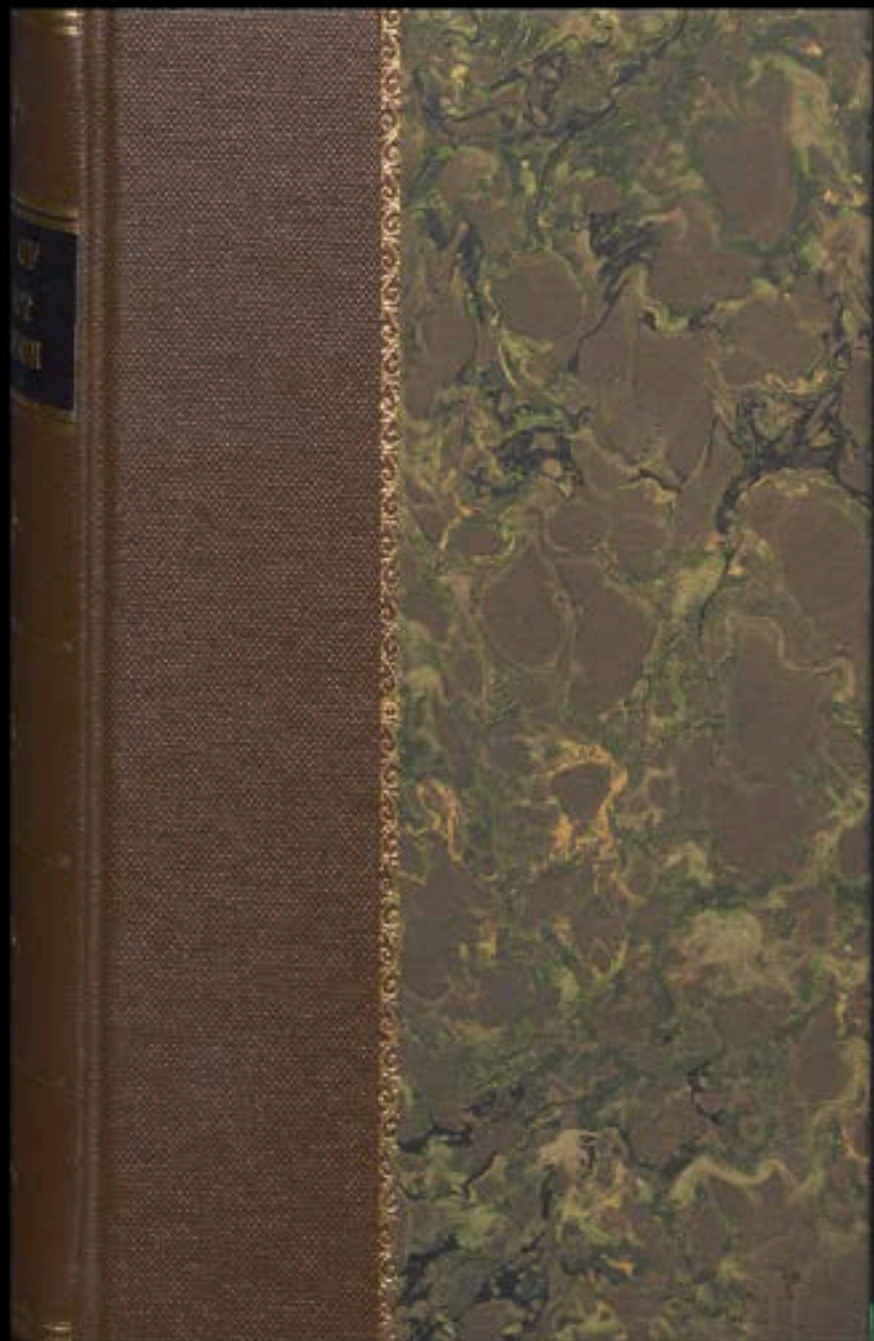




WORKS OF
ROBERT
FERGUSSON

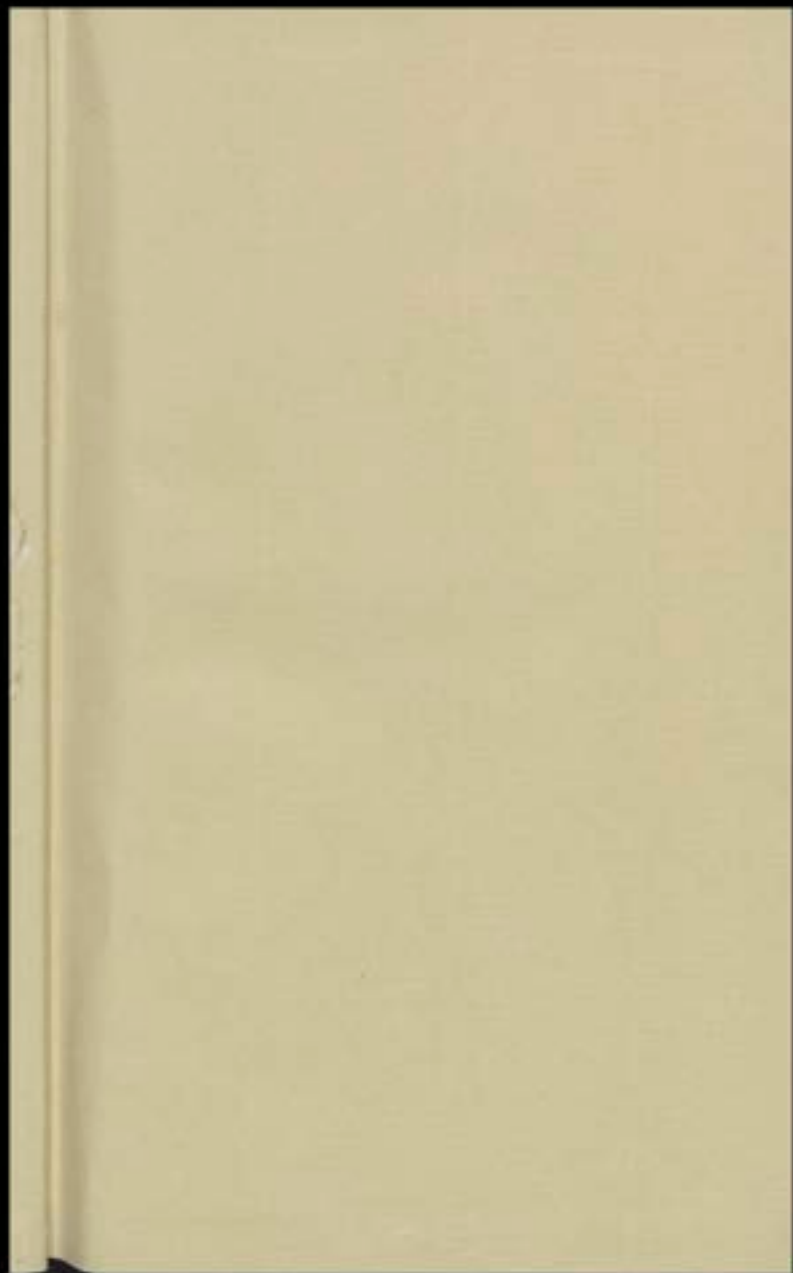




Barns Collection

Book No. 1541.....









FRONTISPIECE



*And now at equal distance show the land,
Shad'd by the tent, the joyful look perceive,
Of gathering in the bright*

POETICAL WORKS
OF
Robert Ferguson
with his Life



Engravings on Wood by Hewish,

Vol. I.

London Printed by W. Dawson.

1541

CONTENTS,

TO VOLUME FIRST.

	PAGE.
T HE Author's Life	9
Morning, Pastoral I.	85
Noon, Pastoral II.	91
Night, Pastoral III.	96
The Complaint, a Pastoral	102
The Decay of Friendship, a Pastoral Elegy	106
Against repining at Fortune, a Poem	111
Conscience, an Elegy	114
Damon to his Friends	119
Retirement	124
Ode to Hope	128
The Rivers of Scotland, an Ode	133
The Town and Country contrasted	145
Ode to Pity	149
On the cold Month of April, 1771	152
The Simile	156
The Bugs	160
A Saturday's Expedition	168
The Canongate Play-house in Ruins	177
Fashion, a Poem	182

 TO VOLUME FIRST.

On the Amputation of a Student's Hair	188
Verses, written at the Hermitage of Braid	191
A Tale	193
The Peasant, the Hen and young Ducks	196
To the Memory of John Cunningham, Poet	199
The Delights of Virtue	203
A Tavern Elegy	209
Good Eating	212
Tea, a Poem	220
The Sore of Feeling	226
An Expedition to Fife and the Island of May	231
To Sir John Fielding, on his attempt to suppress the Beggar's Opera	239
To Dr. Samuel Johnson	245
Epilogue, spoken by Mr Wilson, in the Character of an Edinburgh Buck	250
Songs	254; 257
Epitaph on General Wolfe	259
Extempore, on being asked which of three Sisters was the most Beautiful	264
Epigram on the numerous Epitaphs for General Wolfe	266
The Campaigns of the British Army in Flanders	271
The Campaigns of the British Army in Flanders	271

CONTENTS,

vii

.....
 TO VOLUME FIRST.

On the Death of Mr Thomas Lancashire,	
Comedian - - - - -	ib.
Character of a Friend - - - - -	261
Epigram, on seeing Scales used in a Mason	
Lodge - - - - -	ib.
On seeing a Lady paint herself - - - - -	262
My Last Will - - - - -	263
Codicil to R. Fergusson's last Will - - - - -	268
Notes - - - - -	273







Conscience.

Auld Reekie.





1850

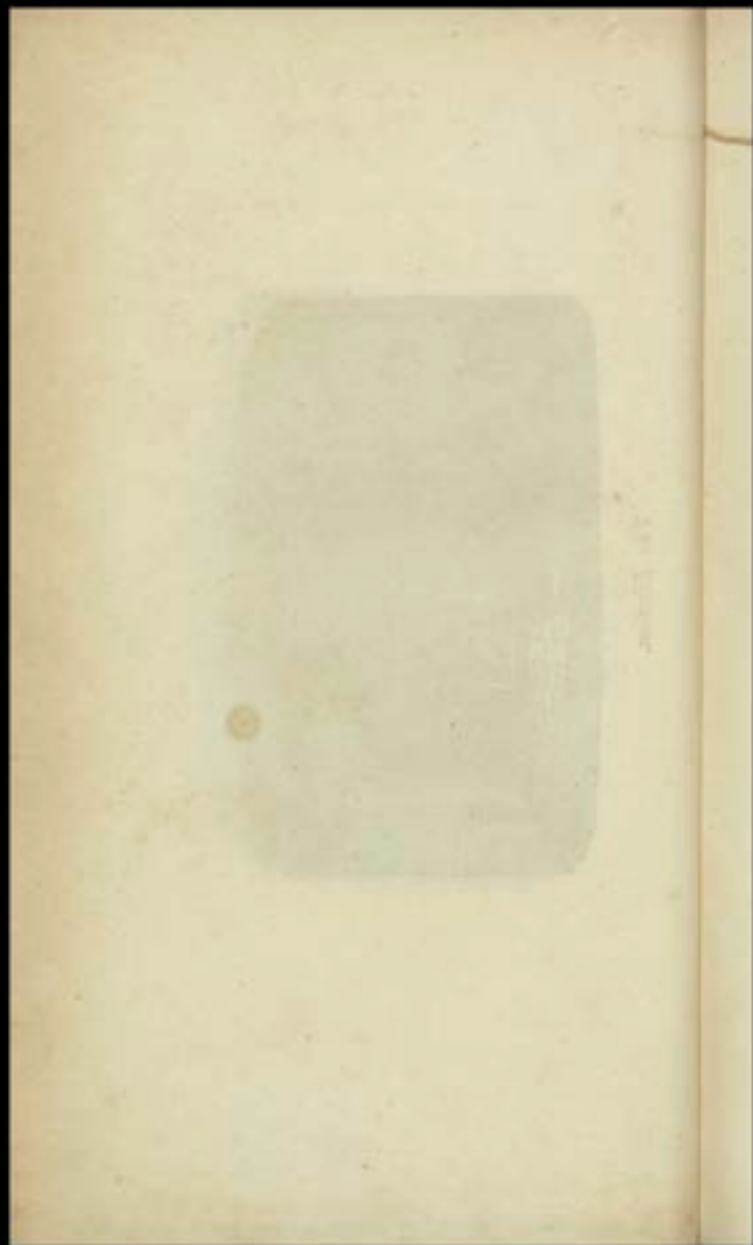


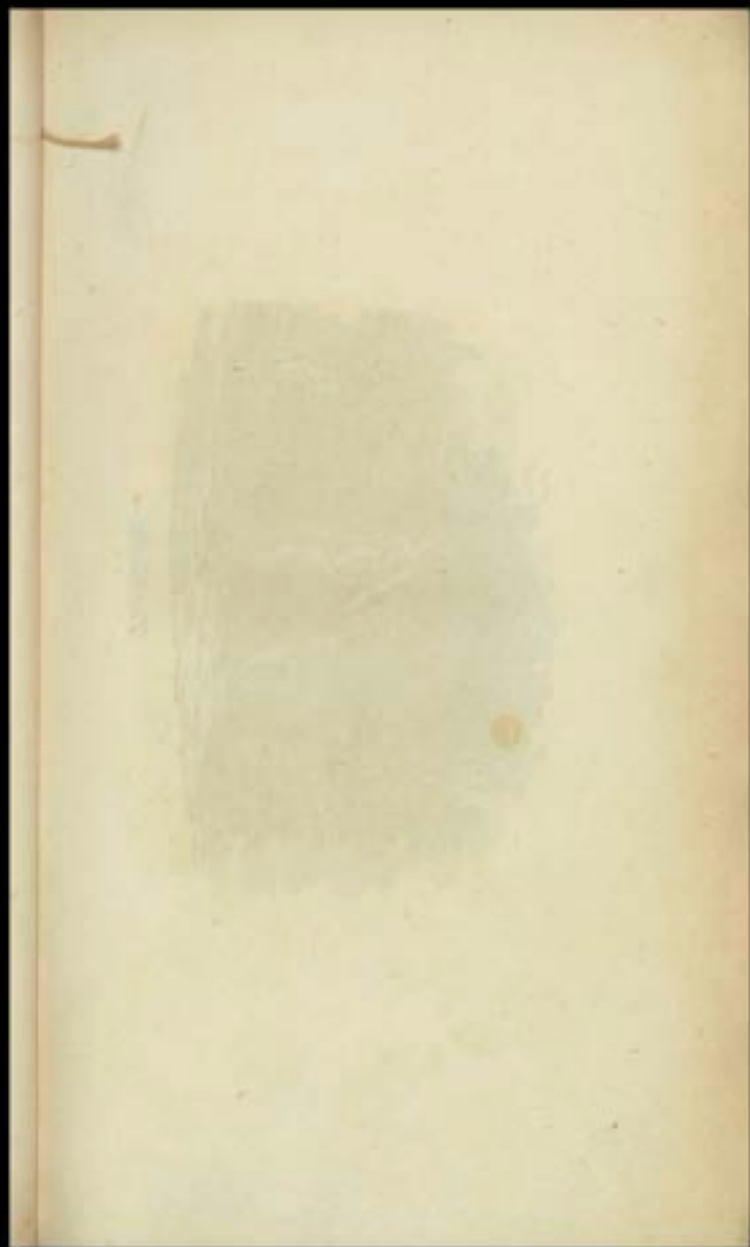


The Farmer's Ingle.

The Election.









The Simile.



Morning, a Pastoral.

Samuel J. May

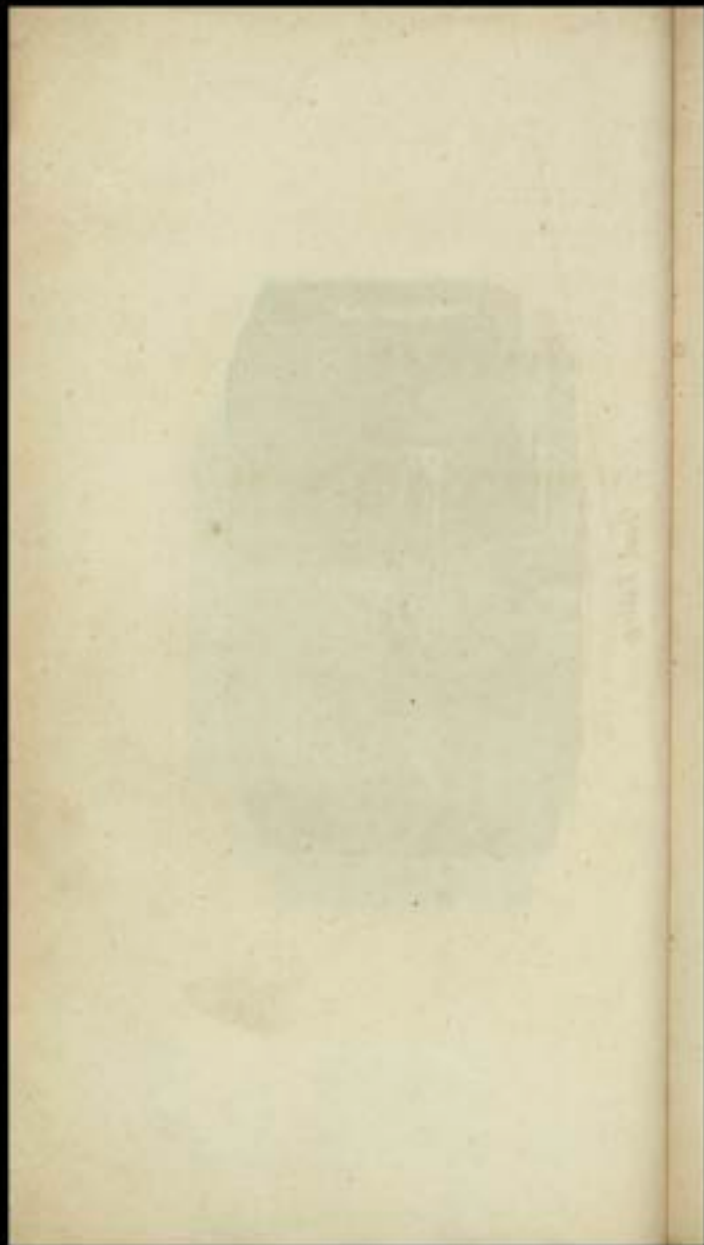




The Edinburgh Buck



Good Eating.



A

SKETCH OF THE LIFE

OF

ROBERT FERGUSSON.

THE errors of genius have often afforded melancholy occasion for the triumphs of prudent stupidity; and sometimes they have produced an affectation of folly and vice, as the appropriate marks of mental brightness. Eccentricity, and dissipated habits of life, it must be confessed, have been the frequent concomitants of high intellectual endowments; but they are to be viewed as the mere contingent blemishes, not as the inseparable associates of genius.

THE SCOTTISH POST.

Vice and profligacy, in the conduct of the dull and illiterate, pass without observation, because the beings in whom these deformities are to be found grovel in the shades of life, without exciting interest, or arresting attention. It must not however be supposed, that stupidity, or mediocrity of talent, exempt a man from the follies and crimes incident to humanity; while at the same time, there cannot be a more fatal error than that which sanctifies imprudence, and neglect of the more rigid duties of life, by representing such conduct as the aberrations of a generous spirit. Perhaps it is possible to derive useful instruction from exhibiting man as he is always to be found, an imperfect being: perhaps it is possible to trace the steps of intellectual pre-eminence through a career of imprudence, without that imprudence being permitted to assume the form and complexion of excellence. It is certainly not impossible to check the shallow pretensions of af-

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

fection, by showing, that the adventitious dress is not the precious jewel—that extravagance, thoughtlessness, and ardour of pursuit, are not the only constituents of mental superiority.

For a moral picture of this kind, it is difficult, perhaps, to select a fitter subject than Robert Ferguson. His natural talents were of the highest order; his acquirements were considerable; and he lived in an age, when the possession of such qualities, if properly applied, could not have failed to promote his domestic and social comfort. Although, however, he was placed in these circumstances, he never reached the meridian of life. The short period of his existence was distinguished chiefly by its wretchedness; and its close was preceded by madness, the consummation of mortal calamity.

Robert Ferguson was the son of William Ferguson, a man of Worth, but of humble Fortune,

THE SCOTTISH POET.

and Elizabeth Forbes, having served an Apprenticeship to a Merchant in Aberdeen, William Fergusson came to Edinburgh in the Year 1746 in search of employment. For a considerable time after his Arrival he was occupied as a Clerk by people of different descriptions but latterly obtained a situation, in the same capacity, in one of the departments of the British Linen Company's Bank in which situation he continued to act until the time of his Death. William Fergusson was a very intelligent man and much respected. He framed a very useful Book of Rates during the time that he had the management of the affairs of a Company of Upholsterers in Edinburgh and in the early part of his Life he indulged himself in writing verses. It is generally believed as he grew up to manhood he relinquished this habit. He had two Sons and two Daughters, viz. Barbara, Margaret, Harry, and Robert. Barbara was married to Mr. David Inverarity, cabinet-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

maker in Edinburgh. Her son, Mr. James Inverarity, some years ago, wrote a spirited and elegant critique on Mr. Irving's account of his uncle's life, and repelled, with becoming indignation, some very unwarrantable statements made by that gentleman. Margaret was married to Mr. Duval, a purser in the Navy. She is an accomplished woman, and possesses a mind that stamps her a genuine relative of Fergusson. Harry, the elder Brother, was a young man of considerable learning and ingenuity: he chose to atone for some juvenile indiscretions, by entering on board a ship of war. Robert the younger son author of the following Poems, was born at Edinburgh, on the 5th of September 1750.

During the years of his early infancy, his constitution was so extremely delicate, that his life was frequently despaired of and was incapable of attending school till he had attained the sixth

THE SCOTTISH POET.

year of his age. He was then placed under the tuition of a Mr. Philp, who taught in Niddry's Wynd. So considerable was his improvement under Mr. Philp, that in half a year he was thought qualified to be initiated in the study of the Latin language, in which he was instructed by Mr. Gilchrist, one of the masters of the High-school, Edinburgh. While he continued at this excellent seminary, the infirm state of his health prevented him from giving proper attendance. His powers, however, were so active, that even under the disadvantage attending this broken kind of study, he equalled any, and surpassed numbers of his class-fellows.

While his school studies were thus interrupted by ill health, he is said to have acquired a taste for Books, which he was accustomed to indulge. It is a remarkable fact, that while yet a mere child, his chief delight was in reading the Bible. The

THE SCOTTISH POET.

Proverbs of Solomon, in particular, attracted his most earnest regard. A curious instance of the effect which this practice produced on his tender and susceptible mind, may be mentioned as a proof of the powerful impression which some circumstances make on the human faculties in the early period of life. One day he entered his Mother's chamber in tears, calling to her to whip him. Upon inquiring into the cause of this extraordinary behaviour, he exclaimed, "O mother! 'hu that spareth the rod, hateth the child.'"—

After a desultory attendance at the High-school of Edinburgh, during a period of four years he went to Dundee, where he studied two years longer. At this time, it seems, his friends had destined him for the church. Accordingly, at the age of thirteen, he entered a student of St. Andrews university, where he enjoyed a bursary. Here he soon became distinguished as a youth of

THE SCOTTISH POET.

superior genius, and rendered himself conspicuous as "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy." His ingenuity recommended him to Dr. Wilkie, professor of natural philosophy in that university. It has been asserted that Wilkie employed him to read his academical prelections, when sickness or other casual circumstances prevented him from performing that duty himself. A boy of sixteen or seventeen years of age mounting the professorial rostrum, would afford an exhibition of a singular kind. It is also probable that Fergusson was more distinguished for his poetical genius, than for his talents in investigating subjects connected with natural philosophy. Certain it is, however, that Wilkie honoured him with particular marks of distinction. Nor were these bestowed on an ungrateful object: upon the death of his patron, which happened on the tenth of October, 1772, Fergusson offered a tribute of warm affection to his memory.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

During his residence at St Andrews, he began to direct his attention to the study of poetry; and wrote many occasional verses, which attracted the particular notice of the professors, as well as of his fellow-students. It is said by Mr Irving, on the authority of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where it is stated as the import of authentic private information that Fergusson, in the last year of his residence at St Andrews, formed the plan of a Tragedy, founded on the story of Sir William Wallace; but when he had finished the first two acts, he is said to have relinquished the design, because he had seen another dramatic poem on the same subject, and was apprehensive lest his should be regarded as a mere copy. There does not seem to be any satisfactory objection urged against the truth of this statement; and while it derives probability from the consideration of other parts of his conduct, and other features of his

THE SCOTTISH POET,

character, it seems to render his claims to an honourable literary ambition, considerably valid. A few observations on the subject, although perhaps unnecessary, may not be deemed superfluous or useless.

Fergusson, like other Scotch Poets since his day, sympathised in the sufferings of fallen greatness. Even liberty itself he seemed to consider as but a phantom, unless it arose from the achievements of his country's patriots.

Independent of all direct and positive testimony, there is sufficient reason for thinking that the story of Sir William Wallace would interest him much; and it is by no means an extravagant supposition, that he might design to delineate our hero's fate in a dramatic form. In some respects, indeed, the subject was admirably calculated for him: it was interesting in itself, and

THE SCOTTISH POET.

from his earliest infancy, every Scotsman regards the memory of Sir William Wallace, as that of a being who surpassed the common race of mortals in every attribute which elevates the individual above his species. Strength preternatural was the fabled quality of his body; patriotism and courage the unquestioned characteristics of his mind. His adventures, whether fabulous or true, were of the mixed kind, which excite the most lively interest in a story,—now proudly moving on the highest tide of success,—now deeply overwhelmed by misfortune. His fall too was of that tragical cast, which excites every sympathy of our hearts. There is not perhaps a Scotaman, in the middle and lower ranks of life, who has not read, with a holy enthusiasm, the account of our national hero's exploits, as recorded by Henry the Minstrel. Yet, from whatever cause it has arisen, it is true, that none of our poets, even to this day, have celebrated;

THE SCOTTISH POET.

in a strain sufficiently sublime, the achievements of Wallace, or delineated, with an adequate truth of poesy, the exalted character of the man. Perhaps no poetical talents are capable of giving to Scotsmen a vivid picture of the greatness of their greatest hero; his name is associated in our minds with every thing that is illustrious. The poet's field of exertion is thought to be fictitious circumstance: but if the story of Wallace's exploits were even divested of what, doubtless, renders them more rich in the means of poetical embellishment, and although the blaze of our patriot's glory were to shine unmingled with the fire of fancy's creation, they are still too brilliant for the eye of a common poet. That Ferguson, in these circumstances, had the courage to think of such a subject for his poetry, is a strong proof of the ambition of his mind and the elevation of his temper. When we consider the positive testimony in the case, and all the circum-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

stances connected with it, we shall scarcely have a ground for with-holding our assent to the supposition of his purpose: and if we grant the probability of his design, we cannot refuse the tribute of respect for his feelings. That he relinquished his purpose, for the reason assigned, seems both probable and honourable. The spirit which could think of celebrating the heroism of Wallace, could ill stoop to the baseness of literary theft, or even to the meanness of servile imitation.

Fergusson appears to have had another theatrical scheme floating in his mind: some fragments of speeches written with his own hand are to be found on the blank leaves of a book which was formerly in his possession.

Though he was never very remarkable for his application to study, yet he performed, with a

THE SCOTTISH POET.

sufficient share of applause, the various exercises which the rules of his college prescribed. The calm and even tenor however of an academic life was but ill calculated to afford him much satisfaction or enjoyment. His natural propensity to mirth and gaiety often caused him to relax in his exertions: he bore a principal part in a thousand youthful frolics; many of which are still remembered at St Andrews.

Mr Irving, in the earlier editions of his work, has mentioned, that Fergusson was expelled from the university of St. Andrews; but as some circumstances which followed, of no less importance, are omitted, it is necessary that these should be noticed, even although Mr Irving has in the later editions corrected his faulty statement. The particulars attending this expulsion, are thus detailed in a paper written by Principal Hill, and subscribed by Professor Vilant; the latter of

THE SCOTTISH POET.

whom was at the time (January 29th 1801) unable, from sickness, to do more than attest the truth of the account.

" The university of St. Andrews keep no record
" of the censures inflicted upon young men during
" the course of their studies, because they are
" willing to hope, that future good behaviour will
" atone for the improprieties of early days. But
" as an inquiry has been made on the part of the
" relations of Mr Robert Fergusson, whether
" he was expelled from this university, Mr
" Nicolas Vilant, professor of mathematics, the
" only person now in the university who was
" then a member of it, declares, for their satisfac-
" tion, that in the year 1767, as he recollects, at
" the first institution of the prizes given by the
" Earl of Kinnoul, late chancellor of this univer-
" sity, there was a meeting, one night after the
" determination of the prizes for that year, of the

 THE SCOTTISH POET.

" winners, in one room of the United College, and
 " a meeting of the losers in another room at a
 " small distance; that in consequence of some
 " communication between the winners and the
 " losers, a scuffle arose, which was reported to
 " the masters of the College; and that Robert
 " Fergusson and some others, who had appeared
 " the most active, were expelled; but that the
 " next day, or the day thereafter, they were all
 " received back into the College, upon promises
 " of good behaviour for the future.

" NICOLAS VILANT".

After a residence of four years in St Andrews, (his bursary having expired, and his father having died two years before) Robert resigned all thoughts of pursuing the clerical profession, and returned to his mother's house in Edinburgh, without any plan of life, or rational prospect of future occupation. It has been

THE SCOTTISH POET.

thought, that a man of liberal education, can easily find some employment in which to engage; and that in the present state of society, he need only seek, in order to obtain, an adequate reward for the application of his talents. Numerous instances might be produced to contradict this notion; and, I am not aware, that any thing better than facts could be stated to explode a supposition, which misleads many parents (particularly in Scotland,) in the education of their families. Fergusson affords one example, in which the worldly condition, and the propensities of character, were completely opposed to each other, by an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances. He was placed on the threshold of life, an unfriended boy; without the means of present support, or the prospect of future provision. He had received a classical education; he had acquired the habits of intellectual, rather than of bodily exertion;

THE SCOTTISH POET.

and he cherished with the ardour peculiar to youth and to genius, the sanguine hopes of future eminence. What in these circumstances could he do? The first and the natural feeling which one so situated is apt to entertain, is a confidence in the exertions of those with whom he is connected by the ties of blood. Fergusson had a mother; but she was a widow—poor—destitute—friendless: She was a proper object of filial reverence; but his advancement in the world, could not be materially promoted by her exertions.

He had a maternal uncle living near Aberdeen, a Mr John Forbes, who was in affluent circumstances. To him he paid a visit, in the hope of procuring some suitable employment through his influence. Mr Forbes at first treated him with civility; but instead of exerting himself to promote his interest, suffered him to remain six months in his house, and afterwards dismissed

THE SCOTTISH POET.

him in a manner which reflects very little honour on his memory. His clothes were beginning to assume an obsolete appearance; and he was therefore deemed an improper guest for his uncle's house. Filled with indignation at the ungenerous treatment which he had received, he retired to a little solitary inn that stood at a small distance; and addressed a letter to his unfeeling relation, couched in terms of manly resentment. After his departure, Mr Forbes seems to have relented: he dispatched a messenger to him with a few shillings to defray his expences on the road. He travelled to Edinburgh on foot; and the fatigues of the journey, added to his depression of mind, produced such an effect upon his delicate constitution, that for several days he was afflicted with a severe illness. When he began to recover strength, he endeavoured to console his grief by composing a Poem on the Decay of Friendship, and another against Repining at Fortune.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

He was soon afterwards employed as an assistant in the office of the Commissary-clerk of Edinburgh, where he continued during the remainder of his life, with the exception of a few months that he wrote in the Sheriff-clerk's office, both Mr Irving and Mr Sommers are mistaken in saying, that he continued in the latter office until his death, from the period that he left the commissary-clerk's office. He could not endure the kind of business which frequently occurred in the latter situation, where Fergusson thought the law too often appeared in the aspect of severity. All proceedings against criminals of various denominations, usually commence in the Sheriff's-court. Fergusson therefore solicited and obtained re-admission into the situation which he formerly held. It is not known, that he originally left the Commissary-clerk's office, on account of tyrannical treatment from his superiors, as stated by Mr Irving: on the contrary, it is certain, he frequent-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

ly amused himself with the trifling peevishness in which the deputy, Mr Abercromby, under whom he acted, indulged. This peevishness was in a great measure owing to the valetudinary state of health under which that gentleman long laboured. He had no dislike at Fergusson, and occasionally employed him in his private affairs; but his fretful disposition did not accord with Fergusson's feelings. He was, however, upon the whole, extremely unlike many others of those business machines who are every day to be met with—illiterate, but industrious,—mean in their dispositions, yet presumptuous in their manners; and who having, by these means, advanced themselves to worldly consideration, conceive themselves fully warranted to trample on, and insult their official inferiors.—He was a man of much knowledge in business, and of considerable ability.

As the epoch of Fergusson's life, which is most interesting in itself, and most fraught with useful

THE SCOTTISH POET.

instruction, commenced at his entry into the Commissary-clerk's office, I shall detail, as minutely as possible, every authentic particular of importance concerning him, which I have been able to obtain.

During the whole of the period which intervened between his return from college and his death, he continued almost daily to write verses on passing occurrences and incidental topics. He was a constant contributor to Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine, a popular and respectable miscellany of the day. His dislike and neglect of his employment seems to have formed a complete contrast to his literary ardour. This fact, of which we are informed by the concurring testimony of all his associates, is pretty amply illustrated by the following anecdote, communicated by a gentleman who had the best access to know the facts, and whose veracity and accuracy may be fully relied on.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

It was a principal part of Fergusson's duty to copy out the extracts of deeds and protests which were recorded in the Commissary-court books. This business is the most mechanical that can well be supposed; being merely to copy the document recorded, with some trifling additions; yet so completely was Fergusson's mind engrossed by matters foreign to his task; that, in the course of one forenoon, he blundered the same extract two different times. When he returned to the office in the evening, he found that the paper had been much wanted; and after venting a coarse expression against the person who molested him, he sat down a third time to the business. He had not, however, got his copy half finished, when he cried out to his office companion, that a thought had just struck him, which he would instantly put into verse, and carry to Ruddiman's Magazine (on the eve of publication,) but that he would instantly return and complete the extract. He immediate-

 THE SCOTTISH POET.

ly scrawled out "Verses on Mr Thomas Lancashire," and ran with them to the press. On his return towards the office, he called at the shop of Mr Sommers, Print-seller and Glazier, below the Commissary office, Parliament Square, where he found the shop-boy reading a poem on Creation. This circumstance furnished him with another topic for versifying, and he wrote a coarse epigram on his friend Sommers.

" Tom Sommers is a gloomy man,
 " His soul is dark with sin ;
 " O holy J***s glaze his soul,
 " That light may enter in."

These proceedings occupied him about twenty minutes ; and having thus given vent to the effervescence of his fancy, he returned quietly to his drudgery.

This anecdote shows pretty distinctly his aversion to the settled employment to which his at-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

tion should have been directed, and his wayward wanderings of thought, in regions foreign to his more immediate concerns. He very naturally conceived the scanty emoluments resulting from his labour to be an inadequate reward for the exertion of such talents as he was conscious he possessed : but he unreasonably allowed contempt for his business to superinduce inattention to its duties. To copy law papers of any description, is indeed an occupation excessively irksome to any man whose talents are not wholly placed at the points of his fingers ; and the pitiful allowance which Fergusson received for his labour, tended very little to render that irksomeness tolerable. To such disadvantages, however, he should have opposed the considerations of necessity and prudence. Some regular occupation he must have followed, and there is none in life unaccompanied with labour and inconvenience of

THE SCOTTISH POET.

some kind. Fergusson would have been a happier man, if he had aimed at the acquisition of business habits. He might by such means have reached that real independence which, by industry and frugality, is attainable in almost every condition of life, and which in every condition confers the most genuine comfort and dignity. He should have reflected, that merit cannot always be known; that it is in every case dangerous, and often disgraceful, to be the object of popular support in a pecuniary point of view; and that the earnings of honest industry, though scanty, are sweeter to the heart, imbued with the pride of true independence, than the most profuse munificence which can be conferred on venal prostitution.

I will not say that it was improper in Fergusson to cultivate his poetical talents—far otherwise: but it was unwise to permit what ought

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

to have been only his recreations, to supplant his actual duties. His employment was doubtless sufficiently servile: but still attention to it was by no means incompatible with his devotion to the muses, as has been sagely discovered by some of his Biographers. Dry and uninteresting as the study of law, and the practical exercise of juridical functions, may appear to those who are unacquainted with the principles of the one, or the habits of the other, I affirm, from observation of the fact, that they have no peculiar and exclusive tendency to extinguish the ardour of genius; and if it were not foreign to my present purpose, I could easily mention the names of many lawyers, whose minds are distinguished by every quality that appertains to the poetic character. Upon the hypothesis of Juridical studies and poetical talent being incompatible, it cannot, therefore, be supposed that Fergusson, although he was certainly not a lawyer, might not have been at the

THE SCOTTISH POET.

same time a poet and an inferior clerk in a law office; unless, indeed, it is thought, that in such a situation it was presumptuous in him to aspire above the mechanical drudgery of penmanship. Fortunately, however, there is yet no aristocracy in the republic of letters, elevated and supported by corporation privileges: Chatterton was an attorney's hack, Burns a ploughman.

In addition to Fergusson's dislike of his profession, other circumstances concurred to influence his character and determine his fate. The obvious merit of his poems, which were widely circulated in Ruddiman's Magazine, attracted public notice; and his company was courted with avidity by people of almost every description. He could rank in the number of his friends, many of the first characters of his time in Edinburgh. His unassuming manners, his wit, and his convivial talents, gave pleasure to all, but chiefly to

THE SCOTTISH POET.

the young and the gay. He was ingenuous, affable, manly, and generous. His conversation was that of a gentleman and a scholar; his wit the spontaneous and captivating offspring of genius; his song was that simple, but powerful melody, which, as its energies are directed, arouses, or ravishes, or subdues. Tavern parties and clubs were the spheres which Fergusson's wit and song too frequently enlivened; and these destroyers of every respectable principle in human nature, at length undermined his constitution, sullied his respectability, and disordered his reason.

The extent to which his convivial propensities would make him descend, is exemplified in an anecdote given by Mr Sommers.

"Such were his vocal powers, and attachment to Scots songs, that in the course of his convivial frolics, he laid a wager with some of his asso-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

ciates, that if they would furnish him with a
certain number of Printed ballads (no matter
what kind) he would undertake to dispose of them
as a street-singer, in the course of two hours.
The bet was laid; and next evening, being in the
month of November, a large bundle of ballads
were procured for him. He wrapped himself in
a shabby great coat, put on an old scratch wig,
and in this disguised form, commenced his ad-
venture at the Weigh House, head of the West
Bow. In his going down the Lawmarket, and
High Street, he had the address to collect great
multitudes around him, while he amused them
with a variety of favourite Scots songs, by no
means such as he had ballads for, and gained
the wager, by disposing of the whole collection.
He waited on his companions by eight o'clock
that evening, and spent with them, in mirthful
glee, the produce of his street adventure."

THE SCOTTISH POET.

At other times again, his humour would assume a moral cast, and he would make trick and jest in some measure the means of usefulness. The following particulars are sufficient proofs of his jocularity.

“ Mr Fergusson had a rooted aversion to every kind of hypocrisy, especially religious hypocrisy. Those who pretended to an extraordinary outward show of religion, he tortured with much severity of ridicule. Among others of this stamp, he considered his landlord as one worthy of his particular attention; and he gave him now and then a little seasonable chastisement. His landlord was a man as religiously attached to his bottle as to his prayers; and though almost every night he was pretty much overcome by the first, he never neglected the last. This conduct Mr Fergusson could not long observe, without giving him

THE SCOTTISH POET.

some correction. One night, when the land-
lord had called his household together, and in
a state of complete intoxication, was proceed-
ing to prayer, Robert took his station in an ad-
joining closet. The landlord had no sooner fal-
len upon his knees, and uttered the words, O
Lord, thou art good and gracious! than Mr
Robert, from the closet, in a hollow tone of
voice, re-echoed his words. The landlord be-
ing much agitated by this secret assistant, did
not venture to proceed farther, till he had ful-
ly ascertained his personal safety. Having sa-
tisfied himself on this point, he uttered the
next sentence with tremulous gravity: it was
again re-echoed by the invisible being, in a
more dismal tone. From these unhallowed
responses, the landlord terminated his evening
devotion, and gave orders to his servants to re-
tire and carry awa' the bulks. After compos-
ing himself, by serious reflection, he recalled

THE SCOTTISH POET.

his servants, and earnestly inquired if Rabbie Fergusson was come home? being answered in the affirmative, (for by this time Robert had escaped from his concealment,) the landlord proceeded to lecture his auditors on the impropriety of their past conduct; telling them, that he was certain, from what had happened that night and other forewarnings, there was something wrong, and that some awful calamity would befall the family; warning them of their danger, and cautioning them against all loose disorderly behaviour in future. Having thus, as he imagined, fortified those under his care, by his prophetic visitation, his inward terror, heightened by guilt, suggested to him the necessity of consulting his own safety, by some salutary advice: and having, on former occasions, had some share of Robert's friendly admonitions, he ventured to communicate to him the events of the evening, and the terrors

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ which oppressed his mind in consequence of
“ them. Rabby was prepared to receive him with
“ all the gravity of a father-confessor. The land-
“ lord gave a full narration of the events, and of
“ his own fears; which were wonderfully increas-
“ ed by Robert’s solemn commentaries. He re-
“ presented to the terrified landlord, the danger
“ he had to apprehend from attempting to ad-
“ dress his Maker in a state of intoxication, and
“ that he had reason to expect some serious afflic-
“ tion from the impropriety of his conduct. The
“ landlord acknowledged his guilt, and promised
“ amendment in future. Upon this acknowledg-
“ ment and promise, Robert absolved him, and
“ recommended a night’s rest as the most proper
“ exercise for one in his condition.

“ Notwithstanding, however, of this supposed
“ preternatural warning, and the promise of a-
“ mendment, it was not long before the landlord

THE SCOTTISH POET.

relapsed into his usual habits ; for, on the Saturday following, he came into his shop, at a late hour, almost incapable of attending to any thing. Robert was there, and after censuring him more severely than before, determined on playing him some other trick. An opportunity immediately offered, and it was embraced. A customer sent for a sight of some goods, which the landlord packed up, and carried to the person's house. Robert, somewhat disguised, followed at a distance ; waited concealed till the landlord came out ; and, at a proper place, snatched away the goods, and left him to find the way home the best way he could. With the parcel, he reached the shop first, and having concealed it in a snug corner, was standing at his ease. The landlord, upon his return wonderfully magnified the circumstances of the robbery, but seemed thankful that he was permitted to escape with life. Robert sympathised in his sorrows and joy, and all the

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ family joined in the gratulations usual on
“ such occasions. The next day being Sunday, a
“ profound silence was observed by all parties;
“ and by Monday morning Robert had made the
“ servants acquainted with what he had done,
“ and his reasons for doing it. At the same time,
“ he prepared a few lines, as from a most noted
“ woman of bad fame, addressed to the landlord,
“ intimating to him his irregular conduct in com-
“ ing to her house in a disorderly manner, leaving
“ his goods, seemingly incapable of taking care of
“ himself; and adding, that from his years, and
“ the character he ought to support, she was
“ unwilling to expose him, and had returned
“ his goods, with her friendly advice, that he
“ would be careful in future not to expose him-
“ self. Robert watched the landlord’s approach,
“ put the parcel of goods and note into his hands,
“ and as the note was unsealed, the landlord na-
“ turally concluded, that all in the shop had pe-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ rused it. He stood amazed ; and returning the
“ note to Ferguson, declared his innocence, ear-
“ nestly requesting that the matter might be con-
“ cealed. Robert gravely perusing the note,
“ seemed astonished at its contents, but would
“ not listen to the landlord’s plea of innocence.
“ He told him, he had no intention of injuring
“ him, by publishing the affair ; and strongly re-
“ commended to him to profit by the friendly ad-
“ vice which the note contained ; for he evident-
“ ly saw, that in his intoxication, he neither
“ knew where he had been, what he did, nor
“ what was done to him. Many similar tricks
“ and frolics Mr. Fergusson engaged in, with a
“ view to reclaim his landlord from the cup, but
“ it is believed without success. In other respects
“ the landlord was a good sort of a man, and
“ Mr Fergusson expressed a great regard for him
“ What was very singular too, the landlord was
“ always giving Rabby (as he called him) his

THE SCOTTISH POET.

best advice against wildness ; seasoning his advice with religious injunctions.

Mr Fergusson seemed so violent against fanatics, and fanatical opinions and practices, that he seldom missed an opportunity of exposing those who were in any degree of this character. One Sunday, when passing by a Glassite meeting-house, he heard the congregation praising the Lord with all their might ; and knowing somewhat of their evening practice of love feasts, &c. he placed himself on a stone adjoining the house, took a slip of paper and pencil from his pocket, and wrote some lines, in imitation of their canting jargon, which he carefully folded up, and threw in at an open window to those assembled. During Mr Fergusson's expeditions to the country (of which he was very fond,) he was daily engaged in some harmless frolic or humorous adventure. One

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ day he somehow procured a sailor’s habit of the
“ coarsest kind, in which he dressed himself; and,
“ with a huge stick in his hand, he visited a great
“ number of his acquaintances. He was so effec-
“ tually disguised, that few or none of them
“ knew him; and, by acquainting many of them
“ with some of their former transactions and con-
“ duct, he so much surprised them, that they im-
“ puted his knowledge to divination. By this
“ means he procured from many of them such a
“ fund of information, as enabled him to give
“ them a greater surprise, when he resumed the
“ genuine character of Robby Fergusson. For
“ in the sailor’s habit, he informed them of many
“ frailties and failings, that they imagined impos-
“ sible for one of his appearance to know; and
“ in the habit of Robby Fergusson, he divulged
“ many things which they believed none but the
“ ragged sailor was acquainted with.”

THE SCOTTISH POET.

These youthful frolics were not in themselves worthy of much disapprobation: some of them, on the contrary, gave a favourable view of his character, and indicate a happy union of cheerfulness and benevolence. They, however, were too often connected with circumstances of a nature inauspicious to the future welfare of youthful genius, and frequently the means of introducing him to scenes of the most pernicious influence.

It were an unpleasant and invidious task to exhibit a full narrative of the dissipated scenes in which Fergusson mingled. They were too numerous to admit of being particularly detailed, and too much alike, in their disgusting features, to afford any gratifications to the admirers of virtue and the friends of genius. The censorious might, indeed, find ample room for the indulgence of their spleen, and the illiterate might triumph over the ruins of dishonoured talents and learning;

THE SCOTTISH POET.

but it is not to such men that a consideration of Fergusson's life can be useful. It is to such as stand in circumstances similar to those in which he was placed, that his errors speak from the grave with a voice of thunder. No man in the outset of life can survey the life of Robert Fergusson, without shuddering at the practices which sullied his existence; or consider his latter end, without sympathising in the horrors which conducted him to the tomb.

The fashionable practices of society in this part of the world, are perhaps the most fruitful sources from whence our countrymen derive their misery and their vice. Compared with these causes of wretchedness, the natural evils of existence, and the disadvantages of social condition, are as dust in the balance. Among others, the evils of conviviality are immensely pernicious. In many

THE SCOTTISH POET.

cases, business cannot be transacted, but over the glass: the desirable intercourse of life, and the pleasures of hospitality, are thought by many to be unattainable, except in the gratification of intemperance. No man can avoid giving a sanction in a greater or less degree to such habits, by his practice, however much he may disapprove of them in the abstract, unless, indeed, he is ready to incur the charge of singularity and affectation, or chooses to relinquish all the charms of social intercourse. Wisdom, however, is manifested in the discreet use of intoxicating beverage. Under its influence, the most delicate sensibility, the most rigid virtue, and inflexible firmness, cannot preserve a man from folly and from crime. In the gay season of youth, its power is doubly baleful. Fergusson is a striking example. His understanding was powerful; his heart generous, even to weakness; his feelings delicate, elevated, honourable; his mind ardently glowed with the

THE SCOTTISH POET.

sublime emotions of religion : yet in the midst of the scenes of dissipation to which he was exposed, and in which he was admirably calculated to shine, his best qualities were humbled in the dust. Urged by the maddening draught, prudence, reason, principle, all fell prostrate before the potent poison : he indulged in the gratification of animal passion, until his hapless career was closed in madness.

While his physical system was under the influence of medicine, for his recovery from the consequences of ebriety and folly, he was unfortunately enticed to accompany some gentlemen, who were interested in an election business, to one of the eastern counties of Scotland. On this expedition he was much exposed to the riotous enjoyments incident to such occasions ; and these, in conjunction with his disordered health, produced a feverishness and decrepitude of mind amounting nearly to insanity.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

In stating these particulars, I only adhere to a resolution, which I formed at the time I thought of writing these pages, of suppressing no circumstance in the life of Robert Fergusson, that tended, in any degree, to illustrate his real character. It is my decided purpose, to tell the truth, and all the truth; nor, in my apprehension, does the mention of the fact, now for the first time brought into view, cast a stain on the memory of Fergusson, which cannot be washed away. I do not affect to vindicate the mode of behaviour that he adopted; which he debilitated his body and impaired his intellectual powers: but I cannot be regarded as presumptuous, if I remind the precise herd of mankind, that a divine Advocate, in behalf of our infirmities, once checked the pharasaical sanctimony of noisy virtue. I do not ask forgetfulness of Fergusson's errors, by mentioning his youth, his fire, his inexperience. I do not speak of his merits and his misfortunes, as an a-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

pology for his follies. I cannot paint the delusions of hope and the rackings of disappointed ambition. But I call upon the censorious, and even the sincerely virtuous, to search their own bosoms, to examine their own feelings and temptations, and to review their own conduct. If in this process they can find no ground of self disapprobation, no trace of error, no instance of intemperance or misconduct, then shall I silently bear their exultations over the venial transgressions of Fergusson. But if they recollect any manifestations of human weakness in their own conduct, let them be satisfied with the obscurity of their vices, and not trample with puritanic pride upon that dust which Robert Burns has embalmed with his tears.

The state of Fergusson's mind, during this gloomy period of his existence, demands peculiar attention, ere we trace him to the close of his

THE SCOTTISH POET.

short career. It will be recollected, that Fergusson received a religious education. He had also been taught to assent to the peculiar doctrines of the Scotch church. There can be no doubt too, that he felt the "compunctious visitings" of remorse, amid the scenes of riot in which he so often took a part: for the same ardour of mind which plunges a youth into the most extravagant licentiousness, is perhaps the best and most certain remedy for the evils which spring from it, if indeed these evils can be remedied. The constitution of mind and of body, which feels, with most vivid delight, the mad rapture of voluptuousness, will also suffer the gnawings of remorse with a keener anguish, a more efficacious regret, than can possibly take place in the tame, cautious, methodical debauchee. There is the best reason to believe, that superstitious horror, and wounded sensibility, co-operated in making Fergusson retire from the haunts of profligacy, and

THE SCOTTISH POET.

meditate, with a gloomy despondency, on the errors of his life. Whatever was the cause, the effect is certain: For a considerable time before his death, he laboured under the afflicting malady of religious, or rather superstitious horror. Various particulars have been mentioned, as the immediate fore-runners of this state of mind. I will not load my narrative with animadversions on the different accounts which have been given of the matter, but state what I am persuaded is most consistent with the truth, from a comparison of those accounts, and from the information which I have received through a gentleman well acquainted with Fergusson, who, indeed, must be regarded, as in this instance, the delinquent of his own feelings and condition.

“ In the month of December, 1773 (says this gentleman to whom I allude), I met with Mr. Fergusson in Edinburgh, seemingly in good

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ health, though I observed him to be more seri-
“ ous and thoughtful than formerly : and in the
“ month of March succeeding, I also met with
“ him. He was then very poorly, and, in the
“ course of a long walk, he freely communicated
“ the state of his mind, and also the situation he
“ had been in for some time.” The substance of
that conversation is partly given in the preceding
pages, being a detail of the circumstances con-
nected with the unfortunate complaint with which
Fergusson was afflicted, and his account of the
electioneering excesses in which he had partaken.
He imputed the decayed state of his body to
these circumstances, and said, he was afraid, that
not this consequence alone had also affected his
head. He seemed, indeed, to be quite aware that
his mind was in disorder, and he anticipated, with
terror, the confinement in a mad-house, which he
foresaw would be unavoidable.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

He also introduced the Christian Religion, and conversed with much earnestness on some of its fundamental doctrines. Upon a particular occasion, which he specified, he said a Mr. Ferrier, at or near St. Andrew's, had alarmed and rather displeas'd him, by maintaining what are usually denominated the orthodox tenets of our Scotch creeds: and Fergusson appear'd to differ, in a very considerable degree, from the commonly received notions on these subjects. He did not seem to be satisfied of the necessity of the fall of man, and of a mediatorial sacrifice for human iniquity; and he question'd, with considerable boldness, the consistency of such doctrines, with the attributes of divine wisdom and goodness. At the same time, however, he confess'd the imperfect nature of human intellect, and the unfathomable depth of all such enquiries. This is the only gleam of infidelity which ever seems to

THE SCOTTISH POET.

have diminished the fearful gloom of superstitious terror: no consoling rays of genuine religion charmed his bosom; no sounds of peace gladdened his heart, and enabled him to sustain, with fortitude and calmness, the sorrows which oppressed him. He anticipated "the last peal of the thunder of heaven" as the voice of Eternal Vengeance speaking in wrath, and consigning him to irremediable perdition. Fergusson's religion, at this time, was the religion of a man in despair. His infidelity was a burst of fancy, and the melancholy effort of freezing energy of reason, which enabled him to hope for peace in the gulph of annihilation, when that of eternal torture seemed yawning to receive him.

It has been said by some of his biographers, that the religious despondency which afflicted Fergusson, arose from a conversation with the late Reverend Mr. John Brown of Haddington—

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

a man eminent for his acquaintance with sacred literature, and for the laborious and zealous application of his knowledge, in the discharge of his pastoral functions. The whole amount of this story is as follows :

Mr. Brown, when taking a walk in Haddington church-yard, met with a disconsolate gentleman, whom he did not know, walking in the same place. Having met, they accosted one another ; and Mr. Brown took occasion, from the nature of the place, to make a few remarks on the mortality of man—observing, that in a short time they would be soon laid in the dust, and that, therefore, it was wise to prepare for eternity. The conversation did not last above three or four minutes, and was not considered, by Mr. Brown, at least, as of much importance. This disconsolate gentleman, it seems, was Fergusson ; and the above rencounter happened, it is believed.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

in 1772; although the precise period does not seem to be perfectly known. A very trifling circumstance will, in particular situations, and states of the wind, produce extraordinary consequences. There is, however, little evidence, that Fergusson was so suddenly awakened to a sense of mortality, and so deeply impressed with anxiety about a future existence, by this occurrence, as has been supposed. He must have heard the same truths resounded in his ears a thousand times before; and we may safely conclude, that the impressions which it made on his mind was very trifling, since even his daily associates never discovered any alteration in the tone of his feelings. The truth upon this point seems to be, that a variety of circumstances, at the same period, contributed to excite his superstitious melancholy. His injudicious conduct enfeebled his body; his consciousness of error must have been as vivid as his ardour in the pursuit of

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

licentious pleasure was extreme ; and these causes, in combination with the power of early associations, and the arousing circumstances which are known to have existed, co-operated for the production of that state of mind which we are now contemplating.

The crisis of Fergusson's fate now approached. A short interval of tranquillity occurred, and enabled him once more to mingle in the social riot. On one occasion, as he was going home, he fell from a stair-case, and received a violent contusion on the head. When carried to his mother's house, he could give no account of the manner in which the accident had befallen him, and seemed totally insensible of his deplorable condition. He soon arrived at a state of the most frantic madness. His situation was humiliating to the pride of human genius. He lay stretched on a humble bed, surrounded with the appalling insignia of a

THE SCOTTISH POET.

homatic asylum. The smile of complacency, and generosity, and worth, which was wont to animate his countenance, had given place to the haggard wildness of aspect which distinguishes the maniac. Fergusson, in the humbled state to which he was now reduced, frequently sang with a pathos and tenderness of expression which he never surpassed in the happiest moments of his convivial brilliancy: in particular, he chaunted "The Birks of Invermay" with such exquisite melody, that those who heard the notes can never forget the sound.

The pecuniary circumstances of Mrs. Fergusson were so limited, and the means or inclination of her son's reputed friends so circumscribed, that it was found necessary to remove him to the public asylum, for the reception of persons in his situation. This was an unfortunate necessity

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

for Ferguson. By a judicious attention to his disordered mind, it might have been healed, and restored to the world: for his malness was not constitutional insanity, but the result of high sensibility, wounded and exasperated by disease and misfortune.

A deception, cruel and barbarous in the extreme, and unjustifiable upon any ground of expedience or necessity, was practised for his removal to the asylum. A few of his most intimate associates pretended that they wished him to go on a visit to an acquaintance; and having got him placed in a sedan chair, they conducted him to the asylum. He soon discovered the place to which he was consigned, and uttered a scream of horror and despair, which was echoed by the commingled yellings of this mansion of wretchedness.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

The circumstances attending Ferguson's confinement, are so briefly and so interestingly stated by Mr. Irving and Mr. Sommers, that I cannot present them to the reader more completely, than by transcribing a few passages of their respective memoirs.

“ During the first night of his confinement
“ (says Mr. Sommers) he slept none; and when
“ the keeper visited him in the morning, he
“ found him walking along the stone floor of his
“ cell, with his arms folded, and in sullen sadness
“ uttering not a word. After some minutes si-
“ lence, he clapped his right hand on his fore-
“ head, and complained much of pain. He
“ asked the keeper, who brought him there? he
“ answered, Friends.—Yes, friends, indeed, re-
“ plied Robert, they think I am too wicked to
“ live, but you will soon see me a *shining* and a
“ *burning light*. You have been so already, ob-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

"served the keeper. You mistake me, said the
"Poet : I mean you shall see and hear of me as
"a bright Minister of the gospel !"

Mr Irving tells us, that "when he was after-
"wards visited by his mother and elder sister, his
"pity had almost entirely subsided. He had
"at first imagined himself a king or some other
"great personage ; and adorned his head with
"a crown of straw, which he plaited very neatly
"with his own hands. The delusion, however,
"was now vanished : upon their entering, they
"found him lying in his cell, to appearance calm
"and collected. He told them he was sensible of
"their kindness, and he hoped he should soon be
"in a condition to receive their visits. He also
"recalled to their memory the presentiment which
"he had so often expressed, of his being at length
"overwhelmed by this most dreadful of all cala-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ mites ; but endeavoured to comfort them with
“ assurances of his being humanely treated in the
“ asylum. He entreated his sister to bring her
“ work, and frequently sit by him, in order to
“ dispel the gloom that overcast his mind. To
“ all this they could only answer with their sighs
“ and tears.—When the keeper entered, and in-
“ formed them that it was time to depart, he with
“ great earnestness conjured them to remain with
“ him a little longer : but with this request it was
“ not in their power to comply. From his be-
“ haviour during this interview, his mother was
“ led to entertain hopes of his speedy reco-
“ very.”

“ Day after day, I inquired for him (says
“ Mr Sommers) of his mother and younger sis-
“ ter, but never had resolution to pay him a per-
“ sonal visit. After, however, nearly two months

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

“ had elapsed, I was surprised at hearing of his
“ being still in his captive state, and therefore
“ was determined to give him a call, but found
“ that it was necessary to obtain, for that pur-
“ pose, an order in writing from the sitting mag-
“ gistrate. In my way to the Council chamber,
“ to procure the order, I met with Dr John Ais-
“ ken, late physician here; I told him where I
“ was going, and for what purpose. He expressed
“ a wish to accompany me, as he knew the poet
“ well. Both our names were inserted in the ma-
“ gistrate's mandate of admission, with a promise,
“ on the part of the Doctor, to report to the Ma-
“ gistrate the state of the Poet. We got imme-
“ diate access to the cell, and found Robert ly-
“ ing with his clothes on, stretched upon a bed
“ of loose uncovered straw. The moment he
“ heard my voice, he instantly arose, got me in
“ his arms, and wept. The Doctor felt his pulse,
“ and declared it to be favourable. I asked the

THE SCOTTISH POET.

“ keeper (whom I formerly knew as a gardener)
“ to allow him to accompany us into an adjoin-
“ ing back court, by way of taking the air. He
“ consented. Robert took hold of me by the arm,
“ placing me on his right, and the Doctor on his
“ left, and in this form we walked backward and
“ forward along the court, conversing for nearly
“ an hour; in the course of which, many ques-
“ tions were asked at him both by the Doctor
“ and myself, to which he returned most satis-
“ factory answers; but seemed very anxious to
“ obtain his liberty.

“ Having passed about two hours with him on
“ this visit, we found it necessary to take our
“ leave, the Doctor assuring him, that he would
“ soon be restored to his friends, and that I would
“ visit him again in a day or two. He calmly,
“ and without a murmur, walked with us to the
“ cell, and upon parting, reminded the Doctor of

.....
 THE SCOTTISH POET.

" his promise, to get him soon at liberty, and of
 " mine, to see him next day. Neither of us,
 " however, had an opportunity of accomplishing
 " our promise ; for in a few days thereafter, I
 " received information from the keeper, that
 " Robert Fergusson had breathed his last."

This event took place after he had continued
 about two months in confinement. Fergusson
 expired in the solitude of his cell, amid the ter-
 rors of the night, " without a hand to help, or
 an eye to pity." His dying couch was a mat
 of straw. The last sounds which pealed on his
 ear, were the howlings of insanity. No tongue
 whispered peace ; and even a consoling tear of
 sympathy mingled not with those of contrition
 and of hope, which, in charity, I trust, illumined
 his closing eye.

Robert Fergusson died on the 16th of Octo-
 ber 1774, very soon after he had completed his

.....
 THE SCOTTISH POET.

twenty-fourth year; and a few days afterwards his body was buried in the Canongate church-yard. His grave remained almost undistinguished from those of the multitude by which it was surrounded, until Robert Burns appeared in Edinburgh (1787) to eclipse his fame, and to follow his career. When he came to Fergusson's grave, he uncovered his head, and kneeling down in a transport of enthusiasm, clasped the venerated clay to his ardent bosom. He obtained leave from the Magistrates of Canongate to erect a monument on the spot. It is now to be seen, a plain, yet splendid, mark of the generosity of Burns's character.

On the Tomb is engraved the following Epitaph.

- " No sculptur'd marble here, nor pompous lay,
 " No storied urn nor animated bust,
 " This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way,
 " To pour her sorrows o'er her Poet's dust."

THE SCOTTISH POET.

On the reverse side of the stone, is the following Inscription:

“ By special grant of the Managers
“ To ROBERT BURNS, who erected this Stone,
“ This burial place is ever to remain sacred
“ to the memory of
“ ROBERT FERGUSSON.”

If Fergusson had lived only a few days longer than he did, the aspect of his life would most probably have been changed by the operation of circumstances not connected with barren friendships. His mother had been enabled, by the receipt of a remittance from her son Henry, to arrange her household in such a manner as to prepare for Robert a comfortable release from his dungeon. If her purpose had been effected, there can be little doubt that his future sanity was a probable circumstance, and that his after life

THE SCOTTISH POET.

would have been as much distinguished for sobriety, and prudence, as his youth, had been for jollity and thoughtlessness. He had been able to ascertain the emptiness of licentious pleasure, and to estimate the friendship of those men for whose society he had sacrificed his health and every thing which could have rendered his life useful and honourable. Although caressed by multitudes in the day of his glory, he was neglected when "shorn of his beams," and permitted to expire in the common receptacle for the most friendless wretches of Society. Many of his associates, no doubt, were disqualified, by their situations in life, from assisting him materially in any of the calamitous events which befel him; but still Fergusson will stand a striking example of what every man may expect in the hour of misfortune—the indifference and the censure of many who participated in his follies, but who never conferred any essential favour on him. From

THE SCOTTISH POET.

this reflection, one name deserves to be exempted. A Mr Burnet had felt such an attachment to the genius and heart of Fergusson, that upon his settlement in India, he was desirous of promoting the interest of his friend. He accordingly sent an invitation to him to come over to India, and, at the same time, remitted a draft for £. 100, to defray the expences of the outward voyage. Fergusson was dead ere these testimonies of friendship arrived. If he had lived no longer than to know of this solitary instance of disinterested benevolence, he would have left the world with the satisfaction arising from the certainty of human worth; a certainty which he could scarcely be supposed to feel, with consolatory ardour, when he retraced the progress of his life, and troubled amid the gloom and the miseries of a common mad-house.

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

After perusing the narrative which has now been given, the mind pauses with involuntary solemnity, to contemplate the images which it exhibits. In Robert Fergusson and his fate, there is a mixture of what delights, with what distresses. His character, whether as a man or a poet, displays many of the most interesting qualities of which human nature can boast; but they were blended with the imperfections which have too often clouded the brightest effulgence of genius. Yet his virtues, though numerous, have been lost amid the darkness of demerits, created by the power of imagination.

Mr Irving has unwarily, to say the least of it, blotted his page with an error of the grossest kind. He tells us, in the earlier editions of his memoir, that Fergusson's "dissipated manner of life, had in a great measure eradicated all sense of delicacy or propriety;" and, in the edition

.....
THE SCOTTISH POET.
.....

of 1804, we have the same assertion somewhat varied, but aggravated by the intolerable solemnity of the statement. "His latter years (says Mr Irving) were wasted in perpetual dissipation. The condition to which he had reduced himself, prepared him for grasping at every object which promised a temporary alleviation of his cares; and as his funds were often in an exhausted state, he at length had recourse to mean expedients." Language such as this, can neither be misunderstood nor explained away. It portrays a bold and strongly coloured picture of human depravity, such as seems to require very decisive evidence of its truth. But Mr Irving has given no testimony—he has not mentioned a single name to accompany his own in a statement that is calculated to stamp infamy on the memory of an unfortunate man of genius, nor has he even specified the facts from whence his general conclusion seems to be drawn. I rejoice in being

THE SCOTTISH POET.

able to controvert Mr Irving's affirmation. I am authorised, by the concurring testimony of different individuals who knew Fergusson, to contradict the assertions of Mr Irving, who knew him not. Their evidence, indeed, is of a negative kind, but I am well entitled to found upon it as unchallengeable, until Mr Irving has substituted positive proof in the stead of palpable hypothesis. That his allegation is a mere theoretical reverie, I am much inclined to believe; for I cannot suppose him capable of a deliberate calumny. Mr Irving seems to imagine, that Fergusson was wicked and mean, because he was dissipated and poor. This is like the logic of a fanatical methodist, or of a recluse; but it is not the language of a man who has looked into the world, and taken an accurate and a liberal view of his fellow men. Poverty was Robert Fergusson's inheritance; his dissipation, which exceeded not the common errors of youth, arose from circumstances in which it never can

THE SCOTTISH POET.

be the lot of many to be placed ; for it arose from the attractive charms of his genius. A generous mind will make allowance for the fascinations of flattery and the yielding simplicity of youth, amid the blandishments of the world : it will not regard his errors as proofs of his genius ; neither will it indulge in contumelious invective ; but it will sigh over the tomb of Fergusson, and indulge in those emotions with which we survey magnificence in disorder and in ruin.

In the domestic relations of life, Fergusson's conduct was exemplary, as far as his convivial irregularity admitted. Indeed, it would have been unexceptionable, had not these distracted the benevolent tendencies of his disposition, and led him to waste on the idle and dissipated, those affections which would have added a bright ray of sunshine to his existence, had their influence been confined within the range of domestic duties and enjoyment.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

The personal appearance of *Fergusson* is described as interesting and genteel, although not peculiarly handsome. The only picture ever made of him, was by the celebrated *Raucinian*, in the character of the Prodigal Son. The painting was excellent, and the countenance bore a striking resemblance to that of *Fergusson*: it was exhibited at the Royal Institution in London, and afterwards sold at a considerable price; but it is not known by whom it was purchased, nor if it be still in existence. Like most men of sense, *Fergusson* despised the trappings of dress; and like many men of genius, he laughed at those who made the form of their habiliments an object of deep importance.

It has been a common practice among the biographers of literary men, and particularly of poets, to interweave the history of their writings with that of their lives, and to connect critical disqui-

THE SCOTTISH POET.

sition with the details of fact. It is impossible, however, to exhibit any chronological account of the composition or publication of Fergusson's poems: the greater number of them were originally published in Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine, and first collected by himself, into a small volume, in 1773. After his death, a fuller edition, comprising several posthumous pieces, was published; and since that time they have passed through a nameless variety of editions. The public voice has already given its decision in favour of the poetic talent of Fergusson. I cannot recommend the beauties of his poems more powerfully than by presenting them for perusal: their blemishes are now sacred from criticism; for it cannot remove them. I at least feel no disposition to commence critic, but shall merely exercise the privilege of a biographer, in briefly delineating what I conceive to be the peculiar qualities of his genius and compositions.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

Every circumstance of Fergusson's life indicates that ardent and susceptible temperament of constitution, which is perhaps the only ingredient of the poetic mind that is the gift of nature. By the education which he received, his natural sensibility seems to have been modified into the morbid refinement which is necessary for the creation of a poet—that delicacy of feeling which makes every surrounding object affect the mind in the way that leads to the various excellencies of poetry. Butler must have been peculiarly alive to the impressions of the grotesque and the ludicrous, before he could have written *Hudibras*; Pope or Churchill could never have poured out the torrent of invective, or pointed the cutting irony, unless a cynical susceptibility of disgust had characterized their minds; and Milton, assuredly, could never have ascended to the sublimities of *Paradise Lost*, unless his heart had often beat high with the conceptions of the great.

THE SCOTTISH POET.

the awful, and the magnificent. Fergusson, too, possessed a mental constitution, which made him strongly feel the influence of the circumstances in which he was placed; for the evidences of his genius bear the stamp of a mind which could distinguish and feel when the vulgar gazed with stupid insensibility. He was indeed a true poet: he united exquisite powers of observation with goodness of heart, and a fancy boundless in its range. He surveyed the face of nature, and she stamped her image on his soul. He looked around him on mankind, and his eye penetrated the recesses of the human heart. As a scholar, he drank from the stream of inspiration, in the hallowed source of ancient poesy, and, in this respect, his advantage over Burns was decisive: yet, although his muse often sports with equal sprightliness and vivacity, and sometimes soars with an elevated sweep, she seldom, like the mighty genius

THE SCOTTISH POET.

of Burns, darts impetuous and sublime. Fergusson's poems, however, it must be remembered, are now before the world with those imperfections which arise from youth and immaturity of judgment—from the temporary purposes which they were intended to serve, and the irregularity of the life during which they were written. They are to be regarded rather as the marks of genius, than as the models of excellence which it is capable of producing. They are the "glorious dawns" of a mind which, ere it enlightened the world with its meridian splendour, was obscured, clouded, extinguished—obscured by the accidental humbleness of its social sphere, clouded by the misfortunes which hung around its mortal condition, and extinguished, by the darkness of the tomb, in its flight to eternity.

.....

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
ROBERT FERGUSSON.

.....

THE
LAW
OF
THE
STATE

OF
THE
STATE
OF
NEW
YORK

IN
THE
YEAR
OF
OUR
LORD
ONE
THOUSAND
EIGHT
HUNDRED
AND
EIGHTY
FOUR

BY
ROBERT
STEELE

NEW
YORK

ROBERT
STEELE

NEW
YORK

ROBERT
STEELE

NEW
YORK

ROBERT
STEELE

NEW
YORK

ROBERT
STEELE

NEW
YORK

ENGLISH POEMS.

PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

DAMON—ALEXIS.

DAMON.

AURORA now her welcome visit pays ;
Stern Darkness flies before her cheerful rays ;
Cool circling breezes whirl along the air,
And early shepherds to the fields repair ;
Lead we our flocks, then, to the mountains brow,
Where junipers and thorny brambles grow ;
Where founts of water 'midst the daisies spring,
And soaring larks and tuneful linnets sing ;
Your pleasing song shall teach our flocks to stray,
While sounding echoes smooth the sylvan lay.

 PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

ALEXIS.

'Tis thine to sing the graces of the morn,
 The zephyr trembling o'er the rip'ning corn ;
 'Tis thine with ease to chant the rural lay,
 While bubbling fountains to your numbers play,
 No piping swain that treads the verdant field,
 But to your music and your verse must yield :
 Sing then,—for here we may with safety keep
 Our sportive lambkins on this mossy steep.

DAMON.

With ruddy glow the sun adorns the land,
 The pearly dew-drops on the bushes stand ;
 The lowing oxen from the folds we hear,
 And snowy flocks upon the hills appear.

ALEXIS

How sweet the murmurs of the neighbouring
 rill !
 Sweet are the slumbers which its floods distill !

PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

Thro' pebbly channels winding as they run,
 And brilliant sparkling to the rising sun,

DAMON.

Behold Edina's lofty turrets rise !
 Her structures fair adorn the eastern skies :
 As Pentland's cliffs o'er top yon distant plain,
 So she the cities on our north domain.

ALEXIS.

Boast not of cities, or their lofty tow'rs,
 Where discord all her baneful influence pours ;
 The homely cottage, and the withered tree,
 With sweet Content, shall be preferred by me.

DAMON.

The hemlock dire shall please the heifer's taste,
 Our lands like wild Arabia be waste,
 The bee forget to range for winter's food,
 Ere I forsake the forest and the flood.

.....
 PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

ALEXIS.

Ye balmy breezes! wave the verdant field;
 Clouds! all your bounties, all your moisture yield;
 That fruits and herbage may our farms adorn,
 And furrow'd ridges teem with loaded corn.

DAMON.

The year already hath propitious smil'd,
 Gentle in spring-tide, and in summer mild;
 No cutting blasts have hurt my tender dams,
 No hoary frosts destroy'd my infant lambs.

ALEXIS.

If Ceres crown with joy the bounteous year,
 A sacred altar to her shrine I'll rear;
 A vigorous ram shall bleed, whose curling horns,
 His woolly neck and hardy front adorns.

DAMON.

Teach me, O Pan! to tune the slender reed,
 No fav'rite ram shall at thine altars bleed;

PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

Each breathing morn thy woodland verse I'll sing,
 And hollow dens shall with the numbers ring.

ALEXIS.

Apollo, lend me thy celestial lyre,
 The woods in concert join at thy desire:
 At morn, at noon, at night, I'll tune the lay,
 And bid fleet Echo bear the sound away.

DAMON.

Sweet are the breezes, when cool eve returns,
 To lowing herds, when raging Sirius burns:
 Not half so sweetly winds the breeze along,
 As does the murmur of your pleasing song.

ALEXIS.

To hear your strains the cattle spurn their food,
 The feather'd songsters leave their tender brood;

PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

Around your seat the silent lambs advance,
And scrambling he-goats on the mountains dance.

DAMON.

But haste, Alexis, reach yon leafy shade,
Which mantling ivy round the oaks hath made;
There we'll retire, and list the warbling note
That flows melodious from the blackbird's throat;
Your easy numbers shall his songs inspire,
And ev'ry warbler join the general choir.



PASTORAL II.—NOON.

CORYDON—TIMANTHES.

CORYDON.

THE sun the summit of his orb hath gain'd,
No flecker'd clouds his azure path hath stain'd,
Our pregnant ewes around us cease to graze,
Stung with the keenness of his sultry rays ;
The weary bullock from the yoke is led,
And youthful shepherds from the plains are fled.
To dusky shades, where scarce a glimm'ring ray
Can dart its lustre thro' the leafy spray.
Yen cooling riv'let where the waters gleam,
Where springing flow'rs adorn the limpid stream,
Invites us where the drooping willow grows,
To guide our flocks, and take a cool repose.

TIMANTHES.

To thy advice a grateful ear I'll lend,
The shades I'll court where slender osiers lead ;

PASTORAL II.—NOON.

Our weanings young shall crop the rising flow'r,
 While we retire to yon twining bow'r ;
 The woods shall echo back thy cheerful strains,
 Admir'd by all our Caledonian swains.

CORYDON.

There have I oft with gentle Delia stray'd,
 Amidst th' embow'ring solitary shade ; -
 Before the gods to thwart my wishes strove,
 By blasting ev'ry pleasing glimpse of love ;
 For Delia wanders o'er the Anglian plains,
 Where civil discord and sedition reigns.
 There Scotia's sons in odious light appear,
 Tho' we for them have war'd the hostile spear ;
 For them my sire, enwrap'd in curdled gore,
 Breath'd his last moments on a foreign shore.

TIMANTHES.

Six lunar months, my friend, will soon expire,
 And she return to crown your fond desire.

PASTORAL II.—NOON.

For her O rack not your desponding mind!
In Delia's breast a gen'rous flame's confin'd,
That burns for Corydon, whose piping lay
Hath caus'd the tedious moments steal away:
Whose strains melodious mov'd the falling floods
To whisper Delia to the rising woods.
O! if your sighs could aid the floating gales,
That favourably swell their lofty sails,
Ne'er should your sobs their rapid flight give o'er
Till Delia's presence grac'd our northern shore.

CORYDON.

Though Delia greet my love, I sigh in vain,
Such joy unbounded can I ne'er obtain,
Her sire a thousand fleeces numbers o'er,
And grassy hills increase his milky store;
While the weak fences of a scanty fold
Will all my sheep and fatt'ning lambkins hold.

PASTORAL II.—NOON.

TIMANTHES.

Ah, hapless youth ! although the early muse
Painted her semblance on thy youthful brows ;
Tho' she with laurels twin'd thy temples round,
And in thy ear distill'd the magic sound ;
A cheerless poverty attends thy woes,
Your song melodious unrewarded flows.

CORYDON.

Think not, Timanthes, that for wealth I pine,
Tho' all the fates to make me poor combine ;
Tay bounding o'er his banks with awful sway,
Bore all my corn and all my flocks away.
Of Jove's dread precepts did I e'er complain ?
Ere curse the rapid flood or dashing rain ?
Ev'n now I sigh not for my former store,
But wish the Gods had destin'd Delta poor.

TIMANTHES.

'Tis joy, my friend, to think I can repay
The loss you bore by Autumn's rigid sway.

PASTORAL II.—NOON.

Yon fertile meadow where the daises spring
Shall yearly pasture to your heifer's bring :
Your flock with mine shall on yon mountain feed,
Cheer'd by the warbling of your tuneful reed :
No more shall Delia's ever-fretful sire
Against your hopes and ardent love conspire.
Rous'd by her smiles you'll tune the happy lay,
While hills responsive waft your songs away.

CORYDON.

May plenteous crops your irksome labour crown
May hoodwink'd fortune cease her envious frown;
May riches still increase with growing years?
Your flocks be numerous as your silver hairs.

TIMANTHES.

But lo! the heats invite us at our ease
To court the twining shades and cooling breeze ;
Our languid joints we'll peaceably recline,
And 'midst the flowers and opening blossoms dine.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

AMYNTAS—FLORELLUS.

AMYNTAS.

WHILE yet grey Twilight does his empire hold,
Drive all our heifers to the peaceful fold.
With sullied wing grim Darkness soars along,
And larks to nightingales resign the song :
The weary ploughman flies the waving fields,
To taste what fare his humble cottage yields ;
As bees, that daily thro' the meadows roam,
Feed on the sweets they have prepar'd at home.

FLORELLUS.

The grassy meads that smil'd serchely gay,
Cheer'd by the ever-burning lamp of day,
In dusky hue attir'd, are cramp'd with colds,
And springing flow'rets shut their crimson folds.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

AMYNTAS.

What awful silence reigns thro'out the shade!
 The peaceful olive bends his drooping head;
 No sound is heard o'er all the gloomy maze;
 Wide o'er the deep the fiery meteors blaze.

FLORELLUS.

The west, yet ting'd with Sol's effulgent ray,
 With feeble light illumines our homeward way;
 The glowing stars with keener lustre burn,
 While round the earth their glowing axles turn.

AMYNTAS.

What mighty power conducts the stars on high!
 Who bids these comets thro' our system fly!
 Who wafts the lightning to the icy pole,
 And thro' our regions bids the thunders roll?

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

FLORELLUS.

But say, what mightier pow'r from nought
could raise

The earth, the sun, and all that fiery maze
Of distant stars that gild the azure sky,
And thro' the void in settled orbits fly?

AMYNTAS.

That righteous Pow'r, before whose heav'nly eye
The stars are nothing, and the planets die;
Whose breath divine supports our mortal frame;
Who made the lion wild and lambkin tame.

FLORELLUS.

At His command the bounteous Spring returns;
Hot Summer raging o'er th' Atlantic, burns;
The yellow Autumn crowns our sultry toil;
And Winter's snows prepare the cumbrous soil.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

AMYNTAS.

By Him the morning darts his purple ray ;
To Him the birds their early homage pay ;
With vocal harmony the meadows ring,
While swains in concert heav'nly praises sing.

FLORELLUS.

Sway'd by his word, the nutrient dew descends,
And growing pastures to the moisture bend ;
The vernal blossoms sip his falling showers ;
The meads are garnish'd with his opening flowers.

AMYNTAS.

For man, the object of his chiefest care,
Fowls he hath formed to wing the ambient air :
For him the steer his lusty neck doth bend ;
Fishes for him their scaly fins extend.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

FLORELLUS.

Wide o'er the orient sky the moon appears,
A foe to Darkness and his idle fears ;
Around her orb the stars in clusters shine,
And distant planets 'tend her silver shrine.

AMYNTAS.

Hush'd are the busy numbers of the day ;
On downy couch they sleep their hours away.
Hail, balmy sleep, that soothes the troubled mind !
Lock'd in thy arms, our cares a refuge find.
Oft do you tempt us with delusive dreams,
When wildering Fancy darts her dazzling beams.
Asleep, the lover with his mistress strays
Thro' lonely thickets and untrodden ways ;
But when pale Cynthia's sable empire's fled,
And hovering slumbers shun the morning bed,
Rous'd by the dawn, he wakes with frequent sigh
And all his flattering visions quickly fly.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

FLORELLUS.

Now owls and bats infest the midnight scene ;
Dire snakes envenom'd twine along the green ;
Forsook by man the rivers mourning glide,
And groaning echoes swell the noisy tide ;
Straight to our cottage let us bend our way ;
My drowsy powers confess sleep's magic sway.
Easy and calm upon our couch we'll lie,
While sweet reviving slumbers round our pillows fly.



THE COMPLAINT.

A PASTORAL.

NEAR the heart of a fair-spreading grove,
Whose foliage shaded the green,
A shepherd, repining at love,
In anguish was heard to complain.—

“ O Cupid ! thou wanton young boy !

“ Since, with thy invisible dart,

“ Thou hast robb'd a fond youth of his joy,

“ In return grant the wish of his heart.

“ Send a shaft so severe from thy bow,

“ (His pining, his sighs, to remove,)

“ That Stella, once wounded, may know

“ How keen are the arrows of love.

THE COMPLAINT.

" No swain once so happy as I,
" Nor tun'd with more pleasure the reed ;
" My breast never vented a sigh,
" Till Stella approach'd the gay mead.

" With mirth, with contentment endow'd,
" My hours they flew wantonly by ;
" I sought no repose in the wood,
" Nor from my few sheep would I fly.

" Now my reed I have carelessly broke ;
" Its melody pleases no more :
" I pay no regard to a flock
" That seldom hath wander'd before.

" O Stella ! whose beauty so fair
" Excels the bright splendor of day,
" Ah ! have you no pity to share
" With Damon thus fall'n to decay ?

THE COMPLAINT.

- " For you have I quitted the plain ;
 " Forsaken my sheep and my fold :
" To you in dull languor and pain
 " My tedious moments are told.
- " For you have my roses grown pale ;
 " They have faded untimely away :
" And will not such beauty bewail
 " A shepherd thus fall'n to decay.
- " Since your eyes still requite me with scorn,
 " And kill with their merciless ray ;
" Like a star at the dawning of morn,
 " I fall to their lustre a prey.
- " Some swain who shall mournfully go
 " To whisper love's sigh to the shade,
" Will haply some charity shew,
 " And under the turf see me laid.

THE COMPLAINT.

"Would my love but in pity appear
"On the spot where he moulds my cold grave,
"And bedew the green sod with a tear,
"Tis all the remembrance I crave."

To the sword then his visage he turn'd ;
'Twas wan as the lilies in May :
Fair Stella may see him inurn'd ;
He hath sigh'd all his sorrows away.



THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

A PASTORAL ELEGY.

WHEN gold, man's sacred deity, did smile,
My friends were plenty, and my sorrows few;
Mirth, love, and bumpers did my hours beguile,
And arrow'd Cupids round my slumbers flew.

What shepherd then could boast more happy days
My lot was envied by each humbler swain;
Each bard in smooth eulogium sung my praise,
And Damon listen'd to the guileful strain.

Flattery, alluring as the Syren's lay,
And as deceitful thy enchanting tongue,
How have you taught my wav'ring mind to stray,
Charm'd and attracted by the baneful song?

My pleasant cottage, shelter'd from the gale,
Arose with moss, and rural ivy bound;

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

And scarce a flow'ret in my lowly vale,
But was with bees of various colours crown'd.

Free o'er my lands the neighb'ring flocks could
roam ;

How welcome were the swains and flocks to me !
The shepherds kindly were invited home,
To chace the hours in merriment and glee.

To wake emotions in the youthful mind,
Strepson with voice melodious tun'd the song ;
Each Sylvan youth the sounding chorus join'd,
Fraught with contentment 'midst the festive
throng.

My clust'ring grape compens'd their magic skill,
The bowl capacious swell'd in purple tide ;
To shepherds, lib'ral as the chrystal rill,
Spontaneous gurgling from the mountain's side.

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

But ah! these youthful sportive hours are fled;
These scenes of jocund mirth are now no more;
No healing slumbers 'tend my humble bed,
No friends console the sorrows of the poor.

And what avail the thoughts of former joys?
What comfort bring they in the adverse hour?
Can they the canker-worm of care destroy,
Or brighten fortune's discontented hour?

He who hath long travers'd the fertile plain,
Where nature in its fairest vesture smil'd,
Will he not cheerless view the fairy scene,
When lonely wand'ring o'er the barren wild?

For now pale Poverty, with haggard eye
And rueful aspect, darts her gloomy ray;
My wonted guests their proffer'd aid deny,
And from the paths of Dæmon steal away.

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

Thus when fair Summer's lustre gilds the lawn,
When rip'ning blossoms deck the spreading tree,
The birds with melody salute the dawn,
And o'er the daisy hangs the humming-bee.

But when the beauties of the circling year
In chilling frosts and furious storms decay ;
No more the bees upon the plains appear,
No more the warblers hail the infant day.

To the lone corner of some distant shore,
In dreary devious pilgrimage I'll fly,
And wander pensive where deceit no more
Shall trace my footsteps with a mortal eye.

There solitary saunter o'er the beach,
And to the murr'ring surge my griefs disclose ;
There shall my voice in plaintive wailings teach
The hollow caverns to resound my woes.

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

Sweet are the waters to the parched tongue ;
Sweet are the blossoms to the wanton bee ;
Sweet to the shepherd sounds the lark's shrill song,
But sweeter far is solitude to me.

Adieu, ye fields, where I have fondly stray'd !
Ye swains, who once the far'rite Damon knew !
Farewel, ye sharers of my bounty's aid !
Ye sons of base Ingratitude, adieu !



AGAINST

REPINING AT FORTUNE.

THO' in my narrow bounds of rural toil,
No obelisk or splendid column rise ;
Tho' partial Fortune still everts her smile,
And views my labours with condemning eyes.

Yet all the gorgeous vanity of state
I can contemplate with a cool disdain ;
Nor shall the honours of the gny and great
E'er wound my bosom with an envious pain.

Avails it aught the grandeur of their halls,
With all the glories of the pencil hung,
If truth, fair truth! within th' unhallow'd walls,
Hath never whisper'd with her seraph tongue

Avails it aught, if music's gentle lay
Hath oft been echo'd by the sounding dome ;
If music cannot soothe their griefs away,
Or change a wretched to a happy home ?

.....
AGAINST REPINING AT FORTUNE.
.....

Tho' fortune should invest them with her spoils,
And banish poverty with look severe,
Enlarge their confines, and decrease their toils,
Ah! what avails if she increase their care?

Tho' fickle she disclaims my moss-grown cot,
Nature! thou look'st with more impartial eyes;
Smile thou, fair goddess! on my sober lot;
I'll neither fear her fall, nor court her rise.

When early larks shall cease the matin song;
When Philomel at night resigns her lays;
When melting number to the owl belong,
Then shall the reed be silent in thy praise.

Can he who with the tide of Fortune sails,
More pleasure from the sweets of Nature share?
Do zephyrs waft him more ambrosial gales,
Or do his groves a gayer liv'ry wear?

.....
AGAINST REPINING AT FORTUNE.
.....

To me the heav'n's unveil as pure a sky;
To me the flow'rs as rich a bloom disclose;
The morning beams as radiant to my eye,
And darkness guides me to as sweet repose.

If Luxury their lavish dainties piles,
And still attends upon their satéd hours,
Doth health reward them with her open smiles,
Or exercise enlarge their feeble pow'rs?

'Tis not in richest mines of Indian gold,
That Man this jewel happiness can find,
If his unfeeling breast, to virtue cold,
Denies her entrance to his ruthless mind.

Wealth, pomp, and honour are but gaudy toys;
Alas, how poor the pleasures they impart!
Virtue's the sacred source of all the joys
That claim a lasting mansion in the heart.

CONSCIENCE.

Conscience, that candid judge of right and
wrong,
Will o'er the secrets of each heart preside,
Nor aw'd by pomp, nor tam'd by soothing
song,



DAMON

TO HIS FRIENDS.

THE billows of life are suppress ;
Its tumults, its toils disappear ;
To relinquish the storms that are past,
I think on the sunshine that's near.

Dame Fortune and I are agreed ;
Her frowns I no longer endure ;
For the goddess has kindly decreed,
That Damon no more shall be poor.

Now riches will ope the dim eyes,
To view the increase of my store ;
And many my friendship will prize,
Who never knew Damon before.

DAMON TO HIS FRIENDS.
.....
.....

But these I renounce and abjure,
Who carried contempt in their eye ;
May poverty still be their dower,
That could look on misfortune awry !

Ye pow'rs that weak mortals govern,
Keep Pride at his bay from my mind ;
O let me not haughtily learn
To despise the few friends that were kind.

For their's was a feeling sincere ;
'Twas free from delusion and art ;
O may I that friendship revere,
And hold it yet dear to my heart !

By which was I ever forgot ?
It was both my physician and cure,
That still found the way to my cot,
Altho' I was wretched and poor.

 DAMON TO HIS FRIENDS.

'Twas balm to my canker-tooth'd care,
 The wound of affliction it heal'd;
 In distress it was Pity's soft tear,
 And naked cold Poverty's shield.

Attend, ye kind youth of the plain!
 Who oft with my sorrows condol'd;
 You cannot be deaf to the strain,
 Since Damon is master of gold.

I have chose a sweet sylvan retreat,
 Bedeck'd with the beauties of Spring;
 Around, my flocks nibble and bleat,
 While the musical choristers sing.

I force not the waters to stand,
 In an artful canal at my door;
 But a river, at Nature's command,
 Meanders both limpid and pure.

DAMON TO HIS FRIENDS.

She's the goddess that darkens my bow'rs
With tendrils of ivy and vine ;
She tutors my shrubs and my flowers ;
Her taste is the standard of mine.

What a pleasing diversified group
Of trees has she spread o'er my ground !
She has taught the grave larch to droop,
And the birch to shed odours around.

For whom has she perfum'd my groves ?
For whom has she cluster'd my vine ?
If Friendship despise my alcoves,
They'll ne'er be recesses of mine.

He who tastes his grape juices by stealth,
Without chosen companions to share,
Is the basest of slaves to his wealth,
And the pitiful minion of care.

DAMON TO HIS FRIENDS.

O come, and with Damon retire
Amidst the green umbrage embower'd!
Your mirth and your songs to inspire,
Shall the juice of his vintage be pour'd.

O come, ye dear friends of his youth!
Of all his good fortune partake!
Nor think 'tis departing from truth,
To say 'twas preserv'd for your sake.



 RETIREMENT.

- " Here chastity may wander unassail'd
 " Thro' fields where gay seducers cease to rove;
 " Where open Vice o'er Virtue be'er prevail'd
 " Where all is innocence, and all is love.
- " Peace with her olive wand triumphant reigns,
 " Guarding secure the peasant's humble bed;
 " Envy is banish'd from the happy plains,
 " And Defamation's busy tongue is laid.
- " Health and contentment usher in the morn,
 " With jocund smiles they cheer the rural swain,
 " For which the Peer, to pompous titles born,
 " Forsaken sighs, but all his sighs are vain.
- " For the calm comforts of an easy mind,
 " In yonder lonely cot delight to dwell,
 " And leave the Statesman for the lab'ring hind,
 " The regal palace for the lowly cell.

RETIREMENT.

"Ye, who to wisdom would devote your hours,
"And far from riot, far from discord stray!
"Look back disdainful on the city's tow'rs,
"Where Pride, where Folly point the slipp'ry
way.

"Pure flows the limpid stream in chrysal tides,
"Thro' rocks, thro' dens, and ever verdant vales,
"Till to the town's unhallow'd wall it glides,
"Where all its purity and lustre fails."



 ODE TO HOPE.

When vital spirits are depress'd,
 And heavy languor clogs the breast,
 Comforting hope! 'tis thine to cure,
 Devoid of Esculapian power;
 For oft thy friendly aid avails,
 When all the strength of physic fails.

Nay, even tho' death should aim his dart,
 I know he lifts his arm in vain,
 Since thou this lesson canst impart,
 Mankind but die to live again.

Depriv'd of thee must banners fall;
 But where a living Hope is found,
 The legions shout at danger's call,
 And victors are triumphant crown'd.

Come then, bright Hope! in smiles array'd
 Revive us by thy quick'ning breath,
 Then shall we never be afraid
 To walk thro' danger and thro' death.

THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

AN ODE.

Set to Music by Mr Collet.

OVER Scotia's parched land the Naiads flew,
From tow'ring hills explor'd her shelter'd vales,
Caus'd Forth in wild meanders please the view,
And lift her waters to the zephyr's gales.
Where the glad swain surveys his fertile fields,
And reaps the plenty which his harvest yields.

Here did these lovely nymphs unseen,
Oft wander'd by the river's side,
And oft unbind their tresses green,
To bathe them in the fluid tide.

Then to the shady grottos would retire,
And sweetly echo to the warbling choir;

THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

High tow'ring on the zephyr's breezy wing,
Swift fly the Naiads from Fortha's shores,
And to the southern airy mountains bring
Their sweet enchantment and their magic pow'rs.

Each nymph her favourite willow takes,
The earth with fev'rous tremor shakes,
The stagnant lakes obey their call,
Streams o'er the grassy pastures fall.

Tweed spreads her waters to the lucid ray,
Upon the dimpled surf the sun-beams play :

On her green banks the tuneful shepherd lies,
Charm'd with the music of his reed,
Amidst the wavings of the Tweed :
From sky-reflecting streams the river nymphs
arise.

THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

CHORUS.

On her green banks the tuneful shepherd lies,
 Charm'd with the music of his reed,
 Amidst the wavings of the Tweed:
 From sky-reflecting streams the river nymphs arise.

The list'ning muses heard the shepherds play,
 Fame with her brazen trump proclaim'd his name,
 And to attend the easy graceful lay,
 Pan from *Arcadia* to Tweed came,
 Fond of the change, along the banks he stray'd,
 And sung unmindful of th' *Arcadian* shade.

Air,—TWEEDSIDE.

I.

Attend ev'ry fanciful swain,
 Whose notes softly flow from the reed,
 With harmony guide the sweet strain,
 To sing of the beauties of Tweed.

IV.

" Since from the void creation rose,
 " Thou'st made a sacred vow,
 " That *Caledon* to foreign foes
 " Should ne'er be known to bow."

The mighty thunderer on his sapphire throne,
 In mercy's robes attir'd, heard the sweet voice
 Of female woe,—soft as the moving song
 Of *Philomela* 'midst the evening shades ;
 And thus return'd an answer to her prayers :

" Where birks at Nature's call arise ;
 " Where fragrance hails the vaulted skies ;
 " Where my own oak its umbrage spreads,
 " Delightful 'midst the woody shades ;
 " Where ivy-mould'ring rocks entwines ;
 " Where breezes bend the lofty pines :
 " There shall the laughing Naiads stray,
 " 'Midst the sweet banks of winding *Tay*."

.....
 THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

From the dark womb of earth Tay's waters spring,
 Ordain'd by Jove's unalterable voice ;
 The sounding lyre celestial muses string ;
 The choiring songsters in the groves rejoice,

Each fount its crystal fluids pours,
 Which from surrounding mountains flow ;
 The river bathes its verdant shores ;
 Cool o'er the surf the breezes blow.

Let England's sons extol their gardens fair ;
 Scotland may freely boast her generous
 streams ;
 Their soil more fertile, and their milder air ;
 Her fishes sporting in the solar beams.

Thames, Humber, Severn, all must yield the boy
 To the pure streams of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay.

THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

In these recesses deign to dwell
With me in yonder moss-clad cell :

Then shall my reed successful tune the lay,
In numbers wildly warbling as they stray
Thro' the gladbanks of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay-



THE
TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTRASTED,

In an Epistle to a Friend.

FROM noisy bustle, from contention free,
Far from the busy town I careless loll:
Not like swain Tityrus, or the herds of old,
Under a beechen, venerable shade,
But on a furzy heath, where blooming brooms
And thorny whins the spacious plains adorn,
Here Health sits smiling on my youthful brow;
For ere the sun beams forth his earliest ray,
And all the east with yellow radiance crowns;
Ere dame Aurora, from her purple bed,
'Gins with her kindling blush to paint the sky;
The soaring lark, morn's cheerful harbinger,
And linnet joyful, flutt'ring from the bush,
Stretch their small throats in vocal melody.

.....
 THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTRASTED.

To hail the dawn, and drowsy sleep exhale
 From man, frail man! on downy softness stretch'd.

Such pleasing scenes Edina cannot boast ;
 For there the slothful slumber seal'd mine eyes,
 Till nine successive strokes the clock had knell'd.
 There not the lark, but fishwives' noisy screams,
 And imundations plung'd from ten house height,
 With smell more fragrant than the spicy groves
 Of Indus, fraught with all her orient stores,
 Rous'd me from sleep ;—not sweet refreshing sleep,
 But sleep infested with the burning sting
 Of bug infernal, who the live-long night
 With direst suction sipp'd my liquid gore.
 There gloomy vapours in our zenith reign'd,
 And fill'd with irksome pestilence the air:
 There ling'ring Sickness held his feeble court,
 Rejoicing in the havoc he had made ;
 And Death, grim Death! with all his ghastly traits,
 Watch'd the broke slumbers of Edina's sons.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTRASTED.

Hail! rosy Health! thou pleasing antidote
 'Gainst troubling cares! all hail, these rural fields!
 Those winding rivulets, and verdant shades,
 Where thou, the heaven-born goddess deign'st to
 dwell!

With thee the hind, upon his simple fare,
 Lives cheerful, and from Heaven no more de-
 mands.

But, ah! how vast how terrible the change
 With him who night by night in sickness pines!
 Him nor his splendid equipage can please,
 Nor all the pageantry the world can boast!
 Nay, not the consolation of his friends
 Can aught avail: his hours are anguish all;
 Nor cease till envious Death hath clos'd the scene.

But, Carlos, if we court this maid celestial;
 Whether we thro' meand'ring rivers stray,
 Or 'midst the city's jarring noise remain;
 Let Temperance, Health's blythe concomitant,

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTRASTED.

To our desires and appetites set bounds ;
Else, cloy'd at last, we surfeit every joy :
Our slacken'd nerves reject their wonted spring ;
We reap the fruits of our unkindly lusts,
And feebly totter to the silent grave.



ODE

TO PITY.

TO what sequester'd gloomy shade
Hath ever gentle Pity stray'd?
What brook is water'd from her eyes?
What gales convey her tender sighs?
Unworthy of her grateful lay,
She hath despis'd the great, the gay,
Nay, all the feelings she imparts
Are far estrang'd from human hearts.

Ah Pity! whither wouldst thou fly,
From human heart, from human eye?
Are desert woods and twilight groves
The scenes the sobbing pilgrim loves?
If there thou dwell'st, O Pity, say
In what lone path you pensive stray.

ODE TO PITY.

I'll know thee by the lily's hue,
Besprinkl'd with the morning's dew :
For thou wilt never blush to wear
The pallid look and falling tear.

In broken cadence from thy tongue,
Oft have we heard the mournful song ;
Oft have we view'd the loaded bier
Bedew'd with Pity's softest tear.
Her sighs and tears were ne'er deny'd
When innocence and virtue died,
But in this black and iron age,
Where vice and all his demons rage,
Tho' bells in solemn peals are rung,
Tho' dirge in mournful verse is sung ;
Soon will the vain parade be o'er,
Their name, their memory no more :
Who love and innocence despis'd,
And ev'ry virtue sacrific'd.

ODE TO PITY.

Here Pity, as a statue dumb,
Will pay no tribute to the tomb ;
Or wake the memory of those
Who never felt for others woes.

Thou mistress of the feeling heart !
Thy powers of Sympathy impart,
If mortals would but fondly prize
Thy falling tears, thy passing sighs,
Then should wan poverty no more
Walk feebly from the rich man's door ;
Humility should vanquish pride,
And vice be drove from virtue's side ;
Then happiness at length should reign,
And golden age begin again.



ON THE

COLD MONTH OF APRIL, 1771.

.....
*Oh! who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus ;
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast ;
Or wallow naked in December's snow
By thinking on fantastic Summer's heat ?*

SHAKESP. RICHARD II.
.....

POETS in vain have hail'd the op'ning spring,
In tender accents woo'd the blooming maid,
In vain have taught the April birds to wing
Their flight thro' fields in verdant hue array'd.

The muse in ev'ry season taught to sing
Amidst the desert snows by fancy's powers,
Can elevated soar, on placid wing,
To climes where spring her kindest influence
showers.

ON THE COLD MONTH OF APRIL, 1771.

April, once famous for the zephyr mild,
For sweets that early in the garden grow,
Say, how converted to this cheerless wild,
Rushing with torrents of dissolving snow.

Nurs'd by the moisture of a gentle shower,
Thy foliage oft hath sounded to the breeze;
Oft did thy choristers melodious pour
Their melting numbers thro' the shady trees.

Fair have I seen thy morn, in smiles array'd,
With crimson blush hepaint the eastern sky;
But now the dawn creeps mournful o'er the glade,
Shrouded in colours of a sable dye.

So have I seen the fair, with laughing eye,
And visage cheerful as the smiling morn,
Alternate changing for the heaving sigh,
Or frowning aspect of contemptuous scorn.

ON THE COLD MONTH OF APRIL, 1771.

Life! what art thou?—a variegated scene
Of mingled light and shade, of joy and woe;
A sea where calms and storms promiscuous reign;
A stream where sweet and bitter jointly flow.

Mute are the plains; the shepherd pipes no more;
The reed's forsaken, and the tender flock;
While Echo, list'ning to the tempest's roar,
In silence wanders o'er the beetling rock.

Winter, too potent for the solar ray,
Bestrides the mast, ascends his icy throne,
And views Britannia, subject to his sway,
Floating emergent on the frigid zone.

Thou savage tyrant of the fretful sky!
Wilt thou for ever in our zenith reign?
To Greenland's seas, congeal'd in chillness, fly,
Where howling monster's tread the bleak domain.

.....
 ON THE COLD MONTH OF APRIL, 1771.

Relent, O Boreas! leave thy frozen cell;
 Resign to Spring her portion of the year;
 Let west winds temp'rate waver the flowing gale,
 And hills, and vales, and woods, a vernal as-
 pect wear.



THE SIMILE.

AT noontide, as Colin and Sylvia lay
Within a cool jessamine bower,
A butterfly, wak'd by the heat of the day,
Was sipping the juice of each flow'r.

Near the shade of this covert a young shepherd boy
The gaudy brisk flutterer spies,
Who held it as pastime to seek and destroy
Each beautiful insect that flies.

From the lily he hunted this fly to the rose ;
From the rose to the lily again ;
Till, weary with tracing its motions, he chose
To leave the pursuit with disdain.

Then Colin to Sylvia smilingly said,
Amyntor has follow'd you long ;
From him, like the butterfly, still have you fled,
Tho' woo'd by his musical tongue.

 THE SIMILE.

Beware in persisting to start from his arms,
 But with his fond wishes comply ;
 Come, take my advice; or he's pall'd with your
 charms,
 Like the youth and the beautiful fly.
 Says *Sylvia*,—*Colin*, thy simile's just,
 But still to *Amyntor* I'm coy ;
 For I vow she's a simpleton blind that would trust
 A swain, when he courts to destroy.



 THE BUGS.

To lie on mountain's top, with shapes replete,
 Clean and unclean, that daily wander o'er
 Her streets, that once were spacious, once were gay.
 To Jove the Dryads pray'd, nor pray'd in vain,
 For vengeance on her sons.—At midnight drear
 Black show'rs descend, and teeming myriads rise
 Of bugs abhorrent, who by instinct steal
 Thro' the putrescent and corrosive pores
 Of sapless trees, that late in forest stood,
 With all the majesty of summer crown'd.

By Jove's command dispers'd, they wander wide
 O'er all the City.—Some their cells prepare,
 'Mid the rich trappings and the gay attire
 Of state luxuriant, and are fond to press
 The waving canopy's depending folds ;
 While others, destin'd to an humbler fate,
 Seek shelter from the dwellings of the poor,
 Plying their nightly suction to the bed
 Of toil'd mechanic, who, with folded arms,

.....
 THE BUGS.

Enjoys the comforts of a sleep so sound,
 That not th' alarming sting of glutting Bug
 To murder's deed can rouse his brawny arm
 Upon the blood-swoln fiend, who basely steals
 Life's genial current from his throbbing veins.

Happy were Grandeur, could she triumph here,
 And banish from her halls each misery,
 Which she must brook in common with the poor,
 Who beg subsistence from her sparing hands.
 Then might the rich, to fell disease unknown,
 Indulge in fond excess, nor ever feel
 The slowly-creeping hours of restless night,
 When shook with guilty horrors.—But the wind,
 Whose fretful gusts of anger shake the world,
 Bears more destructive on the aspiring roofs
 Of dome and palace, than on cottage low,
 That meets Æolus with his gentler breath,
 When safely shelter'd in the peaceful vale.
 Is there a being breathes, how'er so vile,

.....
 THE BUGH.

Hot as her rage, sweep myriads to death,
 Their carcasses are destin'd to the urn
 Of some chaste Naiad, that gives birth to floods,
 Whose fragrant virtues hail Edina, fam'd
 For yellow limpid—whose chaste name the Muse
 Deems too exalted to retail in song.

Ah me! No longer they at midnight shade,
 With baneful sting, shall seek the downy couch
 Of slum'ring mortals.—Nor shall love-sick swains,
 When, by the bubbling brook, in fairy dream,
 His nymph, but half reluctant to his wish,
 Is gently folded in his eager arms,
 E'er curse the shaft envenom'd, that disturbs
 His long lov'd fancies.—Nor shall hungry bard,
 Whose strong imagination, whetted keen,
 Conveys him to the feast, be tantaliz'd
 With poisonous tortures, when the cup, brimful
 Of purple vintage, gives him greater joy
 Than all the heliconian streams that play
 And murmur round Parnassus. Now the wretch

THE BUGS'

Oft doom'd to restless days and sleepless nights,
By laggard Conscience thrall'd, enjoys an hour
Of undisturb'd repose.—The miser too
May brook his golden dreams, nor wake with fear
That thieves or kindred (for no soul he'll trust)
Have broke upon his chest, and strive to steal
The shining idols of his useless hours.

Happy the Bug, whose unambitious views
To gilded pomp ne'er tempt him to aspire ;
Safely may he, enwrapt in russet fold
Of cobweb'd curtain, set at bay the fears
That still attendant are on Bugs of state :
He never knows at morn the busy brush
Of scrubbing Chambermaid ; his coursing blood
Is ne'er obstructed with obnoxious dose
By OLIPHANT prepar'd—Too pois'nous drug !
As deadly fatal to this crawling tribe
As ball and powder to the sons of war.

A SATURDAY'S EXPEDITION.

Which, in obedience to the powerful breeze,
Swell o'er the foaming main, and kiss the wave.

Now o'er the convex surface of the flood
Precipitate we fly—our foaming prow
Divides the saline stream—on either side
Ridges of yeasty surge dilate space;
But from the poop the waters gently flow,
And undulation for the time decays,
In eddies smoothly floating o'er the main.

Here let the muse in dolful numbers sing
The woeful state of those whose cruel stars
Have doom'd them subject to the languid powers
Of wat'ry sickness,—Tho' with stomach full
Of juicy beef, of mutton in its prime,
Or all the dainties luxury can boast,
They brave the elements,—yet the rocking bark,
Truly regardless of their precious food,
Converts their visage to the ghastly pale.

.....
 A SATURDAY'S EXPEDITION.

And makes the sea partaker of the sweets
 On which they sumptuous far'd.—And this the
 cause

Why those of Scotia's sons, whose wealthy store
 Hath blest them with a splendid coach and six,
 Rather incline to linger on the way,
 And cross the river Forth by Stirling bridge,
 Than be subjected to the ocean's swell,
 To dang'rous ferries, and to sickness dire.

And now at equal distance shews the land ;
 Gladly the tars the joyful task pursue
 Of gathering in the freight.—Debates arise
 From counterfeit'd halfpence.—In the hold
 The seamen scrutinize and eager peep
 Thro' ev'ry corner where their watchful eye
 Suspect a lurking place, or dark retreat,
 To hide the timid corpse of some poor soul,
 Whose scanty purse can scarce one groat afford.

.....
 A SATURDAY'S EXPEDITION.

Till we o'erstrike the gradual rising dale
 Where fair *Burntisland* rears her rev'rend dome;
 And here the vulgar sign-post, painted o'er
 With imitations vile of man and horse;
 Of small-beer frothing o'er th' unshapely jug;
 With courteous invitation, spoke us fair
 To enter in, and taste what precious drops
 Were there reserv'd to moisten strangers' throats,
 Too often parch'd upon the tedious way.

After regalling here with sober canns,
 Our limbs we plied, and nimbly mensur'd o'er
 The hills, the vales, and the extensive plains,
 Which form the distance from *Burntisland's* port
 To *Inverkeithing*. Westward still we went,
 Till in the ferry-boat we loll'd at ease:
 Nor did we long on Neptune's empire float;
 For scarce ten posting minutes were elaps'd
 Till we again on *Terra Firma* stood,
 And to M'Laren's march'd, where roasted lamb,

.....
 A SATURDAY'S EXPEDITION.

With cooling lettuce, crown'd our social board,
 Here too the cheering glass, chief foe to cares!
 Went briskly round; and many a virgin fair
 Receiv'd our homage in a bumper full.

Thus having sacrific'd a jocund hour,
 To smiling Mirth, we quit the happy scene,
 And move progressive to Edina's walls.

Now still returning ere creep'd gradual on,
 And the bright sun, as weary of the sky;
 Beam'd forth a languid occidental ray;
 Whose ruby-tinctur'd radiance faintly gleam'd
 Upon the airy cliffs and distant spires,
 That float on the horizon's utmost verge.
 So we, with fessive joints and ling'ring pace,
 Mov'd slowly on, and did not reach the town
 Till Phoebus had unyok'd his prancing steeds.

.....
 THE CANONGATE PLAY-HOUSE IN RUINS.

Can I contemplate on those dreary scenes
 Of mould'ring desolation, and forb'd
 The voice elegiac, and the falling tear!
 No more from box to box the basket pil'd
 With oranges as radiant as the spheres,
 Shall with their luscious virtues charm the sense
 Of taste and smell. No more the gaudy beau,
 With handkerchief in lavender well drench'd,
 Or bergamot, or rose water pure,
 With flavoriferous sweets shall chace away
 The pestilential fumes of vulgar cits,
 Who, in impatience for the curtain's rise,
 Amus'd the ling'ring moments, and apply'd
 Thirst-quenching *porter* to their parched lips.

Alas, how sadly alter'd is the scene!
 For lo! those sacred walls, that late were brush'd
 By rustling silks and waving capochines,
 Are now become the sport of wrinkled Time!

.....
 THE CANONDATE PLAY-HOUSE IN RUINS.

Those walls, that late have echo'd to the voice
 Of stern King *Richard*, to the seat transform'd
 Of crawling spiders and detested moths,
 Who in the lonely crevices reside ;
 Or gender in the beams, that have upheld
 Gods, demi-gods, and all the joyous crew
 Of thund'ers in the galleries above.

O Shakespeare! where are all thy tinsel'd kings,
 Thy fawning courtiers, and thy waggish clowns ?
 Where all thy fairies, spirits, witches, fiends,
 That here have gambol'd in nocturnal sport,
 Round the lone oak, or sunk in fear away
 From the shrill summons of the cock at morn ?
 Where now the temples, palaces, and tow'rs ?
 Where now the groves that ever-verdant smil'd ?
 Where now the streams that never ceas'd to flow ?
 Where now the clouds, the rains, the hails, the winds,
 The thunders, lightnings, and the tempests strong !

THE CANONGATE PLAY-HOUSE IN RUINS.

From its dramatic sources. O! look here
Upon this roofless and forsaken pile,
And stalk in pensive sorrow o'er the ground
Where you've beheld so many noble scenes.

Thus, when the mariner to foreign clime
His bark conveys, where odouriferous gales,
And orange-groves, and love-inspiring wine,
Have oft repaid his toil; if earthquake dire,
With hollow groanings and convulsive pangs,
The ground hath rent, and all those beauties foil'd
Will he refrain to shed the grateful drop,
A tribute justly due (tho' seldom paid)
To the blest memory of happier times?



FASHION.

*Bred up where discipline most rare is,
In Military Garden Paris.* HUBBARD.

O Nature, parent goddess! at thy shrine,
Pronè to the earth, the Muse, in humble song,
Thy aid implores! Nor will she wing her flight
Till thou, bright form! in thy effulgence pure,
Deign'st to look down upon her lowly state,
And shed thy pow'ful influence benign.

Come then, regardless of vain Fashion's fools,
Of all those vile enormities of shape
That crowd the world, and with thee bring
Wisdom in sober contemplation clad,
To lash those bold usurpers from the stage.

VOL. I. Z

FASHION.

Where all the colours in th' ethereal bow
Unite, and blend, and tustalize the sight.

Nature! to thee alone, not Fashion's pomp,
Does Beauty owe her all-commanding eye.
From the green bosom of the wat'ry main,
Array'd by thee, majestic Venus rose,
With waving ringlets carelessly diffus'd,
Floating luxurious o'er the restless surge.
What Rubens, then, with his enliv'ning hand,
Could paint the bright vermilion of her cheek,
Pure as the roseate portal of the east,
That opens to receive the cheering ray
Of Phoebus beaming from the orient sky!
For sterling Beauty needs no faint essays,
Or colourings of art, to gild her more:—
She is all-perfect.—And if beauty fail,
Where are those ornaments, those rich attires,
Which can reflect a lustre on that face,
Where she with light innate disdains to shine?

FASHION.

Britons! beware of Fashion's luring wiles:
On either hand, chief guardians of her power,
And sole dictators of her fickle voice,
Folly and dull Effeminacy reign;
Whose blackest magic and unhallow'd spells
The Roman ardour check'd; their strength decay'd,
And all their glory scatter'd to the winds.

Tremble, O Albion! for the voice of Fate
Seems ready to decree thy after fall.
By pride, by luxury, what fated ills,
Unheeded, have approach'd thy mortal frame!
How many foreign weeds their heads have rear'd
In thy fair garden! Hasten, ere their strength
And baneful vegetation taint the soil,
To root out rank disease, which soon must spread,
If no bless'd antidote will purge away
Fashion's proud minions from our sea-girt isle.

A BURLESQUE ELEGY,
ON THE
AMPUTATION OF A STUDENT'S HAIR,
BEFORE HIS ORDERS.

O SAD catastrophe! O event dire!
How shall the loss, the heavy loss be borne?
Or how the Muse attune the plaintive lyre,
To sing of *Strepſion* with his ringlets shorn?

Say ye, who can divine the mighty cause,
From whence this modern circumcision springs?
Why such oppressive and such rigid laws
Are still attendant on religious things?

Alas! poor *Strepſion*, to the stern decree
Which prunes your tresses, are you doom'd to
yield?

ON THE AMPUTATION OF A STUDENT'S HAIR.

Soon shall your *caput*, like the blasted tree,
Diffuse its faded honours o'er the field.

Now let the solemn sounds of mourning swell,
And wake sad echoes to prolong the lay,
For hark! methinks I hear the tragic knell;
This hour bespeaks the barber on his way.

O razor! yet thy poignant edge suspend;
O yet indulge me with a short delay;
Till I once more pourtray my youthful friend,
Ere his proud locks are scatter'd on the clay.

Ere the huge wig, in formal curls array'd,
With pulvile pregnant, shall o'ershade his face;
Or, like the wide umbrella, lend its aid,
To banish lustre from the sacred place.

Mourn, O ye zephyrs! for, alas! no more
His waving ringlets shall your call obey!

ON THE AMPUTATION OF A STUDENT'S HAIR.

For, ah! the stubborn wig must now be wore,
Since *Strepson's* locks are scatter'd on the clay.

Amanda, too, in bitter anguish sighs,
And grieves the metamorphosis to see;
Mourn not, *Amanda*, for the hair that lies
Dead on the ground shall be reviv'd for thee.

Some skilful artist of a French *friseur*,
With graceful ringlets shall thy temples bind,
And cull the precious relics from the floor,
Which yet may flutter in the wanton wind.



WRITTEN
AT THE
HERMITAGE OF BRAID,
NEAR EDINBURGH.

WOULD you relish a rural retreat,
Or the pleasure the groves can inspire,
The city's allurements forget,—
To this spot of enchantment retire.

Where a valley, and crystalline brook,
Whose current glides sweetly along,
Give Nature a fanciful look,
The beautiful woodlands among.

Behold the umbrageous trees
A covert of verdure have spread,
Where shepherds may loll at their ease,
And pipe to the musical shade.

.....
WRITTEN AT THE HERMITAGE OF BRAID.
.....

For, lo! thro' each op'ning is heard,
In concert with waters below,
The voice of a musical bird,
Whose numbers do gracefully flow.

The bushes and arbours so green,
The tendrils of spray interwove,
With foliage shelter the scene,
And form a retirement for love.

Here Venus transported may rove
From pleasure to pleasure unseen,
Nor wish for the Cyprian grove
Her youthful Adonis to screen.

Oft let me contemplative dwell
On a scene where such beauties appear;
I could live in a cot or a cell,
And never think solitude near.

A TALE.

THOSE rigid pedagogues and fools,
Who walk by self-invented rules,
Do often try, with empty head,
The emptier mortals to mislead,
And fain would urge, that none but they
Could rightly teach the A, B, C ;
On which they've got an endless comment,
To trifling minds of mighty moment,
Throwing such barriers in the way
Of those who genius display,
As often, ah ! too often tease
Them out of patience, and of fees,
Before they're able to explode
Obstructions thrown on Learning's road.
May mankind all employ their tools
To banish pageantry from schools !

A TALE.

And may each pedagogue avail,
By list'ning to the after tale!

Wise Mr. Birch had long intended
The alphabet should be amended,
And taught that H a breathing was,
Ergo he saw no proper cause,
Why such a letter should exist:
Thus in a breath was he dismiss'd,
With, "O beware, beware, O youth!"
"Take not the villain in your mouth."

One day this alphabetic sinner
Was eager to devour his dinner,
When to appease the craving glutton,
His boy Tow produced the mutton.
Was such disaster ever told?
Alas! the meat was deadly cold!
Here take and h—eat it, says the master;
Quoth Tom, that shall be done, and fast, Sir;

A TALE.

And few there are, who will dispute it ;
But he went instantly about it ;
For *Birch* had scorn'd the H to say,
And blew him with a puff away.

The bell was rung with dread alarm ;
" Bring me the mutton, is it warm ?"
Sir you desir'd, and I have eat it ;
" You lie, my orders were to heat it."
Quoth Tom, I'll readily allow
That H is but a breathing now.



THE
PEASANT, HEN, AND YOUNG DUCKS.

A FABLE.

A Hen, of all the dunghill crew
The fairest, stateldest to view,
Of laying tir'd, she fondly begs
Her keeper's leave to hatch her eggs.
He, dunn'd with the incessant cry,
Was forc'd for peace' sake to comply :—
And, in a month, the downy brood
Came chirping round the hen for food,
Who view'd them with parental eyes
Of pleasing fondness and surprise,
And was not at a loss to trace
Her likeness growing in their face ;
Tho' the broad *bills* could well declare
That they another's offspring were :
So strong will prejudices blind,
And lead astray the easy mind .

.....
 THE PEASANT, HEN, AND YOUNG DUCKS.

To the green margin of the brook
 The hen her fancy'd children took:
 Each young one shakes his unfledg'd wings,
 And to the flood by instinct springs:
 With willing strokes they gladly swim,
 Or dive into the glassy stream,
 While the fond mother vents her grief,
 And prays the peasant's kind relief.
 The peasant heard the litter cries,
 And thus in terms of rage replies:
 " You fool! give o'er your useless moan,
 " Nur mourn misfortunes not your own;
 " But learn in wisdom to forsake
 " The offspring of the duck and drake."
 To whom the hen, with angry crest
 And scornful look, herself address:
 " If reason were my constant guide,
 " (Of man the ornament and pride)
 " Then should I boast a cruel heart,
 " That feels not for another's smart:

THE PEASANT, HEN, AND YOUNG DUCKS.
.....

" But since poor I, by *instinct* blind,
" Can boast no feelings so refin'd,
" 'Tis hop'd your reason will excuse,
" Tho' I your counsel sage refuse,
" And from the perils of the flood
" Attempt to save another's brood."

MORAL.

When Pity, gen'rous nymph ! possess'd,
And mov'd at will the human breast,
No tongue its distant suff'rings told,
But she assisted, she condol'd,
And willing bore her tender part
In all the feelings of the heart:
But now from her our hearts decoy'd,
To sense of others' woes destroy'd,
Act only from a selfish view,
Nor give the aid to pity due.

TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN CUNNINGHAM, POET.

*Sing his praises that doth keep
Our flocks from harm ;
Pan, the father of our sleep :
And, arm in arm,
Tread we softly in a round
While the hollow neigh'ring ground
Fills the music with her sound.*

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

YE mournful meanders and groves,
Delight of the Muse and her song !
Ye grottos and dropping alcoves,
No strangers to Corydon's tongue !

Let each Sylvan and Dryad declare
His themes and his music how dear !
Their plaints and their dirges prepare,
Attendant on Corydon's bier,

VOL. I.

B b

.....
TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN CUNNINGHAM, POET.
.....

Let Beauty and Virtue revere,
And the songs of the shepherd approve,
Who felt, who lamented the snare,
When repining at pitiless love.

The summer but languidly gleams ;
Pomona no comfort can bring ;
Nor valleys, nor grottos, nor streams,
Nor the May-born flow'rets of Spring.

They've fled all with Corydon's Muse,
For his brows to form chaplets of woe ;
Whose reed oft awaken'd their boughs,
As the whispering breezes that blow.

To many a fanciful spring
His lyre was melodiously strung ;
While fairies and fawns, in a ring,
Have applauded the swain as he sung.

.....
TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN CUNNINGHAM, POET.
.....

To the cheerrful he usher'd his smiles ;
 To the wocful his sigh and his tear ;
A condoler with Want and her toils,
 When the voice of Oppression was near.

Tho' titles and wealth were his due ;
 Tho' Fortune denied his reward ;
Yet Truth and Sincerity knew
 What the goddess would never regard.

Avails nught the generous heart, 2
 Which Nature to goodness design'd,
If Fortune denies to impart
 Her kindly relief to the mind?

'Twas but faint the relief to dismay,
 The cells of the wretched among ;
Tho' Sympathy sung in the lay ;
 Tho' melody fell from his tongue.

THE DELIGHTS OF VIRTUE.

Fresh from old Neptune's fluid mansion sprung
The sun, reviver of each drooping flow'r ;
At his approach the lark, with *matin* song,
In notes of gratitude confess'd his pow'r.

So shines fair *Virtue*, shedding light divine,
On those who wish'd to profit by her ways ;
Who ne'er at parting with their vice repine,
To taste the comforts of her blissful rays.

She with fresh hopes each sorrow can beguile,
Can dissipate Adversity's stern gloom,
Make meagre Poverty contented smile,
And the sad wretch forget his hapless doom.

Sweeter than shady groves in summer's pride,
Than flow'ry dales or grassy meads is she :
Delighted as the honey'd streams that glide
From the rich labours of the busy bee.

THE DELIGHTS OF VIRTUE.

Her paths and alleys are for ever green ;
There Innocence, in snowy robes array'd,
With smiles of pure content is hail'd the queen
And happy mistress of the sacred shade.

O let not transient gleams of earthly joy
From Virtue lure your lab'ring steps aside ;
Ner instant grandeur future hopes annoy
With thoughts that spring from Insolence and
Pride.

Soon will the winged moments speed away
When you'll no more the plumes of honour wear :
Grandeur must shudder at the sad decay,
And Pride look humble when he ponders there.

Depriv'd of Virtue, where is Beauty's pow'r ?
Her dimpled smiles, her roses charm no more.

A TAVERN ELEGY.

Here Music, the delight of moments gay,
Bade the unguarded tongues their motions cease
And with a mirthful, a melodious lay,
Aw'd the fell voice of Discord into Peace.

These are the joys that virtue must approve,
While reason shines with majesty divine,
Ere our ideas in disorder move,
And sad excess against the soul combine.

What evils have not frenzy'd mortals done
By wine, that *iguis fatuus* of the mind!
How many by its force to vice are won,
Since first ordain'd to tantalize mankind!

By Bacchus' pow'r, ye sons of riot! say,
How many watchful sentinels have bled!
How many travellers have lost their way,
By lamps unguided thro' the evening shade!

A TAVERN ELEGY.

O spare those friendly twinklers of the night!
Let no rude cane their hallow'd orbs assail!
For cowardice alone condemns the light,
That shows her countenance aghast and pale.

Now the short taper warns me to depart
Ere darkness shall assume his dreary sway;
Ere solitude fall heavy on my heart,
That lingers for the fair approach of day.

Who would not vindicate the happy doom
To be for ever number'd with the dead,
Rather than bear the miserable gloom,
When all his comfort, all his friends are fled?

Bear me, ye gods! where I may calmly rest
From all the follies of the night secure;
The balmy blessings of Repose to taste,
Nor hear the tongue of outrage at my door.

.....
 GOOD EATING.

Beam from the ravish'd guests!—Still are their
 tongues,

While they with whetted instruments prepare
 For deep incision,—Now the abscess bleeds,
 And the devouring hand, with stomach's keen,
 And glutting rage, thy beautiful form destroy,
 Leave you a marrowless skeleton and bare,
 A prey to dunghills, or vexatious sport
 Of torrent rushing from *défillement's urns*,
 That o'er the city's flinty pavement hurls.

So fares it with the man, whose pow'ful self
 Once could command respect. Cares'd by all,
 His bounties were as lavish as the hand
 Of yellow *Ceres*, till his stores decay'd,
 And then (O dismal tale!) those precious drops
 Of flatt'ry that bedew'd his spring of fortune,
 Leave the sad winter of his state so fall'n,
 Nor nurse the thorn from which they ne'er can hope
 Again to pluck the odour-dropping rose!

GOOD EATING.

For thee, *Roast Beef!* in variegated shapes,
 Have mortals toil'd.—The sailor sternly braves
 The strength of Boreas, and exulting stands
 Upon the sea-wash'd deck—with hopes inspir'd
 Of yet indulging in thy wish'd for sweets,
 He smiles amidst the dangers that surround him!
 Cheerful he steers to cold forbidden climes,
 Or to the torrid zone explores his way.

Be kind, ye Pow'rs! and still propitious send
 This paragon of feeding to our halls.
 With this regal'd, who would vain glorious wish
 For tow'ring pyramids superbly crown'd,
 With *jellies, syllabubs, or ice creams rare?*
 These can amuse the eye and may bestow
 A short liv'd-pleasure to a palate strange;
 But, for a moment's pleasure, who would vend
 life-time that would else be spent in joy

GOOD EATING.

Fair *Duddingstonia*, where you may be blest
 With simple fare and vegetable sweets,
 Freed from the clamours of the busy world.

Or, if for recreation you should stray
 To *Leithian* shore, and breathe the keener air
 Wafted from Neptune's empire of the main ;
 If appetite invite, and cash prevail,
 Ply not your joints upon the homeward track,
 Till Lawson, chiefest of the Scottish hosts !
 To nimble footed waiters give command
 The cloth to lay.—Instinctively they come,
 And lo ! the table wrapt in cloudy streams,
 Groans with the weight of the transporting fare
 That breathes frankincense on the guests around.

Now, while stern Winter holds his frigid sway,
 And to a period spins the closing year ;
 While festivals abound, and sportive hours

GOOD EATING.

Kill the remembrance of our wedding time,
Let not Intemperance, destructive fiend!
Gain entrance to your halls.—Despoil'd by him,
Shall cloyed appetite, forerunner sad
Of rank disease, invet'rate clasp your frame.
Contentment shall no more be known to spread
Her cherub wings round thy once happy dwelling
But misery of thought, and racking pain,
Shall plunge you headlong to the dark abyss.



TEA.

But for the silken draperies that enclose
Graces from Fancy's eye but ill conceal'd.

Mark well the fair! observe their modest eye,
With all the innocence of beauty bless'd.
Could Slander o'er that tongue its pow'r retain,
Whose breath is Music?—Ah, fallacious thought!
The surface is Ambrosia's mingled sweets;
But all below is death. At tea-board met,
Attend their prattling tongues;—they scoff,—
they rail
Unbounded; but their darts are chiefly aimed
At some gay fair, whose beauties far eclipse
Her dim beholders; who, with haggard eyes,
Would blight those charms where raptures long
have dwelt
In ecstasy, delighted and sufficed.

In vain hath Beauty, with her varied robe,
Bestowed her glowing blushes o'er her cheeks,

TEA.

And called attendant Graces to her aid,
 To blend the scarlet and the lily fair.
 In vain did Venus in her favourite mould
 Adapt the slender form to Cupid's choice.—
 When Slander comes, her blasts too fatal prove;
 Pale are those cheeks where youth and beauty
 glow'd;
 Where smiles, where freshness, and where roses
 grew:
 Ghastly and wan their Gorgon picture comes,
 With every fury grinning from the looks
 Of frightful monster. Envy's hissing tongue
 With deepest vengeance wounds, and every wound
 With deeper canker, deeper poison, teems.

O Gold! thy luring lustre first prevail'd
 On man to tempt the fretful winds and waves,
 And hunt new fancies. Still, thy glaring form

THE

SOW OF FEELING.

Well! I protest there's no such thing as dealing
With these starch'd poets,—with these Men of
Feeling!

EPILOGUE TO THE PRINCE OF TUNIS.

MALIGNANT planets! do ye still combine
Against this wayward, dreary life of mine?
Has pitiless Oppression—cruel case!
Gain'd sole possession of the human race?
By cruel hands has every virtue bled,
And Innocence from men to vultures fled!

Thrice happy, had I liv'd in Jewish time,
When swallowing pork or pig was deem'd a crime;
My husband long had bless'd my longing arms,
Long, long had known love's sympathetic charms!

 THE SOW OF FEELING.

My children, too,—a little suckling race,
 With all their father growing in their face,
 From their prolific dam had ne'er been torn,
 Nor to the bloody stalls of butchers borne.

Ah, Luxury! to you my being owes
 Its load of misery,—its load of woes!
 With heavy heart I saunter all the day;
 Gruntle and murmur all my hours away!
 In vain I try to summon old desire
 For favorite sports,—for wallowing in the mire:
 Thoughts of my husband, of my children slain,
 Turn all my wonted pleasure into pain!
 How oft did we, in Phœbus' warming ray,
 Bask on the humid softness of the clay?
 Oft did his lusty head defend my tail
 From the rude whispers of the angry gale;
 While nose-refreshing puddles stream'd around,
 And floating odours hail'd the dung-clad ground.

.....
 THE SOW OF FEELING.

Oh! had some angel at that instant come,
 Given me four nimble fingers and a thumb,
 The blood-stain'd blade I'd turn'd upon his foe,
 And sudden sent him to the shades below,—
 Where, or Pythagoras' opinion jests,
 Beasts are made butchers,—butchers chang'd to
 beasts.

Wisely in early times the law decreed,
 For human food few quadrupeds should bleed!
 But monstrous man, still erring from the laws,
 The curse of heaven upon his banquet draws!
 Already has he drain'd the marshes dry,
 For frogs, new victims of his luxury;
 And soon the toad and lizard may come home,
 In his voracious paunch to find a tomb.
 Cats, rats, and mice, their destiny may mourn;
 In time their carcases on spits may turn;
 They may rejoice to-day,—While I resign
 Life, to be number'd 'mongst the *Feeling Swine*.

AN EXPEDITION TO

FIFE AND THE ISLAND OF MAY,

*On Board the Blessed Endeavour of Dunbar,
Captain Roxburgh, Commander.*

LIST, O ye slumberers on the peaceful shore!
Whose lives are one unvariegated calm
Of stiltness and of sloth: and hear, O nymph!
In heaven yeleped Pleasure: from your throne
Effulgent send a heavenly radiant beam,
That, cheer'd by thee, the Muse may bend her way:
For from no earthly flight she builds her song,
But from the bosom of green Neptune's main
Would fain emerge, and under Phœbe's reign,
Transmit her numbers to inclining ears.

Now, when the warbling songsters quit the groves
And solemn-sounding whisp' rings lull the spray,

AN EXPEDITION TO FIRE, &c.

To them in fervent adoration bend,
Ye fashion'd maccaronies! whose bright blades
Were never dimm'd or stain'd with hostile blood,
But still hang dangling on your feeble thigh,
While thro' the Mall or Park you shew away,
Or thro' the drawing room on tip-toe steal.

Or poop aloft, to messmates laid along,
Some son of Neptune, whose old wrinkled brow
Has brav'd the rattling thunder, tells his tale
Of danger, sieges, and of battles dire,
While they, as fortune favours, greet with smiles,
Or heave the bitter sympathetic sigh,
As the capricious fickle goddess frowns.

Ah! how unstable are the joys of life!
The pleasures, ah, how few!—Now smile the skies
With aspect mild; and now the thunders shake,
And all the radiance of the heavens deflower.

.....
 AN EXPEDITION TO FIRE, &c.

Thro' the small opening of the mainsail broad,
 Lo, Boreas steals, and tears him from the yard,
 Where long and lasting he has play'd his part !
 So suffers Virtue. When in her fair form
 The smallest flaw is found, the whole decays.
 In vain she may implore with piteous eye,
 And spread her naked pinions to the blast :
 A reputation maim'd finds no repair,
 Till death, the ghastly monarch, shuts the scene.

And now we gain the *Moy*, whose midnight light
 Like vestal virgins' offerings undecay'd,
 To mariners bewilder'd acts the part
 Of social friendship, guiding those that err
 With kindly radiance to their destin'd port.

Thanks, kindest Nature! for those floating gems
 Those green-grown isles, with which you, lavish,
 strew

That else had languish'd for the bless'd return
Of beauteous day, to dissipate the clouds
Of endless night, and superstition wild,
That constant hover o'er the dark abode,
O happy Lothian! happy thrice thy sons!
Who ne'er yet ventur'd from the Southern shore
To tempt Misfortune on the Fifean coast:
Again with thee we dwell, and taste thy joys,
Where sorrow reigns not, and where ev'ry gale
Is fraught with fulness, bless'd with living hope,
That fears no canker from the year's decay.



TO
SIR JOHN FIELDING,
ON
HIS ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS THE BEGGAR'S OPERA.

*When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the Courtiers offended should be ;
When you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
Each cries,—It was levell'd at me.*

GAY.

'Tis woman that seduces all mankind.

FILCH.

BENEATH what cheerful region of the sky
Shall Wit, shall Humour, and the Muses fly ?
For ours, a cold, inhospitable clime,
Refuses quarter to the Muse and rhyme.

VOL. I.

G g

TO SIR JOHN FIELDING, &c.

Since thieves so common are, and *Justice*, you
 Thieves to the gallows for reward pursue.
 Had *Gay*, by writing, rous'd the stealing trade,
 You'd been less active to suppress your bread :
 For, trust me ! when a robber loses ground,
 You lose your living with your forty pounds.

'Twas woman first that snatch'd the luring bait :
 The tempter taught her to transgress and eat.
 Tho' wrong the deed, her quick compunction told ;
 She banish'd Adam from an age of gold.

When women now transgress fair *Virtue's* rules,
 Men are their pupils, and the stews their schools.
 From simple whoredom greater sins began
 To shoot, to bloom, to centre all in man :
 Footpads on Hounslow flourish here to-day ;
 The next, old Tyburn sweeps them all away.
 For woman's faults, the cause of every wrong,
 Men robb'd and murder'd, thieves at Tyburn strung.

TO SIR JOHN FIELDING, &c.

In panting breasts to raise the fond alarm ;
 Make females in the cause of virtue warm ;
 Gay has compar'd them to the Summer flow'r,
 The boast and glory of an idle hour :
 When cropp'd, it falls, shrinks, withers, and decays,
 And to oblivion dark consigns its days.

Hath this a pow'r to win the female heart
 Back from its vice, from virtue ne'er to part ?
 If so, the wayward virgin 'twill restore ;
 And murders, robberies, rapes, will be no more.

These were the lays of him who Virtue knew ;
 Her dictates who rever'd, and practis'd too ;
 No idle theorist in her guiltless ways,
 He gave the spotless goddess all his days.

O Queensberry ! his best and earliest friend ;
 All that his wit or learning could commend ;

.....
TO SIR JOHN FIELDING, &c.
.....

Thou best of patrons! of his Muse the pride!
Still in her pageant shalt thou first preside;—
No idle pomp that riches can procure,
Sprung in a moment, faded in an hour,
But pageant, lasting as the uncropp'd bay,
That verdant triumphs with the Muse of Gog.



DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

FOOD FOR A NEW EDITION OF HIS DICTIONARY.

.....
*Let Wilkes and Churchill rage no more,
 Tho' scarce provision, learning's good ;
 What can these hungrier next explore ?
 Even Samuel Johnson loves our food.*

GREAT Pedagogue ! whose literarian love,
 With syllable on syllable conjoin'd,
 To transmutate and varify, hast learn'd
 The whole revolving scientific names
 That in the alphabetic columns lie,
 Far from the knowledge of mortal shapes ;
 As we, who never can, peroculate
 The miracles, by thee miraculiz'd,
 The muse, silential long, with mouth apert,
 Would give vibration to stigmatic tongue,

.....
TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.
.....

And loud encomiate thy puissant name,
Eulogiated from the green decline
Of Thame's banks to Scotticazion shores,
Where Lochlomonidian liquids undulize.

To meminate thy name in after times,
The mighty Mayor of each regalian town
Shall consignate thy work to parchment fair,
In roll burgharian, and their tables all
Shall fumigate with fumigation strong :
Scotland, from perpendicularian hills,
Shall emigrate her fair, mattonian store,
Which late had there in pedestration walk'd,
And o'er her airy heights perambuliz'd.

Oh, blackest execrations on thy head,
Edina shameless ! Tho' he came within
The bounds of your notation ; tho' you knew
His honocific name ; you noted not,

.....
TO DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.
.....

But basely suffer'd him to chariotize
Far from your tow'rs with smoke that nubilate,
Nor drank one amicitial swelling cup
To welcome him convivial. Bailies all!
With rage inflated, catenations (2) tear,
Nor ever after be you vinculiz'd,
Since you that sociability deny'd
To him whose potent Lexiphanian style
Words can prolongate, and inswell his page
With what in others to a line's confin'd.

Welcome, thou verbal potentate and prince!
To hills and valleys, where emerging oats
From earth assuage our pauperty to hay,
And bless thy name, thy dictionarian skill,
Which there definitive will still remain,
And oft be speculiz'd by taper blue,
While youth studentious turn thy folio page.

EPILOGUE,

*Spoken by Mr. Wilson, at the Theatre-Royal, in
the Character of an Edinburgh Buck.*

YE who oft finish care in Lethe's cup,
Who love to swear, and roar, and keep it up,
List to a brother's voice, whose sole delight
Is sleep all day, and riot all the night.

Last night, when potent draughts of mellow wine
Did sober reason into wit refine ;
When lusty Bacchus had contriv'd to drain
The sullen vapours from our shallow brain,
We sallied forth (for Valour's dazzling sun
Up to his bright meridian had run)
And like renowned Quixote and his squire,
Spoils and adventures were our sole desire.

First we approach'd a seeming sober dame,
Preceded by a lanthorn's pallid flame,

EPILOGUE.

Borne by a livery'd puppy's servile hand,
 The slave obsequious of her stern command
 Curse on those cits, said I, who dare disgrace
 Our streets at midnight with a sober face ;
 Let never tallow-chandler give them light,
 To guide them thro' the dangers of the night.
 The valet's cune we snatch'd, and, damme ! I
 Made the frail lanthorn on the pavement lie.
 The guard, still watchful of the lieges' harm,
 With slow-pac'd motion stalk'd at the alarm.
 Guard, seize the rogues ! the angry madam cry'd,
 And all the guard with "seize ta rogue," reply'd.

As in a war, there's nothing judg'd so right
 As a concerted and prudential flight ;
 So we from guard and scandal to be freed,
 Left them the field, and burial of their dead.

Next we approach'd the bounds of George's square
 Bless'd place ! No watch, no constables come there.

SONG.

WHERE winding Forth adorns the vale,
Fond Strephon, once a shepherd gay,
Did to the rocks his lot bewail,
And thus address'd his plaintive lay :
" O Julia ! more than lily fair,
" More blooming than the budding rose,
" How can thy breast, relentless, bear
" A heart more cold than Winter's snows,

" Yet nipping Winter's keenest sway,
" But for a short-liv'd space prevails :
" Spring soon returns, and cheers each spray,
" Scented with Flora's fragrant gales.
" Come, Julia ! come ; thy love obey,
" Thou mistress of angelic charms !
" Come, smiling like the morn in May,
" And bless thy Strephon's longing arms :

SONG.

- " Else, haunted by the fiend Despair,
 " He'll court some solitary grove,
 " Where mortal foot did ne'er repair,
 " But swains oppress'd by hapless love.
 " From the once pleasing rural throng
 " Remov'd, he'll thro' the desert stray,
 " Where Philomela's mournful song
 " Shall join his melancholy lay."

SONG.

AMIDST a rosy bank of flowers,
 Damon, forlorn, deplor'd his fate ;
 In sighs he spent his languid hours,
 And breath'd his woes in doleful state.

Gay joy no more shall cheer his mind ;
 No wanton sports can soothe his care ;

SONG.

Since sweet Amanda prov'd unkind,
And left him full of black despair.

His looks, that were as fresh as morn,
Can now no longer smiles impart ;
His pensive soul, on sadness borne,
Is rack'd and torn by Cupid's dart.

Turn, fair Amanda ! cheer your swain ;
Unshroud him from his veil of woe ;
Turn, gentle nymph ! and ease the pain
That in his tortur'd breast doth grow.



EPITAPH,
ON GENERAL WOLFE.

IN worth exceeding, and in virtue great,
Words would want force his actions to relate.
Silence, ye bards! eulogiums vain forbear;
It is enough to say that *Wolfe lies here.*

EXTEMPORE,

*On being asked which of the three Sisters was
the most Beautiful.*

WHEN Paris gave his voice, in Ida's grove,
For the resistless Venus, queen of love,
'Twas no great task to pass a judgment there,
Where she alone was exquisitely fair;
But here what could his ablest judgment teach,
When wisdom, pow'r, and beauty reign in each;
The youth, nonplus'd, behov'd to join with me,
And wish the apple had been cut in three.

EPIGRAM,

*On the numerous Epitaphs for GENERAL WOLFE;
for the best of which a Premium of £. 100
was promised.*

THE Muse, a shameless, mercenary jade!
Has now assum'd the arch-tongu'd lawyer's trade;
In Wolfe's deserving praises silent she,
Till flatter'd with the prospect of a fee.

ON THE DEATH OF

MR. THOMAS LANCASHIRE,

COMEDIAN.

ALAS, poor Tom! how oft, with merry heart,
Have we beheld thee play the Sexton's part!
Each comic heart must now be griev'd to see
The Sexton's dreary part perform'd on thee.

CHARACTER OF A FRIEND,

*In an Epitaph which he desired the Author to
Write.*

UNDER this turf, to mould'ring earth consign'd,
Lies he, who once was fickle as the wind.
Alike the scenes of good and ill he knew,
From the chaste temple to the lewdest stew.

Virtue and vice in him alternate reign'd ;
That fill'd his mind, and this his pocket drain'd.
Till in the contest they so stubborn grew,
Death gave the parting blow, and both withdrew.

EPIGRAM,

On seeing Scales used in a Mason Lodge.

WHY should the brethren, met in Lodge
Adopt such awkward measures,
To set their scales and weights to judge
The value of their treasures ?

.....
 ON SEEING A LADY PAINT HERSELF.

The law laid down from age to age,
 How can they well o'ercome it ?
 For it forbids them to engage
 With aught but Line and Plummel.

ON SEEING

A LADY PAINT HERSELF.

WHEN, by some misadventure cross'd,
 The banker hath his fortune lost,
 Credit his instant need supplies,
 And for a moment blinds our eyes :
 So Delia, when her beauty's flown,
 Trades on a bottom not her own,
 And labours to escape detection,
 By putting on a false complexion.

MY LAST WILL.

WHILE sober folks, in humble prose,
Estate, and goods, and gear, dispose,
A poet surely may disperse
His moveables in daggeryl verse ;
And, fearing death my blood will fest chill,
I hereby constitute my last will.

Then, wit ye me to have made o'er
To Nature my poetic lore :
To her I give and grant the freedom
Of paying to the bards who need 'era
As many talents as she gave,
When I became the Muse's slave.

Thanks to the gods, who made me poor !
No lukewarm friends molest my door,
Who always shew a busy care
For being legatee or heir.

MY LAST WILL.

Of this stamp none will ever follow
The youth that's favour'd by Apollo.

But to those few who know my case,
Nor thought a poet's friend disgrace,
The following trifles I bequeath,
And leave them with my kindest breath;
Nor will I burden them with payment,
Of debts incurr'd, or coffin raiment,
As yet 'twas never my intent
To pass an Irish compliment.

To *Jamie Rae* (3), who oft, *jocosus*,
With me partook of cheering doses,
I leave my snuff-box to regale
His senses after drowy meal,
And wake remembrance of a friend
Who lov'd him to his latter end:
But if this pledge should make him sorry,
And argue like *memento mori*,

MY LAST WILL.

He may bequeath't 'mong stubborn fellows
To all the finer feelings callous,
Who think that parting breath's a sneeze
To set sensations all at ease.

To *Oliphant* (4), my friend, I legate
Those scrolls poetic, which he may get,
With ample freedom to correct
Those writs I ne'er could retrospect ;
With pow'r to him and his succession,
To print and sell a new impression :
And here I fix on *Ossian's* head
A domicile for *Doric* reed,
With as much pow'r *ad Musæ bonæ*
As I *in propria persona*.

To *Hamilton* (5) I give the task
Outstanding debts to crave and ask ;

Vol. I.

L 1

.....
 MY LAST WILL.

And that my Muse he may not dub ill,
 For loading him with so much trouble,
 My debts I leave him *singularium*
 As they are mostly *desperatim*.

To thee, whose genius can provoke
 Thy passions to the bowl or sock ;
 For love to thee, *Woods !* and the Nine,
 Be my immortal Shakespeare thine.
 Here may you through the allics turn,
 Where Falstaff laughs, where heroes mourn,
 And boldly catch the glowing fire
 That dwells in rapture's on his lyre.

Now, at my dirge (if dirge there be),
 Due to the Muse and Poetry,
 Let *Hutchison* (6) attend ; for none is
 More fit to guide the ceremonies :
 As I, in health, with him would often
 This clay-built mansion wash and soften,

MY LAST WILL.

So let my friends with him partake
The gen'rous wine at disge or wake.—

And I consent to registration
Of this my will for preservation,
That patent it may be, and seen,
In *Walter's Weekly Magazine*.
Witness whereof, these presents wrote are
By William Blair, the public notar,
And, for the tremour of my hand,
Are sign'd by him at my command.

His
R. \times F.
Mark.



CODICIL

TO R. FERGOUSON'S LAST WILL.

WHEREAS, by testament dated blank,
Enroll'd in the poetic rank,
'Midst brighter themes that weekly come
To make parade at *Walter's Drum*,
I there, for certain weighty causes,
Produc'd some kind bequeathing clauses,
And left to friends (as 'tis the custom
With nothing till our death to trust 'em)
Some tokens of a pure regard
From one who liv'd and died a Bard.

If Poverty has any crime in
Teaching mankind the art of rhyming ;
Then by these presents, know all mortals
Who come within the Muse's portals,
That I approve my will aforesaid,
But think that something might be more said,

.....
 CODICIL.

And only now would humbly seek
 The liberty to add and eke
 To test'ment which already made is,
 And duly register'd, as said is.

To *Tulloch* (7), who, in kind compassion,
 Departed from the common fashion,
 And gave to me, who never paid it,
 Two flasks of port, upon my credit,
 I leave the flasks, as full of air,
 As his of ruddy moisture were;
 Nor let him to complain begin;
 He'll get no more of cat than skin.

To *Walter Ruddiman* (8), whose pen
 Still screen'd me from the Duncce's den,
 I leave of phiz a picture, saving
 To him the freedom of engraving
 Therefrom a copy, to embellish,
 And give his work a smarter relish;

CODICIL.

For prints and frontispieces hind do
Our eyes to stationary window,
As superfluities in clothes
Set off and signalize the beaux,
Not that I think in readers' eyes
My visage will be deem'd a prize ;
But works that others would outrival,
At glaring copper-plates connive all ;
And prints do well with him that led is
To shun the substance, hunt the shadows ;
For, if a picture, 'tis enough ;
A Newton or a *Jamie Duff* (9).
Nor would I recommend to Walter,
This scheme of copper-plates to alter,
Since others at the same in prices
Propose to give a dish that nice is,
Folks will desert his ordinary,
Unless, like theirs, his dishes vary.

.....
 CODICIL.

To *Williamson* (10), and his resettlers,
 Dispersing of the burial letters,
 That they may pass with little cost
 Float on the wings of Penny-post ;
 Always providing and declaring,
 That Peter shall be ever sparing,
 To make, as use is, the demand
 For letters that may come to hand,
 To me address'd while *locum tenens*
 Of earth and of corporeal penance ;
 Where, if he fail, it is my will,
 His legacy be void and null.

Let honest *Greenlaw* (11) be the staff
 On which I lean for epitaph
 And, that the Muses, at my end,
 May know I had a learned friend,
 Whate'er of character he's seen
 In me through humour or chagrin,

.....
 CODICIL.

I crave his genius may narrate in
 The strength of Ciceronian Latin.

Reserving to myself the pow'r
 To alter this at latest hour,
Cum privilegio revocare,
 Without assigning *ratio quare* :
 And I (as in the Will before did)
 Consent this deed shall be recorded :
In testimonium cujus rei,
 These presents are deliver'd by

R. FERGUSSON.

NOTES,
TO VOLUME FIRST.

NOTE 1, p. 173.

A large cave at a small distance from Kinghorn, supposed, about a century ago, to have been the haunt of thieves.

NOTE 2, p. 247.

Catenations, *vide Chans.* JOHNSON.

NOTE 3, p. 264.

Solicitor at law, and the Poet's intimate friend.

NOTE 4, p. 265.

Late Bookseller in Edinburgh.

NOTE 5, p. 265.

Solicitor at law, and the Poet's intimate friend.

NOTE 6, p. 266.

A Tavern-keeper.

NOTE 7, p. 269.

A Wine Merchant.

NOTE 8, p. 269.

The Publisher of the Weekly Magazine.

NOTE 9, p. 270.

A fool who attended at Funerals.

NOTE 10, p. 271.

The Penny-post Master.

NOTE 11, p. 271.

An excellent classical Scholar.

Vol. I. M m

NOTES

TO VISIT THE

NOTE I. p. 172

A paper on the state of the
country, about a century ago, in
the time of Henry VIII.

NOTE II. p. 173

Chronology of the
reign of Henry VIII, and the
state of the country at that
time.

NOTE III. p. 174

The history of the
reign of Henry VIII, and the
state of the country at that
time.

NOTE IV. p. 175

A paper on the state of the
country, about a century ago, in
the time of Henry VIII.

NOTE V. p. 176

The history of the
reign of Henry VIII, and the
state of the country at that
time.

NOTE VI. p. 177

A paper on the state of the
country, about a century ago, in
the time of Henry VIII.

NOTE VII. p. 178

The history of the
reign of Henry VIII, and the
state of the country at that
time.



