beyond the mere statement of this latter fact we have no record of his doings, and it is with the journey in August, 1787, that we are at present concerned. During his Border tour the poet provided himself with a diary, and so preserved his observations by the way, and this he repeated on the occasion of his journey in the north.

On August 25, 1787, Burns, in company with his friend William Nicol,¹ left "Auld Reekie" bound for the Highlands. They set out from Edinburgh in a chaise ; Nicol—to quote from the poet's letter to Robert Ainslie two days before their departure—thought it more comfortable than horseback, to which the bard said "Amen," so that Jenny Geddes went home to Ayrshire "wi' her finger in her mouth." Following the poet's Journal, we find that the route was by Kirkliston, and Winchburgh, and Linlithgow. The first entry akin to our subject is—

"Come through the rich Carse of Falkirk to Falkirk to pass the night."

Beyond this meagre announcement the bard has given us no account of his doings, and any information on the subject must come from other sources.

Mr. J. Gibson Lockhart, in his biography of Burns relates an incident which Dr. Robert Chambers supposes may refer to this, the evening of the first day of their northern tour. "I have heard," says Lockhart, "that riding one dark night near Carron, his (the poet's) companion teased him with noisy exclamations of delight and wonder, whenever an opening in the wood permitted them to see the magnificent glare of the furnaces: 'Look! Burns. Good Heaven! Look! Look! What a glorious sight!' 'Sir,' said Burns, clapping spurs to his horse, 'I would not *look look* at your bidding if it were the mouth of hell!'"² This outburst is attributed by Lockhart to impatience on the part of the poet at being interrupted while viewing some other scene of beauty.

Halting at Falkirk, Burns and his companion resolved, as the Diary bears, to pass the night in the town. They seem to have found accommodation in the Cross Keys Inn, which was at that time the hostelry of chief importance and the calling-place of stage-coaches. The apartment which tradition associates with the poet is still pointed out: it is the centre room on the second floor of the building. Here, it is believed, Burns penned the first of the stanzas which bear witness to his journey at various stages.

Some time prior to his leaving Edinburgh, the poet had procured a diamond pen, and the following lines and date are said to have been found scratched on one of the panes of the window in the apartment occupied by him:—

Sound be his sleep and blythe his morn
That never did a lassie wrang;

Who poverty ne'er held in scorn—
For misery ever tholed a pang.

25th Aug.,
1787.

The date appended to the lines agrees with the date of the poet's visit to Falkirk, and the writing is not unlike that of the bard, but there is no actual proof that the verse was written by Burns. The lines were never acknowledged by Burns, and are not included in any of the earlier editions of his works. Indeed, if they are genuine, they seem to have been overlooked entirely for over half-a-century, as the first publication of them which we have been able to trace was in an article—along “with some other circumstances regarding Burns's visit to Falkirk” which Robert Chambers looked upon “as doubtful”—contributed by Mr. George Boyack, St. Andrews, to the *Fifeshire Journal* for November 4, 1847.³ Boyack, who was a native of Falkirk, and was born on 19th March, 1792⁴—less than five years after the poet's visit—would probably be in possession of any facts—traditional or other—which might go to prove the authenticity of the lines, but it would seem that our acceptance of them must rest entirely on his authority. Admitted by Chambers on this authority, they have been accepted by certain later editors—including Scott Douglas and Hately Waddell—and they are retained by William Wallace in his revised edition of Chambers's “Burns.” Scott Douglas, who prefaces them as “generous sentiments,” prints them as “*said* to have been” written by the poet, and from a small correction in the text, would appear to have compared Chambers's version with the original. The

lines are not printed in "The Centenary Burns," which would seem to point to a dubiety existing in the minds of Messrs. Henley and Henderson as to their authenticity.

In addition to these lines, the Inn preserved until recently what was said to be another relic of the bard. At the time of his visit the ground floor of the hostelry consisted of two apartments, separated by a wooden partition. One of the rooms was the public drinking-place, and for the convenience of the host and his servants, there were windows in the partition which afforded communication with the adjoining room. At some period—seemingly subsequent to the poet's visit—these windows were covered over, and remained so obscured until a few years ago, when, owing to certain alterations which were being effected, the wooden partition was removed. On the windows being uncovered, there was revealed on one of them a signature which purported to be the autograph of the poet scratched, like the lines in the room above, on the window pane with a diamond pen. The proprietor of the Inn—Mr. William Gow—doubtful of its authenticity, paid little attention to it, but, according to the local press, a curio-hunter being in Falkirk and hearing of the signature, visited the Inn, and, after examination, declared the autograph to be genuine. He purchased it, the local scribe tells us, "at a high price," and we are informed by Mr. Gow that it is included in the collection of a well-known Burns enthusiast.

The Cross Keys Inn is proud of its connection with the bard. In one of the rooms the Falkirk

Burns Club met for many years twice in twelvemonths—25th January, the date of his birth, and 25th August, the date of his visit to the town—to celebrate the poet, and in 1889 steps were taken to erect some permanent memorial of his visit. This took the form of a metal medallion of the bard. It was gifted by the late William Thomson Mitchell, and was cast in Grahamston Foundry. It was erected on the front wall of the Inn, and was unveiled on 25th January, 1889, by the late Sir (then Mr.) Thomas D. Brodie.

The medallion tablet is three feet wide by four feet high. The portrait is a three-quarter length casting after Skirving, the bust being in bold relief with floral bordering of daisies on the one side, and poppies on the other, these flowers being considered emblematic of the poet's career. Over the bust on a ribbon scroll are the words—"Wood-notes wild," and underneath is the inscription :—

ROBERT BURNS,
POET,
SLEPT HERE.
AUGUST 25TH, 1787.

On the wall of the Inn the following tribute to his genius is also inscribed :—

What heart hath ever matched his flame
What spirit matched his fire !
Peace to the Prince of Scottish Song,
Lord of the Bosom's Lyre.

Returning to Burns and his companion, we find that on the following day—Sunday—they directed their attention to the places of interest in and around Falkirk, and the following is the poet's *resume* :—

"Falkirk nothing remarkable, except the tomb of Sir John the Graham, over which, in the succession of time, four [three] stones have been laid.⁶

“Camelon the ancient metropolis of the Picts, now a small village, in the neighbourhood of Falkirk.⁶ Cross the grand canal to Carron⁷—Breakfast—come past Larbert, and admire a fine monument of cast-iron erected by Mr. Bruce, the African traveller, to his [second] wife. *N.B.*—He used her very ill, and I suppose he meant it as much out of gratitude to Heaven as anything else.”⁸

In supplement to the poet's notes it is unnecessary that much should be written. One thing that calls for notice is the fact that he dismisses the visit to Carron with mere mention, leaving us to glean⁷ our information from other sources. In visiting the⁷ places of interest on their way, Burns and Nicol proceeded to Carron, in the hope of seeing the ironworks there.⁹ On their reaching the gate of the Foundry, however, the porter refused them admittance, and once more the diamond pen was called into use. The poet and his companion adjourned to Carron Inn, and the following epigram, chronicling their disappointment, was inscribed on one of the windows :—

We cam na here to view your warks
 In hopes to be mair wise,
 But only, lest we gang to Hell,
 It may be nae surprise ;
 But when we tirl'd at your door,
 Your porter dought na bear us :¹⁰
 Sae may, should we to Hell's yetts come,
 Your billie Satan sair us.

This epigram, dated “August 26th, 1787,” and signed “R. B. Ayrshire,” was published in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* for 5th October, 1789, under title, “Written on the Window of the Inn at Carron.” It was republished in 1799 in No. 1 of a series of chap-books issued by George Gray, Book-

seller, North Bridge Street, Edinburgh, and Stewart included it in his "Poems ascribed to Robert Burns" published at Glasgow in 1801.

The lines attracted attention and even inspired a reply. A traveller, or riding clerk as he was called in those days, in the employment of the Carron Company—Alexander (?) Benson¹¹ by name—is said to have been the first to notice the lines. He copied them into his "Order Book," and afterwards retorted in the following terms:—

If you cam here to see our works
 You should have been more civil
 Than give us a fictitious name
 In hopes to cheat the devil.

Six days a week to you and all
 We think it very well,
 The other, if you go to church,
 May keep you out of Hell.

This moralising rejoinder, the work of an obscure individual who probably never attempted higher flights of poesy, nor wrote another line even of kindred doggerel, has, by connection, gained the immortality awarded the epigram of the national bard!

There is another reply to the poet which is quoted from the Toast List of one of the anniversary gatherings of the Larbert Burns Club. It differs considerably from that by Benson, but at the same time seems to have been suggested by his. It runs thus—

When ye cam here to view oor warks,
 Had ye but been mair civil,
 We'd ta'en ye in, and taught ye tricks,
 We'd garr'd ye cheat the Devil.

But when ye tirl'd at oor door,
Ye made sae muckle din ;
Oor porter thocht 'twas Nick himsel,
And widna' let ye in.

The Inn at which Burns halted and on the window of which he penned his lines still stands, but it has long since given up its business of catering for the refreshment of the public. It was originally built by the Carron Company as a Bank, when that Company contemplated adding banking to their other enterprises, but subsequently it was let as an Inn, and was kept by one of the name of Stewart in the year 1787, when Burns visited the district. The poet's verse remained for some time, but one stormy night—the Deil may have had some work on hand—the pane on which it was inscribed was blown into the room, and the original “manuscript” irreparably smashed. The building is now occupied as workmen's houses.

The reason assigned, says Cunningham, for refusing to show the Carron Foundries to Burns was that he called on a Sunday. This could hardly be, continues his biographer: he knew that the labour which rendered the place interesting had ceased; that the furnaces were mostly extinguished, and the “warks” not to be seen. The more probable reason is that he sought admittance without an introduction. In a note the same Editor says, the poet sought permission under “an assumed name,” and this of course is borne out by Benson's reply.

So much for Carron.

After noticing the monument to Bruce's wife, and giving vent to his sarcasm at the pile, he continues his observations:—

“Pass Dunipace, a place laid out with fine taste—a charming amphitheatre bounded by Denny village, and pleasant seats of Herbert-

shire,¹² Denovan,¹³ and down to Dunipace. The Carron running down the bosom of the whole makes it one of the most charming little prospects I have seen."

From the notes which the poet gives it would seem that he took an active interest in every place he saw. His local knowledge could not be so extensive as to enable him to recognise such places as Denovan and Herbertshire. Nor can we suppose that his companion would give him much assistance. The inference is, rather, that he enquired as to the respective places as he passed, or that, recapitulating his journey at the intermediate resting-places to his various hosts, he received from them information for the completion of his Diary.

Resuming our perusal of the poet's Journal, we find that the next paragraph or entry embraces the visitors' doings on the Sabbath afternoon.

"Dine at Auchenbowie¹⁴—Mr. Monro an excellent, worthy old man—Miss Monro an amiable, sensible, sweet young woman much resembling Mrs. Grierson [wife of Dr. George Grierson of Glasgow, the friend and brother-mason of the poet]. Come to Bannockburn—shewn the old house where James III was murdered. The field of Bannockburn—the hole where glorious Bruce set his standard. Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant, heroic countrymen coming o'er the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers; noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe. I see them meet in gloriously triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence.—Come to Stirling"

In the course of a century the shrines of a nation do not alter much, and the places visited by the poet are the spots to which the pilgrim turns to-day. The

white-washed cottage with its thatched roof is still visited by many, and still tells its story of the murder of a king. The field of Bannockburn likewise draws pilgrims from near and far, but the centre of attraction on the field is somewhat altered since Burns's time. "The hole where glorious Bruce set his standard" was in a boulder which lay on that part of the field known as Brock's Brae. This Bored-Stone, or King's Stane, to quote the words of an old inhabitant lately deceased (and the words may be taken as illustrating the appearance of the stone when Burns saw it), was a field boulder about 2 ft. 4 or 5 inches diameter, of rather a coarse and porous nature, not so close in the grain as common whin stone. In the centre was a hole three inches in diameter, and about six inches deep, which must have been made previous to the day of battle, as it would take some time to make it. Visitors were in the habit of chipping off portions of the stone, especially round the hole, and taking it away. To prevent the stone disappearing altogether before this vandalism, the interesting relic was enclosed in the iron grating which visitors to the field must be familiar with. Whether or not the poet was vandal enough to take with him a fragment of the stone, history telleth not, but there he said a fervent prayer for old Caledonia, and there, time and again, multitudes of "brither Scots" from "here aboot and far awa," have shewn their gratitude to the heroes of their country by blending their voices in the poet's battle-ode—"Scots wha hae."

Reaching the City of the Rock on the Sabbath afternoon, Burns and his companion turned their

steps towards Wingate's Inn.¹⁵ This Inn, which had lately been erected by James Wingate, a well-known Stirling innkeeper of that period, was situated in what was then known as Quality Street. To-day the Inn is the Golden Lion Hotel, and the street is King Street. The Inn has changed somewhat since Burns's visit, but the room in which the poet is said to have slept is still pointed out. It is located in the oldest part of the hotel, on the third floor and at the north-east corner. The room is a spacious apartment, and the window faces the Ochils. Having found accommodation here, the visitors betook themselves to see their surroundings, but local history is mute and the writings of the poet are almost silent on the subject. The central object of attraction was the Castle, the view from which received a commendatory notice in his correspondence, and the neglected condition of which drew forth the significant "Stirling Lines."

On returning to the Inn the poet proceeded to write to his friend, Mr. Robert Muir of Kilmarnock. The epistle contains an account of the earlier part of the northern tour, and as such amplifies, to some extent, the poet's Diary. This letter was first printed in No. 10 of *The Brougham* (a Glasgow weekly) for May 5, 1832. It is in the following terms:—

MY DEAR SIR,—I intended to have written you from Edinburgh, and now write you from Stirling to make an excuse. Here am I on my way to Inverness, with a truly original, but very worthy, man, a Mr. Nicol, one of the Masters of the High-school in Edinburgh. I left Auld Reekie yesterday morning, and have passed, besides bye-excursions, Linlithgow, Borrowstounness, Falkirk, and here am I undoubtedly. This morning I kneeled at the tomb of Sir John the Graham, the gallant friend of the immortal Wallace; and two hours ago I said

a fervent prayer for Old Caledonia over the hole of a blue whin-stone, where Robert de Bruce fixed his royal standard on the banks of Bannockburn ; and just now, from Stirling Castle, I have seen by the setting sun the glorious prospect of the windings of the Forth through the rich carse of Stirling, and skirting the equally rich carse of Falkirk. The crops are very strong, but so very late, that there is no harvest, except a ridge or two perhaps in ten miles, all the way I have travelled from Edinburgh.

I left Andrew Bruce and family all well. I will be at least three weeks in making my tour, as I shall return by the coast, and have many people to call for.

My best compliments to Charles [Samson], our dear kinsman and fellow-saint ; and Messrs. W. and H. Parkers. I hope Hughoc [Parker] is going on and prospering with God and Miss M'Causlin.

If I could think on anything sprightly, I should let you hear every other post ; but a dull, matter-of-fact business like this scrawl, the less and seldomer one writes, the better.

Among other matters-of-fact, I shall add this, that I am and ever shall be, My dear Sir, your obliged,

ROBERT BURNS.¹⁶

Stirling, 26th Aug., 1787.

The best of biographers are apt to err in matters of minutest detail, and Mr. William Wallace in company with Dr. Robert Chambers makes a little slip in his reference to the poet's visit to Stirling. As matter of fact, Burns, as we have already said, did not reach Stirling till *Sabbath* afternoon, and the following paragraph contains the error in question :—

“ At Stirling, on the *Saturday* night, the travellers had not been more charmed with the magnificent panorama of the Grampians, viewed from the battlements of the castle, than their patriotic and quasi-Jacobitical feelings had been outraged by the ruinous state of the ancient hall in which parliaments had occasionally been held under the Scottish kings.” The outraged feelings found expression in the “ Stirling Lines.”

Mr. W. B. Cook, in his introduction to his "History of Stirling Castle," says—"When Robert Burns first visited Stirling, the desecration of the Parliament House made him so angry that, on returning to his inn, he scratched on one of the window-panes a few severe lines, reflecting on the successors of the Stewart race."

The lines are said (by Cunningham) to have been composed early on the morning of Monday, the 27th August, before Nicol was awake, and are as follows:—

Here Stewarts once in glory reign'd,
 And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd ;
 But now unroof'd their palace stands,
 Their sceptre fallen to other hands ;
 [Fallen indeed, and to the earth,
 Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth ;]¹⁷
 The injured Stewart line is gone,
 A race outlandish fills their throne ;
 An idiot race, to honour lost—
 Who know them best despise them most.

The Editors of *The Centenary Burns* fall foul of Cunningham for stating, without quoting his authority, that the lines were written on the Monday morning, and allege that "not improbably these lines were written after the jolly supper mentioned in his (the poet's) *Journal*." The statement of Cunningham, without giving his authority, is doubtless of as much value as the "probability" of *The Centenary Burns* Editors ; and is not the consideration of these lines as an after-jolly-supper-production an adherence to that doctrine of atonement for the poet's failings which *The Centenary Burns* declaims so much against ?

Leaving the lines and his friend Nicol in Stirling,

Burns proceeded on Monday to visit some friends at Harvieston, near Dollar, and the following is the entry in his Journal :—

“Go to Harvieston—Mrs. Hamilton and family—Mrs Chalmers—Mrs. Shields—Go to see Cauldron linn, and Rumbling brig, and the Deil’s mill. Return in the evening to Stirling.”

During the poet’s absence, Nicol had observed the lines inscribed on the window. On Burns’s return (following Scott Douglas’s version of the story), his companion took him to task for having penned so bold a libel on the reigning family. “Well,” replied Burns, “I shall try to qualify it somewhat, by writing a reproof to the author.” Taking out his diamond pen, he added the lines :—

Rash mortal, and slanderous poet, thy name
Shall no longer appear in the records of Fame !
Dost not know that old Mansfield, who writes like the Bible,
Says, the more ’tis a truth, Sir, the more ’tis a libel ?

The “Stirling Lines” soon became notorious. They were written on a window of one of the public rooms of the Inn, and there they remained to be seen and read by every visitor who cared ; and copied into many travellers’ note-books, they soon got into circulation. Whether Burns adhibited his name to the stanzas is not clear, but in subsequent correspondence he gave unmistakable evidence of the authorship.

An eccentric character in Paisley, says Mr. Scott Douglas, styling himself “John Maxwell, *Poet*,” published in 1788, the *Stirling Lines* in a tract, entitled, “Animadversions on some Poets and Poetasters of the present age,” in which he aims at being very severe on Burns and Lapraik.

Notwithstanding evidence in existence, it was believed by some that the lines were not written by Burns. The *Paisley Magazine*, edited by William Motherwell, contained in the number for December, 1828, a statement throwing doubt on the authorship. It asserted that the lines were really the production of Nicol, and that it was only because Burns found that the public laid them to his charge that he took the blame of having written them in order that his friend might be saved the consequences.

The article was introduced by Allan Cunningham in his edition of the poet's works, with the words—"this more satisfactory account of these celebrated lines involves circumstances which reflect the brightest lustre on the character of the Ayrshire Poet." The writer says :—

"They were not the composition of Burns, but of his friend Nicol. This we state from the testimony of those who themselves knew the fact as it truly stood, and who were well acquainted with the high-wrought feelings of honour and friendship which induced Burns to remain silent under the obloquy which their affiliation entailed upon him. The individual whose attention the lines first attracted was a clerk in the employment of the Carron Iron Company, then travelling through the country collecting accounts, or receiving orders, who happened to arrive immediately after the departure of the poet and his friend. On enquiry, he learned that the last occupant of the apartment was the far-famed Burns, and on this discovery, he immediately transferred a copy of the lines to his memorandum-book of orders, made

every person as wise as himself on the subject, and penned an answer to them, which, with the lines themselves, soon spread over the country, and found a place in every periodical of the day. To this poetic critic of the Carron Works do we owe the first hint of Burns being the author of this tavern effusion. Those who saw the writing on the glass know that it was not the hand-writing of the poet; but this critic, who knew neither his autograph nor his person, chose to consider it as such, and so announced it to the world. On his return to Stirling, Burns was both irritated and grieved to find that this idle and mischievous tale had been so widely spread, and so generally believed. The reason of the cold and constrained reception he met with from some distinguished friends, which at the time he could not account for, was now explained, and he felt in all its bitterness the misery of being innocently blamed for a thing which he despised as unworthy of his head and heart. To disavow the authorship was to draw down popular indignation on the head of Nicol—a storm which would have annihilated him. Rather than ruin the interests of that friend, he generously and magnanimously, or, as some less fervent mind may think, foolishly, devoted himself to unmerited obloquy by remaining silent, and suffering the story to circulate uncontradicted. The friend who was with Burns when he indignantly smashed the obnoxious pane with the butt end of his whip, and who was perfectly aware of the whole circumstances as they really stood, long and earnestly pleaded with him to contradict the story that had got wind, and injured him so much in

public estimation. It was with a smile of peculiar melancholy that Burns made this noble and characteristic reply: 'I know I am not the author; but I'll be damned ere I betray him. It would ruin him—he is my friend.' It is unnecessary to add that to this resolution he ever after remained firm."

This statement is, *prima facie*, so absurd, that it is matter for wonder that Allan Cunningham, even with his notorious credulity, should have been charmed by the "lustre" it shed "on the character of the poet." The story is such a mixture of verbosity and imagination, and so manifestly conflicts the Carron Lines with the Lines at Stirling as to suggest that its author, while able to make much ado about nothing, did not know what he was speaking about. The stanza was inscribed in one of the public rooms of the Inn—not in an apartment of which Burns was the "last occupant." No reply was penned by a Carron clerk, and this part of the story certainly refers to the lines written by the poet on his being refused admittance to the Ironworks. The friend who pled with Burns when he smashed the pane to contradict the story was probably Dr. Adair, and if so, it is surprising that Dr. Adair makes no mention of this in his account of the destruction of the glass. Above all, the reference to the stanza as a "thing which he despised as unworthy of his head and heart" is beside the mark. The "Stirling Lines" is not the only instance on record of the poet's impulsive disaffection towards the reigning dynasty. His troubles with the Excise are against the view that "he despised as unworthy of his head and heart" the sentiment of the offensive verses.¹⁸

Written at a time when a very little might be interpreted as treason, there was doubtless much in the stanza that might threaten untoward results, but as we have shewn, the article in the *Paisley Magazine* is nothing more than an absurd fiction. Burns was unquestionably the author. The epigram is included in a MS. collection of verses in his own handwriting and is introduced with the significant head-line "Wrote by *Somebody* in an Inn at Stirling." He also put a confession on record in his correspondence with Clarinda, and this may be accepted as final. Writing to his correspondent on Sunday, 27th January, 1788, some months after its production, he said—

"I have almost given up the Excise idea. . . . Why will great people not only deafen us with the din of their equipage, and dazzle us with their fastidious pomp, but they must also be so very dictatorially wise? I have been questioned like a child about my matters, and blamed and schooled for my inscription on Stirling window. Come Clarinda!—'Come, curse me, Jacob; come, defy me, Israel!'"

Clarinda, replying on the following day, and writing with an unquestionable previous knowledge of the authorship of the lines, retorted—

"I'm half-glad you were school'd about the Inscription; 'twill be a lesson, I hope, in future. Clarinda would have lectured you on it before, 'if she durst.'"

The "Stirling Lines" caused many to turn unfavourable eyes on the poet. They were remembered years afterwards, says Lockhart, to his disadvantage, and even danger. The last couplet, continues this biographer, alluding, in the coarsest style, to the melancholy state of the King's health at the time, was indeed an outrage of which no political prejudice

could have made a gentleman approve ; but he in all probability composed his verses after dinner ; and surely what Burns would fain have undone, others should not have been unwilling to forget. Although, as Mr. Scott Douglas subsequently pointed out, "the melancholy state of the King's health" did not become publicly known till some time after the stanza was written, the strictures of Lockhart are not unjust.¹⁹

To combat the disloyal verses of Burns, a reverend rhymers in the person of George Hamilton, minister of Gladsmuir, in East Lothian, and a notable divine of his day, came forward. On reading the "Stirling Lines" he added these by way of commentary—

Thus wretches rail whom sordid gain
 Drags in Faction's gilded chain ;
 But can a mind which Fame inspires,
 Where genius lights her brightest fires—
 Can BURNS, disdainng truth and law,
 Faction's venom'd dagger draw ;
 And, skulking with a villain's aim,
 Basely stab his monarch's fame ?
 Yes, Burns, 'tis o'er, thy race is run,
 And shades receive thy setting sun :
 With pain thy wayward fate I see,
 And mourn the lot that's doomed for thee :
 These few rash lines will damn thy name,
 And blast thy hopes of future fame.

Alas for the gift of prophecy ! The Rev. George Hamilton, and one might even say the monarch himself, are numbered with the almost forgotten dead ; Burns knows no obscurity.

When the commentary came under the notice of the bard, it moved him to a retort. Under the title,

“The Poet’s Reply to the Threat of a Censorious Critic,” he refers to the matter in the Glenriddel MSS. in these words—

“My imprudent lines²⁰ were answered, very petulantly, by *somebody*, I believe a Rev. Mr. Hamilton. In a MS., where I met the answer, I wrote below :—

With Æsop’s lion, Burns says :—‘Sore I feel
Each other blow ; but damn that ass’s heel !’²¹

On his return from Harvieston, the poet and his companion spent the evening in the company of some Stirling folks, regarding whom he has left us scanty information. His entry is as follows :—

“Supper—Messrs. Doig (the Schoolmaster) and Bell ; Captain Forrester of the Castle—Doig a queerish figure, and something of a pedant—Bell a joyous, vacant fellow who sings a good song—Forrester a merry, swearing kind of man, with a dash of the Sodger.”

Of Burns’s friends who sat round the table, the most important was “the Schoolmaster,” and if the bard found congenial company with Bell who sang a good song, and Forrester who was a merry man, he would also find an intelligent conversationalist in Doig. Dr. David Doig, Rector of Stirling Grammar School, was born at Aberlemno, in 1719, and was consequently advanced in life when he met Burns. He was educated for the ministry, but turned to teaching, and for many years filled this important scholastic appointment in Stirling. He had an extensive knowledge of classical and oriental literature. On these subjects he contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and in recognition of his knowledge, the Glasgow University conferred on him the honorary

degree of LL.D. He died at Stirling in 1800. One of his biographers says he was a man of eminence in his times, and this is probably the reason for his acquaintance with the bard. The genius who had attracted the *literati* of the Capital was not likely to be unknown to such a man as Doig. The "Captain Forrester" to whom the poet refers was Gabriel Forrester of Craigannet and Braes, but it would appear that he had only the rank of lieutenant at the date of Burns's visit. He was lineally descended on the maternal side from the family of Napier of Merchiston, the inventor of logarithms. He married Jean, daughter of Robert Hamilton of Hamilton Hill, by whom he had a family of two sons and three daughters. He died in 1813, predeceased by his wife. Regarding "Bell" of the company, there is some doubt. Beyond his name Burns gives no information, but it is likely that he was Christopher Bell, who was a schoolmaster in Stirling at the time. Under his Trust Disposition and Settlement, Captain Forrester appoints "Christopher Bell, teacher in Stirling," one of his Trustees, and in some correspondence with his law-agent refers to "our friend Bell." It is likely, therefore, that it was he who met Burns when the latter was the guest of Captain Forrester. How the evening was spent is not on record, but we can read into the lines of the Diary chronicling this, the first "Burns Supper" in Stirling, that the conversation would now turn on some abstract subject, in the discussion on which the Schoolmaster was pedantic, and then that the company would listen to some reminiscence of military life from the Captain, and again that they would enjoy a song from their friend Bell.

In addition to the trio who have gained immortality through the Diary of the poet, many of the citizens of Stirling would doubtless see Burns on the occasion of his visit. Among those who claimed this distinction was Mr. John Dick, some time Provost of Stirling, and in after years he used to relate the story with pleasure. From his nephew—John Dick, Esq. of Craigengelt, who is a well-known Burns student, and who possesses the MS. “Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat?”—we have received the following account of the incident :—

“The occasion on which the late Provost Dick saw Burns was on his (the poet’s) first visit to Stirling. At that time he was a very young boy ; and he was attending, with a younger sister, the school then kept by ‘Sandy M’Laurin’ in the neighbourhood of Broad Street. On the day in question, ‘the maister,’ as my uncle called him, gave his pupils ‘the play’ in the shape of a holiday on account of the news of some victory. At all events, when my uncle came out of the school (with his little sister in his hand), the bells of the town were ringing a merry peal ; and, running down towards the middle of Broad Street, he saw a considerable crowd of people, who were shouting to each other—‘Burns !—Burns !’

“On looking closer, my uncle saw a group of gentlemen, which included Dr. Doig, Captain Forrester, of Stirling Castle, Mr. Ramsay of Ochertyre (who was then universally known as ‘the learned Mr. Ramsay’), and Hector Macneill, the poet, who was then living near Stirling. The man—Burns—who was with these gentlemen, my uncle described as a tall man, who

‘looted’ (that is stooped) somewhat in his gait. He was remarkably swarthy or ‘black-avic’d’ in complexion, and seemed engaged in earnest conversation. His dress, my uncle distinctly remembered, viz.:—buck-skin breeches and top-boots, a deep yellow or buff vest, and a blue coat with yellow buttons—the Fox political livery. The whole party, named above, had evidently come direct from Stirling Castle ; and the people on the street looked on the gentlemen—Burns particularly, with friendly and interested eyes. Just a little below the Broad Street Steeple, the party made a short halt ; and Mr. M’Laurin (the teacher before referred to) came forward, and was evidently introduced to Burns, as my uncle saw ‘the maister’ take out his snuff-box and present it to Burns in a friendly way. Meantime, the crowd of people had increased, and the cry ran from one to another of ‘Burns! Burns!’ louder than before. But the halt was brief. The party proceeded down Broad Street at a quick pace, and my uncle soon saw it no more.

“ My uncle told me that it was a warm summer day ; so, from what is known of Burns’s movements, it must have been sometime in June or August, 1787.”

In the above narrative there are at least two discrepancies. One of these is the alleged meeting of Burns and Hector Macneill. Although it is the fact that Macneill, at different times and for considerable periods, resided in or near Stirling, he was not resident in this district on the occasions of the poet’s visits, but was the guest of Mr. Graham of Gartmore. The other, and more important discrepancy, is in connection with the age of Mr. Dick. He was,

according to his own story, attending school "with a younger sister," but as he died on 22nd April, 1865, aged 79 years, he could not have been much more than *one year old* in 1787—the date of Burns's visits to Stirling. On referring these discrepancies to our correspondent, he supplied the following explanation, which may, or may not, be satisfactory to our readers:—

"With reference to my late uncle, Provost John Dick's age, I have for long thought that he was older than 79; because he used to tell me various things that necessarily proved he was older than that. Taking everything into consideration, I think he must have been born in 1780 or 1781; in fact he seems to have been 5 or 6 years older than 79, at the date of his death in 1865. This is the only reasonable way I can account for the discrepancy as to his age. Mr. Dick's memory was, up to the end, very clear; and, in the case of the Burns story, he always repeated the same statement; and, from what I knew of him, you may trust me that my uncle spoke according to knowledge and eyesight. What the Stirling town bells rang for on the day of Burns's visit, he could not say, but he remembered of them ringing, and of 'the maister' (Mr. M'Laurin) giving his pupils the play.

"As for Hector Macneill being the guest of Mr. Graham of Gartmore at the date of R. B.'s visit to Stirling, that fact does not prevent Macneill from being in Stirling on the day in question. Besides, Macneill was just the kind of man to go

much further than from Gartmore to Stirling to see such a man as Burns. Macneill was often in Stirling, and he was the intimate friend of Dr. David Doig."

On the morning following the first "Burns Supper" in Stirling, the poet continued his tour northwards. He must have been early astir as we find he indited a long epistle to his friend Gavin Hamilton before he left the City of the Rock. The letter is descriptive of his previous day's visit to Harvieston. It does not deal directly with our subject, but it was written in Stirling, and so may fittingly find a place in these pages.

Stirling, 28th Aug., 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,—Here am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile corses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance; richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c., but no harvest at all yet, except, in one or two places, an old wife's ridge. Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandering Devon's banks to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie; though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine, I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what such young folks as they, are now. Your brother [step-brother] is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make and particularly his manner resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word *still* to please Mrs. Hamilton). Good-sense, modesty, and at the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart might

adorn the breast of a Poet ! Grace has a good figure and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie ; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first ; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte, I cannot speak in common terms of admiration : she is not only beautiful, but lovely. Her form is elegant ; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree ; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our ride to the falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress :

—Her pure and elegant blood
Flow'd in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one would almost say her body thought.²²

Her eyes are fascinating ; at once expressive of good-sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations, the first Peer in the realm might own with pride ; then why but you keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks ? I had a thousand questions to answer about you all : I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John [Gavin's eldest son] was so good a boy and so fine a scholar, and that Willie was going on still very pretty ; but I have it in commission to tell her from them, that beauty is a poor, silly bauble, without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only, Lady M'Kenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore throat, somewhat marr'd our enjoyment. I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Doctor M'Kenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other. I am ever, Sir, yours most gratefully,

ROBT. BURNS.

Having finished the writing of his letter, and breakfasted with Captain Forrester, the poet and his friend continued on their way. The closing note in the Journal having reference to Stirlingshire, is—

“*Tuesday morning*—Breakfast with Captain Forrester—leave Stirling—Ochil Hills—Devon River—Forth and Teith—Allan river.”

The country he was passing through was celebrated at a later date in his Song. The Ochils and the Allan, the Devon and the Forth received verses in their honour. In connection with this last entry there is one point in which the poet seems to have been in error; it is his reference to the Devon river. It is difficult to understand how the poet could have seen the Devon from Stirling, and the explanation may be that he mistook one or other of the marvellous links of the Forth for the "crystal Devon, winding Devon."²³

Before closing our notes on Burns's stay in the town of Stirling, we may say that his visit supplies another legendary link in the chain which connects him with Freemasonry. There is a tradition that on the occasion of his stay in the City of the Rock, he visited his brethren of Stirling Ancient, 30, in lodge assembled, and according to custom, inscribed his name in the Attendance Register. As we were anxious to authenticate the incident if possible, or to refute it authoritatively, a communication was addressed to the secretary, inquiring whether any information could be obtained from the Attendance Register or other Books of the Lodge, which would settle the matter, and the reply, received verbally, was to the effect that no information could be given. That being so, we simply record the tradition, which is well-known in local Freemason circles, and which was communicated to us by several Freemasons. In addition to what has been stated regarding the poet's visit, the tradition also records that the page on which his autograph appeared was subsequently abstracted from the Register, and that at a later period the Register itself disappeared.

ROBERT BURNS'S SECOND VISIT TO
STIRLINGSHIRE: OCTOBER, 1787.



ON Sunday, 16th September, 1787, after an absence of some three weeks, the poet reached Edinburgh. There he remained for a short time, after which he set out again for the north. On this occasion, however, the extent of his journey was small, and he preserved no diary of his doings. There were three things that tempted him north: to revisit his friends at Harvieston, to visit Sir William Murray of Ochertyre, in Strathearn, and to make the acquaintance of Mr. John Ramsay, who resided a few miles north of Stirling, and whose residence was also called "Ochertyre." In addition to the making of these visits, there are several other things which mark his second journey. Of these may be mentioned—his visit to Carron Ironworks, and his smashing the glass containing the "Stirling Lines" on the window of Wingate's Inn at Stirling.

On his second visit Burns was accompanied by Dr. James M'Kittrick Adair,²⁴ whose acquaintance he had made a short time before. It is to this companion that we owe any information we have

regarding the tour. When Dr. Currie was engaged on his Work, he applied to Dr. Adair, who gave him the following account of their journeyings. He says—

“Burns and I left Edinburgh in August, 1787. We rode by Linlithgow and Carron, to Stirling. We visited the Ironworks at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that place and its inhabitants to the cave of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical reader, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling, the prospects from the Castle strongly interested him; in a former visit to which, his national feelings had been powerfully excited by the ruinous and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish parliaments had frequently been held. His indignation had vented itself in some imprudent, but not unpoetical lines, which had given much offence, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn on which they were written. At Stirling we met with a company of travellers from Edinburgh, among whom was a character in many respects congenial with that of Burns. This was Nicol, one of the teachers of the High-Grammar-School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation; the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow, characterized both. Jacobitical principles in politics were common to both of them; and these have been suspected, since the revolution of France, to have given place in each, to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no *memorabilia* of their conversation, either on this or on other occasions, when I happened to meet them together. Many songs were sung; which I mention for the sake of observing, that when Burns was called on in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with a tone and emphasis which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathetic. This he did on the present occasion.”

The date given by Dr. Adair, in his account of the second journey, appears to be incorrect. He wrote after a lapse of twelve years, and, as Chambers says, his memory must have played him false. The tour seems to belong to the month of October. The earlier journey was undertaken in August; the poet

and Nicol did not return from it till 16th September, so that the second journey could not possibly have been made at the time Dr. Adair gives.

As mentioned by his fellow-traveller, the poet was admitted to Carron Works. "The gates were opened with an apology for former rudeness, which mollified the bard." This detail is given by Allan Cunningham, and may be taken for what it is worth. In ignorance of the real cause of his former refusal, one cannot say that an apology for "rudeness" was either necessary or given, and there is no call for exalting the poet at the expense of the porter. Burns, his friend tells us, was forcibly struck with his inspection of the Works, and one remark of the poet has been preserved. He said—"The blazing furnaces and melting iron realized the description of the giants forging thunderbolts."

It is to be regretted that Burns did not preserve any record of this later tour. Whether or not, as on the former occasion, they halted at Falkirk, does not appear; neither is it stated in which Inn in Stirling they found accommodation. It is not improbable that it was Wingate's, and that for one of two reasons—either, that he proceeded there for the purpose of smashing the pane of glass containing the offensive Lines, or, that, finding himself in the Inn, and with the Lines confronting him, he deliberately did what he could to prevent their circulation. As to the actual destruction of the glass various stories are in existence.

The *Stirling Sentinel* of March 15, 1898, noticing a sale of Burns's MSS., including a copy of the "Stirling Lines," put the question—"We wonder what became of the pane of glass," and the following

week it contained this note :—“ In commenting last week upon the sale of Burns' MS. containing the lines which were first written on a window in the inn which is now the Golden Lion Hotel, we remarked that it would be interesting to know what became of the pane of glass. Our curiosity has since been satisfied by Mr. Adam Aikman, Cowane Street [Stirling], whose memory takes him back to the time when the facts were pretty generally known in the town. Burns, it seems, was challenged in the hotel by an officer from the Castle as to the authorship of the lines, and not wishing probably to get into an argument with a gallant soldier, he summarily closed the interview by putting his fist through the window.” The note merely chronicles local tradition, but is worth preserving.

Dr. Chambers, in his “Life and Works of Burns,” writes with regard to the smashing of the pane :—“ Burns, it is said, finding the minister of Gladsmuir's reproof below his Lines, dashed out the pane with the butt-end of his whip.” This note is what Henley and Henderson would call one of Chambers's “slices of gossip.” It is not repeated in William Wallace's edition.

It is worthy of note that less than two months had elapsed since they were inscribed on the window, and yet Dr. Adair writes that they had given much offence. Of course the times were unsettled, and the verses would appeal strongly to the adherents of Jacobitism, by whom they would be circulated as widely as possible. The poet did all he could to correct the mistake, but it was too late. What a broken pane failed to do was accomplished by travellers' note-

books, and the "Stirling Lines" remained to witness to his anger at the neglected state of the Parliament Hall. By one party alone were they forgotten—the War Department. And so they may be said to have failed in their mission.²⁵

"From Stirling," writes Dr. Adair, "we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon, to Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire." Here the poet was detained longer than he intended on account of a violent storm. Dr. Adair, in his narrative, gives the length of their stay as "about ten days," but Burns, in a letter written from Auchtertyre, and from internal evidence, apparently addressed to Mr. William Cruickshank, says—"I was storm-steaded two days at the foot of the Ochel (*sic*) Hills, with Mr. Tait of Harvieston and Mr. Johnson (*sic*) of Alva." Beyond this meagre reference, the bard gives us no information concerning his visit to Alva, and we are forced back upon local tradition for details.²⁶

The story of the poet's visit to Alva, as it has been preserved in oral tradition, is not without interest. It appears that during the time he was in the Hillfoots district he journeyed to Alva and remained over night. He visited Mr. Johnston, the first laird of Alva of that name, who was then the inhabitant of Alva House, and who, in earlier years, had fought at Plassey. It might be inferred from Burns's letter already quoted, that he was the guest of Mr. Johnston during his stay in Alva, but, locally, it is believed that this is not the case. The tradition is that he passed the night in Courthill House, which was at that time occupied as an inn by a person of the name of Hume.

The building, which is situated in Ochil Street, is now used as a dwelling-house, and on the occasion of our visit we found that the inhabitants were quite familiar with the story of the poet's stay, although they made no endeavour to impose upon credulity by pointing out the room or shewing the bed in which he had slept.

It would seem that Burns renewed the acquaintance of a Mauchline friend who was then resident in Alva. This was Betty Black. The information concerning her is somewhat scanty. Among the song-heroines of Burns there are two named "Betty"²⁷—Elizabeth Black and Elizabeth Miller—and for want of accurate information confusion of these persons has been the result.²⁸ Elizabeth Black, otherwise Mrs. Stewart, kept a public-house in the village. The building is situated in what is known as "The Middle-Bridge," and is still occupied as a public-house. Burns visited the place, and the room in which he sat—the apartment at the west end of the building—is still pointed out. Our informant stated that among those who met Burns on this occasion was his wife's grand-uncle, James Dawson. Dawson, who was precentor in the Parish Church was, of course, well-known in the village, and it is understood that "Lucky" (as Betty was familiarly called), thinking him a likely person to converse with the bard, sent for him. He, in company with another villager, named John Morrison, sat down at Lucky's table with the poet, and they had two gills—rather a moderate quantity—among them. Dawson in after years used to tell that Burns was very silent on the occasion, and did not seem to care whether he joined in the conver-

sation or not.²⁹ Our informant's father also recollected having seen the poet. He was a mere boy at the time and was playing with some companions in the Square when a man clad in grey clothes went past, and somebody remarked—"That's Robert Burns."

After their stay at Harvieston, the poet and Dr. Adair returned to Edinburgh by Kinross and Queensferry. A native of Stirling district—Thomas Morrison by name—claimed to have met Burns on the occasion of his crossing from Kinross to Queensferry. Morrison was employed in his early days at Kinross, and stated that he was in charge of the ferry-boat in which the poet crossed the Firth of Forth. This, of course, is mere tradition. So far as record goes, Stirlingshire saw the poet no more.

ROBERT BURNS AND DR. JOHN MOORE.

AMONG the many correspondents of Burns—some of them great men in their day, but nearly all of them living now in the shadow of his fame—was Dr. John Moore, a “Son of the Rock,” a *litterateur* of eminence, and father of the hero of Corunna. Dr. Moore was engaged in medical practice in London during his correspondence with Burns, and his interest in the bard was elicited through the kind offices of another of the poet’s admirers—Mrs. Dunlop.³⁰ It was in the end of 1786, when the bard was participating in the glories of the “Edinburgh period” of his life, that Mrs. Dunlop, in a letter to Dr. Moore, referred to the recently discovered Scottish poet, “and that cultured and kind-hearted man took an opportunity of pointing out to the Earl of Eglinton what a genius was now claiming the friendly patronage of all good Scotsmen.” Writing to Burns, under date December 30, 1786, Mrs. Dunlop, referring to her having mentioned his name to Moore, says—“I sent him a copy of your Poems as the most acceptable present I could make to that person whose taste I valued most and from whose friendship I have reaped most instruction as well as infinite pleasure. His literary knowledge, his

fame as an author, his activity in befriending that merit of which his own mind is formed to feel the full force—all led me to believe I could not do so kind a thing to Mr. Burns as by introducing him to Mr. Moore, whose keen passions must at once admire the poet, esteem the moralist, and wish to be useful to the author."

Dr. Moore was the son of a Presbyterian minister. In many volumes relating to Burns (from Chambers's "Life and Works" to Findlay's "Robert Burns and the Medical Profession") he is referred to as "the son of an *Episcopalian* minister," but this is a mistake. His father, the Reverend Charles Moore, was minister of the second charge in Stirling, and filled the pulpit which was occupied at a later date by Burns's "Black Russell." He was inducted in 1718, and continued to labour in Stirling till 1736. At Kilsyth, on 27th October, 1727, he was married to Marion Hay, daughter of John Anderson of Dowhill, Lord Provost of Glasgow.

John Moore, who was born at Stirling in 1729, was the eldest son of this union, and he was nearly sixty years of age at the time when Burns made his acquaintance. He received his early education at the High School of Glasgow, from which he passed to the University to study medicine. Brought under the notice of Colonel Campbell of the 54th Regiment, who subsequently became fifth Duke of Argyll, Moore was, while yet in his seventeenth year, introduced to the Hospitals in connection with the British Army in Flanders. Here he seems to have equipped himself with satisfaction to his superiors, as, one of his

biographers tells us, he was soon afterwards, on the recommendation of Dr. Middleton, Director-General of Military Hospitals, appointed by the Earl of Albemarle, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, to the office of Assistant-Surgeon to that regiment, then quartered in Flushing. He remained abroad till 1748. In that year, on the conclusion of peace, he returned to London, where for some time he was engaged in the further study of medicine. From London he proceeded to Paris, and while attending the Hospitals there, received an appointment as surgeon in the house of Lord Albemarle, who was at this time Ambassador at the French Court. At the end of two years Moore returned to Glasgow, where he entered into partnership with Dr. Gordon, a friend of earlier days. In 1772 he received his diploma as M.D. from Glasgow University, and six years later he removed to London. Here he devoted himself almost entirely to literary work.

In 1779, a year after his removal to the metropolis, he published "A View of Society and Manners in France;" and two years later he produced a similar work on Italy. In 1786 he issued a volume entitled "Medical Sketches." This work deals with some important topics relative to health and disease, and is written in a popular rather than a scientific style. In 1789, when he was nearly sixty years of age, Moore made his first appearance as a novelist with "Zeluco." This was followed in 1796 by "Edward," and in 1800 by "Mordaunt." He also issued in 1792 his "Journal during a Residence in France," and he edited an edition of Smollett's Works.

He had been in London for some years, and had made a considerable name for himself as a *litterateur*, before Burns was brought under his notice, and that the poet recognised him as a person of some eminence is apparent from his letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated 15th January, 1787. In that letter he writes thus :—

“I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you ; but though every day since I received yours of Dec. 30th, the idea, the wish to write to him, has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of ‘the sons of little men.’ To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant’s order, would be disgracing the little character I have ; and to write the author of ‘The View of Society and Manners’ a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write to him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.”

Two days after writing to Mrs. Dunlop, the Bard addressed himself to Dr. Moore. His letter was in the following terms :—

Edinburgh, 17th January, 1787.

SIR,—Mrs. Dunlop has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honor of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solitudes of authorship can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, sir, I receive with reverence ; only I am sorry they mostly came too late : a peccant passage or two that I would certainly have altered were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greatest part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities ; and as few, if any, writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted

with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had: and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear; where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttleton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

R. B.

This frank letter must have been received with satisfaction by Moore. Burns is "very willing to admit that he has some poetical abilities"; his highest ambition is to please his compeers—a peasant poet among a peasant people; he has seen life as others have not, and he rhymes of it in the Vernacular; he does not hope for fame as an English bard. If one reads this letter alongside a certain recent and somewhat famous essay, one will find that Burns anticipated part, at least, of Mr. Henley's criticism by a hundred and ten years!

To the poet's letter Dr. Moore sent the following reply:—

Clifford Street, January 23rd, 1787.

SIR,—I have just received your letter, by which I find I have reason to complain of my friend Mrs. Dunlop, for transmitting to you extracts from my letters to her, by much too freely and too carelessly written for your perusal. I must forgive her, however, in consideration of her good intention, as you will forgive me, I hope, for the freedom I use with certain expressions, in consideration of my admiration of the poems in general. If I may judge of the author's disposition from his works, with all the other good qualities of a poet, he has not the *irritable* temper ascribed to that race of men by one of their own number, whom you have the happiness to resemble in ease and *curious felicity* of expression. Indeed the poetical beauties, however original and brilliant, and lavishly scattered, are not all I admire in your works: the love of

your native country, that feeling sensibility to all the objects of humanity, and the independent spirit which breathes through the whole, give me a most favourable impression of the poet, and have made me often regret that I did not see the poems, the certain effect of which would have been my seeing the author, last summer, when I was longer in Scotland than I have been for many years.

I rejoice very sincerely at the encouragement you receive at Edinburgh, and I think you peculiarly fortunate in the patronage of Dr. Blair, who, I am informed, interests himself very much for you. I beg to be remembered to him; nobody can have a warmer regard for that gentleman than I have, which, independent of the worth of his character, would be kept alive by the memory of our common friend, the late Mr. George B[annatin]e.³¹

Before I received your letter, I sent, enclosed in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, a sonnet by Miss Williams, a young poetical lady, which she wrote on reading your 'Mountain Daisy;' perhaps it may not displease you:

While soon 'the garden's flaunting flowers' decay,
 And scatter'd on the earth neglected lie,
 Thy 'Mountain Daisy,' cherish'd by the ray
 A poet drew from heav'n, shall never die.

Ah, like that lonely flower, the poet rose!
 'Mid penury's bare soil and bitter gale;
 He felt each storm that on the mountain blows,
 Nor ever knew the shelter of the vale.

By genius in her native vigor nurst,
 On nature with impassion'd look he gazed;
 Then through the cloud of adverse fortune burst
 Indignant, and in light unborrow'd blazed.

SCOTIA! from rude affliction shield thy bard,
 His heav'n-taught numbers fame herself will guard.

I have been trying to add to the number of your subscribers, but find many of my acquaintance are already among them. I have only to add, that, with every sentiment of esteem, and the most cordial good wishes, I am, your obedient humble servant,

J. MOORE.

Thus began a correspondence which extended over years. Moore's appreciation of the bard was returned

in the poet's admiration of Moore, and time only intensified the interest each felt in the other. The lines by Miss Williams—"that crazy creature, Helen Maria Williams," if Mr. Henley's judgment is of any avail—show that the poet had at this early period (before the publication of the Edinburgh volume) admirers beyond the land of his birth, and that the Vernacular had even then its charm for the Southern ear. What strikes one in Miss Williams's sonnet—perhaps even more than its merit as poetry—are its truthfulness to actual facts regarding the bard, and its prophetic utterance as to his destiny.³² That Burns was pleased with the compliment conveyed in the lines is evidenced by his acknowledgement of it to Dr. Moore :—

Edinburgh, 15th February, 1787.

REVERED SIR,—Pardon my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast any thing higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me ; I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment : but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny ; but I see with frequent wringings of the heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honor Miss Williams has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her ; but the other day I got her poems, which for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure.

I have little pretensions to critic lore ; there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry—the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous *sombre* tenderness of “time settled sorrow.”

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

R. B.

To this further declaration of the poet's position with regard to the muses and men, Dr. Moore replied as follows :

Clifford Street, 28th February, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 15th gave me a great deal of pleasure. It is not surprising that you improve in correctness and taste, considering where you have been for some time past. And I dare swear there is no danger of your admitting any polish which might weaken the vigour of your native powers.

I am glad to perceive that you disdain the nauseous affectation of decrying your own merit as a poet, an affectation which is displayed with most ostentation by those who have the greatest share of self-conceit, and which only adds undeceiving falsehood to disgusting vanity. For you to deny the merit of your poems would be arraigning the fixed opinion of the public.

As the new edition of my *View of Society* is not yet ready, I have sent you the former edition, which I beg you will accept as a small mark of my esteem. It is sent by sea to the care of Mr. Creech, and, along with these four volumes for yourself, I have also sent my *Medical Sketches*, in one volume, for my friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop: this you will be so obliging as to transmit, or if you chance to pass soon by Dunlop, to give to her.

I am happy to hear that your subscription is so ample, and shall rejoice at every piece of good fortune that befalls you. For you are a very great favourite in my family; and this is a higher compliment than perhaps you are aware of. It includes almost all the professions, and of course is a proof that your writings are adapted to various tastes and situations. My youngest son, who is at Winchester School, writes to me that he is translating some stanzas of your “Halloween” into Latin verse, for the benefit of his comrades. This union of taste partly proceeds, no doubt, from the cement of Scottish partiality; with which they are all somewhat tinctured. Even *your translator*, who left Scotland too early in life for recollection, is not without it. I remain, with great sincerity, Your obedient servant,

J. MOORE.

Dr. Moore's appreciation of the poet seems to have been so pronounced in his correspondence with Mrs. Dunlop as to give that lady the idea that Burns would be drawn to join the literary circles of London. Under date February 26th, 1787, we find Mrs. Dunlop writing "I am afraid my friend Mr. Moore will rob us of you altogether by persuading you to go to London."

The poet's Edinburgh volume was published on the 21st April, and two days later, after a lapse of nearly two months (a much longer time than might have been expected), he acknowledged receipt of Dr. Moore's volumes :

Edinburgh, 23d April, 1787.

I received the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill-skilled in beating the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, sir, for the honor you have done me ; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book is what I have in common with the world ; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem, is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight, and, after a few pilgrimages over the classic ground of Caledonia, *Cowden Knowes*, *Banks of Yarrow*, *Tweed*, &c., I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer ; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetic compliment in kind.

ROBT. BURNS.

Shortly after receiving this epistle, the Edinburgh

volume (to which Moore had been a subscriber) came to hand, and the Doctor's reply to the bard partakes chiefly of a criticism on the newly-published work.

Clifford-Street, May 23d, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure of your letter by Mr. Creech, and soon after he sent me the new edition of your *Poems*. You seem to think it incumbent on you to send to each subscriber a number of copies proportionate to his subscription money, but you may depend upon it, few subscribers expect more than one copy, whatever they subscribed; I must inform you, however, that I took twelve copies for those subscribers, for whose money you were so accurate as to send me a receipt, and Lord Eglintoun told me he had sent for six copies for himself, as he wished to give five of them in presents.

Some of the poems you have added in this last edition are very beautiful, particularly, the "Winter Night," the "Address to Edinburgh," "Green grow the Rashes," and the two songs immediately following; the latter of which is exquisite. By the way, I imagine you have a peculiar talent for such compositions, which you ought to indulge. No kind of poetry demands more delicacy or higher polishing. Horace is more admired on account of his Odes than all his other writings. But nothing now added is equal to your "Vision" and "Cotter's Saturday Night." In these are united fine imagery, natural and pathetic description, with sublimity of language and thought. It is evident that you already possess a great variety of expression and command of the English language, you ought, therefore, to deal more sparingly, for the future, in the provincial dialect—why should you, by using *that*, limit the number of your admirers to those who understand the Scottish, when you can extend it to all persons of taste who understand the English language? In my opinion, you should plan some larger work than any you have as yet attempted. I mean, reflect upon some proper subject, and arrange the plan in your mind, without beginning to execute any part of it till you have studied most of the best English poets, and read a little more of history. The Greek and Roman stories you can read in some abridgement, and soon become master of the most brilliant facts, which must highly delight a poetical mind. You *should* also, and very soon *may*, become master of the heathen mythology, to which there are everlasting allusions in all the poets, and which in itself is charmingly fanciful. What will require to be studied with more attention, is

modern history : that is, the history of France and Great Britain, from the beginning of Henry the Seventh's reign. I know very well you have a mind capable of attaining knowledge by a shorter process than is commonly used, and I am certain you are capable of making a better use of it, when attained, than is generally done.

I beg you will not give yourself the trouble of writing to me when it is *inconvenient*, and make no apology when you do write for having postponed it—be assured of this, however, that I shall always be happy to hear from you. I think my friend, Mr. —, told me that you had some poems in manuscript by you, of a satirical and humorous nature (in which, by the way, I think you very strong) which your prudent friends prevailed on you to omit, particularly one called “Somebody's Confession;”³³ if you will intrust me with a sight of any of these, I will pawn my word to give no copies, and will be obliged to you for a perusal of them.

I understand you intend to take a farm, and make the useful and respectable business of husbandry your chief occupation : this, I hope, will not prevent you making occasional addresses to the nine ladies who have shewn you such favour, one of whom visited you in the “auld clay biggin.” Virgil, before you, proved to the world that there is nothing in the business of husbandry inimical to poetry ; and I sincerely hope that you may afford an example of a good poet being a successful farmer. I fear it will not be in my power to visit Scotland this season ; when I do, I shall endeavour to find you out, for I heartily wish to see and converse with you. If ever your occasions call you to this place, I make no doubt of your paying me a visit, and you may depend on a very cordial welcome from this family. I am, Dear Sir, Your friend and obedient servant,

J. MOORE.

This letter with its criticism, and advice, and manifest interest in the bard's success, alike as a farmer and a poet, would seem to have strengthened the regard in which Burns held the friendship of his correspondent, and when next the poet took up his pen to write to him, it was to indite that long epistle which has since been regarded as his autobiography. It was written in August, 1787, during the poet's

short stay at Mossgiel, after his Border and first Highland tour. Writing to Mrs. Dunlop, he says—

“I have a long letter to Dr. Moore just ready to put into the Post Office. It is on a subject you have done me the honour to interest yourself in, so if you dare face twenty pages of an epistle, a reading of it is at your service. . . . I have no copy of Dr. Moore’s letter, I mean the one I send him, so this you read must go to post. If you can contrive no better way, I shall call for it myself to-morrow; as I am going for Edinburgh by way of Paisley and Glasgow to-morrow morning.”

The letter, which was duly received and perused by Mrs. Dunlop, is as follows :

SIR,—For some time past I have been rambling over the country, partly on account of some little business I have to settle in various places; but of late I have been confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of *ennui* I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself.

My name has made a small noise in the country; you have done me the honor to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be at the expense of frequently being laugh’d at; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of WISDOM, I sometimes think I resemble,—I have, I say, like him, “turned my eyes to behold madness and folly,” and like him, too frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. In the very polite letter Miss Williams did me the honor to write me, she tells me you have got a complaint in your eyes. I pray God it may be removed; for, considering that lady and you are my common friends, you will probably employ her to read this letter; and then good-night to that esteem with which she was pleased to honor the Scotch Bard!

After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some very twitching qualms of conscience, that, perhaps, he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to what the pye-coated guardians of Escutcheons call, a Gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted at the Herald's Office; and, looking thro' the granary of honors, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

— My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels since the flood.

Gules, purple, argent, &c., quite disowned me. My forefathers rented land of the famous, noble Keiths of Marshal, and had the honor to share their fate. I do not use the word "honor," with any reference to political principles; *loyal* and *disloyal* I take to be merely relative terms in that ancient and formidable court known in this country by the name of "club-law." Those who dare welcome Ruin, and shake hands with Infamy, for what they believe sincerely to be the cause of their God or their King are—as Mark Antony in *Shakespear* says of Brutus and Cassius, "honorable men." I mention this circumstance because it threw my Father on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my pretensions to Wisdom. I have met with few who understood Men, their manners and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly Integrity, and headlong, ungovernable Irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son.

For the first six or seven years of my life, my Father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had my Father continued in that situation, I must have marched off to have been one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous Master, he ventured on a small farm in that gentleman's estate. At these years I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy *something* in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot-piety. I say "*idiot-piety*," because I was then but a child. Though I cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and against the years of ten or eleven, I was absolutely a critic in substantives, verbs and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old maid of my mother's, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity and superstition.

She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country, of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cant-raips, enchanted towers, giants, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of Poesy; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical in these matters than I, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest thing of composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning,—“How are thy servants blest, O Lord!” I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear :

For though in dreadful whirls we hung,
High on the broken wave.

I met with these pieces in Mason's *English Collection*, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read again, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough that I might be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice in my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical Divinity about this time was putting the country half-mad, and I, ambitious of shining on Sundays between sermons, in conversation parties, at funerals, etc., in a few years more, used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and-cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of great advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modification of spited pride, like our Catechism's definition of Infinitude, was “without bounds or limits.” I formed many connections with other youngsters who possessed superior advantages,—the youngling actors who were busy with the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on that stage, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at these green years that the young Noblesse and Gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the

young Great Man that proper, decent, unnoticed disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who perhaps were born in the same Village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the "Munny Begum's" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they dropped off for East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My Father's generous Master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a Factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "Twa Dogs." My Father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children; and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labor. My Father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these, we retrenched expenses. We lived very poorly. I was a dexterous ploughman for my years, and the next eldest to me was a brother, who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at [the recollection of] the threatening, insolent epistles from the Scoundrel Tyrant, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave—brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, who just counted an autumn less. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scotch idiom—she was a "bonie, sweet, sonsie, lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into a certain delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and bookworm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our chiefest pleasure here below. How she caught the contagion I can't say; you medical folks talk much of infection by breathing the same air, the touch, etc., but I never expressly told her that I loved her. Indeed, I did not well know myself why I liked so

much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rantann, when I looked and fingered over her hand to pick out the nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualifications, she sung sweetly; and 'twas her favourite Scotch reel that I attempted to give an embodied vehicle to in rhyme. I was not so presumptive as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting smearing sheep and casting peats (his father living in the moors), he had no more scholar-craft than I had. Thus with me began love and poesy, which at times have been my only, and, till within this last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment.

My Father struggled on till he reached a freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain was such as to throw a little ready money in his hand at the commencement, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a lawsuit between him and his landlord commencing, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my Father was just saved from absorption in a jail, by a phthical consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and snatched him away to "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

It is during this climacteric that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward being in the parish. No *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. My knowledge of ancient story was gathered from Guthrie's and Salmon's *Geographical Grammar*; my knowledge of modern manners, and of literature and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakespear, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, *The Pantheon*, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, Justice's *British Gardener*, Boyle Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Doctor Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, a *Select Collection of English Songs*, and Hervey's *Meditations*, had been the extent of my reading. The *Collection of Songs* was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by

verse—carefully noting the tender or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe much to this for my critic-craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My Father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands. My Father, as I said before, was the sport of strong passions; from that instance of rebellion, he took a kind of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of that dissipation which marked my future years. I say dissipation, comparative with the strictness and sobriety of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue never failed to point me out the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was never to have an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my Father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two doors by which I could enter the fields of fortune were—the most niggardly economy, or the little chicaning art of bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it; the last, I always hated the contamination of its threshold! Thus abandoned of view or aim in life, with a strong appetite for sociability (as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark), and a constitutional hypocondriac taint which made me fly solitude: add to all these incentives to social life—my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense, made me generally a welcome guest. So 'tis no great wonder that always “where two or three were met together, there was I in the midst of them.” But beyond all the other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some Goddess or other; and, like every other warfare in this world, I was sometimes crowned with success, and sometimes mortified with defeat. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and set want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for any labors than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evening in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on an amour without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity in these matters which recommended me as a proper second in duels of that kind; and I dare say I felt as much

pleasure at being in the secret of half the amours in the parish, as ever did Premier at knowing the intrigues of half the Courts of Europe.

The very goose-feather in my hand seems instinctively to know the well-worn part of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song, and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the amours of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious part of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made very considerable alterations on my mind and manners was—I spent my seventeenth summer a good distance from home, at a noted school on a smuggling coast, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at this time very successful: scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were as yet new to me, and I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to look unconcernedly on a large tavern-bill, and mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand in my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom: a charming *Fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off in a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping out to the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, I met with my angel—

Like Proserpine, gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.—

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet with her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, I was innocent.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works. I had seen mankind in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own

letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same tenor till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favourites.

Poesy was still a darling walk of my mind, but 'twas only the humour of the hour. I had usually half-a-dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed it as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once they were lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except "Winter, a Dirge" (the eldest of my printed pieces), "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie," "John Barleycorn," and Songs first, and second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important æra. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined with a flax-dresser in a neighbouring country town, to learn his trade, and carry on the business of manufacturing and retailing flax. This turned out a sadly unlucky affair. My partner was a scoundrel of the first water, who made money by the mystery of Thieving, and to finish the whole, while we were giving a welcome carousal to the New Year, our shop, by the drunken carelessness of my partner's wife, took fire, and burned to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth sixpence. I was obliged to give up business; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my Father's head; the darkest of which was—he was visibly far gone in a consumption. To crown all, a *belle fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the fields of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my hypochondriac complaint being irritated to such a degree, that for three months I was in a diseased state of body and mind, scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have just got their sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed! &c."

From this adventure I learned something of a Town life ; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn was—I formed a bosom friendship with a young fellow,³⁴ the *first* created being I had ever seen, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a plain mechanic ; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view to bettering his situation in life. The patron dying, and leaving my friend unprovided for, just as he was ready to launch forth into the world, the poor fellow, in despair, went to sea ; where, after a variety of good and bad fortune, he was, a little before I was acquainted with him, set a-shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stript of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this moment Captain of a large West Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

This gentleman's mind was fraught with courage, independence, and magnanimity, and every noble, manly virtue. I loved him ; I admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and I strove to imitate him. I in some measure succeeded ; I had the pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself when Woman was the presiding star ; but he spoke of a certain fashionable failing with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough I wrote the enclosed "Welcome."

My reading was only increased by two stray volumes of *Pamela*, and one of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces which are in print, I had given up ; but meeting with Fergusson's *Scotch Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding, rustic lyre with emulating vigour. When my Father died, his all went among the rapacious hell-hounds that growl in the Kennel of Justice ; but we made a shift to scrape a little money in the family amongst us, with which (to keep us together) my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness ; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution "Come, go to, I will be wise !" I read farming books, I calculated crops ; I attended markets ; and in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man ; but the first year, from unfortunately buying in bad seed ; the second, from a late harvest, we lost

half of both our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two Reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis persone* in my "Holy Fair." I had an idea myself that the piece had some merits; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of these things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain side of both clergy and laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held three several meetings to look over their holy artillery, if any of it was pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my idle wanderings led me on another side, point-blank, within reach of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story alluded to in my printed poem, "The Lament." 'Twas a shocking affair, which I cannot yet bear to recollect, and it had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning, of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; as in truth it was only nominally mine (for stock I had none to embark in it), and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. Before leaving my native country, however, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as in my power; I thought they had merit; and 'twas a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even tho' it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps gone to the world of spirits, a victim to that inhospitable clime. I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and my works as I have at this moment. It was ever my opinion that the great, unhappy mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance or mistaken notions of themselves. To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself, alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design, where she seemed to have intended the various *lights* and *shades* in my character. I was pretty sure my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of Censure, and the novelty of

West Indian scenes would make me forget Neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; besides pocketing (all expenses deducted) near twenty pounds. This last came very seasonably, as I was about to indent myself, for want of money to pay my freight. So soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the Torrid Zone, I bespoke a passage in the very first Ship that was to sail, for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

I had for some time been skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised ungrateful people had uncoupled the merciless legal pack at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed a song, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," which was to be the last effort of my muse in Caledonia, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by rousing my poetic ambition. The Doctor belonged to a class of critics for whose applause I had not even dared to hope. His idea, that I would meet with every encouragement for a second edition, fired me so much that away I posted for Edinburgh, without a single acquaintance in town, or a single letter of recommendation in my pocket. The baneful star that had so long presided in my Zenith, for once made a revolution to the Nadir; and the providential care of a good God placed me under the patronage of one of his noblest creatures, the Earl of Glencairn. "*Oubliez moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie!*"

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them were new to me, and I was all attention to "catch the manners living as they rise."

You can now, Sir, form a pretty near guess of what sort of Wight he is, whom for some time you have honored with your correspondence. That Whim and Fancy, keen sensibility and riotous passions, may still make him zig-zag in his future path of life, is very probable; but, come what will, I shall answer for him—the most determinate integrity and honor [shall ever characterise him]; and though his evil star should again blaze in his meridian with ten-fold more direful influence, he may reluctantly tax friendship with pity, but no more.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. The very elegant and friendly letter she honored me with a few days ago, I cannot answer at present, as my presence is required at Edinburgh for a week or so, and I set off to-morrow.

I enclose you "Holy Willie" for the sake of giving you a little further information of the affair than Mr Creech could do. An Elegy I composed the other day on Sir James H. Blair, if time allow, I will transcribe. The merit is just mediocre.

If you will oblige me so highly and do me so much honour as now and then to drop me a line, please direct to me at Mauchline, Ayrshire. With the most grateful respect, I have the honour to be, Sir, your very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

Mauchline, 2nd August, 1787.

Dr. Moore did not receive this autobiographical letter for some considerable time. After the tour in the north, the poet returned to Edinburgh, and the following epistle explains the delay :

Edinburgh, 23rd September.

SIR,—The foregoing letter was unluckily forgot among other papers at Glasgow on my way to Edinburgh. Soon after I came to Edinburgh I went on a tour through the Highlands, and did not recover the letter till my return to town, which was the other day. My ideas, picked up in my pilgrimage, and some rhymes of my earlier years, I shall soon be at leisure to give you at large—so soon as I hear from you whether you are in London. I am, again, Sir, yours most gratefully,

R. BURNS.

To the autobiographical letter of the poet Dr. Moore replied as follows :—

Clifford St., 8th Nov., 1787.

DEAR SIR,—At the time your very interesting letter came to my hands I was involved in a business that gave me a great deal of trouble. This, with the rumour of war which then prevailed, and the efforts I was obliged to make to get my son the Lieut.³⁶ in the Navy placed in a proper situation, prevented my answering you immediately. I now assure you that the account you give of yourself and the admirable manner in which

You run it through even from your boyish days
To the very moment that you kindly tell it,

afforded me much pleasure.

Your moving accident in the harvest field
 With her whose voice thrilled *like th' Æolian Harp*,
 Your hairbreadth 'scapes in *th' imminent deadly breach*,
 The process raised by holy cannibals
 Who such devour as follow Nature's law,
 Your wild and headstrong rage for matrimony,
 Your redemption thence, whereof by parcels
 I had something heard but not distinctively—

all were highly interesting to me, and augment the advantageous opinion I had formed of you on seeing your first publication.

In your letter you hint at your scarcity of English. I am far from thinking that this is the case. On the contrary I am convinced you already possess that language in an uncommon degree, and with a little attention you will become entirely master of it. In several of your poems there is a striking richness and variety of expression—for which reason I hope you will use it in most of your future productions. If there actually existed a language called the Scotch language, which had a grammar, and which was used by the best writers of Scotland, I should perhaps prefer it to the English. But unfortunately there is no such thing. The Scotch is as provincial a dialect of the English as the Somersetshire or Yorkshire. And therefore no serious work can be written in it to advantage, altho' it must be owned in works of humour and *naïveté* it sometimes gives additional force and beauty. Some of your humorous poems have gained by it, and it gives a fresh charm to the beautiful simplicity of some of your songs.

I hope you will plan out some work of importance and suitable to your genius, which you will polish at your leisure and in the returns of fancy, and do not waste your fire on incidental subjects or the effusions of gratitude on receiving small marks of attention from the great or small vulgar.

I heard you was at one great castle in the W. Highlands.³⁶ Whatever the place might, I can hardly suspect the inhabitants would inspire you with much to admire. Their minds are prosaic and grovelling; the Muses have no charm in the eyes of either; tho' one is a person of much mildness of character and integrity.

I will be much obliged to you when you have leisure to fulfil your promise of sending me *the ideas you have picked up in your pilgrimage thro' the Highlands and your early rhimes*.

I think you should employ your leisure in collecting and polishing a sufficient number to form another volume, but the principal part should

be new, and for this I would have you to reflect very attentively to choose right subjects ; for much depends on this. You have greatly distinguished yourself from common rhymers by drawing your imagery directly from Nature, and avoiding hackneyed phrases and borrowed allusions. This you will always have pride and good sense to continue. With the reputation you have justly acquired I make no doubt of your being able to get a considerable sum for a second volume, whether you publish by subscription, or sell the copy at once to a bookseller. I shall be most ready to afford you my best assistance and advice on that or any other occasion in which I may have it in my power to be of use to you. But you must consider now that you have a reputation to lose, and therefore you will certainly not be rash in offering any new work to the public till it has lain a considerable time by you, and been often subjected to consideration. If you think of any particular subject, I wish you would let me know. I'll freely give you my opinion, which you will afterwards follow or not as you please ; in neither case will you in the smallest degree disoblige me.

Perhaps you may come to London with your new work. If you do, I will be happy to see you, and all my family are in the same way of thinking. Adieu, my dear Burns,—Believe me, with much regard, your friend and servt.

J. MOORE.

Direct under cover to Major J. Moore, M.P.,
Clifford St., Burlington Gardens, London.

At Miss Williams's desire I send you a copy of some lines I wrote to her lately when she was at Southampton. She said she wished to send you her picture drawn by me. The truth, however, is they are all exaggeration, for she is remarkably pretty ; but on her being a little out of humour at my laughing at her nose, and chin, and stooping, which she expressed in a letter, I wrote in answer, the enclosed.

I confess I have said—but pray do not pout—
That your chin is too fond of yr aquiline snout,
Like the world dispos'd from inferiours to fly,
It always looks up to the features on high.
That I said of your back, and I still must say so,
It resembles the back of an Indian canoe :
What was strait as an arrow, you've bent like a bow.
I must own too I hinted your waddling walk
Was much like a parrot's—and sometimes yr talk.

Yet these observations as plainly you'll view,
Tho' they glance at your person, don't touch upon *you* ;
For *you* never can think—you're too much refined—
That your body is *you*—you's entirely your mind.
And when yr sweet genius so gracefully flows,
In melodious verse or poetical prose,
Who thinks of your chin or the turn of yr toes?
For you, my dear Helen, have proved by your works
That women have souls, in the teeth of the Turks.
Your person and face in the hands of those
Who think upon nought but the care of their bodies
It is true would be ranked for beauty and air
In a pretty high class of the graceful and fair,
And would doubtless attract from the thoughtless and gay
A more pointed regard to yr fabrick of clay,
But all those you will treat with scorn eternal
Who sigh for the shell and taste not the kernel.

If the poet fulfilled his promise and sent his correspondent some of the ideas picked up in his pilgrimage, and some rhymes of his earlier years, the letter containing or sending these is missing. There is a lapse of fully fifteen months before we find the Bard again addressing Dr. Moore, and his epistle contains no reference to the promise. In this letter, written early in January, 1789, he chronicles news as far back as the previous April, so that in the period between 8th November, 1787, and April, 1788, there may be a link in the chain of correspondence which up to the present has not been recovered. By the time Burns wrote this letter the Edinburgh period of his life was past, and he was settled at Ellisland.

ELLISLAND, near Dumfries, 4th Jan., 1789.

SIR,—As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary-sized statue offering at a conversation with the

Rhodian Colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarries somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have at last got some business with you, and business letters are written by the style-book. I say my business is with you, Sir, for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late *éclat* was owing to the singularity of my situation and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the muses' trade is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;"—but I as firmly believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least, I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses, in a good measure, the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend—not only of abilities to judge, but with good-nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic diseases—heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I inclose you an essay of mine in a walk of poesy to me entirely new: I mean the epistle addressed to R. G., Esq., or Robert Graham, of Fintry, Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of Mr. Creech's ingenuous, fair dealing to me. He kept me hanging about Edinburgh from 7th August, 1787, until the 13th April, 1788, before he would condescend to give me a statement of affairs; nor had I got it even then but for an angry letter I wrote him, which irritated his pride. "I could" not a "tale" but a detail "unfold," but what am I that I should speak against the Lord's anointed Bailie of Edinburgh?

I believe I shall, in whole, £100 copy-right included, clear about £400 some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentleman has yet to settle with me. I give you this information, because you did me the honor to interest yourself much in my welfare. I give you this information, but I give it to yourself only, for I am still much in the gentleman's mercy. Perhaps I injure the man in the idea I am sometimes tempted to have of him—God forbid I should! A little time will try, for in a month I shall go to town to wind up the business if possible.

To give the rest of my story in brief: I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm: with the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied; with the last, it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who supports my aged mother, another still younger brother and three sisters in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh, it cost me about £180 to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much—I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part: I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*. There is still one thing would make my circumstances quite easy: I have an excise officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the commissioners of excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a Treasury warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, etc.

Thus, secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet poetry, delightful maid," I would consecrate my future days.

R. B.

Dr. Moore does not appear to have replied to this communication by the time a circumstance arose which led to the poet writing him again. The circumstance came about in this way. The Rev. Edward Neilson had been presented by the Duke of Queensberry to the Parish of Kirkbean in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, but the Duke left Scotland without sending "the presentation"—the legal document em-

powering a Presbytery to ordain a minister—to the presentee. Mr. Neilson went to Paris in search of the Duke but failed to find him, and ultimately the matter was arranged by the Presbytery of Dumfries accepting as sufficient a document signed by the factor on the Queensberry estate. By the hands of Mr. Neilson the bard sent the following communication to Dr Moore :

Ellisland, 23d March, 1789.

SIR,—The gentleman who will deliver this is a Mr. Neilson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourhood and a very particular acquaintance of mine. As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness, to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him:—Mr. Neilson is on his way to France, to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him, and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, etc., for him, when he has crossed the Channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honor of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character gives you much pleasure, that I am persuaded in soliciting your goodness in this business I am gratifying your feelings with a degree of enjoyment.

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. Oswald of Auchencruive. You probably knew her personally, an honor of which I cannot boast ; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath she was much less blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Whigham's, in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labors of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels

the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald, and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest moors and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say that when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the inclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately and settled finally with Mr. Creech ; and I must own that, at last, he has been amicable and fair with me.

R. B.

From the recently published *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop* by Mr. William Wallace, much that is interesting is gathered concerning the proposal that Burns should endeavour to procure a professorship in Edinburgh. Through the munificence of Mr. William Johnstone Pulteney, a sum of £1250 was presented to Edinburgh University for the endowment of a Chair of Agriculture. Mrs. Dunlop and Dr. Moore entered into hearty co-operation on behalf of the bard, and were the means of having his name brought under the notice of the patron. Moore's action in the matter, however, appears to have been entirely out-with the poet's knowledge *so far as Moore knew* as there is no reference to the Chair in any of his letters to the bard. It is in the correspondence of Burns and Mrs. Dunlop that the story is told, and it is in that correspondence that reference is made to the endeavours of Dr. Moore. Notwithstanding the action of his friends, Burns seems to have entertained little or no idea of ever becoming a Professor of Agriculture, and in his letter to Mrs. Dunlop, dated July 8, 1789, which closes the correspondence on the subject, he writes :—

“As I have no romantic notions of independency of spirit, I am

truly obliged to you and Dr. Moore for mentioning me to Mr. Pulteney . . . The Professorship is, I know, to me an unattainable object, but Mr. Pulteney's character stands high as a Patron of merit, and of this, had I no other proof, you have made me believe that I have some share."

To the poet's epistle of 23rd March, and earlier letters, Moore replied as follows:—

CLIFFORD STREET, 10th June, 1789.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the different communications you have made me of your occasional productions in manuscript, all of which have merit, and some of them merit of a different kind from what appears in the poems you have published. You ought carefully to preserve all your occasional productions, to correct and improve them at your leisure; and when you can select as many of these as will make a volume, publish it either at Edinburgh or London, by subscription: on such an occasion it may be in my power, as it is very much in my inclination, to be of service to you.

If I were to offer an opinion, it would be that in your future productions you should abandon the Scottish stanza and dialect and adopt the measure and language of modern English poetry.

The stanza which you use in imitation of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," with the tiresome repetition of "that day," is fatiguing to English ears, and, I should think, not very agreeable to Scottish.

All the fine satire and humour of your "Holy Fair" is lost on the English; yet, without more trouble to yourself, you could have conveyed the whole to them. The same is true of some of your other poems. In your "Epistle to J. Smith," the stanzas from that beginning with this line, "This life, sae far's I understand," to that which ends with "Short while it grieves," are easy, flowing, gaily philosophical, and of Horatian elegance—the language is English, with a *few* Scottish words, and some of those so harmonious as to add to the beauty; for what poet would not prefer *glaming* to *twilight*?

I imagine that, by carefully keeping and occasionally polishing and correcting those verses which the Muse dictates, you will, within a year or two, have another volume as large as the first ready for the press; and this without diverting you from every proper attention to the study and practice of husbandry, in which, I understand, you are very learned, and which, I fancy, you will chuse to adhere to as a wife, while poetry amuses you from time to time as a mistress. The former, like a prudent

wife, must not show ill-humour, although you retain a sneaking kindness to this agreeable gipsy and pay her occasional visits, which in no manner alienates your heart from your lawful spouse, but tends, on the contrary, to promote her interest.

I desired Mr. Caddell to write to Mr. Creech to send you a copy of *Zeluco*. This performance has had great success here; but I shall be glad to have your opinion of it, because I value your opinion and because I know you are above saying what you do not think.

I beg you will offer my best wishes to my very good friend, Mrs. Hamilton, who, I understand, is your neighbour. If she is as happy as I wish her, she is happy enough. Make my compliments also to Mrs. Burns, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, Dear Sir, Yours,

J. MOORE.

Burns duly received *Zeluco*, and subsequent correspondence shews that he intended to give the author his opinion, but so far as his published letters go, his opinion was never given. Writing to Mrs. Dunlop under date 6th September, 1789, he says:

“I have been very busy with *Zeluco*. The doctor is so obliging as to request my opinion of it; and I have been revolving in my mind some kind of criticism on novel-writing, but it is a depth beyond my research. I shall, however, digest my thoughts on the subject as well as I can. *Zeluco* is a most sterling performance.”

Mrs. Dunlop, writing to the poet on 7th January, 1790, says—

“I have just got a letter from Mr. Moore. . . . He begs I would write, and wishes much to hear from you, and to have your particular sentiments of *Zeluco*.”

Nearly a year elapsed ere the bard wrote Moore acknowledging receipt of the book, and then he refers to an opinion which is to be forthcoming on some future occasion. He writes thus:

DUMFRIES, EXCISE OFFICE, 14th July, 1790.

SIR,—Coming into town this morning to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you,

as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can, but let my letter be as stupid as , as miscellaneous as a news-paper, as short as a hungry grace-before-meat or as long as a law-paper in the Douglas cause ; as illspelt as country John's billet-doux or as unsightly a scrawl as Betty Byre-mucker's answer to it, I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it ; and as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, *Zeluco*. In fact, you are in some degree blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me that nothing less would serve my overweening fancy than a formal criticism on the book. I fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel-writers. This, I own, betrays my ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear ; but I am fond of the spirit young Elihu shews in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion." I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pencil and marking with asterisks, parentheses, etc., wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkably well-turned period or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I shall hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative view," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are. I have just received from my gentleman that horrid summons in the book of Revelation—"that time shall be no more."

The little collection of sonnets have some charming poetry in them. If *indeed* I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgements and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of the pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feelings as an author, doing as I would be done by.

R. B.

Early in the following year Burns again addressed Moore, sending him some of his most recent poems for criticism.

ELLISLAND, near Dumfries, 28th Feb., 1791.

I do not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*. If you are, the inclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof-sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view : it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard ; and also of shewing you that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.

The "Elegy on Captain Henderson" is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics ; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical ; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living : and as a very orthodox text, I forget where, in Scripture, says "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin," so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly-beloved friend or still more dearly-beloved mistress who is gone to the land of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with Percy's *Reliques of English Poetry*. By the way, how much is every honest heart which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice obliged to you for your glorious story of *Buchanan and Targe* ! 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving "Targe" the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not. What a rocky-hearted perfidious succubus was that Queen Elizabeth ! Judas Iscariot was a sad dog to be sure, but still his demerits sink to insignificance compared with the doings of the infernal Bess Tudor. Judas did not know, at least was by no means sure, what and who that Master was : his turpitude was simply betraying a worthy man who had ever been a good Master to him, a degree of turpitude which has ever been undone by many of his kind since. Iscariot, poor wretch, was a man of nothing at all per annum, and by consequence, thirty pieces of silver was a very serious temptation to *him*. But, to give but one instance, the Duke of

Queensberry, the other day, just played the same trick to *his* kind master, tho' his Grace is a man of thirty thousand a-year and come to that imbecile period of life when no temptation but avarice can be supposed to affect him.

I have just read over, once more of many times, your *Zeluco*. I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one, or two I think, which, with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe those marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson, indeed, might perhaps be excepted; but, unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of some other world; and, however they may captivate the inexperienced, romantic fancy of a boy or girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper years.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn, the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul and was entwined with the thread of my existence, so soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day) my getting forward in the Excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much by the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors this is one of the best—*Better to be the head o' the commonalty than the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject which, however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honor to be, Yours, etc.,

R. B.

The "short poem" inscribed "on the other page" consisted of the lines to Miss Cruikshank beginning, "Beauteous Rose-bud, young and gay."

In his reply Moore entered into criticism on the poems which had been sent him, and also chided the poet for his apparent carelessness of his effusions in scattering copies of them among his friends. He wrote thus:—

London, 29th March, 1791.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter of the 28th of February I received only two days ago, and this day I had the pleasure of waiting on the Rev. Mr. Baird at the Duke of Athole's, who had been so obliging as to transmit it to me, with the printed verses on *Alloway Church*, the *Elegy on Capt. Henderson*, and the *Epitaph*. There are many poetical beauties in the former: what I particularly admire are the three striking similes from

"Or like the snow-falls in the river,"

and the eight lines which begin with

"By this time he was cross the ford,"

so exquisitely expressive of the superstitious impressions of the country. And the twenty-two lines from

"Coffins stood round like open presses,"

which, in my opinion, are equal to the ingredients of Shakespeare's cauldron in *Macbeth*.

As for the *Elegy*, the chief merit of it consists in the very graphical description of the objects belonging to the country in which the poet writes, and which none but a Scottish poet could have described, and none but a real poet, and a close observer of nature, could have so described.

There is something original, and to me wonderfully pleasing, in the *Epitaph*.

I remember you once hinted before, what you repeat in your last, that you had made some remarks on *Zeluco*, on the margin. I should be very glad to see them, and regret you did not send them before the last edition, which is just published. Pray transcribe them for me; I sincerely value your opinion very highly, and pray do not suppress one of those in which you *censure* the sentiment or expression. Trust me, it will break no squares between us—I am not akin to the Bishop of Grenada.

I must now mention what has been on my mind for some time : I cannot help thinking you imprudent in scattering abroad so many copies of your verses. It is most natural to give a few to confidential friends, particularly to those who are connected with the subject, or who are perhaps themselves the subject ; but this ought to be done under promise not to give other copies. Of the poem you sent me on Queen Mary, I refused every solicitation for copies ; but I lately saw it in a newspaper. My motive for cautioning you on this subject is that I wish to engage you to collect all your fugitive pieces not already printed, and after they have been reconsidered and polished to the utmost of your power, I would have you publish them by another subscription ; in promoting of which I will exert myself with pleasure.

In your future compositions, I wish you would use the modern English. You have shewn your powers in Scottish sufficiently. Although in certain subjects it gives additional zest to the humour, yet it is lost to the English ; and why should you write only for a part of the island, when you can command the admiration of the whole ?

If you chance to write to my friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, I beg to be affectionately remembered to her. She must not judge of the warmth of my sentiments respecting her by the number of my letters : I hardly ever write a line but on business ; and I do not know that I should have scribbled all this to you, but for the business part, that is, to instigate you to a new publication ; and to tell you that when you think you have a sufficient number to make a volume, you should set your friends on getting subscriptions. I wish I could have a few hours' conversation with you—I have many things to say, which I cannot write. If I ever go to Scotland, I will let you know, that you may meet me at your own house, or my friend Mrs. Hamilton's, or both.

Adieu, my dear Sir.

J. MOORE.

The correspondence of years here comes to a somewhat abrupt conclusion and one would like to think that the later letters had been lost. We mean by that we would like to think there *were* later letters between the friends.

Mrs. Dunlop, in her letter of 16th June, 1792, says—

“I had last day a long, kind letter from the Dr. He enquires earnestly after you, and writes so warmly, so like the friend I have ever

found him, that I like the whole world the better for his sake," and again on 10th September, 1793—"Mr. Moore writes me thus—"What is become of Burns? He is the first poet in our island. There is an infinity of genius in his "Tam o' Shanter," but I wish he would write English, that the whole nation might admire him as I do.'"

Some months afterwards in his correspondence with Mrs. Dunlop, the poet refers to Moore as "our worthy and ingenious friend," and so perhaps some future discovery of Burns MSS. may reveal what at present remains obscure. In that letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns says:—

"I hope he is well, and I beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I daresay for the hundred and fiftieth time, his *View of Society and Manners*; and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of anybody but Dr. Moore. By the bye, you have deprived me of *Zeluco*; remember *that* when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

"He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication."

From the above it is seen that the poet gave his copy of *Zeluco* to Mrs. Dunlop. He inscribed on the fly-leaf of the volume:—"To my much esteemed friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop.—ROBT. BURNS." Chambers says—"There are a few pencilled notes on the margin. In the twelfth chapter of the novel a lady's-maid, in supporting the claims of a bashful suitor to the hand of her mistress, a widow, affirms, 'Rather than open his mouth to you on the subject, he will certainly die.' 'Die! nonsense,' cried the widow. 'Yes, die!' cried the maid, 'and what is worse, die in a dark lanthorn; at least, I am told that is what he is in danger of.' This passage is annotated

by Burns: 'Rather a bad joke—an unlucky attempt at humour.'" Dr. Charles Rogers records in his "Book of Robert Burns" that this copy of *Zeluco* was at the time of his writing in the possession of Mrs. Dunlop's grandson. "The second volume," he says, "was, unhappily, destroyed by ants in India."

Mrs. Dunlop, while on a visit to London, called on Dr. Moore, and in her letter to the Bard, written 12th January, 1795, there is ample evidence that the break in the correspondence had not diminished the novelist's interest in the poet:—


"I was with your friend the Doctor about a week. In our country he would be called a sad democrat, for we are the very pink of loyalty, and hate every word that fancy can connect with independence, which I believe will be the inspiring spirit of his intended publication now in the press, and pushing quickly into being . . . We had much discourse of you, and he bid me tell you he had wrote you a long and earnest letter on a subject he had much at heart, that he believed it had not come to hand by his having no return, but he had given it to one of the young surgeons you sent him, and wished you attending to the contents, since he was convinced you would find advantage from doing so; that if you would write *Seasons*, and paint rural scenes and rural manners, not as Thomson did, but as you would naturally do, he would undertake to dispose of the manuscript to advantage, as he was certain you would succeed; that he would advise your only giving the world one at once, and beginning with Spring, which he would, however, have you first revise with that coolness an author gains by laying aside his work a while before he reads it over again, or, if you pleased, showing it to some of those friends you trusted most, but who might be a little less partial than yourself. I told him you were too fickle to be long partial to the same thing, that you always liked the last best, and after a while, I dare say, would judge as justly as anybody else. He asked if this peculiarity in your way of thinking was extended to your friends as well as your works. I told him I hoped not, and trusted on my return to Scotland I should be able to assure him as certainly of your steadiness as of his own."

It seems to be a moot point whether Burns and Moore ever actually met each other in the flesh. In "Robert Burns and The Medical Profession," Dr. William Findlay maintains that they never did, while in "The Book of Robert Burns," Dr. Charles Rogers hints clearly at a meeting of the two correspondents. He says :—" During the winter of 1794-95 Dr. Moore paid a long visit to Scotland. Whether at this period or on the occasion of a former visit Dr. Moore formed the poet's personal intimacy cannot be ascertained, but an earlier date is more probable. We are informed by Dr. Moore's grandson, Mr. John [Carrick] Moore of Corsewall, that both he and his brother learned from their father that the kindly physician proposed to invite the poet to visit him in London, but that the proposal was stoutly opposed by his wife on account of remarks which had reached her respecting the bard's social excesses." Whatever truth may be in the story of Dr. Charles Rogers there is an apparent error as to the date of Moore's visit to Scotland. Mrs. Dunlop, writing to the poet from London under date *12th January, 1795*, states that she was with the Doctor about a week, and does not give the least indication of Moore having recently been or purposing immediately being in Scotland. Since therefore he was resident in London in the early part of January, 1795, it is not probable that he paid a "long visit" to Scotland "during the winter of 1794-95."

Dr. Moore survived his distinguished correspondent for some years. In the London list of subscribers to the fund for behoof of the poet's family his name appears opposite a donation of £2 zs., and he would

doubtless look back with pleasure on the literary friendship he had been a party to. His later years were spent at Richmond in ease and retirement, but towards the close of his days he returned to London, where he died in February, 1802.

“SCOTS WHA HAE:” THE SONG AND
ITS HISTORY.

“HY should we speak of ‘Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,’ since all know of it from the king to the meanest of his subjects?” Such are the words with which Carlyle proceeds to speak of the song, and our answer to it is—“Because it belongs inseparably to Stirlingshire.” Far from Bannockburn, ay! far from Scotland, the immortal ode has roused a response to the prayer of Burns in many a Scottish heart, but nevertheless it is in connection with Bannockburn that one thinks of *Bruce’s Address*. There too, at the shrine of Scottish independence, the poet doubtless felt the first breath of the inspiration that was to find utterance in his immortal song. Lockhart, quoting the words the Bard inscribed in his diary with reference to his visit to Bannockburn, says, “Here we have the germ of Burns’s famous ‘Ode on the Battle of Bannockburn.’”

It was years after his visit to the field of battle ere he composed his song. In the summer of 1793 the poet, in company with John Syme, the Distributor of Stamps at Dumfries, made a tour through Galloway.

Writing to Currie regarding this tour, Syme says :
—“ We left Kenmure and went to Gatchouse. I took

Wha for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa',
Let him follow me !

Do you hear your children cry—
“Were we born in chains to lie?”
No ! Come Death, or Liberty !
Yes, they shall be free !

Lay the proud Usurpers low !
Tyrants fall in every foe !
Liberty's in every blow !
Let us Do or Die !!

“Scots Wha Hæe” was first published on May 8, 1794, in the columns of *The Morning Chronicle*. It had been suggested to the poet by the proprietor of that newspaper—Captain Patrick Miller—that he should settle in London and contribute to *The Morning Chronicle*, and in replying to Perry, the Editor, as to the proposed engagement he wrote:—
“In the meantime they are most welcome to my ode; only let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me.” *The Morning Chronicle* kept the poet's injunction in view by publishing the ode with the somewhat absurd note:—
“If the following warm and animating ode was not written near the times to which it applies, it is one of the most faithful imitations of the simple and beautiful style of the Scottish bards we ever read, and we know but of one living poet to whom to ascribe it.”

At the time “Scots Wha Hæe” was written Burns was in correspondence with Thomson regarding his collection of songs, and in September,

1793, we find him writing to Thomson in the following terms, and sending a copy of the ode amended and improved considerably on the foregoing draft. He wrote thus—

“MY DEAR SIR,—You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of Nature’s instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of your connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air “Hey, tuttie, taitie,” may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser’s hautboy, it has often filled by eyes with tears. There is a tradition which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce’s March at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my yesternight’s evening-walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scots Ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant royal Scot’s address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

BRUCE TO HIS MEN AT BANNOCKBURN.

TUNE—*Hey tuttie taitie.*

Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,

Or to victorie !

Now’s the day, and now’s the hour;
See the front of battle lour;
See approach proud Edward’s power—
Chains and slaverie !

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward’s grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?

Let him turn, and flee !

Wha for Scotland’s king and law
Freedom’s sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa’,

Let him follow me !

By oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be free !
 Lay the proud usurpers low !
 Tyrants fall in ev'ry foe !
 Liberty's in ev'ry blow !—
 Let us do or die !

So may God ever defend the cause of Truth and Liberty, as He did that day ! Amen.

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I shewed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me make soft verses for it ; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not *quite so ancient*, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the *Museum*, though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

R. B.

“So ‘Scots wha hae’ was,” says William Wallace in his edition of Chambers's “Burns,” “to some extent inspired by the success of the French in beating back the enemies of their republic ; although it may be assumed that Burns in writing it had in his mind the message sent by the Scottish Parliament to the Pope after the battle of Bannockburn: ‘Not for glory, riches, or honour did we fight, but for liberty alone, which no good man abandons but with his life.’ The association of ideas came naturally enough to a Scottish patriot of Jacobite leanings. The English Ministers who had declared war on the French Republicans, and so ruined the still struggling Scottish commerce, became in his imagination the ancient enemies of the old-time allies, France and Scotland.

Under cover of a fourteenth-century battle-song he was really liberating his soul against the Tory tyranny that was opposing liberty at home and abroad, and moreover, striking at the comfort of his own fireside."

The exact time at which the song was composed is in dispute. Syme tells us that he received a copy of it on the morning following the storm on the Galloway moors, and Burns, writing to Thomson some weeks later, says:—"I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint." After all, the point is not of very great importance, and there may be truth in both versions of the story. It seems impossible that Syme would create a legend such as this when there was really no purpose to be served. A first draft may have been given to him at the time he says, and yet the poet may have *finished* the song "the moment" before he sat down to write to Thomson.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his "Introduction to Selected Poems of Robert Burns"—published in 1891—charged the poet with ignorance regarding the history of his country. Burns, he says, "was under a delusion common in Scotland as to the Edward whose forces were defeated at Bannockburn," and he goes on to say that the "proud usurper" can only "mean Edward I.; and it was quite another Edward, one neither conspicuously cruel nor able, that Burns mistakenly denounces." It may hardly be worth while labouring the point, as after all the opinion may only have been expressed with the fond desire of saying something *new*, and yet it would seem as though Mr. Lang had mistaken Burns, rather

than Burns the particular English king. It is not to be supposed that the poet had even the slightest doubt regarding the particular Edward who was overthrown at Bannockburn. To a copy of the song which he sent to Dr. Hughes of Dumfries, he appended the following postscript, which is at once conclusive proof of his knowledge of the history of the period :—

“This battle was the decisive blow which put Robert I., commonly called Robert de Bruce, in quiet possession of the Scottish Throne. It was fought against Edward II., son of that Edward who shed so much blood in Scotland in consequence of the dispute between Bruce and Balliol.

“Apropos, when Bruce fled from London to claim the Scottish crown, he met with the Cummin, another claimant of the crown, at Dumfries. At the altar in the priory there they met; and it is said that Bruce offered to Cummin—‘Give me your land and I’ll give you my interest in the crown, or *vice versa*.’

“What passed nobody knows; but Bruce came in a great flurry to the door and called out to his followers—‘I am afraid that I have slain the Cummin!’ ‘Are you only *afraid*?’ replied Sir Roger de Kilpatrick (ancestor to the present Sir James Kilpatrick of Closeburn), and ran into the church and stabbed Cummin to the heart; and coming back said, shewing a bloody dagger, ‘I’ve sickered him!’ that is, in English, ‘I have secured him.’

“Until lately this was the motto of the Closeburn family; but the late Sir Thomas changed it into ‘I make sure.’ The crest still is ‘The bloody dagger.’”

The association of the air “Hey, tuttie, taitie” with the song was signally appropriate. The tradition prevailed that to this tune Bruce marched to the field where Scotland’s independence was achieved, and the poet, in his Notes to Johnson’s “Musical Museum,” has put the following on record with reference

to it—"I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march to the battle of Bannockburn."

Greig, in his *Scots Minstrelsie*, says, "The air is also said by some to have been sung by Alexander Montgomery, a pensioner at the Court of James VI., as an improvement on an earlier song of the same name popular in the times of the poet Dunbar (1500) and Gavin Douglas (1512). We are further told the same air was afterwards set—about 1720—to a Jacobite drinking song entitled 'Here's to the King, Sir.' It has moreover been supposed that the expression 'Hey Tuttie Taitie' arose from the mistake of an ignorant copyist in an ignorant age, who had made a jumble of the title and the Italian direction 'tutti, etc.,' written at the top of a page regarding the performance of the music."

The tradition, which was inserted by the poet in the second volume of the *Museum*, was challenged by Ritson in his "Essay on Scottish Song," published in 1794, who insisted that the only music the Scots had in those days was supplied by *horns*, and he cited Barbour and Froissart in his defence. James Hogg entered the lists on behalf of the tradition, and replied to Ritson's argument with the words—"Hey *tuttie taitie* is evidently a *bugle tune*, which the critic might have known if he had possessed even the ear of a bullock!" The late J. Wood Muir of Glasgow, writing on the subject of "Scotch Music" in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, regards the words "tuti taiti" as

an attempt to imitate the trumpet-notes; and in defence of his opinion cites the following lines from a Jacobite song :—

“When you hear the trumpet soun’
Tuti taiti to the drum,
Up sword and doon gun,
And to the loons again.”

The tune selected by the poet for his Ode did not meet with approval from Thomson, and on 5th September, 1793, he replied to the bard in the following terms :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I believe that it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakespeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your Heroic ode is to me the noblest Composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; intreated me to find out a suitable Air for it; and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as ‘Hey tuttie taitie.’ Assuredly, your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scots airs—I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

“I have been running over the whole hundred Airs of which I lately sent you the List; and I think ‘Lewie Gordon’ is most happily adapted to your ode; at least, with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in ‘Lewie Gordon’ more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of [the song], ‘Lewie Gordon,’ which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry, that characterise your Verses. Now, the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse (the only line too short for the air) is as follows :—

Verse 1st, Or to *glorious* victory.
2d, *Chains*—chains and slavery.

- Verse 3d, Let him, *let him* turn and flee.
 4th, Let him *bravely* follow me.
 5th, But *they shall*, they shall be free.
 6th, Let us, *let us* do—or die!

“If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy.

“The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is ‘Welcome to your gory bed!’ Would not another word be preferable to ‘Welcome?’ In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.”

A week later, Thomson, in writing to Burns regarding other songs, returns to the subject of “Scots wha hae” with still further suggested improvements. He says:—

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. ‘Gory’ presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them, ‘Welcome to your gory bed,’ seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shewn the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest—

Now prepare for honour’s bed,
 Or for glorious victory.

The idea of altering the song to suit the air “Lewie Gordon” seems to have been readily entertained by Burns, and he set himself to reconstruct it accordingly. This later suggestion by Thomson regarding “honour’s bed,” however, did not find favour with the poet, who replied as follows:—

I am happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea ‘honour’s bed,’ is, though a beautiful, a hackney’d idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows:—

BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led ;
 Welcome to your gory bed !
 Or to glorious victorie !

Now's the day, and now's the hour ;
 See the front o' battle lour ;
 See approach proud Edward's power—
 Edward ! Chains and Slavery !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
 Wha sae base as be a slave ?
 Traitor ! Coward ! turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Free-man stand, or Free-man fa'—
 Sodger ! Hero ! on wi' me !

By Oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be—shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low !
 Tyrants fall in every foe !
 Liberty's in every blow !
 Forward ! let us Do or Die !

N.B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common-stall edition of Wallace :—

‘ A false usurper sinks in every foe,
 And liberty returns with every blow.’—

A couplet worthy of Homer.”

Thus “Scots wha hae,” attired in the hideous dress which Thomson had partly suggested, and partly caused to be woven, and robbed of much of its former grandeur, till it was reduced at times to a

burlesque, was sent back to Edinburgh for approval by the editor of the forthcoming musical miscellany. The alterations suggested by Burns did not satisfy him. In reply he proceeded to still further "improvements," but these were dismissed by the Bard, who wrote—

"Who shall decide when Doctors disagree? My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconstructing it, as I think I have much improved it. Instead of 'Soger! hero!' I will have it to be 'Caledonian! on wi' me!'

"I have scrutinised it over and over; and to the world, some way or other, it shall go as it is. At the same time, it will not in the least hurt me tho' you leave the song out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses."

Writing of Thomson's suggested alterations, Currie says—"Burns adopted the alterations proposed by his friend and correspondent in former instances, with great readiness; perhaps, indeed, on all indifferent occasions. In the present instance, however, he rejected them, though repeatedly urged with determined resolution. With every respect for the judgment of Mr. Thomson and his friends, we may be satisfied that he did so. He who, in preparing for an engagement, attempts to withdraw his imagination from images of death, will probably have but imperfect success, and is not fitted to stand in the ranks of battle, where the liberties of a kingdom are at issue. Of such men, the conquerors of Bannockburn were not composed. Bruce's troops were inured to war, and familiar with all its sufferings and dangers. On the eve of that memorable day, their spirits were, without doubt, wound up to a pitch of enthusiasm, at

which danger becomes attractive, and the most terrific forms of death are no longer terrible. Such a strain of sentiment this heroic 'welcome' may be supposed well calculated to elevate—to raise their heads high above fear, and to nerve their arms to the utmost pitch of mortal exertion."

To the world, some way or other, "Scots wha hae" went as it was.³⁷ It was six years before it was given to the public in Thomson's collection—"The Melodies of Scotland,"—and it appeared in the second volume set to the air "Lewie Gordon." On the publication of the third volume, however, it was found that the opinion of Burns had prevailed, for there his Ode appeared set to the tune of his choice, "Hey tuttie taitie." In presenting it Thomson makes the following remarks:—"The Poet originally intended this noble strain for the air of *Hey tuttie taitie*; but on a suggestion from the editor, who then thought *Lewie Gordon* a better tune for the words, they were united together and published in the preceding volume. The editor, however, having since examined the air *Hey tuttie taitie* with more particular attention, frankly owns that he has changed his opinion; and that he thinks it much better adapted for giving energy to the poetry than the air of *Lewie Gordon*. He therefore sent it to Haydn, who has entered into the spirit of it with a felicity peculiar to himself; his inimitable symphonies and accompaniments render it completely martial and highly characteristic of the heroic verses. It is worthy of remark that this appears to be the oldest Scottish air concerning which anything like evidence is to be found."

The writer of an article in the fourth volume of "Burnsiana" edited by Mr. John D. Ross, writes thus with regard to the air selected by the poet for his ode, "In the history of a tune we occasionally encounter some curious and unsuspected transformations. The air of 'Tutti taitie' shows a curious variety of uses. From a quaint old pastoral it passes into a boisterous drinking-song. Then from a fierce defiant battle-cry, it seeks rest, as if with wearied wing, in the tender pathos of 'The Land o' the Leal.' Verily on the world's stage a tune, like a man, in its time plays many parts." Writing on the same subject in an earlier volume of "Burnsiana," Mr. J. Cuthbert Hadden says, "Burns's tune is not the tune which we now use, our present air being more worthy and nobler in every respect than the older air. Curiously the same tune, with a different rhythm, is sung to 'The Land o' the Leal,' where it becomes one of the gentlest and most pathetic of melodies. The tune as sung to 'Scots wha hae,' is one of great boldness and grandeur, and the words and music combined cannot fail to move the heart of every one who has in his soul the true spirit of music and of patriotism."

It is a noticeable feature in the life of Burns that he lavished copies of his latest effusions upon his friends. To duplicate his poems seems to have given him little or no trouble, and his correspondents were consequently favoured with copies whenever a new poem was completed. Writing to a Captain ——, (probably, Captain Robertson of Lude), a few weeks after finally adjusting the song with Thomson, he says—

“I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song I had lately composed, and which, I think, has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble but most sincere tribute of respect from a man who, dear as he prizes poetic fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind.”

About a week later he sent a copy to the Earl of Buchan, writing as follows :—

Dumfries, 12th Jan., 1794.

“MY LORD,—Will your Lordship allow me to present you with the inclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for that acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honor me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

“Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable!—for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

“If my little Ode has the honor of your Lordship’s approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition. I have the honor to be, etc.,

“R. B.”

As we have said, “Scots wha hae” appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* for May 8, 1794, and since then who shall number its appearances in this, that, and the other journal, or miscellany, or kindred work? To few compositions, if indeed to any, has greater popularity been accorded. The song has become the “Marseillaise” of Scotland, and with “Auld Lang Syne” the gathering cry of Scotsmen in every clime.

It has also been frequently called upon to represent the national bard in foreign tongues. Here we have it in its French dress, and it will be seen that it is the version rejected by the Scottish public that has fallen into the translator's hands :—

BANNOCKBURN.

Eçossais, qui avez saigné sous Wallace,
Eçossais, que Bruce a souvent conduits,
Soyez les bienvenus à votre lit sanglant
Ou à la victoire glorieuse !

Voici le jour et voici l'heure,
Voyez le front de la bataille se rembrunir ;
Voyez approcher les forces de l'orgueilleux Edouard—
Edouard ! les chaines et l'esclavage !

Qui sera un infâme traître !
Qui peut remplir sa tombe d'un lâche
Qui assez bas pour être esclave ?
Traître ! lache ! tourne et fuis !

Que pour le roi et la loi de l'Ecosse
Vout tirer avec vigueur l'épéc de la liberte,
Vivre homme libre, ou périr homme libre ?
Calédonien, alions avec moi !

Par les maux et les peines de l'oppression !
Par vos fils aux chaines de l'esclave !
Nous tarirons nos plus précieuses veines,
Mais ils seront—ils seront libres !

Jetons a bas ces fiers usurpateurs !
Un tyran tombe dans chaque ennemi !
La liberte est dans chaque coup !
En avant ! vaincre ou mourir !

To the general reader translation will doubtless prove uninteresting, and it is, therefore, needless that we should present other versions.

In addition to the foregoing, "Scots wha hae" is to be found in "Robert Burns in other Tongues," a volume edited by Mr. William Jack, in German, Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, Hungarian, Italian, Swedish, Welsh, and Latin.

"Scots wha hae" is one of the group of songs which the critics have chosen as a basis on which to found their appreciation of the poet, and in connection with our subject it may not be unfitting if we select a few of the criticisms passed upon it—the thoughts of great minds,—and with them close our history of the battle-ode.

Professor Masson, unveiling the Burns statue at Aberdeen, spoke in glowing language of the Ode. "Is not," said he, "the Scottish national lyric for all time Burns's 'Scots wha hae?'" Some critics of late have been sneering even at that lyric, finding fault with it on account of some finical objections to the wording, but in reality disliking the sentiment it would immortalise, and voting it obsolete and barbaric. One must differ here from the critics whoever they are. The wording of the lyric accords with the sentiment; and both are grand. For the sentiment of Scottish nationality is not something barbaric and obsolete, the poetical expression of which is justifiable only on historical grounds; it exists indestructibly yet among the powers and forces of the present composite and united British body politic, and is capable of services in the affairs of that body politic that may be of incalculable utility even yet. Imagine a Scottish regiment on a foreign battlefield. Imagine it driven

back for the moment, foiled, fatigued, and dispirited. 'Scots wha hae' shouts their commander, or someone else; and no more is needed. They recollect, or half-recollect the rest:—

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him on wi' me.

They thrill with that recollection, or half-recollection; they rally as they thrill; the Scottish soul returns in them; they face about again; they are unconquerable now; they fight and die like demigods."

Who shall say that Professor Masson has over-estimated the effect which "Scots wha hae" would produce? Who, that has stood at Bannockburn, has not felt his blood thrill, when "Scots wha hae" rose into the air, and that from a scene of smiling peace? One can hardly over-estimate the influence which the ode would exercise in the field of action.

Dr. Charles Rogers, the joint-author of "The Book of Robert Burns," speaking at the unveiling of the bust of the bard in the Wallace Monument at Stirling, spoke thus of "Scots wha hae":—"Vehement, vigorous, and intense, this ode is an embodiment of patriotic ardour, thrilling aspirations, and intellectual strength. Equalled in grace of diction, it has not been reached in terse delineation, or in moral force. It is a clear, round pebble in a casket of gems—a diamond in a cabinet of rubies."

"All Scotsmen at home and abroad," says Professor Wilson, "swear this is the grandest Ode out of the Bible. What if it be not an Ode at all? An Ode,

however, let it be ; then wherein lies the power it possesses of stirring up into a devouring fire the *per-fervidum ingenium Scotorum* ? The two armies suddenly stand before us in order of battle—and in the grim repose preceding the tempest we hear but the voice of Bruce. The whole Scottish army hears it—now standing on their feet—risen from their knees as the Abbot of Inchaffray had blest them and the Banner of Scotland with its roots of Stone. At the first six words a hollow murmur is in that wood of spears. ‘Welcome to your gory bed!’ a shout that shakes the sky. Hush! hear the king. At *Edward’s* name what a yell! ‘Wha will be a traitor knave?’ Muttering thunder growls reply. The inspired Host in each appeal anticipates the Leader—yet shudders with fresh wrath, as if each reminded it of some intolerable wrong. ‘Let us do or die’—the English are overthrown—and Scotland is free.

“That is a very Scottish critique indeed—but none the worse for that ; so our English friends must forgive it, and be consoled by Flodden. The Ode is sublime. Death and Life at that hour are one and the same to the heroes. So that Scotland but survive, what is breath or blood to them? Their being is in their country’s liberty, and with it secured they will live for ever.

“Our critique is getting more and more Scottish still ; so to rid ourselves of nationality, we request such of you as think we overlaud the Ode to point out one word in it that would be better away. You cannot. Then, pray, have the goodness to point out one

word missing that ought to have been there—please to insert a desiderated stanza. You cannot. Then let the bands of all the Scottish regiments play ‘Hey tuttie taitie;’ and the two Dun-Edins salute one another with a salvo that shall startle the echoes from Berwick-Law to Benmore.”

With Carlyle we began, with Carlyle we shall close. “So long,” wrote the Sage of Chelsea, “as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.”

“BY ALLAN STREAM I CHANCED TO ROVE.”

IN speaking of ‘Allan Water’ three songs will readily recur to the mind. These are, “On the Banks of Allan Water,” by Matthew Gregory Lewis, “Jessie, the Flower of Dunblane,” by Robert Tannahill, and “By Allan Stream I Chanced to Rove,” by Robert Burns. Curiously enough, the least known of the three is that by Burns. It never seems to have acquired popularity, although for merit it will compare favourably with many of his lyrics. Its main attraction for us at present may be said to lie in the fact that it belongs to the County. Here, however, we may be met with opposition, for, in truth, the song may be also claimed for Perthshire. The Allan rises in Perthshire, flows southwards into Stirlingshire, where it joins the Forth a short distance below the far-famed Bridge of Allan.

The poet, writing to George Thomson under date August, 1793, says—

“I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the *Museum* in my hand, when, turning up *Allan Water*, ‘What numbers shall the muse repeat,’ etc., it appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong, but I think it not in my worst style. You must know that in Ramsay’s

Tea-Table, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is 'Allan Water, or My Love Annie's very Bonie.' This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy:

BY ALLAN STREAM I CHANCED TO ROVE.

TUNE—*Allan Water*.

By Allan Stream I chanc'd to rove,
 While Phebus sank beyond Benledi;*
 The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
 The yellow corn was waving ready;
 I listen'd to a lover's sang,
 An' thought on youthfu' pleasures monie,
 And aye the wild-wood echoes rang;—
 O, dearly do I love thee, Annie!³⁸

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

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose-brae,
 The Summer joys the flocks to follow.
 How cheery thro' her short'ning day
 Is Autumn in her weeds o' yellow!
 But can they melt the glowing heart,
 Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
 Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
 Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

* A high mountain to the west of Strathallan.

"Bravo! say I; it is a good song, should you think so too (not else), you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses."

To this epistle Thomson replied in a most congratulatory manner on the following day:—

"Bravissimo! I say. It is an excellent song. There is not a single line that could be altered. Of the two lines—'O my love Annie's very

bonie!’ and ‘O dearly do I love thee, Annie!’ I prefer the latter decidedly. Till I received this song, I had half resolved not to include ‘Allan Water’ in the collection, and for this reason, that it bears such a near resemblance to a much finer air—at least, a greater favourite of mine—‘Galashiels’ or ‘Ah, the poor shepherd’s mournful fate;’ the beginning is almost quite the same.”

Again the public have reversed the judgment of Thomson. They spurned his version of ‘Scots wha hae,’ and notwithstanding his plaudits of ‘Allan Water’ popularity has never been accorded the effusion. The fame of Burns is secured by a rich garland of lyrics, but the “excellent song” is not of the number.

The Editors of *The Centenary Burns* fall into error in their treatment of the MSS. of “By Allan Stream.” Their note says “‘Benledi’—‘A mountain to the north of Stirling’ (R. B. in Lochryan MS.); ‘A mountain in Strathallan, 3009 feet’ (R. B. in Thomson MS.) His geography is faulty: Strathallan is to the north of Stirling [the Allan flows by Dunblane and Bridge of Allan into the Forth], but Ben Ledi is about 20 miles west-north-west.” Burns’s marginal note to the song was, as quoted, “A high mountain to the west of Strathallan.” In Currie’s edition it is rendered as, “A mountain west of Strathallan, 3009 feet high—R. B.” Either of these notes indicates that the poet’s geographical knowledge on this point was as accurate as that of Messrs. Henley and Henderson.

“HUGHIE GRAHAM.”



THE great work engaged in by Sir Walter Scott, viz., his rescuing from oblivion the ballad minstrelsy of Scotland was in some measure anticipated by Burns. The Ayrshire bard, it is true, did not set himself methodically to collect specimens of the earlier muse, but when a ballad came in his way he did not fail to make a note of it. Of the compositions rescued by the poet, “Hughie Graham” is one, and it has a special interest for us in the fact that, while the version given by Scott belongs to the Borderland, that noted by Burns belongs to Stirlingshire. Burns contributed his version to Johnson’s *Musical Museum*, accompanied by the note—“There are several editions of this ballad. This here inserted is from oral tradition in Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song. It, originally, had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.” This is all the history of the ballad so far as Burns is concerned. The version sent to the *Museum* contained two verses—3 and 8—which, according to Cromek, were the work of the poet, while certain other stanzas—9 and 10—were retouched by him. Burns’s version is as follows :—

Our lords are to the mountains gane,
A hunting o’ the fallow dear,
And they have gripet Hughie Graham,
For stealing o’ the bishop’s mare.

And they have tied him hand and foot,
 And led him up thro' Stirling town ;
 The lads and lasses met him there,
 Cried, Hughie Graham thou rt a loon.
 O lowse my right hand free, he says,
 And put my braid sword in the same ;
 He's no in Stirling town this day,
 Dare tell the tale to Hughie Graham.
 Up then bespake the brave Whitefoord,
 As he sat by the bishop's knee,
 Five hundred white stots I'll gie you,
 If ye'll let Hughie Graham free.
 O haud your tongue, the bishop says,
 And wi' your pleading let me be ;
 For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
 Hughie Graham this day shall die.
 Up then bespake the fair Whitefoord,
 As she sat by the bishop's knee ;
 Five hundred white pence I'll gie you,
 If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.
 O haud your tongue now lady fair,
 And wi' your pleading let me be ;
 Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
 It's for my honor he maun die.
 They've ta'en him to the gallows knowe,
 He looked to the gallows tree,
 Yet never colour left his cheek,
 Nor ever did he blink his e'e.
 At length he looked round about,
 To see whatever he could spy ;
 And there he saw his auld father,
 And he was weeping bitterly.
 O haud your tongue, my father dear,
 And wi' your weeping let me be ;
 Thy weeping's sairer on my heart,
 Than a' that they can do to me.
 And ye may gie my brother John,
 My sword that's bent in the middle clear,
 And let him come at twelve o'clock,
 And see me pay the bishop's mare.

And ye may gie my brother James,
 My sword that's bent in the middle brown,
 And bid him come at four o'clock,
 And see his brother Hugh cut down.

Remember me to Maggy, my wife,
 The neist time ye gang o'er the moor ;
 Tell her she staw the bishop's mare,
 Tell her she was the bishop's whore.

And ye may tell my kith and kin
 I never did disgrace their blood ;
 And when they meet the bishop's cloak
 To mak' it shorter by the hood.

Cromek in his "Reliques of Robert Burns" has the following note to the foregoing ballad :—

"Burns did not *choose* to be quite correct in stating that this copy of the ballad of *Hughie Graham* is printed from oral tradition in Ayrshire. The fact is, that four of the stanzas are either altered or super-added by himself.


"Of this number the third and eighth are original, the ninth and tenth have received his corrections. Perhaps pathos was never more touching than in the picture of the hero singling out his poor aged father from the crowd of spectators ; and the simple grandeur of preparation for this afflicting circumstance in the verse that immediately precedes it is matchless.

"That the reader may properly appreciate the value of Burns's touches, I here subjoin two verses from the most correct copy of the Ballad, as it is printed in the *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii., p. 324 :—

"He looked over his left shoulder
 And for to see what he might see ;
 There was he aware of his auld father,
 Came tearing his hair most piteouslie.

"O hald your tongue, my father, he says,
 And see that ye dinna weep for me !
 For they may ravish me o' my life,
 But they canna banish me from heaven hie !"

SONGS AND POEMS WITH LOCAL REFERENCES.

EVERAL of the effusions of Burns touch on local places, and these productions consequently have an added interest to natives of the shire. From the prominent part which the county has played in Scottish history it may indeed be matter for wonder that the poet's references are not more numerous than they really are. And it is curious that (excepting "Scots wha hae" of course) his verses should refer to incidents so remote from each other as the early struggles between the Picts and the Scots, and the battle at Sheriffmuir in connection with the Rising of 1715.

In his notes on Stirlingshire contained in the Diary of his northern tour (see *ante* page 7) he refers to Camelon as "the ancient metropolis of the Picts," and in his ballad "Caledonia" he invests it with the same dignity. Reviewing the successive attacks which were made on Scotland by alien powers, he thus refers to the "auld enemies":—

The Camelon savage disturbed her repose
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion and strife;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life.

This reference to the Picts is of course somewhat in error. The poet looked upon the Scots as themselves

the predecessors of the later nation, and consequently regarded the Picts as an alien power. Bellenden's *Croniclis*, the vernacular version of Boece's History, says Chambers, repeated in many popular forms, describes at length the siege, capture, and destruction of Camelon by Kenneth Macalpin (referred to A.D. 839) as the final subversion and practical extirpation of the Picts, and their disappearance from history. This is, of course, wholly unhistorical.

The "Camelon savage" has been rendered variously by different Editors. Currie and Chambers gave it as "Cameleon" while Scott Douglas and Wallace print it "Camelon." This latter seems to be the better reading, but the Editors of the "Centenary Burns" retain "Cameleon" and add the note "'Cameleon-Savage':—The Pict, who dyed and stained and parti-coloured his person with woad." It is of course impossible to say whether it was the inhabitant of "the ancient metropolis of the Picts" or the "dyed and stained and parti-coloured savage" who was present to the mind of Burns when he wrote the poem.

It is a far cry from the battles of the Picts to the Jacobite risings, but it is in his ballad of "The Battle of Sherramoor" that Stirlingshire comes in for some touches of his pen. On the authority of Currie it is affirmed that the ballad was composed in 1787 about the time of the poet's tour to the north. Whether this be true or not, the composition does not seem to have been suggested by any visit to the field of battle for, while in his journey he would see, and perhaps

have pointed out to him, Sheriffmuir where the battle was fought, he does not seem to have actually visited the scene.

Burns's effusion is a summary of a somewhat diffuse ballad written by the Rev. John Barclay, a Berean minister, which was entitled:—" *The Dialogue Betwixt William Luckladle and Thomas Cleancogue, who were Feeding their Sheep upon the Ochil Hills, 13th November, 1715. Being the day the Battle of Sheriffmuir was fought. To the tune of The Cameron Men.*" As the title bears, the ballad takes the form of a dialogue, and this Burns maintains in his song. The difficulty as to which side had taken flight presented itself to the shepherds, and Thomas Cleancogue is interrupted in his description of the battle by William exclaiming—

“ ‘O, how Deil ! Tam, can that be true ?
 The chase gaed frae the north, man !
 I saw mysel, they did pursue
 The horseman back to Forth, man ;
 And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
 They took the brig wi' a' their might,
 And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight ;
 But, curs'd lot ! the gates were shut,
 And mony a huntit poor red-coat
 For fear amaist did swarf, man ! ’ ”

The Forth—the Rubicon of Scottish History—with its marvellous links and its charms for various bards, was not forgotten by Burns. In his epistle to William Simpson, written in 1785, he bewails that while Forth and Tay have found their poets, the rivers of his native district remain unsung:—

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
 Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon ;

Yarrow and Tweed, to monie a tune,
Ower Scotland rings
While Irwin, Lugar, Aire and Doon
Naebody sings.

And in his song "Yon wild, mossy mountains" he says, referring to the attractions of the place mentioned in the lyric :—

Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors.

Again, in the fragment "Out over the Forth," which he has left us, we find this river suggesting itself to the bard :—

Out over the Forth, I look to the north ;
But what is the north and its Highlands to me ?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast—
The far foreign land, or the wide rolling sea :
But I look to the west when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be ;
For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The man that is dear to my babie and me.

The places of interest—natural and historic—of the shire have thus had their measure of treatment from Burns, and possibly some of the productions may have been written—

"While winds frae off Ben-Lomond blew.

SOME COUNTY "INTIMATES" OF
ROBERT BURNS.



OF the large army of "intimates" and others connected with Burns a few may be claimed by residence or otherwise as having some connection with Stirlingshire, and short biographical notes concerning these may not be inappropriate here.

REV. JOHN RUSSELL.

When Burns directed his satire against that coterie of Ayrshire ministers who espoused what were known as the "Auld Licht" doctrines, it fell with stinging force on the Rev. John Russell, *alias* "Black Russell," *alias* "Black Jock," *alias* "Rumble John."

The "Black Russell" was at that time minister of the High Church in Kilmarnock. A native of Morayshire, having been born there in 1740, he studied for the Church, and after undergoing the necessary curriculum, received license from the Presbytery of Chanonry in June, 1768. He was called to the High Church, Kilmarnock, in 1774, where he laboured for fifteen years, defending with all his power the traditional Calvinism, the darker side of which had become repugnant to so many of the clergy. In

the battle between the Auld Licht and the New Licht, Burns arraigned himself on the side of the New Licht, and for the abolition of the old theology brought his terrible satire into play.

The first of his lampoons against the divines was composed in 1784, and was entitled "The Twa Herds; or the Holy Tulzie: An unco mournfu' tale." The satire refers to a quarrel which took place between the Rev. John Russell and his co-presbyter and co-Auld Licht, the Rev. Alexander Moodie, minister of the adjacent parish of Riccarton.

In the "Epistle to John Goldie" where he refers to him as "Black Jock, the State Physician," Burns gives unmistakable evidence that Russell was regarded as the leader of the Auld Licht party. His reference to him as "Black Jock" is explained by the preacher having been of a very dark complexion. A contemporary thus describes him:—"He was the most tremendous man I ever saw: Black Hugh M'Pherson was a beauty in comparison. His voice was like thunder, and his sentiments were such as must have shocked any class of hearers in the least more refined than those whom he usually addressed." This description of the preacher is borne out by "The Holy Fair." In that poem, after enumerating the earlier proceedings of the sacramental feast, the poet writes:—

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
 Till a' the hills are rairin,
 And echoes back return the shouts;
 Black Russell is na spairin;
 His piercing words, like HIGHLAN' swords,

Divide the joints an' marrow ;
 His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
 Our verra 'souls does harrow'
 Wi' fright that day !

In "The Ordination" and "The Kirk's Alarm" Russell also comes in for a share of the poet's satire. Indeed, in the composition of these lampoons, it would seem that "Black Jock" always recurred to the mind of the Bard as a character who was to be overlooked at his peril.

Transfixed in satire, Russell became the object of derision and sympathy—derided by those who chose to think according to the new light, and sympathised with by those who adhered to the older doctrine. For ten years after the appearance of the latest lampoon he continued to "herd the brutes" in Kil-marnock, but on the 22nd October, 1799, he was elected by the Kirk Session and delegates of the West Church or second charge in Stirling to be their minister. Accepting the call to the new sphere he was admitted to the office on the 30th January of the following year. It may be fair—alike to Burns and Russell—to suppose that at that time the "skits" in which the preacher appeared in so repellent attire enjoyed only a local circulation, and that when he came to Stirling he found himself away from the scene and the influence of the satires. He would, as it were, begin life anew, and form enemies or friends according as his new congregation viewed his preaching. For the long period of seventeen years Russell continued one of the ministers of Stirling, enjoying, Dr. Rogers informs us, the respect and confidence of

his people. His death took place at Stirling on the 23rd February, 1817, when he was in the 77th year of his age, and 43rd of his ministry. His widow survived him for about two years. Hugh Millar says—"He lived to a great age, and was always a dauntless and intrepid old man."

He was buried in the old churchyard of Stirling under the shadow of the church in which he had preached so long, and a monument was subsequently erected to the memory of him and his wife.

In the course of nearly a century this memorial stone had gone considerably to decay, but in 1886 a public movement was set on foot for its restoration. It was re-erected on a new base, and on the back of the stone the names of Burns and Russell were bracketed in a somewhat more friendly fashion than hitherto. A stanza composed of selections from "The Twa Herds" and "The Holy Fair" now attests to the identity of the sleeper with "Black Jock" and "Rumble John" of the Ayrshire Auld Lights. Few who read the stanza and are unacquainted with the poet's works would conjure up the grotesque attire in which the preacher treads the stage of Burns's verse. It is as follows :—

What herd like Russell telled his tale,
His voice was heard ower muir and dale,
His piercin' words, like Highlan' swords,
Divide the joints and marrow.

—Burns.

JANE FERRIER.

During the Edinburgh period of his life Burns made a large circle of friends in the Scottish Capital,

and that circle included Mr. James Ferrier, W.S., and his daughter Jane, who subsequently became the wife of General Samuel Graham, Deputy Governor of Stirling Castle. Miss Ferrier was born in 1767, and was famous for her beauty at the time when the poet met her. In his lines "To Miss Ferrier, enclosing the 'Elegy on Sir J. H. Blair,'" he sings of her charms thus:—

Jove's tunefu' dochters three times three
 Made Homer deep their debtor ;
 But gien the body half an e'e,
 Nine Ferriers wad done better !

In 1804 Miss Ferrier was married to General Graham, and after his appointment as Deputy Governor of the Castle was resident in Stirling for a number of years. Her connection with Stirling is marked by the publication of "*Lacunar Strevilinense*." This work deals with what are known as the "Stirling Heads"—a series of rich oak carvings that formed the roof of the Parliament House in Stirling Castle. The carvings were ruthlessly cast down about the year 1777, and a number of them used as firewood. The work of despoliation being observed by Mr. Ebenezer Brown, the keeper of the jail, he succeeded in securing certain of the carvings, and a number of years afterwards they were brought under the notice of Mrs. General Graham. She, together with Edward Blore, an Edinburgh artist, made drawings of the carvings which, engraved by Lizars, were published in 1817 under title *Lacunar Strevilinense*. The work is now rare. Mrs. Graham was sister to Miss Susan Edmon-


stone Ferrier (b. 1782, d. 1854), the authoress of *Marriage* and other once popular Scotch novels. She died at Edinburgh in 1846.

WILLIAM CORBET.

Concerning William Corbet little seems to be known. Extensive inquiries in Excise quarters at various places have failed to produce much concerning him, and his story must therefore be taken, to a large extent, as it exists in Burns literature. The name is a common one in the Excise service: there were two of the same name during the bard's lifetime. Mrs. Dunlop, writing to the poet under date 16th February, 1790, put the question "Do you know a Mr. Corbet in the Excise? Could he be of any use to you in getting on? Pray tell me," and Burns in reply explained, "If it is a Corbet who is what we call one of our General Supervisors, of which we have just two in Scotland, he can do everything for me . . . He is a Willm Corbet, and has his home, I believe somewhere about Stirling." Following on this Mrs. Dunlop wrote to Corbet's wife (with whom she was intimate) pressing the claims of Burns to advancement, and the poet addressed Corbet himself in correspondence. From the tone of the second letter by the Bard it would appear that Corbet interested himself in his behalf, although nothing actually resulted in the way of promotion. When—in 1792—inquiry was instituted regarding the poet's alleged disloyalty, Corbet was appointed to make the examination, and it is generally believed that he did his best to palliate the supposed offence.

So far as we have been able to learn, Corbet, who in 1790, according to Burns, lived "somewhere near Stirling," appears to have held the position of Supervisor of Stirling district somewhere about the year 1786. At that date "William Corbet, Supervisor of Excise," applied to the Guildry of Stirling "to free him of his tack of a pew possessed by him in the Guildry loft in the East Church." Mr. R. W. Macfadzean, Ayr, to whom we applied regarding Corbet, sends us two extracts from a volume dealing with the trial of Deacon Brodie and George Smith for robbing the Excise Office at Edinburgh. This volume was published in 1788, and in the declaration of George Smith it is stated "that Brodie first planned the Excise Office Robberies . . . under pretence of calling for *Mr. Corbett from Stirling* and other people, in order to learn the situation of the place," and also "that Brodie came to the knowledge of these circumstances by being present when *Mr. Corbett from Stirling*, who is a connection of Brodie's, drew money at the Cashier's Office." As Mr. Macfadzean says, Corbet's "connection with the worthy deacon was nothing to his discredit, as Brodie had his friends among the wealthy and respectable on the one side of his character." How long Corbet filled the position of Supervisor of Stirling district we have been unable to learn, but he seems to have occupied a much more important position by 1790, when we find the poet first referring to him as one who could "do everything for" him, and he was stationed at Edinburgh in 1792 when he was commissioned to investigate the poet's behaviour.

NOTABLE COUNTY CONTRIBUTORS TO BURNS
LITERATURE AND ART.

HEN the desiderated though almost impossible *complete* "Bibliography" of Burns literature is produced it will be found that Stirlingshire has a fair representation in its pages. Many of the sons and daughters of the shire have contributed to the great mass of literature which has gathered round the national poet and his works, and it may not be an exaggeration to say that even a County Bibliography would make a not unworthy volume. That being so it must be understood that in these pages we pass over the great army of natives of the shire who have contributed towards the literature of the poet, and merely mention one or two of outstanding eminence.

JAMES GIBSON.

In many respects the name of James Gibson is unique in Burns literature. He compiled what is so far the most complete Bibliography relating to the poet and his works. He was born at Stirling on January 2, 1819, and after being educated at Kilmarnock Academy, was apprenticed to the drapery trade. He was for twenty years on the road as a commercial

traveller, but retired in the end of 1866, setting up in business at Liverpool in the following year. Here he was engaged for some considerable time. His death took place at Stratford-on-Avon on 10th July, 1886, and he was at that time librarian to the "Shakespeare Memorial" there.

His published works chiefly refer to Burns. In 1873 he issued for private circulation "Burns and Masonry;" in 1874, "The Burns Calendar: a Manual of Burnsiana;" in 1876 he edited the "Manual of Religious Belief, written by William Burns, the Poet's father, for the benefit of his children, with Biographical Preface;" in 1877, "The Burns Birthday Book;" and in 1881, "The Bibliography of Robert Burns, with Biographical and Bibliographical Notes and Sketches of Burns Clubs, Monuments and Statues." Gibson was the possessor of a most valuable Burnsiana library, consisting of over 600 volumes "gathered together after many years' patient book-hunting." This collection is now in the "Poet's Corner" of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

REV. PETER HATELY WADDELL, LL.D.

"The Life and Works of Robert Burns by P. Hately Waddell, minister of the gospel: Glasgow, 1867," is one of the many collected editions of the poet's works which have been produced. "It is modelled," says *The Centenary Burns*, "as to shape, size, and print, on 'the big Ha' Bible,' and blends the special idiosyncracies of the sermon and the biblical commentary; and notwithstanding that it represents the result of 'abundant' labours, is so heavily over-

burdened with irrelevant matter, so badly confused in arrangement, so loose in its treatment of facts, so eccentric in its choice of text, that its independent value is almost in inverse proportion to its bulk." The criticism is not unjust. The editor of this edition of the poet's works was born at Balquhatson, Slamannan, Stirlingshire, on May 19, 1816. He was educated at the Grammar School and College, Glasgow, and having passed through the necessary curriculum, was licensed as a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1841. He "came out" in 1843, joining the newly-organised Free Church, but subsequently he seceded from that body and formed an independent congregation, first at Girvan, and afterwards at Glasgow, where he died in May, 1891.

He was Chairman at the Centenary Dinner in 1859, held in the Burns Cottage at Ayr, and was an enthusiastic Burnsite. His contributions to literature were many and varied, including "The Genius and Morality of Robert Burns," "The Church of Revelation and Reality," "The Psalms Frae Hebrew intil Scottis," "Ossian and the Clyde," and "Isaiah intil Scottis." He edited an edition of the Waverley Novels, and was a well-known lecturer on subjects such as "Luther," "Knox," "Shakespeare," "Scott." He received the degree of LL.D., in 1868, from Tusculum College, America.


SIR GEORGE HARVEY, *P.R.S.A.*

The son of a watchmaker, George Harvey was born in St. Ninians, near Stirling, in 1805. After having received an ordinary education, he was ap-

prenticed to a bookseller in Stirling. He early evinced a liking for art, and when about eighteen years of age, he entered the Trustees' Academy at Edinburgh. He took an active interest in the formation of the Royal Scottish Academy, and was enrolled an Associate during its first year. In 1829 he was admitted an Academician, and on the death of Sir John Watson Gordon in 1864, he was appointed President. Three years later he was knighted. His death took place at Edinburgh on January 22, 1876.

Harvey's brush was frequently called into use to illustrate the verse of Burns. In 1859, there was issued "for the members of the Royal Association for the promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland" a series of five illustrations by Harvey, delineating "Auld Lang Syne;" and in 1861, he joined with Horatio Macculloch, Erskine Nicol, and others, in the preparation of "The Illustrated Songs of Robert Burns." Harvey was also called to "illustrate" the genius of Burns in another way. In the "Phrenological Development of Robert Burns, from a Cast of his Skull moulded at Dumfries, with Remarks by George Combe," the drawings of the poet's skull are from his pencil.

THE BUST OF ROBERT BURNS: NATIONAL
WALLACE MONUMENT.

ORD ROSEBERY, speaking in Glasgow at the centenary celebration of the death of Robert Burns, enquired—"If a roll-call of fame were read over at the beginning of every century, how many men of eminence would answer a second time to their names?" The men who are commemorated in the "Hall of Heroes" in the National Wallace Monument on the Abbey Craig, near Stirling, may be fairly considered as those who would answer a second time, although they may not all be privileged to have centenary celebrations. Provided the Wallace Monument Custodiers pay due respect to eminence, the acceptance of a memorial for the "Hall of Heroes" may be regarded as one of the highest honours that can be conferred on Scotland's gifted sons.

The foundation stone of the national memorial to Wallace on the Abbey Craig was laid on 24th June, 1861, and the building was formally completed on 11th September, 1869. In 1885, the Custodiers, finding themselves with funds on hand, resolved to endeavour to further embellish the building, and among the improvements proposed was the setting aside of

one of the halls, viz., the Champion Room, for the reception of busts of eminent Scotsmen. Curiously enough the first memorial offered to be gifted was that of Burns. The following letter explains itself:—

CRESSON, PA.,

September 18th, 1885.

MY DEAR SIR,—I shall consider it quite a privilege to be allowed to add a bust to the noble Wallace Monument. As I am the first I presume I can make a selection. In which case I prefer the author of “Scots wha hae wi’ Wallace bled.”

I think it best to leave to the Custodiers the selection of a sculptor. Your draft on me will be duly honoured.

Yours very truly,

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

Wm. Christie, Esq.

The handsome offer of Mr. Carnegie was accepted by the Custodiers, who selected as their sculptor Mr. D. W. Stevenson, R.S.A., Edinburgh. Mr. Stevenson, working from the Naismyth portrait, produced a fine likeness of the bard. The ceremony of unveiling the bust took place on 4th September, 1886, in presence of a large assemblage, including some notable Burns enthusiasts. Mr. Robert Yellowlees, Provost of Stirling, presided, and the bust was unveiled amid cheers, by Mr. Robert Mercer, Dean of the Guildry of Stirling. About the first to express an opinion, says a press reporter, was Mr. James M’Kie, Kilmarnock, who, in a tone quite audible throughout the room, repeated “It’ll do. It’ll do.” In reply to a question, Mr. M’Kie stated that in his opinion the bust was perfection.

After a service of cake and wine, the gathering adjourned to the open air, where an oration on “The

Genius of Burns" was pronounced by Dr. Charles Rogers, subsequently joint-author of "The Book of Robert Burns." The usual votes of thanks having been passed, the proceedings terminated with the singing of "Scots Wha Hae."

The bust, an illustration of which forms the frontispiece to the present volume, rests on a neat bracket, carved in Scottish Gothic, designed by Mr. Kinross, architect, Edinburgh, and on a bronze plate underneath are the words :—

ROBERT BURNS.

Presented by

ANDREW CARNEGIE, Esqr.

THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS :

JANUARY 25, 1859.



IN the national celebration of the centenary of the poet's birth, on 25th January, 1859, Stirlingshire took an active interest. The principal towns observed the occasion as a holiday. The county press teemed with Burns literature in its issues immediately before and after the event, and some of the county pupils—faithful to the traditions of Daddy Auld and Black Jock—hurled their wrath against the bard and his works. The newspapers of the time afford ample proof of the enthusiasm which permeated all classes, and of the genius and love which were brought as offerings to the poet's shrine. The event called forth a number of poetical effusions, some of them of little merit, but all testifying to the wide-spread interest that was evinced in the occasion.

“There has been no event of public interest during the last week,” said the local press, “except the celebration of the centenary of our national poet. From the way the centenary has been celebrated, from the enthusiasm manifested, we see what a firm hold the works of Burns have on the public mind of this country. Never was there a greater tribute paid to the memory

of any man, and we are glad to think that it will not be barren of results. Besides the thank-offering that will be paid to the relatives of Burns who are still amongst us, and who are living in comparative poverty, the feeling that has been called forth on this occasion, will revive the spirit of many a weary 'o'erlaboured wight,' and nerve him to the discharge of his duty, manfully and faithfully, in whatever circumstances he may be placed. The moral effect of the celebration on Tuesday will thus be great and lasting, and pointed to with pride by all who love their country and the men who contributed to raise her to the position she now occupies among the nations of the earth."

From the columns of the county newspapers, and the "Chronicle of the Hundredth Birth-day of Robert Burns," the following accounts of the various meetings have been drawn.

The centennial celebration was observed at **Airth** by a public dinner in the Crown Inn. The meeting was most successful, and Mr. Tosh, of Newok, ably filled the chair. After the usual loyal and patriotic toasts, the chairman claimed a bumper to the "Immortal Memory of Scotia's Bard," which was responded to with the utmost enthusiasm, honour, and respect. Many other toasts were proposed and duly honoured in the course of the evening. Several other private social parties were held throughout the district in honour of the interesting event.

The day was observed at **Alva** as a holiday—all the places of business being closed, and in the evening

a grand soiree and concert took place in the Town Hall, which was crowded to excess. After the soiree broke up a large party met for supper in the Johnstone Arms. The usual toasts were given and appropriate songs sung.

At **Bannockburn** the centenary was observed by a procession which, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, came off in tolerably good order. It returned to the Town Hall about seven o'clock, after which the members of the Bruce and Thistle Masonic Lodge proceeded to enjoy themselves in the hostelry of Mr. Teasdale. In the Hall, Alex. Wilson, Esq., younger of Craighead, presided, and gave an excellent address. Other addresses and recitations were given by members of the Eclectic Society.

Two gatherings were held at **Bonnybridge**. These were supposed to be to some extent in opposition, but each met with a fair share of patronage. One, which took the form of a soiree, was held in the New School-room. The other gathering, which partook of the nature of a concert, was held in Mr. Gardiner's School, and both were eminently successful.

The hundredth anniversary of the birth-day of the national poet was celebrated at **Bridge of Allan** by the Curling Club and their friends. Sixty gentlemen sat down to dinner in the Westerton Arms. The chair was occupied by Mr. James Hogg of the *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, who proposed "The Immortal Memory" in an eloquent speech. A song, composed for the occasion by Mr. John Halliday, and entitled "The Scottish Folk," was sung by Mr. Dow of Keirfield.

The members of the **Buchlyvie** Mutual Improvement Society met, along with a few friends, in the Public School, which was most tastefully decorated. Mr. John Robertson, who occupied the chair, proposed "The Immortal Memory." Other addresses on Burns were given, and an ode, composed for the occasion by Mr. P. Dun, stationmaster, Port of Menteith, was recited by him.

The people of **Campsie** demonstrated on the 25th by various entertainments. The Masonic body had a supper and ball in the Commercial Inn; a party of sixty dined in the Lennox Arms; and an excellent entertainment was provided for upwards of 200 in the New Subscription School-room.

At **Carron** a few of the admirers of Burns met in Carron Inn. Mr. John Campbell, accountant, Carron, discharged the duties of the chair, and after the usual loyal and patriotic toasts, gave a very interesting description of the life and poetry of the immortal bard.

At **Carronshore** a number of the admirers of Scotland's poet met in the house of Alexander Hunter, publican. The duty of the chair was confided to Mr. John Lawson. After partaking of a most substantial supper, the usual loyal toasts were given, after which the chairman, in a most appropriate speech, proposed the toast of the evening, "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns," which was responded to in a most enthusiastic manner.

At **Denny** a tea and fruit soiree was held in the Oddfellows' Hall. The preparations made were on a

scale which had never been equalled in the locality. Long before the hour announced the company began to assemble, and the Hall was soon filled. Shortly before seven o'clock the speakers took their seats on the platform—the Rev. Mr. Falconer occupying the chair. Appropriate speeches were delivered, and a suitable and appropriate selection of songs from the poet's works was sung during the evening.

In the Red Lion Inn, **Falkirk** had a public reunion on the afternoon of the centenary. There was a large gathering of admirers of the bard, and a poem, written for the celebration by Mr. John Campbell, writer, Falkirk, was recited by him amid applause. In Bank Street Chapel another gathering was held. W. Hepburn, Esq., occupied the chair, and gave a graceful outline of the poet's character. Thereafter a programme of Burns's songs and recitations was gone through. In connection with the Falkirk Working Men's Burns Festival a prize competition was held. Provost Keir gave a very handsome edition of Burns's Works for the best poem by a working man—the Committee of the Festival giving an edition of the poet's works for the second best. Both prizes were won by Mr. James Law, builder, Falkirk. Throughout the whole of the day the principal offices and shops were closed. The bells were kept ringing, and bands of music perambulated the streets, while in the evening there were several bonfires, and the urchins amused themselves with "squibs," "crackers," "Roman candles," and other specimens of pyrotechny.

The centenary was celebrated at **Gargunnoch** by a supper in Mrs. Hardie's. There was a numerous

attendance, and the chair was ably filled by the Provost, who gave the toast of the evening in very felicitous terms. Several songs were sung, and a piece of original poetry, composed for the occasion, was read amid applause.

At **Grangemouth** the centenary was observed as a holiday. In the evening a large number of the merchants, farmers, and other gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood celebrated the occasion by a grand dinner in the Zetland Arms Hotel. The musical association of the town also afforded to a select party of one hundred a superior treat. Some other attempts to commemorate the centenary received their merited encouragement.

At **Kilsyth** a respectable company met in the Parish School-room—Rev. William Wallace in the chair. After doing justice to an abundant supply of tea and cake, a talented address on the character and genius of Burns was delivered by the chairman. Other addresses were given by Mr. John Wallace and Mr. William Moffat. At the termination of the soiree a grand ball commenced, and “tripping on the light fantastic toe” was kept up with great spirit till an early hour.

A number of the inhabitants of **Kippen** met together to unite their sentiments of sympathy and concord with their fellow countrymen throughout the land, in doing honour to the memory of Scotland’s immortal bard. The utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed. A number of speeches were delivered on topics connected with the prosperity and

welfare of Scotland. Several songs from the works of Burns were sung, and the whole proceedings were such as to leave a pleasant impression on the minds of all who were present.

The good folks of **Laurieston** manifested their love towards the national poet by having a bonfire in the square, around which many of the youngsters of the town gathered, and behaved in a quiet and orderly manner; whilst a few of the older inhabitants enjoyed themselves by partaking of an excellent supper in Mr. Pratis's Inn—Mr. Murphy, Falkirk, in the chair. After the usual toasts came "The Memory of Burns," "Bonnie Jean Armour," "Highland Mary," and "Burns's Sons."

Menstrie, inspired by the prevailing enthusiasm, and determined not to be found wanting in contributing its mite of honour to the memory of Scotia's bard, resolved, in fitting style, to celebrate the centenary of his birth. A torch-light procession, headed by the band, paraded the village, infinitely to the delight of "auld wives and weans." The school-room, festooned with evergreens for the occasion, was filled by eight o'clock with cheerful faces and merry hearts. The chair was occupied by Mr. John Tainsh, and an interesting programme of song and sentiment was gone through. This was followed by a dance.

The centenary was observed at **Milngavie** by a festival in the Town Hall—Mr. H. Carmichael, East Chapelton, presiding. After doing justice to a substantial dinner, the chairman proposed "The Immortal Memory of Scotland's Peasant Poet." The croupier

then gave "The Noble and Manly Independence of Burns." Mr. R. Crawford, being called upon, gave an original ode on "Burns and his Works," prepared for the occasion. Other songs and poems were rendered, and the company separated after singing "Auld Lang Syne."

A large number of admirers of the poet, in the village and vicinity of **Polmont**, celebrated the occasion by dining together in the Black Bull on the afternoon of Tuesday. William Thorburn, Esq., ably filled the chair. Ample justice was done to the object of the meeting, and appropriate songs and toasts were spiritedly given and enthusiastically responded to.

Redding held a very enthusiastic celebration of the centenary in Redding-Muirhead School, there being nearly 400 present. The toast of the evening was given from the chair in an able speech, and was cordially responded to. During the evening poems and songs of Burns were rendered, and a happy evening terminated with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

A soiree was given in the Parish School-room at **Slamannan**. Mr. R. Taylor having been called to the chair, introduced to the meeting the Rev. Mr. Horne, who gave a very interesting and humorous speech. John Boyd, Esq., M.D., then addressed the meeting, and very fully and ably discussed the prominent features in the character of the poet, as shown by his craniological development. Mr. Christie drew attention to the connection between music and poetry, to the position Burns occupied as a writer of songs, and

to the influence his writings have had on the popular mind of Scotland. Several of the poet's choicest songs were sung, and after votes of thanks to the speakers and singers, the meeting terminated.

The Burns Centenary was celebrated in **Stirling** with the utmost enthusiasm, and in a manner highly creditable to the town. A number of the principal shops were closed during the day, and in the afternoon business was generally suspended. The public bells were rung between the hours of five and six o'clock. It was intended that a procession should take place, but owing to the inclemency of the weather—a heavy gale of wind blowing from the westward with rain—it would have been a matter of impossibility to have displayed any banners or insignia, and consequently that part of the arrangement was not carried out. A grand musical festival took place in the Corn Exchange Hall at six o'clock. Bailie Rankin was unanimously called to the chair. After the chairman's introductory remarks, "Scots Wha Hae" was sung by the Choral Society, after which the Milton Instrumental Band played the same spirited air. A number of other songs of Burns were rendered and speeches were delivered by Mr. Theodore Røeding, teacher of French and German in the High School, and the Rev. William Blair, Dunblane. A song, composed for the occasion by Mr. William Sinclair, was then sung by Mr. Sutherland. The Stirling Musical Association also celebrated the event by a gathering in a room of the High School. Mr. William Mackieson, the President of the Association, occupied the chair, and gave an address on the

bard and his writings. Other speeches were given and a number of the poet's songs sung. The local Freemasons dined in Bro. David Pollock's Corn Exchange Inn. The chair was occupied by R. W. M. Dyson, and Brother Forbes, P.M., gave the toast of the evening, "The Immortal Memory of Burns." "The Sons of Burns" was proposed by Mr. Stevenson, and "Burns as a Mason" by Mr. James Fleming. Several of the poet's songs were rendered.

At **St. Ninians** a select party of admirers met in Mr. Johnstone's Wallace Inn—Mr. George Pitblado in the chair. A substantial supper crowned the board; and when the cloth was removed the chairman, after giving the usual preliminary toasts, proposed, in a stirring speech, "The Memory of Robert Burns." Several other toasts were given, a number of Burns's songs were sung, and after spending a pleasant evening, the company separated at the "statutory hour."

JULY 21, 1896.

The celebrations attending the centenary of the death of Robert Burns were not so wide-spread as those which marked the hundredth anniversary of his birth. Every town and village in Scotland did not on this later, as on the former occasion, display their interest in the centenary event, by holding individual gatherings, but it may be safely affirmed that many joined in spirit in the great demonstration which was held in Dumfries on the 21st July, 1896. According to the programme of the day's proceedings, the Bannockburn, Denny, Dennyloanhead, and Lenzie Burns Clubs were represented in the procession, while

a number of sons of the shire also made private pilgrimage to the poet's grave ; and there were a few gatherings throughout the county in honour of the event. Notices of these have been drawn from the newspaper reports, which will shew that a genuine enthusiasm prevailed. "The week that is now ending," said the *Falkirk Herald* of July 25, 1896, "has borne fitting and impressive testimony to the love and appreciation with which Burns is regarded, and we are glad to know that Falkirk has not been backward in rendering her share of the testimony—the meeting in the Town Hall having been a decided success." The other tributes to the poet's memory were also successful, and Stirlingshire may be considered as having performed a worthy part, in what is perhaps one of the most interesting literary functions that has taken place.

At **Falkirk** the celebration meeting was held in the Town Hall, and there was a large attendance. Provost Weir presided, and with him on the platform were Mr. James M'Killop, M.P., Sheriff Scott Moncrieff, Mr. Wilson of Bantaskine, Mr. Sutherland of Wallside, Mr. David Mitchell of Millfield, Rev. James Aitken, Rev. John Scott, Bailie Flannigan, Ex-Bailie Christie, and Mr. John Beeby, secretary of the Celebration Committee. The Wright Memorial Brass Band, Camelon, having played a selection of melodies from Burns's songs, the chairman explained that it was thought right that some celebration of the centenary of the death of the bard should take place in Falkirk, and thereafter called upon Mr. James M'Killop,

M.P., who gave an excellent address on the life and works of Burns. Ex-Bailie Christie also addressed the gathering. The chairman then intimated that, as many were aware, the Celebration Committee offered a prize of a handsomely-bound copy of the Poet's Works for the best poem on Burns written for the occasion. Nine poems were submitted to the judges, and the prize was awarded to Mr. Alexander Stewart, Polmont, for the poem which was then read by the Rev. John Scott. Songs and recitations were rendered during the evening, and after the usual votes of thanks, "Auld Lang Syne" brought the gathering to a close.

On the Sabbath before the 21st July, the Rev. P. Anton, minister of **Kilsyth**, preached a sermon in the Parish Church on the centenary of the death of Burns. He took as his text ii. Kings, 13 and 21. Burns's life from first to last, he said, had been before the world. It was clear that Burns made himself much worse than he was. So also had Bunyan and many others. The people of Scotland had not been wrong in their opinions of Bruce, Knox, Watt, Scott and Calvin, and it is impossible they could have erred about Burns. Two things strongly and deeply touched Burns's sympathies—Scotland and Scotland's Church. He was a citizen of the one and a member of the other. He thought there was no place like Scotland, and he was himself a personified Scotland. His birth was in cold winter weather; his death was amid the sunshine of summer. And so it was with his memory. They were learning now more than ever how much there was in him "of that Divinity which grows not old."

The members of **Stenhousemuir** "Thistle" Burns Club celebrated the centenary by a supper in the Crown Inn. A company of fifty gentlemen were present, and Mr. James Scott, Parish Councillor, occupied the chair. After supper, the chairman delivered an address on "Burns: His Life and Works," and during the evening songs and recitations were rendered.

There was no celebration in **Stirling** in connection with the centenary, but the local Burns Club did not allow the day to pass altogether without some notice being taken of the event. A laurel wreath, prepared by Mr. John Craig, fruiterer, Murray Place, was sent out to the Wallace Monument and hung round the brow of the bust of the bard. The wreath bore an appropriate inscription and the motto "laurels ne'er were worthier won." Mr. Ferguson, the keeper of the Wallace Monument, also prepared a wreath from laurels grown on the Abbey Craig, and hung it over the shoulders of the bust. This wreath bore the inscription, "From Freedom's ground to Freedom's poet."

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE 1—PAGE 2.

William Nicol was born at Dumbretton, in the parish of Annan, in 1744. An itinerant teacher gave him the rudiments of education, and so well did he succeed that he early taught a school in his mother's house. He subsequently passed to Annan Academy and Edinburgh University. He was for some time one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh, but, quarrelling with the Rector, he resigned and set up a school of his own. He died at Edinburgh in 1797.

NOTE 2—PAGE 3.

Chambers is probably in error in assigning this incident to this date. As has been seen, the journey from Edinburgh was in a chaise, and not on horseback, and perhaps the anecdote may be more correctly attributed to the occasion of the poet's second visit to the Carron district.

NOTE 3—PAGE 4.

In *The Fifeshire Journal* the last line of the stanza was printed "For misery *never* tholed a pang," which being inconsistent with the sense evidently intended, Chambers altered to "For misery ever tholed a pang." On collation with the original on the Inn window this is found to be correct.

NOTE 4—PAGE 4.

Boyack was apprenticed to a shoemaker, but he left this in 1810 to study music, and after filling various situations, was appointed music master in Madras College, St. Andrews. He died at St. Andrews on 10th February, 1854.

NOTE 5—PAGE 6.

The resting-place of this warrior is in the Old Churchyard of Falkirk, where, as mentioned by the poet, a suitable monument marks the spot.

NOTE 6—PAGE 7.

Camelon's prominence in the Pictish dominion and its metropolitan character are pretty much matter of legend. It is believed by some that the place was possessed by the painted Picts down to the ninth century, when Kenneth, King of Scots, meeting them in battle (A.D. 839), put them to the sword, "sparing neither age nor sex."

NOTE 7—PAGE 7.

The Carron Company are among the oldest Glasgow merchants, and the first furnace was blown on 1st January, 1760. The Ironworks achieved almost world-wide distinction at the very outset by their manufacture of cannon, mortar, and chain-shot for the arsenals of Europe. Russia, Denmark, and Sardinia each drew its war supplies from this Foundry, and Carron manufactured the whole battering train of the Duke of Wellington.

NOTE 8—PAGE 7.

James Bruce was born at Kinnaird House in 1730. His first wife was Adriana Allan, the daughter of a London wine merchant. His second wife (in whose memory he erected the monument referred to by the poet) was Mary Dundas, daughter of Thomas Dundas of Fingask. The memorial is adorned with various emblematical figures and Greek inscriptions, and bears to have been erected by Bruce "to the memory of Mary Dundas, his wife, who died, Feb. 10, 1785."

NOTE 9—PAGE 7.

The fame of Carron Ironworks has drawn many distinguished visitors to their gates. In 1821, Prince Nicholas, afterwards Emperor Nicholas, visited the works, and he was followed by Prince Leopold, and Prince Maximilian of Austria. In July, 1859, the chief departments were inspected by the Prince of Wales.

NOTE 10—PAGE 7.

"Line 6.—Your porter dought na *hear* us. Gray, Stewart, and all Editors but the *Courant* has 'bear,' which rhymes with 'sair,' and in the sense of 'suffer,' or 'allow' is the better reading."—*The Centenary Burns*.

NOTE 11—PAGE 8.

Benson was also Blast Furnace Manager with, and was a shareholder in, the Carron Company. He resided at West Carron, which is close to the Ironworks, and which was at that time a farm. Here he engaged in farming in addition to his clerical duties. He had a large family, and one of his daughters was married to Symington, who built the first steamboat. One of the sons was a sea-captain in the Carron Company's service. At a later date the family went to Australia, and the name is now unknown in the Carron district.

NOTE 12—PAGE 10.

Herbertshire Castle on the Carron. This keep was given by one of the early Jameses to the Earl of Wigton, in recognition of services rendered in battle. The castle was presented as the Earl's "halberty share," which time has changed into "Herbertshire."

NOTE 13—PAGE 10.

Denovan House lies about a mile and a quarter from the town of Denny.

NOTE 14—PAGE 10.

The Estate of Auchenbowie is situated a few miles south from Stirling, and is still in the possession of the Monro family. The present representative is D. B. Monro, Esq., of Oriel College, Oxford. His great-grandmother was the Miss Monro of Burns's time.

NOTE 15—PAGE 12.

In local handbooks Burns is said to have stayed in Gibb's Inn—now the Golden Lion Hotel. The building did not pass to the Gibbs, however, until some time subsequent to the poet's visit, and it was the hostelry of James Wingate in 1787. At this date the Gibbs were proprietors of an Inn situated in St. Mary's Wynd, which was considered the principal Inn of the town until the erection of the Golden Lion Hotel. There is a belief entertained by some that it was in this Inn in St. Mary's Wynd that the poet slept, but local tradition is against it.

NOTE 16—PAGE 13.

In 1892 the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* made some startling exposures regarding the manufacture of Burns MSS., and in the cor-

respondence which took place on the subject the following letter, dated at Stirling, and purporting to have been written by Burns, was submitted as having been sent out to Canada to be sold to the highest bidder, by a Scotch gentleman who had exhausted his fortune in collecting literary curiosities:—

Stirling, August 26th, 1787.

John Ord, Esq., Lanark.

DEAR SIR,—I am forced to be more laconic in my letter, as I have not had much time on my hands with my present travelling about. I had some intention of sending you the songs from Edinburgh, but could not get a chance. However, you will receive a packet of them with this letter by the hand of the carrier. I have had a favourable settlement. I am, your obliged friend,

ROBERT BURNS.

There seems to be little room for the suspicion that this letter is other than one of those forgeries which resulted in twelve months' imprisonment to "Antique" Smith.

NOTE 17—PAGE 14.

These lines are not printed in the text by Mr. W. Scott Douglas, but are given as a footnote, with the explanation that they are to be found in the Glenriddell MSS. In an edition of Currie's "Life and Works," published in 1865, the lines are given as follows:—

Here Stuarts once in glory reign'd,
The laws for Scotia's weal ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre's sway'd by foreign hands.
The Stuarts' native race is gone!
A race outlandish fills the throne.

NOTE 18—PAGE 18.

In "Old Faces, Old Places, and Old Stories of Stirling," by William Drysdale (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1898), reference is made to Burns's visit to Stirling, and the *Paisley Magazine* article is quoted *verbatim*. It is apparently adopted by Mr. Drysdale, and this is unfortunate, as, from what we have said, it will be manifest that the story is very far from being correct.

NOTE 19—PAGE 20.

A lady still living in Perthshire, wrote Robert Chambers in his "Life and Works of Robert Burns," remembers visiting Drummond

Castle a very short time after Burns had been at Ochtertyre. Captain Drummond, subsequently Lord Perth, had recently obtained possession of this fine place, along with the estates which had been forfeited by his collateral relations in 1745-46. He and his lady, the Honourable Mrs. Drummond, were full of loyalty to the reigning family, to which they had been so largely indebted. My informant remembers that someone asked Mrs. Drummond why Burns, who had been at various places in the neighbourhood, had not been here; to which the answer was—"We could not invite him, unless he had disclaimed writing the lines on the inn window." This "slice of gossip," as *The Centenary Burns* might call it, has not been re-served by Mr. William Wallace in his revised edition of Chambers's "Burns."

NOTE 20—PAGE 21.

Mr William Wallace, quoting from the Glenriddell MSS. gives "My *imprudent* lines," etc. The Editors of *The Centenary Burns*, quoting from the same source, give "These *impudent* lines, etc."

NOTE 21—PAGE 21.

The lines are sometimes rendered thus:—

With Æsop's Lion, Burns says, "Sore I feel
All others' scorn—but damn that ass's heel."

NOTE 22—PAGE 27.

From *Of the Progress of the Soul: the Second Anniversarie (Elegy on Mrs. Elizabeth Drury)*, by John Donne, D.D.

NOTE 23—PAGE 28.

In an article entitled "Robert Burns in Stirlingshire," which appeared in the *People's Journal* for January 21, 1899, the topographical note of Burns is accepted as accurate, and in order to justify it the writer informs us that "he passed into Perthshire *over the Ochil Hills*, and as he went, admired in poetic fashion the beauties of the Forth, the Teith, and the Devon."

NOTE 24—PAGE 29.

Dr. Adair was the son of a physician in Ayr, and had been introduced to Burns by the minister of Loudon—Rev. Mr. Lawrie. In 1789 he

was married to Miss Charlotte Hamilton, whose acquaintance he made on the present occasion. He was for some time engaged in medical practice in the Pleasance, Edinburgh, but he afterwards removed to Harrogate, where he died in 1802, aged 37.

NOTE 25—PAGE 33.

At a sale of Burns MSS. at Messrs. Sotheby's Auction Rooms in London on March 11, 1898, four pages of autograph lines from poems of Burns, comprising the last two verses of "Bruar Water," "Lines written on a pane of glass at Stirling," "The bonnie lass of Albany," and "Strathallan's Lament" realised the sum of £16.

NOTE 26—PAGE 33.

Finding that Alva possessed traditional evidence of incidents connected with the poet's visit, we made enquiry, and were referred to Mr. John Ritchie, Green Square, Alva, whose father had seen Burns, and who was understood to know the facts. We interviewed Mr. Ritchie on August 17, 1898, and our story of Burns in Alva is the result. Mr. Ritchie was in his 84th year at the time we saw him. Possessed of a very retentive memory, he recounted incidents of long ago with fluency, and on one or two points which we were able to check from other sources, we found his statements correct, so that his recollections may be regarded as accurate. So far as Mr. Ritchie is concerned, our narrative may be accepted as a "true and particular account."

NOTE 27—PAGE 34.

Chambers tells us that there was a third "Betty" who inspired the muse of Burns. It is still believed, he says, in the parish of Stair that Burns courted and was accepted by Betty Campbell, a servant in Stair House, that he gave her "lines," and that these were destroyed by the girl after a quarrel with the poet.

NOTE 28—PAGE 34.

In the "Burns Obituary" in the *Burns Chronicle* for 1896, there appears the following—"Black, Elizabeth (reputed 'Eliza') died 1827, aged 74." This is manifestly a reference to Betty Black of Alva, and it raises the question whether, after all, Burns writers have been correct in their speculations regarding the heroine—Betty—of "Mauchline Belles," and the heroine of "From thee, Eliza, I must go." It has been generally agreed that the "braw" Miss Betty of the "Mauchline

Belles," the subject of "From thee, Eliza, I must go," and the "Bess" of "The Mauchline Wedding" were one and the same person, viz.—Miss Elizabeth Miller, daughter of John Miller of the Sun Inn, Mauchline; and this agreement has been come to after considering evidence that is not very conclusive. Elizabeth Miller was resident in Mauchline, so also was Elizabeth Black, and both appear to have been intimate with Burns. To begin with, it is stated by Chambers that "Miss Betty" of the "Mauchline Belles" was Elizabeth Miller. He gives no authority for his statement, and it could quite as easily have referred to Elizabeth Black. Elizabeth Miller was born in 1768, and was thus nine years younger than Burns, while Elizabeth Black, born in 1754, was six years older, and if, as Chambers infers, he had composed the lines by the time he was twenty-six years of age, it is more likely that he would write of the "braw" woman of twenty-nine than of the girl of sixteen. Having made his statement regarding the "Betty" of the "Mauchline Belles," Chambers further records with respect to the heroine of "Eliza" that, "from a variety of circumstances, he has been led to conclude that Eliza was identical with the *Miss Betty*, one of the Mauchline Belles." What the "circumstances" are he does not so much as indicate, and in support of his case he merely quotes the reference to his "quondam Eliza," on whom he had called on his return to Mauchline in June, 1787. But again, his "quondam Eliza" could easily have been, and probably was, Elizabeth Black. Without, therefore, appearing to be too anxious to knock a "pious opinion" on the head, and with due deference to Robert Chambers and the later writers who have copied his statements and accepted his conclusions without demur, we may be allowed to say that it seems to us at least that the "braw" Miss Betty and the heroine of "Eliza" were Elizabeth Black, whose acquaintance the poet renewed at Alva.

In "The Complete Works of Robert Burns," by William Gunnyon, "From thee, Eliza, I must go" is introduced with the note—"The heroine of this song was the 'Miss Betty is braw,' one of the Mauchline belles whom the poet has celebrated in epigrammatic verse. She was born and brought up in Ayrshire, was of an amiable disposition, and appears to have sympathised with the poet in all his sufferings, and thus raised, says Chambers, a kind of love chiefly composed of gratitude, in his bosom. She ultimately married a Mr. James Stewart, and long survived the poet, having died in Alva in 1827, in the 74th year of her age." Gunnyon's note is clearly a mixture of Chambers and some one else, but it without hesitancy declares Betty Black to be the heroine.

Mr. Ritchie informed us that he had heard her remark that it was she who came up "as light as onie lambie" in the "Holy Fair." This may mean either that Burns had been at Mauchline "Holy Fair" with her, and on her invitation—which is not unlikely—and that she had consequently taken the remark in the poem to apply to herself, or, that the bard had indicated to her that she was commemorated in this way. In any event, if Betty is correct, the statement goes to prove that the "Fun" of Burns was a real personage, and not after all a mere suggested copy of Fergusson's "Mirth" in "Leith Races."

Lucky had a sister married to a Mr. Rutherford, who resided in Bridge of Allan. Mr. Ritchie and a son of Rutherford used to meet on Airthrey Loch at curling, and Mr. Ritchie was informed by him of one incident in Lucky's Mauchline connection with Burns. It was that her father was always very angry when he saw Betty coming home from any of the fairs round Mauchline riding behind Burns.

A well-known Alva worthy, Betty left behind her one memorial in the form of "Lucky's Linn." This was a pool in which Betty was wont to bathe, and so it took her name. The bathing place has passed from existence, but the term "Lucky's Linn" continues. She died at Alva in 1827, and was interred in Alva Churchyard.

NOTE 29—PAGE 35.

James Dawson died in 1837, aged 77, so that he would be about twenty-seven years of age when he met Burns.

NOTE 30—PAGE 36.

The daughter of Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie, Frances Anna Wallace was born April 16, 1730. She was married in 1748 to John Dunlop of Dunlop, who was much her senior. On her father's death, which occurred in 1760, she succeeded to Craigie Estate, but in 1783 it had to be sold, it was so heavily encumbered. This loss, followed by the death of her husband in 1785, conduced to a depressed state of mind, and she spent much of her time in semi-retirement. She died May 24, 1815.

NOTE 31—PAGE 41.

George Bannatine, minister of Craigie Parish, Ayrshire, 1744-64, and afterwards of the West Parish (now St. George's), Glasgow, 1764, till his death in 1769.—Chambers.

NOTE 32—PAGE 42.

Miss Helen Maria Williams was born in London in 1762. Chambers tells us that she was settled in Paris in 1790, was imprisoned as a partisan of the Gironde, released on the fall of Robespierre, and died at Paris, December, 1827. She published *Julia*, a novel, in 1790; translated *Paul and Virginia*; wrote several books on France, and for several years the portion of the *Annual Register* relating to that country. Her verse—smooth, flowing, and essentially conventional—includes *Edwin and Elfrida* (1782), a legendary tale, and *The Slave Trade* (1788).

NOTE 33—PAGE 46.

This is probably a reference to “Holy Willie’s Prayer.”

NOTE 34—PAGE 55.

Richard Brown, one of the poet’s correspondents.

NOTE 35—PAGE 58.

Graham (afterwards Sir Graham, Admiral, who did distinguished service in the French wars), the younger brother of Sir John Moore.—*William Wallace*.

NOTE 36—PAGE 59.

This may be an allusion to the poet’s mysterious Highland tour of June, 1787, but more probably the castle referred to is Gordon Castle—Dr. Moore may not have been strong in Scotch geography—and the “inhabitants” the Duke and Duchess of Gordon.—*Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*.

NOTE 37—PAGE 89.

The songs of Burns were readily picked up and circulated in the form of chap-books. Sometimes they were transformed. “Scots Wha Hae” was introduced with the following verses:—

“Near Bannockburn King Edward lay,
The Scots they were not far away;
Each eye bent on the break of day,
Glimm’ring frae the east.

At last the sun shone o’er the heath,
Which lighted up the field of death,
While Bruce, with soul-inspiring breath,
His heroes thus address’d.”

Then followed the song, and these stanzas were added to make a proper finish :—

“ Now fury kindled every eye,
‘ Forward ! forward ! ’ was the cry ;
‘ Forward, Scotland, do or die ! ’
 And where ’s the knave shall turn ?

At last they all run to the fray,
Which gave to Scotland liberty ;
And long did Edward rue the day
 He came to Bannockburn.”

NOTE 38—PAGE 98.

Or, “ O, my love Annie’s very bonie.”—(R. B.)

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