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A
PRIMER OF BURNS

BY
GEO. W. T. MCGOWN

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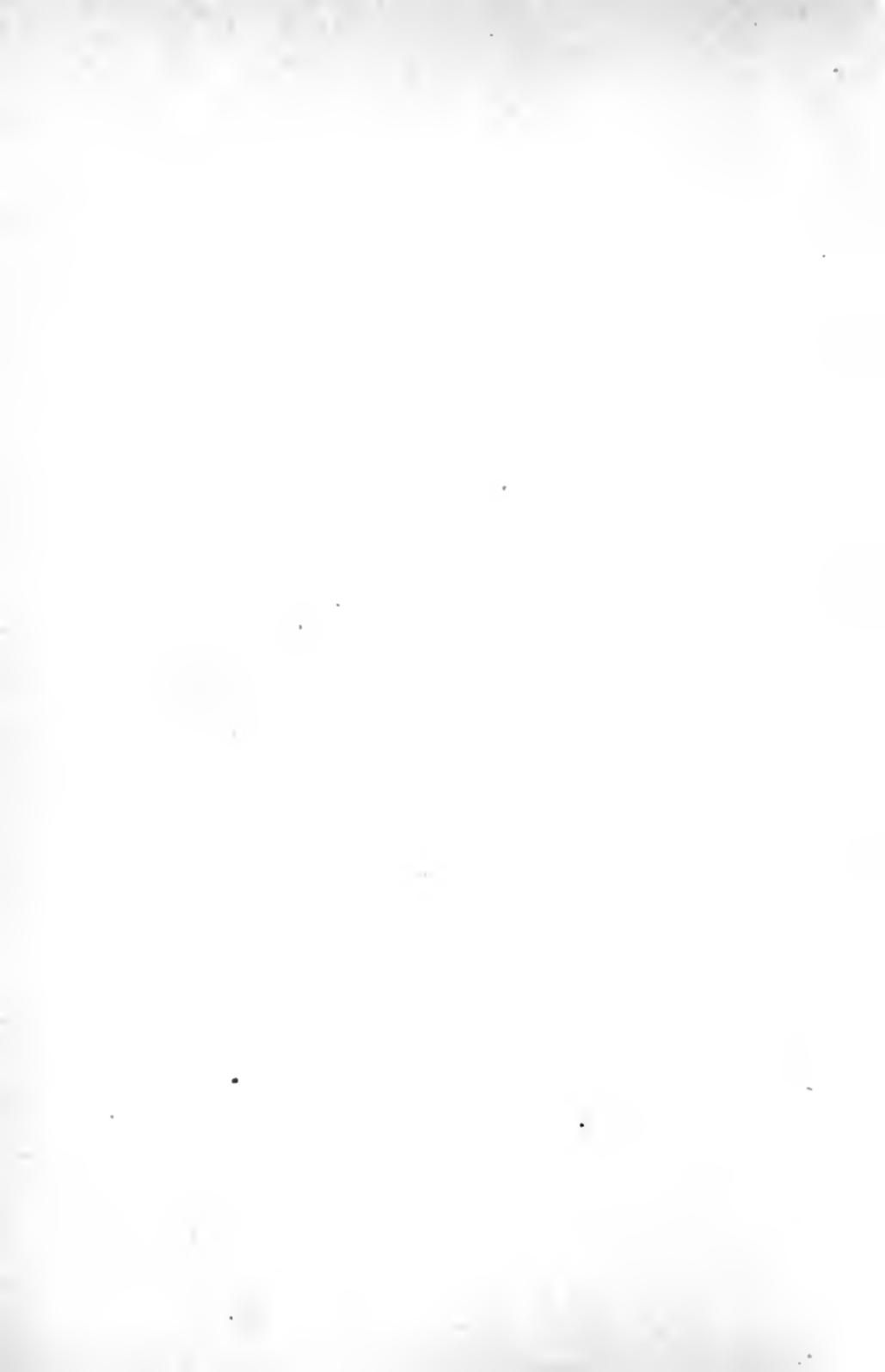


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A PRIMER OF BURNS



Burns, Robert

A

PRIMER OF BURNS

BY

GEO. W. T. MCGOWN

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AUTHOR OF "TEN BUNYAN TALKS"



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P R E F A C E .

THERE is good reason to hope that the Doric is about to become a subject of more systematic study than ever before.

A goodly number of literary and educated people throughout Scotland have a strong opinion that their native tongue—so rich in the best of song and poem—should have a place in the curriculum of their own Scottish Universities. To hasten on such a desirable step, or, at least, to support the hands of those who may make an effort to see this realised, no body of the people can do more than the Teachers of Scotland. This is said with all due deference to existing Clubs and Societies.

In educative value, next to studying with a class a special poet each year, so as to aim at as much completeness as circumstances will allow, is the plan of selecting the cream of poetry as contained in short, choice pieces. Long “screeds” of rhyme may serve as exercise and training for the memory; but there is more likelihood that the mental possession of noble thoughts set in choice words—even though imparted in lines and couplets and stanzas—will do more good as mental training now, and will provide the mind with a store of rich thought that it can fall back upon for pleasure and profit in after years.

Such may be argument enough for the shortness of the selected pieces.

It has long been the practice of the subscriber to take up a poem of our National Poet each year, along with, of course, some other suitable piece, or pieces, from the English Classics.

Each of the poems contained here represents, therefore, a year's special study in Burns. Other Teachers might take from, or add to, the verses, stanzas, or poems selected, so as to suit their own individual likings; for it goes without saying that the Teacher will impart best to his or her class the spirit and teaching of that poem which he or she likes best.

Years of teaching and study, as well as a long and intimate experience of Burns Clubs and Societies, have made the conviction very deep that detailed and minute treatment of our native Classics is as essential as an annotated 'Comus,' or 'Elegy,' or 'Lady of the Lake.'

Three results are aimed at in this collection: first, to give material and explanatory matter suitable for, say, Classes III., IV., and V.; second, to provide, by means of additional notes, material minute and difficult enough for Classes VI. and Supplementaries; and, lastly, where possible, to suggest wider fields of correlative study, so that the Teacher's stock of information may not be completely represented by what is imparted to the Pupils.

The vexed question as to how much or how little help to furnish in Derivations, etc., or how much to leave to the linguistic instincts of the Reader, or Scholar, has not been kept prominently in view in this work. The ruling idea has rather been all-round completeness—linguistic and literary, as well as that of general information.

There is a great tendency in schools at present to treat the Classics liberally, that is, from a purely literary and historical point of view, as against the grammatical and philological. This broadness often verges into indefinite and slipshod knowledge of the work professed. In short pieces, it is possible to gain such an intimate and minute knowledge of our language by close philological study, as will not only, even in the getting, be a splendid mental training, but will give the student such a grasp of the *radical* element of his own language as will widen and deepen all Literature in his eyes.

The Doric, as a basis of systematic language-study, is doubly valuable, not only as being the northern dialect of English, and as occupying—as Professor Blackie says—the same relationship to Classical English that the Doric dialect did to Attic prose, and not merely also as being the most musical and lyrical vehicle of the general English speech, but also because of the insight the histories of Doric words give into the life and character, the traditions and history of our Native Land, deeper and more faithful than it is possible for Chroniclers of events to furnish.

The Derivation, or the etymological origin of words—especially those that are provincial or local—is sometimes uncertain, indefinite, and obscure, and often a matter for doubt or conjecture ; but the best authorities have been consulted, so as to make the notes as trustworthy in this respect as possible.

Finally, not so much to meet a demand as, humbly, to help to make one, is the object of the subscriber.

GEO. W. T. MCGOWN.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE,
CORSTORPHINE, MIDLOTHIAN.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TO A MOUSE,	9
THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT,—TEN STANZAS, ...	21
TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,	47
A WINTER NIGHT,	59

ROBERT BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS, Scotland's National Poet, was born at Alloway, about two miles from Ayr, on the 25th of January, 1759.

His father, William Burness, left Kincardineshire (or Mearns) about the year 1740, and finally settled in Ayrshire. In 1766 he entered upon a lease of the farm of Mount Oliphant, a few miles above the mouth of the Doon; but this proved an unfortunate step, entailing drudgery and debt.

In his sixth year, Robert was sent to a small village school; afterwards his education was continued under the guidance of a young teacher, William Murdoch. He received a larger share of the rudiments of learning than was customary among children of his class at that time. While being educated, however, he, along with the other members of the household had to work hard on the farm. These were days and nights of hard labour and rigid economy.

In 1777 the family removed to the farm of Lochlea, in the Parish of Tarbolton; but here the same hard lot was experienced as at Mount Oliphant.

After their father's death, Robert and Gilbert, his younger brother, took a lease of Mossgiel, near the village of Mauchline; but here also their labours were unsuccessful.

Tired of wrestling with adverse circumstances, Burns resolved to try to better his fortunes in Jamaica. To raise the necessary funds for his passage, he was advised to print his poems (by subscription). In July, 1786—the poet was then twenty-seven years of age—this volume appeared. Immediately Robert Burns became a famous poet. He was lionised and fêted for a time, especially by the literati of Edinburgh.

A second edition of his poems appeared in 1787. Half of the money accruing from this publication the Poet handed over to his brother Gilbert, and with the other half he leased and stocked the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles from Dumfries.

In 1788 he married Jean Armour, and settled down as a farmer; but farming on his own account proved as unsuccessful as it had been in conjunction with his father and brother. But for the income from an appointment which he had obtained in the Excise, he would have been ruined. He gradually became less and less a farmer; and, after a short struggle, he sold his stock, and removed to Dumfries. At this time the Poet was thirty-three years of age.

Matters did not improve with him, he being in great measure the cause of most of his own troubles. Debt and difficulties beset his path.

In January, 1796, he was seized with a rheumatic fever from which he never recovered, and he died on the 21st of July at the age of thirty-seven.

PRIMER OF BURNS



INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON 'TO A MOUSE.'

IN 1841 there was living in Kilmarnock a former farm servant of Burns called John Blane. John remembered that, when a boy at Mossgiel, fifty years before (*i.e.*, November, 1785), he one day chased a mouse across the field, armed with a pettle (pattle) or plough-share scraper. Burns, who was ploughing near at the time, at once shouted to him in peremptory tones to desist and allow the poor little creature to get away unmolested.

Blane remembered distinctly that for the rest of the day his master was moody and thoughtful. After the servant had gone to sleep, the master must have remained up musing on the mouse's fate, for he wakened his bed-fellow and repeated to him this poem, which the simple incident of the day had evoked from his responsive heart.

Perhaps this is the most truly sympathetic and touchingly tender of all his poems. Carlyle, on reading these lines, exclaimed, 'How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal nature!'

It is interesting to note such kindred poetic feeling in regard to the field mouse as exhibited by an earlier poet, Wyatt. He writes:

'My mother's maids, when they do sew and spin,
They sing a song made of the fieldish mouse;
That, for because her livelode was but thin,
Would needs go see her townish sister's house.

She thought herself endured to grievous pain,
 The stormy blasts her cave so sore did souse,
 That when the furrows swimm'd with the rain
 She must lie cold and wet, in sorry plight:
 And worse than that, bare meat there did remain
 To comfort her, when she her house did dight,
 Sometime a barley corn, sometime a bean,
 For which she laboured hard both day and night
 In harvest time, while she might go and glean;
 And when her store was stroyed with the flood,
 Then wellaway! for she undone was clean.'

The Scotch pastoral poet and fabulist Henryson (1425?-1500?) has an exquisite fable on 'The Tail of the Uplandis Mous and the Burges Mous.'

Of English poets, Cowper is perhaps the most sympathetic in the treatment of animals.

TO A MOUSE.

1. WEE, sleekit, cowerin, tim'rous beastie,
 Oh! what a panic's in thy breastie!
 Thou need na start awa' sae hasty
 Wi' bick'ring brattle!
 I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
 Wi' murd'ring pattle!

NOTES.

Sleekit: sly, cunning. The original meaning is sleek, glossy-coated, fat, well-conditioned; the notion of 'sly' is secondary.

Cowrin: cowering; crouching through fear.

Tim'rous: timorous; full of fear.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The field-mouse can hardly be said to be glossy-haired: the word rather means here a mixture of timidity and instinctive cunning. The original meaning is seen in 'The Auld Farmer's New Year Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie':

'I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, an' glaizie.'

Mid. Eng. 'kouren'; W. 'cwrian,' to squat; Gael. 'curr,' a corner.

Lat. 'timor' and 'ous.'

NOTES.

Panic: confusion caused by fear. A similar state as exhibited in human beings may be exemplified in the frenzy and confusion consequent upon shipwreck, a ship or theatre on fire, etc.

Start: This is a very expressive word: it gives a picture of the mouse darting away with a spring, caused by the feeling of sudden alarm that had possessed it. See also *Startle*, in v. 2.

Hasty = hastily. Adj. used adverbially.

Bick'ring brattle: pattering noise; something like the sound made by water running over pebbles.

Laith: loth; very unwilling.

Pattle (another form is 'pettle'): the plough staff; the long pole with a knife at the end of it, with which the ploughman frees the cutting part of the plough from clay or other impediments. When not used, it lies in a groove along one of the arms of the plough.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Gr. 'panikos,' influenced by the god Pan (the god of shepherds, in shape half man and half goat). Pan is said to have assisted the Athenians at Marathon by inspiring the enemy with a causeless fear.

In the case of the mouse also, the panic was without cause.

Beastie, breastie: Mark the diminutive and endearing force of 'ie' at the end of substantives. We have the same in *sonnie, girlic, Johnnie*, etc. In the North-East of Scotland especially, this ending is very commonly used in conversation.

See Scott's 'Lady of the Lake' for similar usages—ll. 72-3, 288, 290-1, Canto v.

A **brattle** is a short race, a 'hurry-scurry.' See 'Auld Mare Maggie,' v. x. Suggestive quotations:

- (a) 'I hear in the chamber above me,
The *patter* of little feet.'
—Longfellow, in 'The Children's Hour.'
- (b) 'I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To *bicker* down a valley.'
—Tennyson, 'The Brook.'

Mark the expressive Scotticism, 'rin an' chase,' *i.e.*, run down, run to earth.

Pattle = paddle = spaddle = a little spade, especially to clear a plough with: it is a diminutive of spade (Skeat).

'Thou shalt have a *paddle* on thy weapon.'
—Deuteronomy.

Mark how the poet adds vividness to the situation by imputing the act of murder to the instrument used,—*i.e.*, by using the figure of speech called Personification, by which human feelings and purposes are attributed to inanimate objects. So, 'The mountains sing together, the hills rejoice and clap their hands.'

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

NOTES.

Nature: the established law and order among all created things.

Social union: friendly and familiar intercourse: happy-family condition of things.

Justifies: 'Makes you have a good and substantial reason for being suspicious;' *i.e.*, 'your feeling of dread is quite excusable.'

Ill opinion: bad opinion: an opinion that is the result of the mouse's suspicion of man's natural antipathy or cruelty.

Startle: see *Start*, in v. 1.

Earth-born . . . fellow-mortal: 'Why should I lord it over you, for I am made of dust, and must return to it, just like yourself.'

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Dominion: supreme power or authority. L. 'dominans,' ruling or bearing sway,—from L. 'dominus,' a lord.

Man's dominion: see Genesis I., vs. 26 and 28.

This dominion, bequeathed to man by his Creator from the beginning, makes it impossible for all Nature's living beings to dwell in peace and harmony.

Fr. from L. 'natus,' born; and 'natura.' Cf. Shakspeare's 'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.'

Social: L. 'socialis'—from 'socius'—a companion.

Union: L. 'unus,' one.

L. 'justus,' just, and 'facio,' I make.

L. 'opinio' = belief, judgment.

Earth-born: Genesis I., v. 24.

Mortal: L. 'mors,' death.

Companion: L. 'con,' together, and 'panis,' bread; lit. mess-mate; associate; comrade.

Our poet's heart went out in sympathetic kindness to all things in Nature. The daisy crushed 'amang the stoure,' the wounded hare 'hirpling' past, the startled wild-fowl, the auld mare Maggie, 'the owrie cattle,' 'ilk happing bird,' with 'chittering wing'—all called forth the tenderness and love of his large heart.

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

NOTES.

'I have no doubt but that you sometimes steal.'

'What then? What about that? What does that matter? There is surely no crime in that! You must get the necessaries of life "by hook or by crook," and so you are forced to become a thief!'

Icker: ear of corn.

Daimen: here and there; now and then.

Thrave: a sheaf of corn, or a bundle of sheaves. The number of sheaves in a thrave seems to vary with the locality. In some parts of Scotland a bundle of three sheaves is called a thrave: it stands also for twelve, and sometimes for twenty-four sheaves.

The lave: the rest; the remainder; the others, *i.e.*, what is *left* after the mouse has dined.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Though the kind-hearted house-wife may regularly put down crumbs, in severe weather, for the little birds, yet no soft-hearted farmer ever dreams of putting down any kind of food for the little mouse.

'Whyles' is purely Scotch: it must not be confused with the A.S. 'whiles,' the genitive of 'hwil,' times (modern equivalent is 'whilst'), with the real adverbial meaning of 'at times,' cf. 'o' nights' (advl. gen.); Greek 'nuktos,' (gen.)=at night.

A.S. 'aechir'; Ger. 'Aehre'; Dut. 'acre'; compare A.S. 'aecer,' a field—*e.g.*, a field of corn.

Probably from same root as deem=think, reckon.

'An anterin' ane,' as we hear old people sometimes say—especially in Ayrshire. The idea may be expressed thus: An ear of corn from this stalk, and one from that, and a third from another, is not much to ask out of a bundle of sheaves; and the want of such would never be felt, even if known.

A.S. 'threaf,' a handful; Dan. 'trave,' a score of sheaves.

This word is Scotch as well as English, *i.e.*, it is found in A.S., which is the parent of both, and is used by both Scotch and English poets. Ben Jonson uses it. It was in everyday use in Ayrshire in the time of Burns.

This word is now obsolete in England, though formerly it was used.

Refer to such songs as: 'Whistle over the lave o't,' etc., and so introduce to the pupils the masterpieces of Burns—his matchless songs.

4. Thy wee-bit hoosie, too, in ruin !
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewin' !
 An' naething, noo, to big a new ane
 O' foggage green !
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin'
 Baith snell an' keen !

NOTES.

Note the diminutive force of 'wee,' 'bit,' and 'ie.'

In ruin: completely destroyed.

Silly: not strong; frail; weak.

Wa's: walls.

Winds: gusts of wind.

Strewin': scattering about.

Big: build.

Ane: one (another form, 'ae').

Foggage: fog; moss, or soft vegetation found in pasture land.

Bleak: cold; dreary; dull; dismal; gloomy.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

L. 'ruina,' a rushing or tumbling down; from 'ruere,' to fall with violence.

Originally meant 'holy' in O.E.; Ger. 'selig.' Usually applied to mental weakness; here, to material. Cf. 'silly sheep,' in 'A Winter Night.'

He speaks of the mouse's nest as a house.

A.S. 'wall'; allied to L. 'vallum.'

A.S. 'wind': allied to L. 'ventus,' air in motion.

A.S. 'strewian,' to scatter; L. 'sternere.' Strew is lit. to scatter straw—from A.S. 'strew,' straw.

Burns refers to the house in which he was born as 'the auld clay **biggin'**.'

Refer to Ballantyne's 'Castles in the Air':

'Ha! the young dreamer's *biggin'* castles in the air.'

Generally spelled so in Scotch, although often pronounced as if with a 'y' prefixed, as in 'yill' for ale, 'yirth' or 'yird' for earth. See 'Auld Mare Maggie,' v. 3: so 'ance' (once) is often pronounced 'yince.'

M. Lat. 'fogagium,' winter pasture, after-grass; grass not eaten down in summer that grows in tufts over the winter.

A.S. 'blacc,' black.

One MS. has 'cauld December.'

NOTES.

December's: last month of the year—formerly the *tenth* month.

Ensuin': coming on.

Snell: sharp; biting; bitter. A cold wind is spoken of as a 'snell' wind.

Keen: sharp; cutting, like the edge of a knife.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Lat. 'Decem' and 'ber.' December is really an adjective with '*mensis*' understood. The 'ber' is an adj. suffix which occurs in 'ber' or 'bris'—*e.g.*, salu-ber, cele-ber, fune-bris, lugu-bris, mulie-bris. The 'ber' is probably allied to the Gr. *φέρ*—*i.e.*, bringing with, or having.

O.Fr. 'ensuir,' to ensure; Mod. Fr. 'ensuivre,' to follow; Lat. 'in,' and 'sequor,' I follow upon.

A.S. 'snell'; akin to Dut. 'snel,' Ger. 'schnell,' valiant; active; brisk; nimble; sharp.

Butter-milk allowed to stand till it is sour, acid, or bitter to the taste, is called 'snell' milk by country people. The idea is applied in its radical sense in the poem to feeling; the application to taste is secondary. In Mid. Eng. a knight or 'warrior bold' was described as 'snell in tournament' (*i.e.*, keen, valiant). In Scotch, 'snell' and 'keen' are almost synonymous.

5. Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin' fast,
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
 Till crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out thro' thy cell.

NOTES.

Thou saw: thou sawest.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Scotch idiom. The dropping of inflexions in this way is a peculiarly northern idiom. The 2nd and 3rd pers. sing. of the verb were the same: chiefly observable in connection with strong verbs.

NOTES.

Fields :

Bare :

Waste : like desert or uncultivated land.

Weary : dreary and lasting long.

Winter :

Cozie : warm; snug; sheltered; comfortable.

Blast : stormy wind.

Thought : intended.

Cruel coulter : note, as in verse 1, that the instrument is personified. The poet attributes the cruelty of the act to the coulter. The coulter is the cutting part of the plough—the share or shearing part.

Oot through : through and through; giving the idea of complete destruction.

Cell : little dwelling. The poet uses this word probably to bring out the idea of smallness; perhaps, also, because it was underneath the surface, and therefore having little inlet for air or light.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'feld,' a forest clearing, where the trees have been felled; Ger. 'Feld'; Dut. 'veld,' the open country. Hence velt or veldt of South Africa.

Is sometimes given as 'bleak.'

A.S. 'wecstan'; M. Lat. 'vastina'—from 'vastus,' waste, desert.

A.S. 'werig': *lasting* in its coldness and dreariness.

The 'wind' month; Lat. 'ventus.'

Scotch in origin; derivation unknown; probably from Gael. 'cosagach'—from 'cos,' a hollow or crevice.

A.S. 'blæsan,' to blow; 'blæst,' a violent rush of wind.

Dwell : some prefer the spelling 'dwall.'

Cruel : L. 'crudelis'; Fr. 'cruel,' inclined to inflict pain or suffering on others; connected with 'crude'; L. 'crudus,' bloody, raw.

L. 'culter,' a plough-share, a knife. This word probably came into the language with the Latin of the Second Period, *i.e.*, during St. Augustine's mission. (See Morris' *Historical Eng. Grammar*.)

A prepositional phrase.

Through is sometimes written 'thro'.

L. 'cella,' a hiding-place. The word has its original meaning in the poem—a hiding-place (from the blast).

6. That wee-bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Noo thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald!
To thole the winter's sleety dribble
An' cranreuch cauld!

NOTES.

Leaves :

Stubble : stubble. A field in which the corn crop has been cut is called a stubble field. The stubble is the part of the stalk left after the mowing, and which is attached to the root. A good many pupils may have walked in such a field with their bare feet, and so felt the stubble ends.

Weary :

Nibble : small bites, such as are characteristic of all gnawing animals. Rabbits are said to nibble their food : the beaver is the greatest gnawer.

For a' thy trouble : in spite of all your toil.

But house or hald : without house or home. 'House' is a covering from the elements, temporary it may be, or even belonging to another; but 'hald,' in the sense of home, is the dwelling-place of the heart, with all its endearing ties. Even the mouse felt that—

'Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.'

Cf. —

'I'll tak' ye to my father's ha.'
('Lass o' Gowrie.')

Thole : suffer ; bear ; put up with.

Sleety dribble : the dreary drip, drip of sleet, a mixture of half rain and half snow : such weather renders one colder and more miserable than a downpour of rain or a heavy fall of snow.

Cranreuch : hoar frost ; frozen dew ; rime : other forms are crainroch, cranreugh, craurach.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Ger. 'Laub' ; Dut. 'loof' ; A.S. 'leaf.' **Stubble** is the diminutive of 'stub,' which is the stump of a small tree or shrub. A.S. 'steb' ; Mid. Eng. 'stobil' = stubble ; Lat. 'stipula' = stem or stalk of corn.

(The 'stibble-rig' is the reaper in the harvest who takes the lead. See 'Hallowe'en' :—

'Our "stibble-rig" was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow.'

See note, v. 5, l. 2, above.

The sawing process of the chisel-shaped teeth of all rodents (Latin, 'rodentia,' from 'rodo,' I gnaw).

Fr. 'trouble' ; Lat. 'turbula,' a dim. of 'turba' ; Lat. 'turbare.'

Note the uncommon usage of 'but' ; so in 'Hamlet,' I., iii., 4—'Do not sleep but let (*i.e.* without letting) me hear from you.' See also 'As You Like It'—III., iv., 6 ; and 'Henry V.'—III., v., 105 ; also 'Epistle to Davie'—v. 4, l. 3.

But : O.E. b-ut-an = be-ut-an = bi-ut-an = be (by) + ut (out). It is thus a preposition compounded with a preposition.

House : probably from verbal root 'hud,' 'húd,' of 'hydan,' to hide.

Hald : O.E. 'heall,' a covering ; a hold, stronghold.

'But hame or hald' is the rendering of one MS.

A.S. 'tholian.' Cf. the 'thole-pin' of a rowing-boat—the pin that *tholes* or endures strain.

Sleety : Icel. 'sletta,' to splash ; Dan. 'slud,' rain mingled with snow or hail.

Dribble : for 'dripple,' dim. of drip ; Dan. 'draabe,' a drop ; Prov. Dan. 'drible,' to fall in drops ; dripping or oozing out of the air.

Probably from Gael. 'crann,' tree, and 'reodhadh,' freezing.

The picture that Burns draws of the little mouse driven from home and shelter is indeed a pathetic one.

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

NOTES.

No : Scotch for 'not.'

Thy lane : 'alane'; alone = all and one; by yourself; without company.

But . . . in vain : 'desperate as is your lot, you are not the only one in this world whose life has been, at times, a proof of the fact that making provision for the future may turn out to be of no avail.'

Proving : showing from experience.

Foresight : looking to the future in the sense of providing for it. Laying past against a rainy day, is a common way of expressing thrift or a provident spirit.

Vain : of no use.

The best-laid, etc., . . . agley : This much quoted couplet is quite a proverb. The effect of the truism is heightened also by making it universal in its application to life's experiences.

Schemes : plans ; projects.

Agley : off the right line ; off the straight ; wide of the aim ; wrong ; do not turn out as expected. Instead of the

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

This is a fine Scotch idiom. Compare

'O wha will dry the dreepin' tear
 She sheds *her lane*, she sheds *her lane*.'

—Sir David Lindsay.

'As I was walking all *alane*
 I heard twa corbies making a mane.'

—Anon.

So—'I went *my lane*.'

A.S. 'profian,' to try; Ger. 'proben'; Lat. 'probare,' to test.

The exact English equivalent is 'providence.' Latin 'pro,' before, and 'video,' I see; so 'providentia' = foresight, timely care or preparation.

Fr. 'vain,' from Lat. 'vanus,' empty, fruitless, ineffectual as an effort.

'May be vain' is given in one MS. as 'whyles in vain.'

The most skilful and far-seeing plans, not only of mice but even of men, may—by some accident or unforeseen circumstance cropping up—have a result quite different from that which there was every reason to expect.

Lat. and Gr. 'schema,' shape, fashion, outline.

Eyes the pupils of which converge towards the nose are said to be 'gleed' ('gleid,' 'gleyed,' are different spellings). Cf.—

NOTES.

mouse reaping the reward of its labours, it is driven from its 'cosy' nest to 'thole' all the rigours of winter weather.

Grief :

Promis'd : hoped for; expected.

Joy :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

'The gleed Argyll has written to Montrose.'
—'Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie.'

The same expression is used in connection with a picture on the wall that is not hanging plumb.

Gley is a squint, or to squint.

Fr. 'grief,' oppression; Lat. 'gravis,' heavy.

Latin 'promissum,' a promise; a pledge.

Fr. 'joie'; Lat. 'gaudere,' to enjoy.

8. Still, thou art blest compared wi' me!

The present only toucheth thee:

But, och! I backward cast my e'e

On prospects drear!

An' forward—though I canna see—

I guess—an' fear!

NOTES.

Still, thou art, etc., . . . thee :
Your ills are as nothing compared to mine: they only trouble you for the present: at their worst they are only temporary: in a few months you will be possessed of "house" and "hald" again, and will have forgotten the dire straits of to-day.'

Blest : happy; lucky in your lot.

Compared :

Present : the present time.

Toucheth : affects; concerns.

My e'e : my mind's eye.

Prospects : not sight in front, as the word radically signifies, but that which is embraced

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Black as is the picture in the foregoing verses, the autobiographical touches in the present one are blacker still.

Still is given as 'but' in one MS.

A.S. 'bloedsian,' to consecrate by blood, to make holy; to make happy. Cf. Genesis ii. 3.

Lat. 'comparare,' to couple things together, from 'con,' together, and 'par,' equal.

Lat. 'praesens,' in sight, or at hand.

E'e = eye, = A.S. 'eage'; Ger. 'Auge.'

Lat. 'prospectum'—from 'pro,' forward, and 'specio,' I look; a looking forward; a distant view.

NOTES.

by the eye in vision; and here, therefore, views or pictures of the past.

Drear : dreary.

But, och ! etc., . . . drear :

Forward : looking into the future : thinking of what the future may have in store for him.

I guess—an' fear : ' though I am not certain, yet I have a foreboding that Fate does not contain for me any experiences that will be brighter or happier than those that have hitherto made up my lot.'

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'dreorig'; Ger. 'traurig,' sorrowful, dismal, gloomy.

' I look back upon my past life, and, in the journey from boyhood till now, I can see nothing but scenes and incidents that have been full of sorrow and toil, of worry and care.' Such was only too true, as we know from the poet's family history.

Guess : Dut. 'ghissen'; Dan. 'gisse,' an opinion formed without certain knowledge.

' *Guess* is a desiderative of *get*, and so means "wish to get."—Skeat.

' Though no mortal eye can pierce through the curtain of futurity and discover what Fate is storing up, yet I have a sense of dread concerning my remaining days upon earth.'

It is only very occasionally that the poet's constitutional melancholy is allowed such free play as in this closing verse. Alas! his doubts and fears were to receive too cruel and complete a fulfilment in the after years.

INTRODUCTION TO STANZAS
FROM 'THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.'

It is generally believed that the poet's venerable father, William Burness, is faithfully depicted in this 'priest-like' head of a humble, godly, Scottish household.

He was born at Clockenhill, in Kincardine, on the 11th of November, 1721. Agnes Brown, whom he married in 1757, belonged to the Carrick district of Ayrshire. She was the daughter of Gilbert Brown, a small farmer of Kirkoswald.

William Burness was descended from a race of small farmers who came originally from Argyleshire to Kincardineshire. His father lost his farm at Glenbervie through troubles consequent upon his connection with the rebellion of the 'Forty-Five. William was forced to leave home and seek employment elsewhere. Having failed to establish himself as a gardener in Edinburgh, he moved westwards to Ayrshire. For a couple of years he was gardener on the estate of the Laird of Fairlie, and afterwards on that of Mr. Crawford of Doonside. Leasing seven acres from Dr. Campbell, of Ayr, he commenced as a public gardener and nurseryman. Soon afterwards we find him private gardener to Provost Ferguson of Doonholm.

The honest gardener of Alloway was both architect and builder of the 'auld clay biggin' where our poet first saw the light. It cannot be said that he was a success in this sphere. It is a sad fact that he was quite as unsuccessful as architect and builder of his own fortunes.

Next he took a farm of seventy acres, called Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr; and from that moment his difficulties rapidly accumulated. Rigid economy and incessant toil marked the days and nights of each member of his household. All efforts to stave off impending ruin were, however, in vain. A cruel factor, too, completed the distraction of the little home.

In the Whitsuntide of 1777, William (his son Robert was then seventeen) removed to the larger farm of Lochlea in the parish of Tarbolton. Here, too, the daily programme was largely made up of extreme thrift, care, and drudgery.

Cruel litigation, unavailing toil, and over-mastering disease won the day, and William Burness's 'darg' was done at sixty-three years of age. The great dread of his illustrious son during his last days—jail for debt!—the father escaped by dying of consumption.

Thin and sinewy, some five feet eight or nine inches in stature, slightly bent with toil, locks prematurely scant and gray, swarthy complexion and gloomy cast of face, make up the portrait of our poet's exemplary but unfortunate parent.

The vigorous intellect in the son, as also the melancholy bent, is traceable to the father.

William Burness, amid all his work and worry, made the education of his children his principal care. At great inconvenience, and with much self-sacrifice, he provided them with as much as could be procured of both religious and secular instruction. Thanks to the worthy teacher Murdoch and others, the poet got a good foundation of general information, and above all, the desire for acquiring more, with the ability to assimilate it.

Speaking of the poem itself, Professor Wilson says that 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is 'the noblest poem genius ever dedicated to domestic devotion.' Hazlitt compares the mental effect of it to that produced 'by a slow and solemn strain of music.'

The poem was composed in 1785 at Lochlea. The style is somewhat didactic. Perhaps it is the most uneven of his greater poems. Some lines are decidedly weak. The late W. E. Henley says, 'It is the most artificial and most imitative of Burns's works.' He detects in it 'the influence of Gray's "Elegy,"' and also finds 'echoes of Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, and even Milton.'

Although Burns says in the opening stanza that he sings 'in simple Scottish lays,' yet, out of twenty-one stanzas, eleven are wholly English in word and form. Some—as stanza 13—are almost entirely English. The mixture of Scotch and English is in some cases most perplexing.

But the poem is not without great merit. Principal Shairp says:—'In spite of many feeble lines and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me that even his genius would suffer more in estimation by being contemplated in the absence of this poem, than of any other single poem he has left us.'

TEN STANZAS FROM
'THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.'

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

This motto—taken from the Elegy—is wanting in the MS. sent to the inscribed—R. Aitken, Esq., Solicitor, and Surveyor of Taxes in Ayr. Aitken was a warm friend of Burns, and is the 'Aitken dear' of 'The Farewell,' 'glib-tongued Aitken' of 'Holy Willie's Prayer,' and 'Orator Bob' of 'The Kirk's Alarms.'

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

NOTES.

November chill: the adj. coming after its noun is common in poetry. So—

'Wild is thy lay and loud.'
—Hogg's 'Skylark.'

Loud: loudly; adjective used adverbially.

Wi' angry sugh: making sounds as if in anger.

Sugh (such, sooch): a sighing, rushing, or whistling noise made by the wind. It sometimes has the meaning of a deep sigh.

Short'ning: the time of shortening days and lengthening nights.

Close:

Miry: covered with mud or clay.

Retreating = returning.

Pleugh (pleuch): plough.

Black'ning: blackening or darkening the sky with their numbers.

Trains: flocks flying home in regular, drawn-out, procession-like order.

Crows: rooks. Rooks and crows should be distinguished from one another. Rooks live in colonies and are gregarious (*i.e.* living in flocks) all the year round. Crows are usually found singly or in pairs. The carrion crow is easily distinguished from the rook by its black bill. It resembles a raven, but is smaller. The hooded crow is another form of the carrion crow.

Repose: complete rest.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

November: See note on December, v. 4, l. 5 of 'To a Mouse.'

The O.E. name is 'Wynde-monath,' windy month.

This usage is common in poetry. See note on 'hasty' in v. 1, l. 3 of 'To a Mouse.'

Note that the anger is ascribed to the sound made by the blast. Such personification adds vividness to the idea conveyed.

A.S. 'sweg,' a sound. It is from the same root as 'sigh,' A.S. 'sican.' Another form is 'sough.' It refers also to the rushing sound of water.

Day: A.S. 'daeg'; Lat. 'dies.'

Fr. 'clos,' closed, from Lat. 'clausis.'
Icel. 'myri,' marsh; Dut. 'moer,' a bog.

An uncommon word to use. Lat. 're,' back, and 'traho,' I draw.

Pleugh: Dan. 'plog,' a peg or stake, 'plov,' a plough; Ger. 'Pflug,' a plough, and 'Pfluck,' a peg.

Fr. 'train'; Lat. 'traho,' I draw. Some MSS. have 'flocks' instead of 'trains.'

Ger. 'krähen,' to crow; Lat. 'crociro'; Fr. 'croasser'; Lat. 'corvus,' a crow. 'Corby' is the Scotch equivalent, from Fr. 'corbeau'; see quotation in v. 7, l. 1 of 'To a Mouse.'

Lat. 're,' back, and 'pono'; a lying back (at ease).

NOTES.

Toil-worn: fatigued with work.

Cotter: cottager.

Labour:

Moil: toil; labour.

Collects:

Spades:

Mattocks: a kind of pick-axe having one end flat; a tool with which to grub weeds.

Hoes: a common garden or field tool.

The morn: to-morrow; the next day—Sunday.

Weary=wearily:

Moor:

Course:

Hameward: towards home.

His course does . . . bend: he directs his steps.

Spend:

Bend:

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Connected with 'till'; A.S. 'tillian,' to labour; Dut. 'tuylen,' to till the soil.

From 'cot'; A.S. 'cote,' a dwelling-house.

Fr.-Eng. spelling, from Fr. 'labour,' Lat.-Eng. is 'labor,' from Lat. 'labor.'

Gr. 'molos,' toil, labour; Lat. 'moliol,' I toil: connected with Fr. 'mouiller,' to wet, and Lat. 'mollis,' soft. 'Toil' and 'moil' are kindred words. In the phrase 'toil and moil,' the idea of soiled clothes is added to that of labour.

Lat. 'con,' together, and 'lectum,' to gather.

Dut. 'spade'; Norm. 'spode'; Gr. 'spathe'; Lat. 'spatha,' a blade; It. 'spada,' a sword.

A Keltic word. Lith. 'mattikas,' a grubbing axe; Serv. 'matika,' a hoe; Gael. 'madog,' a pick-axe.

Fr. 'houe,' from 'houer,' to dig up; Dut. 'houwer,' to pick or hoe.

Not 'the morning.' To-day in Scotch is 'the day'; to-night, 'the night,' or 'the nicht'; together, 'thegither.' The 'to' here is a correlative of 'the' or 'this,' and is quite distinct from the preposition.

Adj. used adverbially.

Icel. 'mor,' peat, turf; 'myri,' a marsh; Dut. 'moer,' a bleak swamp or marsh.

Lat. 'cursus,' a course, journey—from 'curro,' I run.

A.S. 'ham,' a village, dwelling; the dim. hamlet is from the same root.

A.S. 'spendan,' to spend; Lat. 'expendere,' to weigh out.

A.S. 'bendan,' to stretch, to incline.

3. At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree ;
 Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through,
 To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
 His wee-bit ingle blinkin bonilie,
 His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
 The lisping infant prattling on his knee
 Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
 An' makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

NOTES.

Lonely : standing by itself.

Cot : little cottage.

Appears in view : comes into view.

Shelter :

Tree : oaks, saughs, and rowans are favourites in such places.

Expectant : expecting ; looking and waiting for their father's return.

Wee things : little children.

Toddlin : walking like a child.

Stacher : stagger ; walking unsteadily or with abrupt movements as if going to fall.

Through : through the doorway.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Not in the sense of being dreary or desolate.

See note to 'cotter' in v. 2, l. 5 above.

View : Fr. 'vue,' sight, view—from Lat. 'visum,' to see.

Connected with O. E. 'shiel' or 'shield,' a covering, or house. Sc. North Shields ; also note on v. 4, l. 2 of 'To a Mouse.'

A.S. 'treow' ; Gr. 'drus,' an oak, is from the same root. Refer to the song—'O rowan tree.' (Baroness Nairne.)

Lat. 'ex,' out, and 'specto,' I look at—to look out for.

Expresses endearment.

Gives the idea of the tottering, uncertain steps of a child's walk : akin to 'tot.' See song 'John Anderson, my jo.'

Toddlin' is sometimes rendered 'tot-tlin'.

Note that in old Scotch the present participle ended in '-and' or '-nd,' with no 'g' sound. The Scotch ending 'in' is not the same as the English 'ing.'

Prov. Ger. 'staggeren,' to stagger. It is sometimes spelled 'stacker' in Scotch.

A.S. 'thurth,' through ; Lat. 'trans.' across.

It might mean 'through the trans-door,' *i.e.*, the door between the outside and the kitchen ones.

NOTES.

Dad : father.

Flichterin : fluttering ; like young nestlings making a loud fluttering and chirping sound when the parent bird comes near the nest.

Glee : the music of children's laughter and joy.

Wee bit ingle : little fireside.

Blinkin bonilie : burning brightly and cheerily.

Bonilie : prettily ; brightly. (Other forms : bonnilie, bonily, bonnily).

Clean hearthstane :

Thrifty wife's smile : smile of welcome all the more sincere because each felt a pleasure in 'something attempted, something done.'

Thrifty : frugal ; careful ; economical—a characteristic of the Scottish peasantry.

Smile :

Wife :

Lisping : unable to speak properly or distinctly.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Another form 'daddy.' W. 'tad,' Lap. 'dadda,' the name for a father in child-language.

Akin to 'fly' and 'flight.'

A.S. 'glig,' music, sport ; 'gliowian,' to sing, to play ; 'gleeman' is a minstrel.

Wee and **bit** are diminutives.

'Wee' is used by Shakespeare in 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' I. 4, 22.

Ingle : Gael. 'aingéal,' fire, light ; Lat. 'ignis,' fire ; 'igniculus,' a little fire.

Blinkin : The shining and sparkling would no doubt be the result of his helpmate's willing work, so as to have all trig and bright against her husband's return.

F. 'bon' or 'bonne' ; L. 'bonus,' good. 'Bonny' is an English word. Shakespeare uses it in 'Taming of the Shrew,' III. 2, l. 219—'bonny Kate.'

Hearthstane : A.S. 'hearth' ; O.E. 'harthe,' 'herth,' 'herthe' ; often used synonymously with fireside and home.

From O.E. 'thriven,' to thrive ; probably originally, to grasp for one's self ; able to thrive by judicious work and management.

O.E. 'smilen' : akin to Lat. 'mirari,' to wonder at.

Dim. and endearing form of 'wife.' So 'wifock' and 'wifockie.' See note to 'Winnocks,' v. 3. 'A Winter Night.' O.E. 'wif' ; A.S. 'wif.'

'To lisp,' originally means to speak with the tongue against the teeth or gums, so as to make 's' or 'z' sound like 'th'—a common defect in children.

NOTES.

Infant :

Prattling : engaging in soft baby-talk.

Carking cares : fatigue caused by anxiety.

Does : do.

Labour . . . toil :

Beguild : cause them to vanish.

Forget :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Lat. 'in,' not; and 'fans,' speaking. Infancy is the non-speaking period of life.

A dim. of Eng. 'prate'; Prov. Ger. 'praten,' to chat, to tattle.

Cares : A.S. 'cearian,' to take heed; Lat. 'carus,' dear.

Kiaugh (of obscure origin, and meaning trouble, worry, bustle) and **care** was changed by Burns in a later edition of the poem to 'carking cares.' (Milton in 'L'Allegro' has

'And ever against *eating cares*
Lap me in soft Lydian airs').

'Cark and care' is one of the bilingual phrases that necessarily came into use during the period when Norman-French and English were both spoken in England. So 'assemble and meet,' 'acknowledge and confess,' 'choose and elect,' 'will and testament,' 'use and wont,' etc.

Scotch allows this form with a plural noun.

Labour and **toil** seem in this line to be meant to denote different forms of work. Perhaps 'toil' is meant to express incessant drudgery.

A.S. 'be'; Old F. 'guille,' deceit. All the comforts and pleasures of his happy home act jointly as a powerful charm in making the depressing effect of his laborious day's work to vanish completely.

A.S. 'forgitan'; 'for' and 'get.' L. 'foris,' without, out of doors. Forget = to away-get, to lose from memory. So 'forbid' = to bid away; 'forego' = to go without.

This beautiful pen-picture of rustic felicity has been the subject-matter of not a few splendid specimens from the artist's brush.

11. But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food :
 The soupe their only Hawkie does afford,
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood :
 The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck, fell—
 And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid ;
 The frugal wife, garrulous, will tell
 How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

NOTES.

Supper :

Crowns . . . board : the table is set for a 'plain' supper. Probably the table ('board') would be a well-scrubbed deal one.

Board :

Halesome: wholesome; health-giving,

Parritch : porridge.

Chief . . . food : an important article of diet in Scottish (especially peasant) homes.

Soupe : liquid food ; milk, of course, is meant.

Hawkie : cow. The word strictly means a cow with a white stripe on its face or forehead.

'Yont : beyond (other forms, ayont, beyont).

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Connected with 'sip' and 'soup'; and related also to 'sap,' 'sop,' 'sup,' representing the sound of a liquid being sucked, or agitated in a confined space.

Lat. 'corona,' a crown; Gael. 'crùn,' the boss of a shield, a garland.

Simple : L. 'sine,' without, and 'plico,' I fold; without ceremony or ostentation; unadorned by finery of any kind.

In one MS. the line runs; 'But now the cheerful supper crowns the board.'

A.S. 'bord'; Dut. 'berd'; Ger. 'Brett,' a board, plank.

A.S. 'hal,' sound, healthy; Gr. 'holos,' entire.

Akin to Eng. 'pottage,' Fr. 'potage'; Low L. 'porrata' = leek pottage—from 'porrum,' a leek. Sometimes it signifies a kind of broth made with leeks.

See note on 'supper' above. A spoonful = 'sowp' in Scotch.

Derivation obscure. 'Hawked' means having white spots or streaks (Jamieson): seems to have been common in Ayrshire breeds of cattle: sometimes a term of endearment. In Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd'—

'Nae mair the *hawkeys* shalt thou milk.'

On the other side of.

NOTES.

Hallan : a partition wall between the kitchen and the byre—sometimes between the fire and the door—to protect from the draught.

Chows her cood : chews her cud; ruminates. The cow, sheep, goat, etc., first tear up and swallow their food, and afterwards bring it up again into their mouths for thorough mastication.

Dame : mother.

In complimentary mood : kind and obliging manner, out of respect to the 'neibor lad' who 'cam' owre the moor' with 'blithe Jenny,' her eldest daughter.

To grace the lad : to show him special favour.

Weel-hained : well kept or cared for.

Kebback : cheese.

Fell : tasty; 'biting' taste; having a 'grip' in the mouth.

Prest : urged to take more.

Ca's=calls : says that it is (good).

Frugal : thrifty; sparing; not lavish.

Garrulous : in a chatty, talkative mood.

Wife :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Murray says it is perhaps a derivative or diminutive of 'hall.' In Fergusson's 'Farmer's Ingle' we have—

'When he out o'er the *halland* flings his een.'

Cood : A.S. 'cud,' that which is chewed; radically it seems to signify a glutinous substance. All animals that walk on two toes are called Ruminants (Lat. 'rumen' = the throat or gullet). Ruminantia is the scientific name for an order of Vertebrates that possess four stomachs and ruminates. Cf—

'The whiles his flock their chawed cud do eate.'
—Spenser.

Fr. 'dame'; It. 'dama'; L. 'domina,' a lady.

Complimentary : L. 'complere,' to fill up. A classical-English word—and an awkward one in a Scotch poem.

Mood : Fr. 'mode,' manner; Lat. 'modus,' measure.

Grace : Lat. 'gratia,' favour, thanks; 'gratus,' pleasing; Gael. 'gràdh,' love, fondness.

To 'hain' is to spare or save up; probably from same root as 'hedge.'

Gael. 'cabag.'

O.E. 'fel'; A.S. 'fel' (only used in compounds); Fr. 'felle,' fierce, cruel; this is the meaning in English; but in Scotch a 'fell' person is one possessing admirable qualities.

Fr. 'presser'—from Lat. 'pressare,' and 'premere, pressum,' to press.

Lat. 'frugalis,' from 'frux,' fruit.

Lat. 'garrio,' I chatter.

Frugal and **garrulous** are both non-Scottish.

Line 26 is by no means a musical one. In one MS. this line is rendered: 'meanwhile the wife, garrulous, will tell.'

With more of an endearing than dim. force.

NOTES.

Will tell : tells as a matter of course in the midst of her chattering,

Towmond = twalmonth = a twelvemonth = a year.

Sin' = since.

Lint : the flax plant ; hemp.

Was i' the bell : was in blossom.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Tow = twelve : A.S. 'tweolf' ; Goth. 'tvalif,' from 'tvai,' two, and 'laibos,' relics, the remainder. The idea is the second excess over 10 : so 'eleven'—*i.e.*, leave one—is the first excess.

A.S. 'linet' ; same root as linen ; Lat. 'linteum.'

Flax has little bell-shaped flowers of a bright blue colour. Cf. Longfellow's

'Blue were her eyes as the fairy flax.'

('Wreck of the Hesperus.')

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

NOTES.

Cheerfu' :

Done : being done ; being over.

Supper :

Serious : solemn ; grave ; earnest.

Ingle :

Form a circle wide : arrange the chairs in a wide curve round the fire.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The words and forms are now getting more English.

Cheerful is rendered 'social' in one MS.

See former note, l. 19.

Lat. 'serius,' grave, earnest ; 'ous' = full of.

See note in stanza 3, l. 14.

Semi-circle would be more strictly correct. Lat. 'circulus' ; F. 'cercle.'

NOTES.

Sire : father.

Wi' patriarchal grace : like the head of a family in ancient times ; Abraham, for example, was both Head and Priest of his family or tribe.

Ha'-Bible : family Bible ; refers to the great Bible that used to lie in the hall of the noble for the use of the whole household.

Ance = once : (usually pronounced 'yince'), long ago, formerly.

Father's pride : it had been handed down as an heirloom from father to son.

Rev'rently : respectfully ; with an air of solemnity or awe.

Laid aside :

Lyart : grey, or sprinkled with grey.

Haffets : temples ; sides of the head.

Strains . . . glide : The Psalms of David in the metrical version are meant.

Once : formerly. Notice Scotch form 'ance' in line 4.

Zion : the temple at Jerusalem.

Glide :

Wales : picks, chooses, selects carefully, so as, probably, to have the theme of the singing to correspond with that of the reading part of the exercises.

Judicious : wise ; thoughtful ; discriminating (like a judge).

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

In stanza 2 the mother is spoken of as 'dame.' Fr. 'sire,' sir or master ; Lat. 'senior' ; It. 'signor.' It is a poetic word.

Patriarchal : Gr. 'patriarches,' the head or founder of a family ; from 'pater,' father ; and 'arche,' rule.

Ha' = hall. A.S. 'heal' ; L. 'aula' ; Fr. 'salle.' Strictly, a large room at the entrance to a mansion-house or palace.

Ance . . . pride : most Scotch households possess a family Bible, in which is recorded on a specially prepared page all the births, deaths, and marriages in connection with the family.

Lat. 're' back or again ; and 'verior,' I feel awe.

Did he not take off his headgear previous to partaking of supper ?

In O.E. 'liard' is a grey horse. Low Lat. 'liardus,' grey.

Haffets = half-heads ; A.S. 'healf-heafod' ; L. 'semi-cranium.'

Gives the idea of slow-moving, stately, and solemn music. The Psalms were versified originally by Francis Rous.

Strains : O.F. 'estraindre,' to strain from ; Lat. 'stringere,' to stretch or draw tight. The strains of a musical instrument require to be *drawn tight* to give forth musical sounds : hence the secondary meaning.

A hill in Jerusalem which was the royal residence of King David and his successors.

A.S. 'glidan,' to slip down gently.

O.E. 'walen' ; Ger. 'wählen,' to choose. Connected with Lat. 'velle,' to have will ; and English 'will,' the power of choosing or determining.

L. 'judex' (gen. 'judicis'), a judge.

NOTES.

Let us worship God : the formal or ministerial phrase with which (public) worship is usually commenced.

With solemn air : in reverent manner.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Care : See note to line 17.

Let, etc. : Burns himself has said that there was something peculiarly venerable in this phrase, used by the head of a household in introducing family worship.

Solemn : L. 'solemnis,' or 'solemnis,' religious; with due religious or devotional gravity.

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

NOTES.

They chant their artless notes : they sing the Psalms in a natural, rustic manner, not having any great musical skill.

Chant : sing. Not chant in its common meaning, which is to intone the words of a hymn or psalm. 'Troyte's chant' is a good example.

Artless : simple; natural; unskilful.

Guise : manner.

They tune their hearts : the music is not high-class, but

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Chant here seems to be intended to give the idea of singing in rather a monotonous style.

The singing was not marked by artistic taste or power in the several performers. It was, however, to an equal degree, free from affectation.

F. 'chanter'; L. 'cantare,' to sing.

L. 'ars,' an art : not done by human skill—*i.e.*, natural.

Guise (F. 'guise,' way, manner) : Another form is 'wise,' way, or manner. So we have ward and guard, warden and guardian, warranty and guarantee, guile and wile, etc.

Tune : Fr. 'ton'; L. 'tonus'; Gr. 'tonos.'

NOTES.

the hearts of the worshippers are 'in tune' with the spirit breathed through the words.

By far the noblest aim: it is infinitely better that the spirit of the worshippers should be right than that they should possess splendidly trained voices.

'Dundee.. Martyrs.. Elgin': names of Scottish Psalm-tunes. The Scottish Psalter, or any Psalm tune-book contains these.

Wild-warbling:

Measures: musical divisions of the tune, containing so many pulses or beats, and giving a particular rhythm to the music.

Plaintive . . . worthy of the name: as its name imports, it breathes the spirit of grief.

Noble: in its pathos and mournfulness.

Beets: increases; renews; revives. To 'beet' originally meant to kindle or make a fire: here it is used in its secondary sense of 'feeding.' It is used in 'Epistle to Davie,' stanza 8.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The music gives effect to the words, intensifies their meaning and impresses it upon the hearts: but it is only secondary; the words are of primary importance.

Noblest: L. 'nobilis,' famous, of high birth.

Aim: L. 'aestimo,' I value; purpose, intention, endeavour.

'Dundee': the modern form is called 'Windsor.' It is a common measure (C.M.) tune, in the Lah Mode.

'Martyrs' is of the same nature as 'Dundee,' and is in the Ray Mode.

'Elgin' belongs to the pathetic and mournful, and is also in the Ray Mode. They should be sung to feel and show the force of the epithets 'wild-warbling,' 'plaintive,' and 'noble.'

Note the same initial letter. This alliteration, or head-rhyme, is the characteristic of our early poetry. It is seen also in such phrases as 'house and hald' ('To a Mouse'), 'watch and ward' (Scott's 'Marmion'). Shakespeare, in Rich. II., praising England, says—

'This precious stone set in a silver sea';

Byron, in 'Childe Harold'—

'Ho rushed into the field and foremost fighting fell.'

Fr. 'plainte,' complaint—from 'plaindre,' to pity, and Lat. 'plangere,' to complain. The name expresses the mental effect of the tune.

O. E. 'betan,' to make better, to mend. It became obsolete in literary English before 1500. Ramsay uses the p.p. 'bett.' In Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale' we have—

'Two fyres in the auter gan sche beete'

(used in original sense). Tannahill uses it in its secondary sense in—

'The wither'd twigs to beet her fire.'

Ramsay, Douglas, Henryson, and also Blind Harry use it.

NOTES.

Beets the heaven-ward flame: those grand old tunes, wedded to particular and appropriate words, make the worshippers more devout.

The sweetest far: this, of course, is only the poet's opinion; others might say the same about quite different tunes.

Scotia: poetic name for Scotland.

Holy lays: sacred songs; psalms. Hymns were at first looked upon as demoralising innovations.

Italian trills: generally speaking, high class or complicated music.

Tame: mild; spiritless; wanting in strength and feeling.

The tickled ear . . . raise: they are 'catchy,' or capable of captivating the ear, but they fail to touch the heart and raise holy emotions.

Rapture: state of being carried away with excitement or intense feeling.

Nae unison, etc. . . praise: such music is meant principally for show, and is not suitable for the praise of God.

Unison: harmony; accord.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The **flame** or spark of heavenly aspiration and longing in their hearts is thus fanned into renewed brightness and strength.

Old effects, situations, and associations imprint certain tunes on one's mind more forcibly and fondly than others. 'Sweetest' is sometimes given as 'chiefest.'

A.S. 'Scottas,' the Scotch, the Irish; Lat. 'Scoti,' the Scot.

Holy: 'haelig,' from 'hael,' health, salvation, happiness—from 'hal,' whole, well. Compare 'whole,' 'hallow.'

Lays: A.S. 'leoth,' hymn, poem.

This seems to show that *the words* played the most important part in the exercise of praise.

A quaver tremulous voice characterises the singing of this species of music.

Trills: It. 'trigliare,' to quaver with the voice in singing.

The tickled ear, etc.: they give an outward or physical pleasure, but they do not raise the soul one single rung on the heavenly ladder.

Tickled: from Eng. 'tick,' to mark with dots; Lat. 'titillare'; Scotch, 'kittle,' to touch lightly: so, as here, to excite with slight or superficial pleasure.

Lat. 'rapio,' to seize or carry off.

Nae unison, etc.: but for this last—and weakest—line, the present stanza would be completely English in word and form.

Lat. 'unus,' one, and 'sonus,' sound.

Creator's: L. 'creatum,' to create—allied to Sans. 'kri,' to make; It. 'creare'; F. 'créer,' to form out of nothing.

Praise: allied to Eng. 'price'; Lat. 'pretium,' a price; Ger. 'Preis,' price, praise; F. 'priser,' to rate, to value.

The old Puritanical gloom hovers about this stanza. The 'kist o' whistles,' anthem-singing by trained choirs in public worship, the rendering of sacred solos in the church service by paid singers, not to speak of the growing desire for orchestration in connection with the musical life of churches, are, in our day, fast removing the needless rigidity and hampering bigotry of our Reforming forefathers. All honour to them, but—*tempora mutantur!*

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

NOTES.

Priest-like: reverend, or ministerial-looking.

Sacred page: holy writ; the Old or New Testament.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

This is completely an English stanza. In stanza 12 we have the same idea in the phrase 'patriarchal grace.'

Priest: A.S. 'preost'; L. 'presbyter'—from Gr. 'presbuteros,' an elder:

'New *presbyter* is but old *priest* writ large.'

—Milton.

In ancient times one who performed the rites of sacrifice: in Roman and Greek Churches the lowest order of ecclesiastics empowered to consecrate the host and perform mass: in the Episcopal Church the order between bishop and deacon; generally, a minister of the Christian religion.

Father: A.S. 'faeder'; L. 'pater'; Ger. 'Vater.' Connected with 'feeder.'

Sacred: O.E. 'sacre,' to set apart, to consecrate; Fr. 'sacré'; L. 'sacer.'

NOTES.

How Abram, etc.: perhaps he read in 2nd Chronicles xx. See verse 7.

Moses bade . . . progeny: Read Exodus xvii. 16.

Bade = bidden = ordered (by God).

Eternal (read Exodus xvii. 16): without end; that is, lasting until the race was not only subdued, but extinguished.

Warfare:

Bade . . . wage: was ordered to war against.

With = against.

Ungracious: unpleasing; hateful; offensive.

Progeny: offspring; descendants; race.

Or how the royal bard . . . ire: Perhaps the punishment meted out to King David for his foolish pride in numbering

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Page: L. 'pagina,' the page or leaf of a book—from 'pango,' I fasten; Fr. 'page.'

See also James ii. 23.

The Amalekites were supposed to be descendants of Amalek, the grandson of Esau. The children of Israel defeated them at Rephidim, west of the Red Sea. For their opposition to God's people they were marked out as objects of His special wrath. A.S. 'beodan,' to tell to do.

L. 'aeternus,' perpetual—from 'aevum,' life-time; Fr. 'éternel.'

Fr. 'guerre'; Dut. 'werre.' Warfare = carrying a war. L. 'fero,' I carry. Cf. Latin phrase, 'fere bellum,' to wage war.

Wage: L. 'vas,' a surety; Fr. 'gage,' a pledge; Mid. Lat. 'vadium' or 'gaudium.'

Wedgewood tells us that under the Gothic laws when one challenged another to judicial combat, a pledge was first given that the cause was just. The challenged then threw down his glove in court and the challenger took it up. This was styled 'vadiare duellum,' the wager of battle. So, in the declaration of war between two countries, it was called 'vadiare bellum,' although there was nothing in the nature of a pledge.

As in withstand. O.E. and A.S. 'with,' against; akin to A.S. 'wither,' against.

Lat. 'gratia,' favour, grace—from 'gratus,' pleasing.

L. 'progenies,' race, family—from 'pro,' forth, and 'gigno,' I beget.

Royal bard: King David was the author of many of the Psalms.

Royal: Lat. 'regalis,' kingly—from 'rex,' a king.

NOTES.

the people, and his repentance, are referred to. See 2nd Sam. xxiv. and 2nd Chron. xxi.

Groaning: uttering mournful sounds like one deeply oppressed or afflicted.

Stroke: blow; weight.

Avenging ire: anger that caused just punishment to be inflicted upon the wrongdoer.

Pathetic plaint: mournful, affecting, complaining.

Wailing cry: lamentations.

Rapt: in a state of ecstasy or exultation; carried out of himself with inspiration.

Wild: enthusiastic; passionate; unrestrained.

Seraphic fire: sublime enthusiasm; angelic exaltation.

Seers: prophets; Old Testament writers.

That tune the sacred lyre: those who wrote and sang about God and His dealings with the people of Israel.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Bard: Fr. 'barde'; L. 'bardus'; W. 'barrd'; one who sang his own songs among the ancient Celts.

An imitative (onomatopoeic) word. Fr. 'gronder,' to grunt.

Gael. 'strac,' a loud or crashing noise; Dut. 'strekc,' a blow.

Heaven's: A.S. 'heofan'; Ger. 'Himmel,' an arched or vaulted covering. Connected with 'heave.'

Avenging: Fr. 'venger,' to revenge; Lat. 'vindicare,' to avenge.

Ire: L. 'ira,' anger; Fr. 'ire'; A.S. 'yrre.'

Pathetic: Gr. 'pathos,' suffering.

Plaint: see note to 'plaintive,' l. 40.

Wailing: crying 'wae'; loud and mournful weeping. See Book of Job.

Enraptured: L. 'rapio.' See note to 'rapture,' l. 44.

As the result of abandonment to the mood. So—

'Wild is thy lay and loud.'

—Hogg's 'Skylark.'

Seraphic: Heb. 'saraph,' to burn; Fr. 'séraphin,' an angel of the highest order. Heb. plural is seraphim; English, seraphs. So 'cherubim' and 'cherubs.'

Connected with 'see'; A.S. 'seon'; one who can foresee future events.

Lyre: L. 'lyra'; Gr. 'lura'; Fr. 'lyre'; a musical stringed instrument common among the ancient Egyptians and Greeks.

Hence the term 'lyric' and 'lyrical,' that is, fitted to be sung to the lyre or harp; and applies to any kind of poetic language, unequal in measure, which is suitable for musical recitative, or which may be used as a vehicle for conveying the emotions of the writer.

Note how Burns looks upon all the scriptures of the 'seers' as poetry. Holy Writ is eminently musical and poetic. The Book of Isaiah is one of the grandest prose-poems in literature.

15. Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme :

How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;

How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,

Had not on earth whereon to lay His head :

How His first followers and servants sped ;

The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :

How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,

Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand

And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's
command.

NOTES.

Christian volume: the New Testament, dealing with Christ and His gospel, as opposed to the Old Testament, and the teaching of the Prophets.

Is the theme: supplies the subject-matter.

How guiltless, etc. . . shed :

How He, who, etc. . . head : Jesus.

Second name—Son (of God) : the Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

First followers and servants: the disciples and apostles.

Sped : succeeded ; prospered in their mission of spreading the gospel.

The precepts : the epistles ; the gospels.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

An English Stanza.

Volume : L. 'volumen,' a roll, book—from 'volvere,' to turn round an object.

An ancient volume consisted of a single sheet with a rod stretched across at each end, for the convenience of rolling and unrolling during the reading.

Theme : Gr. and L. 'theme,' the thing laid down ; the subject treated of. Fr. 'thème.'

Guiltless . . . guilty : A.S. 'gildan,' Ger. 'gelten,' to requite, to return an equivalent. Swiss, 'gült,' debt.

Shed : Low Ger. 'schudden,' to shake ; Gr. 'sked,' to scatter, to shed.

Had not, etc., . . . head : this line is elliptical, but easily understood. Note how close the wording is to Luke ix. 58.

Followers : A.S. 'folgian,' to go after or behind.

Servants : L. 'servire,' to be in service—from 'servus,' a servant, or slave. Note that the word 'minister' also means servant or attendant.

A.S. 'spedan,' to succeed, prosper ; Gr. 'spendo,' I hasten.

Precepts : L. 'praeceptum,' a maxim—from 'prae,' before, and 'capio,' I take ; injunctions ; doctrines ; rules of action or conduct.

NOTES.

Sage : wise ; prudent.

How he, who lone in Patmos, etc. : the evangelist John, who was banished to an island in the Aegean Sea called Patmos.

Lone = alone : an exile ; a prisoner.

Saw in the sun :

Great Bab'lon's : Babylon was one of the greatest cities the world has seen. It was the capital of Chaldea.

Doom : judgment ; destruction ; destiny.

Pronounced : uttered formally and solemnly :

Heaven's = God's.

Command : order ; authority.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Note that the 'how' is dropped at the beginning of this line, giving an awkward effect. 'The' is 'what' in one MS.

Fr. 'sage' ; L. 'sagus,' presaging ; prophetic ; and 'sagio,' I perceive quickly.

How he, etc. : he was banished by the Emperor Domitian, A.D. 94.

Banished : Fr. 'bannir,' to banish ; M. Lat. 'bannire,' to proclaim, denounce. Connected with 'ban' and 'bandit.'

Rev. xix. 17—'And I saw an angel standing in the sun,' etc.

Angel : Gr. 'angelos,' a messenger ; L. 'angelus,' a heavenly being.

Great Bab'lon's doom, etc. : read Rev. xviii. Babylon might be styled the 'London' of the ancients.

Doom : A.S. 'dom,' judgment, 'de-man,' to judge.

Pronounced : L. 'pronuncio,' to tell or report publicly—from 'pro,' forth, and 'nuncio,' I declare.

Command : Lat. 'con' and 'mando,' I order.

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

NOTES.

Kneeling down: most likely all the worshippers would simultaneously kneel at their respective chairs.

The saint, the father, and the husband prays: he acted in a three-fold capacity—as an example of holy living to the members of his household; as the provider for his children's wants; and—together with his help-mate—as the general overseer and protector of all the interests of the home.

Hope 'springs exulting,' etc.: their hearts are filled with the hope that they will be an unbroken family in Heaven. The hope is strengthened by the feeling of confidence in attaining the desired end.

Exulting: rejoicing.

Triumphant: rejoicing in victory. Hope rises in their bosoms as a bird, strong of wing, soars into the air.

All shall meet in future days: in Heaven.

Bask: lie at ease in the warmth.

Uncreated rays: Rev. vii. 16. '... neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat.'

Rays: beams of the sun.

No more to sigh . . . tear: Rev. vi. 17 '... and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' So also—'and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

Shed:

Bitter: caused by excessive grief.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Another English stanza.

Kneeling: Ger. 'Knie'; Gr. 'gonu'; L. 'genu.'

Heaven's—eternal: see notes on st. 14, line 3, and st. 15, line 4.

King: Ger. 'König'; A.S. 'cyng,' 'cyning.'

Saint: Fr. 'saint'; L. 'sanctus,' holy.

Father: connected with 'to feed.' See note, stanza 14, line 1.

Husband: A.S. 'husbonda,' the master of the house; 'hus' = a house.

This line gives a splendid picture of a custom that has had great power for good on the Scottish character.

A quotation from Pope's 'Windsor Forest.'

Hope: A.S. 'hopa'; Ger. 'hoffen,' Dut. 'hoppen,' to expect.

L. 'exultare'; intensive form from 'exsilire,' to leap out—('ex' and 'salire').

L. 'triumphus,' the solemn and magnificent entrance of a victorious general into ancient Rome.

Note that the means of victory (*i.e.* the wings) are spoken of as the victor.

The same conviction breathes through the poem 'We are Seven' (Wordsworth).

Akin to 'bake.'

Uncreated: see note on st. 13, line 9.

Fr. 'ray,' a sunbeam; L. 'radius,' a ray; a line of light.

Sigh: A.S. 'siccan,' to sigh or sob; Low Ger. 'suchten'; Scot. 'sough,' the sound of the wind, or of heavy breathing. Compare note to line 1. It is an onomatopoeic word.

See note to stanza 15, line 2.

Ger. 'bitter,' bitter; biting; stinging.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Tear: Hymning: noun used as a verb.	A.S. 'taer'; Gael. 'dear,' a tear. L. 'hymnus'; Gr. 'humnos,' a song in honour of the gods; Fr. 'hymne.'
Praise: Society: company; companionship; fellowship.	In Eph. v. 19, we read of 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'
Yet still more dear: the bond of love that unites them will be stronger in the heavenly than in the earthly state.	See note to stanza 13, line 9.
Circling time: time without end.	L. 'socius,' a companion.
Eternal sphere: everlasting circuit; <i>i.e.</i> , to all eternity.	Circling: see note to stanza 12, line 2.
	Time: Fr. 'temps'; L. 'tempus.'
	Eternal: see note, stanza 14, line 3.
	Sphere: Fr. 'sphère'—from Lat. 'sphaera'; Gr. 'sphaira,' a ball; a globe.

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

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Scotia: poetic name for Scotland.	An English stanza. See note stanza 11, line 2.
My native soil:	Native: Lat. 'nativus,' born. Soil: Fr. 'sol'; Lat. 'solium,' the ground; the upper stratum of the earth.
My warmest wish . . . sent: One's warmest, Heaven-sent wish, is surely a splendid definition of a prayer.	Warmest: Ger. 'warm'; Gr. 'thermos,' hot. Wish: A.S. 'wiscan,' to wish. Heaven: see notes on st. 14, ll. 3 and 6.

NOTES.

Hardy: sturdy; strong; muscular; able to stand fatigue.

Rustic: rural; pertaining to the country as distinguished from the town.

Rustic toil: the work of a peasant.

Be blest:

Health:

Peace:

Content: contentment; satisfaction in regard to one's lot.

Simple lives: homely; unartificial; true to nature.

Prevent: protect; keep back.

Luxury's contagion: bad effects or influence of excessive indulgence in all that riches can supply.

Weak: weakening; injurious to health and strength.

Vile: base; depraved.

How'er crowns and coronets be rent: although the sway of kings and the power of princes and nobles be destroyed. We have the same idea in—

'Let kings and courtiers rise and
fa.'

('The Star o' Robbie Burns,'
by James Thomson.)

A virtuous populace: a good-living people.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

F. 'hardi'; It. 'ardito,' daring.

L. 'rusticus'—from 'rus,' the country.

Toil: see note, stanza 3, line 9.

A.S. 'bletsian,' to bless: connected with 'blithe.'

From 'heal'; A.S. 'healan,' to cure; Ger. 'heil,' whole; Gr. 'holos,' entire; whole.

Fr. 'paix'; Lat. pax.'

L. 'con,' together, 'tentus,' held; kept within limits. Contentment is a state of mind that changes so much with temperament and environment, that it is indefinable. Real satisfaction of mind, however, is not passive, but is of that nature that is breathed in the line:—

'Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair.'

Simple: L. 'sine,' without, and 'plico,' I fold. See note, stanza 11, line 1.

Lat. 'prae' and 'venio,' to come before, so as to hinder progress or motion. Shakespeare often uses it with this meaning. Cf. Hamlet, ii. 2, line 288.

Contagion: L. 'con,' and 'tango,' I touch—'contagio,' a touching by which disease is communicated to a healthy body.

A.S. 'wac'; O. E. 'weik,' soft, pliant.

Lat. 'vilis' of small price or value.

Crown=emblem of royalty.

Coronet (small crown)=emblem of princely or noble rank.

Rent: A.S. 'rendan,' to tear asunder, to plunder.

Burns glorifies the Scottish peasantry. In his 'Address to the Dumfries Volunteers,' he says—

'But while we sing, "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget the people.'

NOTES.

May rise the while: will grow up in the meantime.
A wall of fire: to keep off assailing foes.
Loved:
Isle: island.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The 'honest man' is his ideal of true nobility.

Lat. 'libet,' it pleases; 'libido,' pleasure, desire.
 Old Fr. 'isle'; Lat. 'insula.'

The wish expressed in this stanza does honour to the poet's mind and heart.

21. O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
 That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
 Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part
 (The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)
 O never, never Scotia's realms desert,
 But still the patriot and the patriot bard
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard.

NOTES.

Poured: pouredst.
Patriotic tide: love of fatherland.
Tide: stream; current; properly the alternate rising and falling of the ocean.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

An English stanza.
 As this stanza is purely English in word and form the verb should properly be in the 2nd person to agree with 'Thou.' In Scotch declension, 2nd and 3rd persons singular were the same.
 Gr. 'patriotes,' a fellow-countryman—from 'patria,' one's native country. Patriotism was one of the fundamentals of Burns's nature and genius.
 Gives the idea of force and permanency.

NOTES.

Streamed through, etc. : like his life's blood. As with 'tide,' 'streamed' gives the idea of power to do and dare.

Undaunted : brave ; bold ; fearless ; indomitable.

Dared to nobly stem : *i.e.*, dared nobly to stem : he risked persecution and death to free his country from the thralldom of England.

Tyrannic pride : the haughty, high-handed treatment of the usurper Edward I.

Pride :

Nobly :

The second glorious part : *i.e.*, death in a good cause is 'next' best to fighting victoriously.

Second :

Glorious : noble ; praise-worthy.

Patriot's :

Peculiarly : especially.

Friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward : one who is a close companion—who influences and directs the mind by superior worth and wisdom—who takes a person under

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

In the First Edition this line was : 'That streamed through great unhappy Wallace' heart.' The alteration was a decided improvement, being quite as expressive, and much more direct and poetic. In MSS. 'through' is sometimes rendered 'in' and sometimes 'thro'.

Teutonic prefix 'un' = not ; Fr. 'dompter,' to tame—from L. 'domitare,' intensive form of 'domare,' to tame.

Dared : A.S. 'dearran,' to dare ; Lat. 'durus,' hard.

Stem : Icel. 'stemma,' to close, stop ; Swed. 'stamma,' to stop, staunch ; connected with Ger. 'stemmen,' and English 'stammer.'

L. 'tyrannus' ; Gr. 'turannos,' a ruler, king ; Fr. 'tyran.' Tyrant is an example of a word that has degenerated. Other examples are : harness (armour), idiot (a private person), knave (a boy), villain (a peasant), etc.

A.S. 'pyrd,' haughtiness ; Ger. 'Pracht,' pomp, splendour. In 'Scots wha hae,' Burns says—

' See approach *proud* Edward's power,
Chains and slavery.'

See note to stanza 13, line 2.

Same idea is expressed in 'Scots wha hae'—'Let us do or die.' The famous Latin equivalent is : 'Dulce et decoram est pro patria mori,' = it is sweet and glorious to die for one's country.

L. 'secundus,' from 'sequor,' I follow—the second following the first. Note that this is the only Latin name in our English numerals.

Lat, 'gloria,' gain, honour ; Fr. 'gloire.'

See note to 'patriotic' above.

L. 'peculiaris,' one's own ; 'peculium,' that which one has for his own.

Friend : A.S. 'freond'—from 'freon,' to free, to love.

Inspirer : Lat. 'in' into, and 'spiro,' I breathe. Inspiration is the infusion of ideas into the mind by supernatural influence.

NOTES.

his special care and protection
—and who, when the strife is
over, gives rest and Heaven.

Scotia's realm :

Desert :

Still : always ; continually.

Patriot bard : the writer of
songs and poems in honour
of his native land.

In bright succession : an un-
broken line—a constant sup-
ply—of bright souls endowed
with the instincts of the
patriot and the inspiration of
the poet.

Raise : do Thou raise.

Her ornament and guard :
their mission is not only
to adorn their native land
through their excelling quali-
ties, but also, by these very
gifts and virtues, to safeguard
her every interest.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Guardian : Fr. 'garder,' to keep,
guard.

Reward : L. 're' again, and 'award.'

Fr. 'regarder,' to look at.

Fr. 'realme,' 'royaume'—from Lat.
'regalis,' royal, and 'rex,' a king.

L. 'desertus,' solitary, waste—from
'de,' and 'sertum,' to join, to connect.

Bard : see note, stanza 14, line 5.

Patriot : see note, line 1, above.

Succession : L. 'successus,' followed
after; advanced. Here it means a
series of heroes and poets following
one another : as one does his work
and dies, another is ready to take
up his mantle.

Ornament : Lat. 'ornamentum,' a
decoration—from 'orno,' I decorate,
or adorn.

Guard : see note, stanza 21, line 6 ; and
also note on 'guise,' stanza 13, line 1.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL,
1786.

INTRODUCTION.

IN a letter of 20th April, 1786, to his friend John Kennedy, factor to the Earl of Dumfries, at Dumfries House, near Mauchline, the poet inscribed this poem under the title of 'The Gowan.'

Speaking of the verses in the letter, he says: 'I have here enclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions. I am a good deal pleased with some of the sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which, as the elegantly melting Gray says, "melancholy has marked for her own."'

This poem belongs to a time in the life of Burns when despondency had a firm hold of him. 'The Lament,' and his mournful odes, 'Despondency' and 'To Ruin' belong to this dark time.

The incident which gave the 'raison d'être' of the poem took place on the farm of Mossgiel, and in a field that lies next to that in which the nest of the mouse was turned up.

The poem consists of nine verses, of which the last four, bearing the moral, are entirely English in word and form. The fifth is almost so. The sixth verse—for obvious reasons—is omitted in this little collection.

The Daisy, whose botanical name—*Bellis perennis*—signifies perpetual beauty, belongs to the order of 'compositae.' Although found everywhere in this country, it is not common in the north of Europe or in America, unless as a garden flower.

‘The bright-eyed, pink-tipped flower’ has been a favourite with the poets of all times. Chaucer tells us that he was in the habit of passing whole days ‘leaning on his elbow and his side’—

‘For nothing ellis, and I shall not lie
But for to lokin upon the daisie
The emprise and flowre of flowres all.’

His lines giving the origin of the name are almost household words—

‘One called eye of the daie
The daisie, a flowre white and rede,
And in French called La bel Marguerite.’

The French name Marguerite (Fr. ‘marguerite’; Lat. ‘margarita,’ a pearl), has reference to the likeness of its buds to the pearls of the ocean.

Burns, in the letter referred to above, gave it the purely Scotch name of ‘gowan.’ In the North of England it sometimes gets the name of ‘bairnwort,’ being looked upon as pre-eminently the children’s flower; and certainly there is no ‘gem’ in Nature so woven into the bright days and round the tender hearts of childhood, as this ‘unassuming commonplace of Nature.’

The sympathy expressed in the poem is as deep as it is kindly, and compels the most muscular among us to mourn the doom of the ‘slender stem,’ as if it were indeed a brother in affliction.

1. WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flow’r,
Thou’s met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow’r,
Thou bonie gem!

NOTES.

Daisy: the common and classical daisy has a yellow disc, and white or pinkish rays.

Wee, modest, etc. :

Wee :

Modest: chaste and humble; having a natural delicacy; 'unassuming' (Wordsworth).

Tipped :

Thou's: thou hast.

Met: note that the poet speaks as if the daisy were the active agent in the meeting.

In an evil hour: at a most unfortunate time.

Maun: must; am compelled; (other forms: mon; mun; mune).

Stoure: dust; earth.

Stem: stalk.

Bonie: pretty; (other forms, bonnie; bony; bonny).

Gem :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

O.E. 'dayseye'; A.S. 'daeges-eage,' day's eye. 'Daisy' is thus a corruption of 'day's eye.'

For Scotch name see 'Auld Lang Syne'—

'And pu'd the *gowans* fine.'

So, also, in 'Annie Laurie'—

'Like dew on the *gowan* lying.'

Notice a similar beginning in 'To a Mouse.'

'Wee' is connected with O.E. 'we.' The idea of 'little' was a later importation into the word. 'Wee' is used in Provincial English. Shakespeare has

'A little *wee* face, with a little yellow beard.'

Fr. 'modeste'; Lat. 'modestus,' from 'modus,' measure; restrained within the limits of propriety. Personification is here used.

Dut. 'tip,' a point. Refer to 'that thin red-line streak *tipped* with a line of steel.' (Russell: 'The British Expedition to the Crimea').

See note in 'To a Mouse,' v. 5, in regard to the use in Scotch of 2nd and 3rd persons singular.

Evil: Ger. 'übel'; Dut. 'evel.'

Hour: L. and Gr. 'hora'; Fr. 'heure.'

A.S. 'styrian,' to stir. Connected with Old Fr. 'estour,' a conflict, battle—and Eng. 'storm.' L. 'turbare,' to stir. In Scotland it usually signifies dust in a state of motion.

A.S. 'stemm'; Ger. 'Stamm'; stem or trunk.

Of uncertain origin. Probably connected with Fr. 'bon' (Johnson); O.E. 'boni'; Lat. 'bonus,' good. Shakespeare has 'blithe and bonny.'

'For *bonny* sweet Robin is all my joy.'

(Hamlet).

A.S. 'gym,' a gem; connected with Latin 'gemma,' a bud.

2. Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
 The bonie lark, companion meet,
 Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
 Wi' spreckl'd breast!
 When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling east.

NOTES.

Alas!**No:** Scotch for 'not.'**Neibor:** close friend.**Bonie:****Lark:** the lark has been a great favourite with poets on account of its gift of song.**Companion:****Meet:** fit; suitable.**Dewy:****Weet:** wetness.**Spreckl'd:** speckled; spotted.

'Speckle' is a diminutive of 'speck.'

Breast:**Blythe:** cheerful; joyous; full of song or glee. Also spelled 'blithe.'**Greet:** welcome.**The purpling east:** sunrise.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

L. 'lassus,' wearied; Fr. 'las,' weary.

A.S. 'neah-bar': Ger. 'Nachbar'—from A.S. 'neah,' near; and Dan. 'boe'; Ger. 'bauen,' to till, to cultivate.

Compare 'boer.' The same idea of close friendship is seen in 'And maun I still on Menie doat,' in the lines—

'And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
 Blythe waukens by the daisy's side.'Occurs also in verse 1, *q. v.*

A.S. 'laferc'; Scot. 'laverock'; Dut. 'lewerck.' Refer to poems by Shelley, Hogg, and Wordsworth. 'Lav'rocks fan the snaw-white clouds' ('Gloomy Winter's noo awa').

See also 'My Nannie's awa.'

L. 'con' and 'panis.' The original idea is a friendship that includes eating together; mess-mate.

A.S. 'mete,' measure; according to measure.

Ger. 'Thau'; Low. Ger. 'dauen,' to dew, to thaw.

Connected with 'water.' Goth. 'vato'; Ger. 'Wasser'; Lat. 'udus,' wet.

Lith. 'spakas,' a spot, stain; Swiss 'speckig,' dirty. Fergusson uses this word. 'Spreckly' is also used with the same meaning.

The 1786 MS. has 'Wi's spreckl'd breast.' It was altered in 1787.

A.S. 'breost.'

A.S. 'blithe,' merry. Hogg refers to the lark as 'blithesome and cumberless.' Longfellow calls the cuckoo 'blithe bird.' Other instances are plentiful.

Dut. 'groeten,' to salute.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
<p>Purpling: (purple is the colour formed by blending red and blue). East:</p>	<p>Fr. 'pourpre'; Lat. 'purpura'; Gr. 'porphura,' the purple fish. Ger. 'Ost'; Icel. 'aust,' the east.</p>

3. Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
 Upon thy early, humble birth;
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
 Thy slender form.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
<p>Cauld: Blew: Bitter-biting: blowing keenly as if cutting or biting into the body. The same idea is here as in 'snell and keen' ('To a Mouse'). North: north-wind. Early humble birth: Early birth: first appearance through the soil. Humble: lowly; 'earth-born.' Birth: Cheerfully: like a bright and joyous thing. Glinted: ('glintedst' is the English grammatical form) peeped forth; glittered; sparkled; shone brightly. 'Glent' is another form of</p>	<p>Except for the opening word and 'glinted,' this verse is entirely English. Goth. 'kalds,' cold; Icel. 'kala,' to blow cold; Ger. 'kalt,' cold. A.S. 'blawan,' to blow or breathe; Ger. 'blähen,' to puff up. Bitter: Ger. 'bitter'; biting; stinging. -biting: Goth. 'beitan,' to tear. 'Bitter' signifies biting to the taste; thus the two parts of this compound, besides being mutually strengthening, are almost synonymous. The idea of the wind <i>biting</i> as if it had <i>teeth</i> is common in poetry. Icel. 'nordr'; Fr. 'nord'; one of the four cardinal points. Wordsworth calls it an 'unassuming common-place of nature.' Early: A.S. 'acr,' before; 'earlice,' early. Lat. 'humilis,' lowly, mean,—from 'humus,' the ground. A.S. 'beorth'—from 'beran,' to bring forth. Connected with Fr. 'chère,' cheer, entertainment. O.E. 'glenten'; akin to Dut. 'glans,' lustre, brightness; Teut. 'glanta,' splendour. In Scotch poem we have '<i>glint o' her bonnie black e'e.</i>' In 'Noctes Ambros.,' 'frae the earliest</p>

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
<p>'glint.' The idea of speed, or shortness of time, is inseparable from this word. Glinted forth : shone out like a ray of light. Storm :</p>	<p><i>glint o' morn.</i> See also 'Halloween.' In Scotch, 2nd and 3rd persons singular of the verb were the same.</p>
<p>Scarce : scarcely ; hardly. Its form was just peeping through the ground. Rear'd : raised.</p>	<p>A.S. 'storm' ; akin to Dut. 'storm,' a rustling, a rattling,—and perhaps to Lat. 'sternere,' to strew. Adverb having adjectival form. See note on l. 3, v. 1, 'To a Mouse.'</p>
<p>Above :</p>	<p>A.S. 'raeran,' to raise ; for 'raesan,' causative of 'risan,' to rise. A.S. 'abufan'—from 'a,' on, 'be,' by ; and 'ufa,' high ; Dut. 'boven,' overhead.</p>
<p>Parent : (See also 'earth-born,' v. 2, l. 5, 'To a Mouse.')</p>	<p>L. 'parens,' a father or mother ; Fr. 'parent' ; akin to 'parere,' to bring forth.</p>
<p>Slender : slim ; slight ; delicate.</p>	
<p>Form :</p>	<p>Lat. 'forma,' shape, or figure.</p>

4. The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield ;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
<p>The flaunting flow'rs : those decked in gay colours, and that make a great show. Flaunting :</p>	<p>In the North of Europe and America the daisy appears only among 'the flaunting flow'rs' of the garden.</p>
<p>Flow'rs : Gardens :</p>	<p>Bav. 'flandern,' to wave to and fro ; Ger. 'flattern,' to flutter and make an ostentatious display. Fr. 'fleur' ; L. 'flos.' Fr. 'jardin' ; Ger. 'Garten' ('gart,' an enclosure) ; akin to A.S. 'geard,' and O.E. 'yard,' 'yerd,' an enclosure.</p>
<p>Yield : produce. Shelt'ring : protecting from wind and storm.</p>	<p>A.S. 'gyldan,' to restore, repay. O.E. 'scheltrun,' a guard, a squadron ; and A.S. 'scildtruma,'—'scild,' a shield, and 'truma,' a band of men.</p>
<p>Woods :</p>	<p>A.S. 'wudu' ; O.E. 'wode,' 'wude' Dan. and Sw. 'ved,' wood.</p>

NOTES.

Wa's :**Shield .** protect.**Beneath :****Random :** chance; without preparation or foresight.**Bield :** shelter; protection.**Clod :** hard lump of earth.**Stane :****Adorns :** adornest. (Scotch idiom.)**Histie :** bristling; rough; prickly.**Stibble-field :** stubble-field; a field with the stumps or root-ends of corn left in the ground after the crop has been cut down.**Alane :** alone.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'weal,' a wall; Dut. 'wal,' a rampart; L. 'vallum,' from 'vallus,' a stake.

O.E. 'sheld,' 'scheld'; A.S. 'scield,' 'scild'; Ger. 'Schild'; A.S. 'scildan' or 'scyldan,' to cover with, or as with a shield. Cf.—

'Thy shield should be my bosom.'

('O wert Thou in the Cauld Blast.')

'Shieling' and 'sheeling' (Scot.) have the same derivation.

All these gay flowers require the artifice of man to protect them from harm, and to ensure their gaudy display; but the daisy 'is born to blush unseen,' and must face the blast with scant protection from its surroundings.

A.S. 'be,' by, and 'neothan.'

A.S. 'randun,' rushing; O.E. 'randon,' force, violence, rapidity; Fr. 'randon,' force, violence; done at hazard or without aim or calculation.

Teutonic word. Derivation is uncertain. Probably from the same root as 'build.' The modern Scotch 'bield,' 'beild,' 'beeld,' seem to be the same as M.E. 'belde.' See Burns's 'Better a wee bush than nac *bield*.' 'The oppressors that hae driven me to tak' the heather-bush for a *bield*' (Scott's 'Rob Roy'). So we have the phrase 'in the *bield* o' the dyke,' *i.e.*, on the side of the wall that is free from the blast.

Dan. 'klods'; Sw. 'klots,' a block; a log; Dut. 'klos,' a ball.

A.S. 'stan'; O.E. 'ston,' 'stan.'

Lat. 'ad,' and 'orno,' I deck or beautify.

It is a West of Scotland word (Jamieson), and often means dry, chapped. Probably from 'hispid,' and Lat. 'hispidus,' rough with bristles or minute spines. Perhaps connected with 'hirsute,' 'hirsty,' 'hirst.'

See note on 'stibble' in verse 6 of 'To a Mouse.'

Field : see note in v. 5 of 'To a Mouse.'

In Milton's 'L'Allegro' we have—

'Meadows trim with daisies pied.'

'All' and 'one'—by itself. See note, verse 7, line 1. 'To a Mouse.'

5. There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
 Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise ;
 But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies !

NOTES.

Scanty : not sufficient as a means of protection.

Mantle :

Clad :

Snawie :

Bosom :

Sunward : towards light and heat.

Spread : expanded ; opened out.

Lifts : liftst.

Unassuming : 'modest.'

Head :

Guise : manner.

But now the share, etc. :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Lat. 'mantellum'; Fr. 'mantille,' a cloak; Fr. 'mante,' a covering.

From 'cloth.' A.S. 'clath'; Ger. 'Kleid.' 'Clothed' is another form of the past participle.

Ger. 'Schnee'; Gael. 'sneachd'; Gr. 'nipha.'

A.S. 'bosum'; Ger. 'Busen.'

Sun : O.E. 'sunne,' 'sonne'; A.S. 'sunne'; Goth. 'sunno'; Icel. 'sunna.'

-ward : A.S. 'weard,' or 'weardes'—used in composition, to express situation or direction.

Dut. 'speeden'; Dan. 'sprede,' to spread, scatter.

See former notes on 2nd and 3rd persons singular.

A.S. 'hliftan,' to rise up, to raise; Low Ger. 'luften,' to raise into the lift, or air,—from 'lucht'; O.E. 'luft,' the sky, the air. 'Lift' is Scotch for sky. So—The sweet calm moon in the midnight *lift*' (Wilson's 'Noct. Ambr.'). It is common in poem and song.

'Un,' not, and Lat. 'assumo,' I take to myself,—from 'ad,' to, and 'sumo,' I take.

Un : A.S. 'un' is a preivative or negative principle. Wordsworth uses this word in his poem, 'To the Daisy.'

A.S. 'heafod'; O.E. 'hed,' 'heved'; its origin is unknown.

Fr. 'guise,' way, manner. See note, stanza 13, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

Note the similar incident in 'To a Mouse.'

NOTES.

Share: the plough-share; the broad iron blade of the plough, which cuts the bottom of the furrow into a slice and raises it up.

Uptears :

Bed : a sympathetic touch.

Lies : liest.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'scir,' a share; 'sciran,' to cut off, to divide; Low Ger. 'scheren,' to separate, to tear away.

The *tearing* expresses the root force of 'share.'

See similar terms used for the nest of the mouse.

See note to 'lifts,' above, etc.

7. Such is the fate of Simple Bard,
 On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !
 Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er !

NOTES.

Fate: destiny; life-experience; doom; inevitable lot.

Simple: unknowing; uneducated; 'rustic'; true to Nature.

Bard :

Rough :

Ocean :

Luckless starr'd: ill-starred; born under an unlucky star.

Luckless: unlucky; unfortunate; unpropitious.

Starr'd :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Verses 6 to 9 contain the moral of the poem—a melancholy one,—and are English throughout.

Lat. 'fatum,' a prophetic declaration; oracle; what is ordained by the gods. Refer to the Three Fates of Mythology.

Fr. 'simple'—from L. 'simplex,' plain, unmixed,—from 'sine,' without, and 'plico,' I fold.

See note to stanza 14, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

O.E. 'rugh,' 'ruh'; A.S. 'ruh,' uneven, wrinkled.

Lat. 'oceanus'; Gr. 'okeanos,' the great sea.

Luck: Ger. 'Glück; ' Dut. 'luk,' happiness; fortune.

O.E. 'sterre'; A.S. 'steorra'; Gr. 'aster'; Lat. 'astrum'; Gael. 'stairno,' a star.

Reference to stars and planets influencing the destinies of mortals is common in all literature.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Unskilful :	Skill : A.S. 'scylan,' to distinguish; Icel. 'skil,' a distinction; discernment.
Note : read with full knowledge.	Lat. 'nota,' a mark or sign by which a person or thing is known—from 'notum,' to know.
Card : a paper on which the points of the compass are marked; the dial or face of the mariner's compass, and by which he steers his course.	Fr. 'carte'; Lat. 'charta,' paper. One of the witches in 'Macbeth' speaks of— 'All the quarters that they know I' the shipman's card.'
Prudent ; cautious : wise.	The compass is an instrument for indicating the magnetic meridian of any locality. It was known in China before the birth of Christ, but was introduced into Europe only in the seventeenth century. F. 'prudent'—from Lat. 'prudens,' a contraction for 'providens,'—'pro,' before, and 'video,' I see.
Lore : knowledge; learning; counsel; instruction.	A.S. 'lare,' teaching. It usually means the knowledge gained from tradition and books, and always signifies accumulated knowledge.
Billows :	Dan. 'bolge'; Dut. 'bolghe,' a wave of the sea.
Gales :	Norm. 'galen,' angry; Dan. 'gal,' mad, furious. Probably of Scandinavian origin. Akin to A.S. 'galan,' to sing. Cf. nightingale.
Hard : strongly; furiously.	A.S. 'heard,' hard; allied to Gr. 'kratos,' strength. 'Hard' has here its literal meaning of strength.
Whelm : cover completely; engulf. This verb is not commonly used without the prefix 'o'er,' or 'over.'	O.E. 'whelm,' to turn over. Akin to A.S. 'awhelfan,' to overwhelm; Dut. 'wemelen,' to whirl; Scot. 'whummle'; Prov. Eng. 'whemmle,' to turn upside.

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

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Fate . . . is given : treatment . . . is meted out.	'Fate' is here used with a somewhat different signification from that in v. 7. It means not so much final or fixed destiny as treatment from the outside world. L. 'suffero'—from 'sub' and 'fero.'
Suffering : struggling ; persecuted ; misunderstood.	A.S. 'weorth,' price, value.
Worth : merit ; excellence ; worthy people.	A.S. 'wan,' signifying deficiency, negation.
Wants : lack of necessaries.	An onomatopoetic word: imitation of the deep-drawn breath accompanying severe pain. A.S. 'wa,' woe.
Woes : distress ; calamities.	L. 'humanus,' a human being,—from 'homo,' a man.
Human :	A. S. 'pryd,' haughtiness ; Ger. 'Pracht,' pomp.
Pride :	A.S. 'cunnan,' to know.
Cunning : deceit ; scheming.	A.S. 'drifan,' to urge forward as with an overwhelming force.
Driv'n :	L. 'miser,' wretched.
Mis'ry's : that of extreme distress.	Dan. 'brink,' declivity ; Icel. 'bring,' hillock.
Brink :	O.E. 'wrench,' a trick, a sharp turn ; Dut. 'rancken,' to bend, to turn aside ; a sudden or violent twist.
Wrench'd : (having been) ruthlessly deprived.	Fr. 'éstaye,' a prop, or supporter.
Stay : support.	A.S. 'heofan' ; Ger. 'Himmel,' an arched or vaulted covering.
Heav'n : God.	Lat. 'ruina,' a rushing or tumbling down,—from 'ruere,' to fall with violence.
Ruin'd : overwhelmed with disaster.	A.S. 'sencan,' to fall to the bottom.
Sink :	The picture in this verse is a very gloomy and pessimistic one indeed, and the closing verse shows plainly that it is autobiographical. There is a striking similarity between the closing lines of this poem and those of 'To a Mouse.'

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

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Thou . . . mourn'st :	Note that the 2nd person singular is here in the English form.
Mourn'st :	A.S. 'murnan'; Gael. 'mairgnich,' to groan, to sob, to grieve for.
Distant :	Lat. 'distantia,' remoteness,—from 'dis,' asunder, and 'stans,' standing.
Date : point of time.	Fr. 'date'; Low Lat. 'data,' from 'datus,' given.
Stern Ruin's plough-share :	Compare 'the cruel coulter' in verse 5 of 'To a Mouse.' We have a parallel passage in Young— <div data-bbox="553 485 895 528" style="text-align: center;"> <p>'final Ruin fiercely drives Her plough-share o'er creation.'</p> </div>
Stern : harsh ; unrelenting.	O.E. 'sterne,' 'sturne'; A.S. 'styrne'; Scot. 'stourne,' stern.
Ruin's :	See note on 'ruin'd,' verse 5.
Plough-share :	See note to line 5, verse 8.
Elate : puffed up with the pride of success.	Plough : see stanza 2, line 3, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'
Thy bloom : thy youth and manhood ; thy life of blossoming prospects and possibilities.	Lat. 'elatus,' raised, exalted,—from 'ex,' out of, and 'latus,' carried.
Crush'd :	Bloom : Dut. 'bloeme'; Ger. 'Blume,' a flower.
Furrow's :	Onomatopoeic : imitative of the noise of crushing a hard or brittle body. Fr. 'croissir,' to crack or crash.
Weight :	A.S. 'furfh.' Allied to Lat. 'porca,' a ridge between two furrows. The furrow is properly the small trench or channel cut out by the plough ; but it here seems to signify the earth cut out by the share and turned over.
Shall :	A.S. 'wegan,' to lift, to move ; Ger. 'wiegen,' to weigh, literally, to move to and fro ; the act of weighing takes its name from the wagging movement of the beam up and down.
Doom : destiny ; final lot ; judgment.	Expresses the certainty that is in the mind of the poet in regard to his quickly coming troubles.
	A.S. 'dom,' judgment ; 'deman,' to judge.
	The word 'deem' is used by Shakespeare as a substantive meaning judgment. A deemster (doomster) in the Isle of Man is a judge who decides controversies without process. Cf. Hall Caine's novel 'The Deemster.'

A WINTER NIGHT.

THE poet has taken as a motto for these verses a quotation from Shakespeare's 'King Lear.'

The old king, driven from kingship, home, and reason, by 'unfilial ingratitude' and premeditated heartlessness, is discovered on a storm-swept heath with only the miserable shelter of a hovel to protect him from the howling blast. Those sublime exclamations that Shakespeare puts into the mad Lear's mouth have, as a setting, the loyalty of Kent that, from its intensity, verges upon actual madness, the eerie babblings of the Fool, and the feigned madness of Edgar. The whole is a scene unique in literature as an embodiment of the terrible in tragedy.

Burns was at this time in a despondent state of mind; and such a subject would not be uncongenial to his mental condition. In 'Winter' he says:—

'The tempest's howl it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!'

In 'A Winter Night' there is the same melancholy grandeur, the same abandonment to despair, and the same indignation at unjust inequalities of honours, wealth, and power, that we find in 'Man was made to mourn,' 'The Lament,' 'Despondency,' and 'To Ruin.'

The poem bears unmistakable evidence that Burns at this time must have been closely studying Shakespeare. Besides the introductory motto, there is in the strophe beginning, 'Blow, blow, ye winds with heavier gust,' a most striking resemblance to the famous song of Amiens in 'As You Like It.'

' Blow, blow, thou winter wind ! thou art not so unkind
 As man's ingratitude :
 Thy tooth is not so keen, because thou art not seen,
 Although thy breath be rude !
 Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky ! thou dost not bite so nigh
 As benefits forgot :
 Though thou the waters warp, thy sting is not so sharp
 As friends remembered not ! '

The above mentioned passage of Burns is generally looked upon as merely an excellent paraphrase of these lines.

On 20th November, 1786—which was after his ' Kilmarnock ' publication—Burns sent this poem to John Ballantyne with the accompanying remark : ' Enclosed you have my first attempt at that irregular kind of measure in which many of our finest odes are wrote. How far I have succeeded I don't know, but I shall be happy to have your opinion on Friday first (24th Nov.), when I intend being in Ayr. '

The genius of Burns did not excel in this ' irregular kind of measure. ' The first four verses are, beyond comparison, the best work in the poem ; and they are purely Doric. There is an evident straining after effect, and a grandiloquence that is foreign to his best and natural muse, immediately our poet attempts what Henley assumes to be an imitation of the irregular strophes of Gray.

But, despite defects, there is abundance of sympathy and heart in the poem. Carlyle says of it : ' How touching is it, amid the gloom of personal misery that broods over and around him, that even amid the storm he thinks of " the ourie cattle, the silly sheep, and the wee helpless birdies ! " yes, the tenant of the mean, lowly hut has a heart of pity for all these. This is worth a whole volume of homilies on mercy ; for it is the voice of mercy itself. Burns lives in sympathy : his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being : nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. '

MOTTO.

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

Loop'd and window'd signifies full of holes and apertures. The allusion is to loop-holes, such as are to be found in ancient castles, and designed for the admission of light and air.

1. WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
Or whirling drift;

NOTES.

Biting:

Boreas: the north wind.

Fell: keen; fierce; merciless.

Doure: blowing hard; persistent; lasting long.

Sharp shivers: blows with icy breath.

Sharp: with piercing coldness.

Shivers: blows with a trembling or shaking motion, as if caused by extreme cold.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

See note on 'bitter-biting north' of 'To a Mountain Daisy.'

Lat. and Gr. 'boreas,' the north wind; Russ. 'borei'; a personification. In Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar' we have—

'The blust'ring Boreas did encroche';
and in Pope's 'Iliad,' II. line 1025—

'Boreas beats the hoarse-resounding shores.'

See note, stanza 11, line 6, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

Fr. 'dur'; Lat. 'durus,' hard.

As applied to human beings this quality is said to be a Scottish characteristic.

A.S. 'scaerfan,' to cut to pieces; having a keen edge.

O.E. 'chiveren,' 'cheveren'; allied to Dut. 'schetteren,' to chirp; Dan. 'skjalve,' to tremble, to quake. The origin is uncertain.

Note the sympathetic touch—as if Boreas was causing 'the leafless bow'r' to shiver with cold.

NOTES.

Bow'r: trees; bushes; thicket:—its exact meaning is a place covered with trees bent and entwined—a shady retreat of any kind.

Phœbus: poetic name for the sun.

Short-lived: it was the time of the short days and long nights, besides being a special time of clouds and darkness.

Glow'r: fixed look; stare; stare with wide-open eyes. It usually signifies the presence of anger or some such feeling.

Lift: the sky; horizon.

Dim-dark'ning . . . show'r: the thick-falling snow darkens the face of the sun still more.

Dim-dark'ning: obscuring in darkness. 'Dim' intensifies the idea of the darkness that caused Phœbus to look angry.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Icel. 'bur,' a separate apartment; A.S. 'bur,' a chamber; Welsh 'bwr,' an enclosure.

L. 'Phœbus'; Gr. 'Phoibos,' from 'phoibos,' pure; the sun; Apollo, the Sun-god, the Bright and Shining One. Apollo when driving the chariot of the Sun was called Phœbus. See 'Phœbe,' stanza 6, line 1.

Connected with 'glow.' The etymology is uncertain. Probably akin to the Icel. 'glod,' live coal; Dut. 'gloed,' hot coals; Old Dut. 'gloeren,' to squint, to stare. 'Gleg o' the glow'r' is the Scotch for sharp-sighted. Burns uses the word in the 'The Holy Fair.' In 'Death and Dr. Hornbook' we have—

'The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant Cumnock hills out-oure.'

Allan Ramsay uses it in 'The Gentle Shepherd': it is found also in Scott and other writers of the Doric.

A.S. 'hlfian,' to raise up; Low Ger. 'luften,' to raise into the lift or sky; O.E. 'luft,' the sky, the air; A.S. 'lyft,' the air. (Akin to loft, lofty). Burns in 'Willie brewed a peck o' maut,' refers to the moon as 'blinking in the lift so hie.' In Wilson's 'Noct. Ambr.' the line occurs—

'The sweet calm moon in the mid-night lift.'

Cf. also.

'Argyll in his rage then kindled sie a lowe
That it rose to the lift red and clearly,'
(The Bennie House o' Airlle.)

Dim: from 'dam,' in the sense of stopping. Icel. 'dimmer,' dark; Sw. 'dimba,' a fog, haze.

NOTES.

Flaky: feathery; like a shower of downy feathers.

Show'r: usually applied to a fall of rain or snow of short duration.

Whirling drift: the snow being driven in a rotatory manner by the stormy wind.

Whirling: moving rapidly in a circle,—usual in a vehement but short-lived storm.

Drift: usually means snow driven by the wind and collected in a heap. Here it means the state of matters that goes to form drifts.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Icel. 'flak,' a plank, a slice; Dan. 'flage,' snowflake. Cf. 'flag.'

'A flaky weight of winter's purest snows.'
(Wordsworth.)

Icel. 'skur,' a shower of rain; Ger. 'Schauer,' a shivering fit, a shower.

From Eng. 'whir'; Sw. 'hwirfwel.' whirlpool.

A.S. 'drifan,' to move under the influence of an overpowering force; Icel. 'drif,' a tempest.

'Who can read these lines without beholding the dun and labouring gloom with all its adjuncts before his eyes? The few circumstances exhibited are marked with a strength, and preferred with a judgment which rouse the activity of the mind, and introduce whatever association can supply.'—Professor Walker.

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

NOTES.

Ae: Scotch for 'one.'

Night:

Storm:

Steeples: towers; spires.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'niht'; Lat. 'nox,' night.

Dut. 'storm,' a rattling; Icel. 'stormr,' a tempest, a sedition.

A.S. 'stypel,' a tower; Low. Ger. 'stipel,' a prop, support; O.E. 'stepel.' Akin to 'steep.'

NOTES.

Rocked :

Poor labour : poor labourers ; those who had toiled all day : sleep to them was 'sweet.'

Sweet : sweetly ; refreshingly.

Sleep :

Locked :

Burns : brooks ; small running streams.

Wreaths : drifts.

Up-choked : choked-up ; stopped-up ; the passage of the water was stopped just as the passage of the breath would be by pressure or by some obstacle.

Wild-eddying : sweeping with a rush and a swirl into unaccustomed places ; rushing or whirling round contrary to the main stream.

Swirl : whirling motion.

Mining : mined ; worked or worn out by the current.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Dan. 'rokke' ; Norm. 'rugga,' to rock, shake ; Old Fr. 'rocquer,' to rock a child ; Ger. 'Ruck,' a shake or toss.

Refer to 'the give' of high stalks that is necessary for their safety in a storm of wind.

Fr. 'labour' ; Lat. 'labor.'

A.S. 'swet' ; Lat. 'suavis.'

O.E. 'slepen' ; A.S. 'slaepan.' Akin to Goth. 'slepan' ; Ger. 'schlafen' ; Dut. 'slaepen,' to sleep,—from old H. Ger. 'slaf,' to lie relaxed, to be slothful ; Icel. 'slapa,' to hang loose.

Parallel passages are numerous in literature. See 'Macbeth,' Act II. Scene 2, lines 37-40.

Icel. 'loka,' a bolt,—'loka,' to shut ; A.S. 'loc,' a place shut in.

Goth. 'brunna' ; Icel. 'brunnr' ; Ger. 'Born,' a well, spring ; Gael. 'burn,' water. The first meaning of the Teutonic word is spring, fountain. The word 'burn' was used to render the Latin 'fons' of the Vulgate.

Dan. 'wride,' to wring or twist ; connected with 'writhe' and 'wry.' See verse 1, line 6.

Icel. 'kok,' the throat ; O.E. 'cheken,' 'choken.' Cf. A.S. 'accocian,' to suffocate. 'Up' as a prefix to the verb 'to choke' is uncommon.

Wild : allied to Scot. 'will,' confused, bewildered.

Eddying : Icel. 'yda,' a whirlpool,—from 'yda,' to boil ; A.S. 'yth,' a wave, flood.

Akin to Norm. 'svirla,' frequentative of 'sverra,' to whirl ; Dan. 'svirre' ; Ger. 'schwirren,' to whizz, buzz.

Fr. 'miner,' to dig under ground ; Low Lat. 'minare,' to lead or dig a mine ; Gael. 'meinn' ; W. 'mynn,' ore, mine. 'Mining outlet' is uncommon ; the outlet is the result of the mining, not the cause.

NOTES.

Outlet: opening in the drift caused by the action of the running water.

Bocked: belched out; came out with a rush, as if vomiting; came out intermittently; flowed in gulps.

Headlong: speedily; precipitately; lit. head-foremost.

Hurl: hurtle; are hurled; throw themselves with impetuosity; rush with violence.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

‘Out’ and ‘let.’

‘Let’; A.S. ‘letan,’ to let, suffer.

Connected with ‘belch.’ Perhaps from A.S. ‘bealcan’ (Lat. ‘eructare’).

O.E. ‘hurlen’; probably contracted from ‘hurtlen,’ to hurtle; allied to ‘whirl’; Sw. ‘hurra,’ to whirl; Dan. ‘hurra,’ to hum, to buzz.

Compare this description with that in Thomson’s ‘Winter’—

‘Wide o’er the brim with many a torrent
swell’d,
And the mixed ruin of its banks o’erspread,
At last the housed-up river pours along:
Restless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,
Tumbling o’er rocks abrupt and sounding
far;
Then o’er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent: till again constrained,
Between two meeting hills it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o’erhang the turbid
stream:
There gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders
through.’

3. List’ning the doors and winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide the brattle
O’ winter war;
And thro’ the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle
Beneath a scaur.

NOTES.

List’ning: listening to; hearkening to; hearing attentively or sympathetically.

Doors:

Winnocks: little windows; windows.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. ‘hlystan,’ to listen; Dut. ‘luysteren,’ to whisper, to listen.

Gr. ‘thura’; Ger. ‘Thür’ and ‘Thor’; Sans. ‘dvar,’ a door.

Icel. ‘vindauga’; Dan. ‘vindue’; literally ‘wind-eye.’ Originally an opening in a building to admit air.

NOTES.

Thought . . . on :

Rattle :

Thought me : thought within myself; remembered.

Oorie (other forms, *owrie*, *oorie*): chill; shivering; drooping from exposure.

Cattle :

Silly : weak; helpless; simple; not able to take care of themselves. 'Silly' is here a term of endearment or compassion.

Sheep :

Bide : bear; suffer; endure.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

'Oock' is diminutive. There is an old humorous song, 'The wee wifuckie' (by Dr. Alexander Geddes),—who was too fond of 'a wee bit drappuckie,'—that is full of such diminutives.

Cf. 'And when he thought *thereon* he wept.' Mark xiv. 72.

Ger. 'rasseln'; Dut. 'rateln,' to make a succession of sounds representing the syllable 'ras' or 'rat.'

Onomatopoeic word.

Thought : O.E. 'thinken,' properly 'to seem,'—from A.S. 'thyncean,' but confounded with O.E. 'thenken,' to think. Impersonal in form.

Akin to 'eerie,' 'eery,' from A.S. 'earh,' timid. 'Oorie-like' is having the appearance of being much fatigued. 'Ooriness' signifies a tendency to shivering: 'oorisom,' timorous. Here, probably, it signifies a suffering from both cold and fear. Currie says that 'owrie cattle' are those that are un-housed all winter—out-lying.

Mid. Lat. 'catalla,' chattels, goods in general; especially applied to cattle as being the principal wealth in an early state of society. O. Fr. 'catel,' goods, movables.

A.S. 'saelig'. Ger. 'selig,' blessed, happy, holy. It originally meant 'holy.'—Cf. 'All the *silly* souls in heaven.' It is, therefore, a degenerated word. Too much piety results in loss of practical power and renders a person *silly*, *i. e.*, enfeebled, weak. See 'silly wa's' in 'To a Mouse.'

O.E. 'shep,' 'scheep'; A.S. 'scep'; Ger. 'Schaf.' A ruminant of the genus 'ovis': there are many varieties or breeds of the domestic sheep (ovis aries).

A.S. 'bidan,' to wait, to remain; O.E. 'biden.' 'Bide' signifies enduring for a length of time. In 'Duncan Gray' we have

'Slighted love is sair to *bide*.'

See the introductory motto for the same word.

NOTES.

Brattle o' winter war: noise and violence of the storm; strife and din of the elements.

Winter:

War:

Drift:

Deep-lairing: refers to the deep snow-wreaths as if they had been heaped layer upon layer: the drifts would be in the hollow places, hence the idea of a *lying* place or bed.

Sprattle: sprawl; scramble; flounder about in fear and impatience.

Scaur: scar; overhanging rock, or cleft; a face of rock or cliff. Properly a bare and broken place on the side of a hill: it may mean a precipitous bank of earth overhanging a river.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Brattle: connected with 'brawl.' O.E. 'braulen,' to quarrel, boast; probably connected also with 'break' and 'rattle'; a smart, rattling sound, especially of something breaking or bursting. In Dunbar's 'Turnament' the line occurs, 'His harness brak and maid ane *brattill*.' Jamieson says that it is a noise like that made by the feet of prancing horses. In 'To a Mouse' it has the significance of a short race,—a hurry-skurry.

See note v. 5, l. 2, 'To a Mouse.'

Fr. 'guerre'; It. 'guerra,' from 'gara,' emulation, strife; Dut. 'werre,' strife, war; Ger. 'wirren,' to embroil.

See note, v. 1, l. 6 above.

Lair: O.E. 'leir,' akin to Dut. 'leger,' a bed; Dan. 'leir,' a camp; Dut. 'leggen,' to lie; A.S. 'leger,' a lying.

If 'deep-lairing' refers not to the 'drift' but to the 'silly sheep,' its meaning is that of wading or sinking deep into the snow.

O.E. 'spraulen'; Sw. 'sprattla,' to sprawl, to flounder.

Norse origin; from 'skera,' to shear or cut asunder: thus Scarborough, The Skerries, Skerryvore. Cf. Gael. and Erse 'sgeir,' a cliff, and A.S. 'sciran,' to divide: so we have the kindred words 'shire' (a division of the kingdom), 'shore' (that which divides sea from land). Cf. 'Shear,' 'plough-share.' Fr. 'escarre,' a scar.

4. Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,

What comes o' thee?

Whare wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

NOTES.

Ilk (another form is 'ilka') :
each, every.

Happing : hopping.

Thing : this term brings out
the utter helplessness of the
little birds as play-things of
the storm.

Merry months : the poets are
fond of thinking of spring as
the merry time.

Spring :

Delighted me to hear, etc. :

Delighted :

Hear :

Sing :

Comes : becomes; happens to.

Cower : crouch for warmth;
hide (in a corner) from the
blast.

Chattering : shivering; quiver-
ing with cold.

Close :

E'e :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

A.S. 'aelc,' each, 'ilea'; O.E.
'ilke,' the same.

It is archaic. In Scotland it is used
as an addition to a gentleman's name
when the name of his estate is the same
as his surname—*i.e.*, Grant of that Ilk.

A.S. 'hoppa,' to hop, to frisk.

Icel. and A.S. 'thing.'

Months : A.S. 'monath'—from
'mona,' the moon; Lat. 'mensis':
the period of the moon's revolution.

Ger. 'sprengen,' to burst open;
Nature's opening time. According to the
calendar, spring comprises February,
March, and April. In middle latitudes
north of the Equator the vernal season
usually comprehends March, April, and
May. Spring of an astronomical year
begins with the vernal equinox, about
21st March, and ends with the summer
solstice, about 21st June.

Impersonal form. Cf. Lat. 'Te-
pugnare iuvat.'

O.E. 'deliten'; Fr. 'delecter'—from
Lat. 'delectare,' to entice away, to
delight; Lat. 'deliciae,' pleasure,
delight.

A.S. 'hyran,' to hear.

A.S. 'singan,' to sing; Goth. 'sigg-
van,' to sing, to read aloud; Gael
'scinn,' to ring as a bell.

W. 'currian,' to squat; Gael. 'curr,'
a corner. See note on verse 1, line 1,
'To a Mouse.'

Prov. Eng. 'chitter,' to twitter, then
to shiver. It is a parallel form to
'chatter' (so drop, drip; chop, chip,
etc.). Scotch boys after bathing in a
river or loch use a 'chattering-bite,' *i.e.*,
a crust of bread to prevent shivering.

Fr. 'clos,' closed; Lat. 'clausus,'
shut up.

A.S. 'eage.'

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

NOTES.

Murd'ring: of murder; killing, as birds or beasts of prey. Not a secret slaying, and against the moral law, as murder signifies in its common usage, but of necessity, and according to Nature.

Errands: wanderings in search of food (or prey).

Toil'd: spent; fatigued.

Lone: alone; lonely; solitary in your quest for food.

Savage: because the abode of creatures that live by killing.

Home: nest; hole; lair.

Exil'd: forced to wander for a time, and now storm-stayed; not driven *from* home, but kept away from it.

Blood-stained: showing that the fox or the hawk had been raiding the hen-coop; marked with the blood of their victims.

Roost: the pole or perch on which a bird or barn-fowl settles itself to rest. Perhaps it means here the hen-house or hen-coop.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

There is an extra touch of sympathy here. After commiserating the lot of the innocent and helpless creatures that are compelled to 'bide this pityless storm,' he compels us even to forgive the cruel beasts and birds of prey whom the blast has overtaken on their errands of death and destruction.

See note verse 1, line 6, 'To a Mouse.' Note the Personification.

A.S. 'aerend'; Lat. 'errare,' to wander.

See note, stanza 2, l. 5, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

Alone = all + one; by itself; singly.

Fr. 'sauvage,' savage, wild; Lat. 'silvaticus,' living in the wood,—from 'silva, a wood. Personification.

See note on 'house an' hald' in 'To a Mouse.'

Fr. 'exil,' banishment; L. 'exsilium,' banishment,—from 'exsul,' an exile.

Blood: A.S. 'blod'; Dut. 'bloed'; Ger. 'Blut.'

Stain'd: O.F. 'desteindre,' to deaden or take away the colour of; Lat. 'tingere,' to dye.

A.S. 'hrost'; Dut. 'roest,' the seat or perch of a bird, so called from the rod or perch. 'To 'roost upon the bauk' is to settle on the cross beams that support and unite the rafters. Cf.—

'There's twa fat hens upon the bauk.'
 ('Nae Luck about the Hoose.')

NOTES.

Sheep-cote: sheep-fold or -pen; usually a stone enclosure built to shield the flock from the blast.

Spoil'd: harried; raided; plundered.

My heart forgets: forgives; does not condemn overmuch for such offences.

Pityless: pitilessly; mercilessly; heartlessly; with no compassion for your sore plight.

Tempest:

Sore: sorely; fiercely; in a way to cause pain and harm.

Beats: strikes incessantly; keeps battering.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Sheep: see former note, v. 3, l. 3 above.

Cote: A.S. 'cote,' a mud cottage; W. 'cwt,' a hovel. So dovecot. See note to 'cottage,' 'cotter,' and 'cot,' in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

Fr. 'spolier,' to plunder; Lat. 'spoliare,' to deprive of covering,—from 'spolium,' the spoil of an animal, *i.e.*, its skin stripped off.

Heart: see note on stanza 13, l. 2, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

Forgets: A.S. 'forgitan,' 'for' and 'get'; to let go from the memory.

Fr. 'pitié'—from Lat. 'pietas,' pity, —from 'pius,' devout, pious. Compare 'pityless storm' of motto.

Lat. 'tempestatas,' weather, a storm,—from 'tempus,' time; Old Fr. 'tempeste'; Fr. 'tempête.'

Icel. 'sar,' wound, sore; Scot. 'sair,' a sore.

A.S. 'beatan'; Fr. 'battre,' to beat, strike.

6. Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
 Dark-muffl'd view'd the dreary plain;
 Dull crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
 Rise in my soul,
 When on my ear this plaintive strain,
 Slow, solemn, stole:—
7. 'Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
 And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
 Descend ye chilly, smothering snows!
 Not all your rage, as now united shows
 More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
 Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
 Than Heaven-illumin'd man on brother man
 bestows!

NOTES.

Phœbe the moon.

Mid-night :

Reign : the moon is poetically called 'queen of the night.'

Dark-muff'd : obscured ; enveloped in storm-clouds.

View'd : looked down upon.

Dreary-plain : level stretch of storm-swept country.

Dreary : dreary-looking ; leafless ; desolate.

Still : silently ; quietly.

Crowding : thronging ; pressing one after another (in no regular order).

Thoughts :

Pensive : sad ; melancholy ; literally, thoughtful.

Train : succession (of thoughts).

Rose :

Soul : mind ; the thinking, spiritual, immortal part of man.

Ear :

Plaintive : sad ; expressing deep sorrow.

Strain : song ; poem whose pervading note (or burden) is 'plaintive.'

Slow, solemn : in a stately way ; in a grave, serious style.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The name of Diana in her capacity as 'goddess of the moon,' and so applied to the moon itself. Both names are from the Greek, meaning bright. Cf. 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' I. i. 209.

Mid : Lat. 'medius' ; Gr. 'mesos' ; Ger. 'Mittel' ; Icel. 'midill,' from 'midla,' to divide ; the dividing time ; at an equal distance from the extremes.

Night : A.S. 'niht' ; Goth. 'Nahts' ; Lat. 'nox.'
Lat. 'regnare,'—from 'rex,' a king.

Dark : A.S. 'deorc' ; Gael. 'dorch.'

Muff'd : Dan. 'muffe' ; Ger. 'Muff' ; Dut. 'moffel,' a winter glove, sleeve.
Fr. 'vue,' sight, view,—from Lat. 'visum,' to see.

Plain : Fr. 'plain,' level,—from Lat. 'planus,' even, level.

Dut. 'stil,' calm ; connected with 'st,' the sound commanding silence.

W. 'crwd,' a round lump : connected with 'curd.'

A.S. 'theaht' or 'thot,'—from 'then-can,' to think.

Lat. 'penso,' I weigh ; Fr. 'pensif.' Cf. Shakespeare's 'pale cast of thought' (Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 1. l. 85).

Fr. 'train,'—from Lat. 'trahere,' to draw.

A.S. 'arisan,' to rise up.

A.S. 'saw' ; Ger. 'Seele,' soul ; Gael. 'saoil,' to think.

Lat. 'auris' ; Icel. 'eyra' ; Ger. 'Ohr.'

See note to l. 4, stan. 13, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

O. Fr. 'estraindre,' to strain,—from Lat. 'stringere,' to squeeze, wring.

Lat. 'solemnis,' religious, solemn.

NOTES.

Stole: came gradually, as if in stealth.

Blow, blow, etc.:

Gust: sudden or violent blast.

Freeze and frost:

Bitter-biting:

Descend:

Chilly: chilling; cold; literally, rather cold.

Smothering: covering up all vegetable life, etc.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Goth. 'stilan'; Icel. 'stela,' to steal. See Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice,' Act V. Sc. i. lines 55-6, where 'creep' is used in the same sense—

'Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears.'

Now dark and melancholy thoughts crowd into the Poet's mind, and render it as storm-tossed as the 'dreary plain' that the 'muff'd' moon is obscurely viewing. In this mental condition he hears a voice utter a series of mournful and gloomy reflections. The cruelty, ruthlessness, and heartlessness of the elements are not only equalled but surpassed in their intensity by 'man's inhumanity to man.'

The key of the remainder of the poem is pitched high; but it cannot be considered a successful effort, being 'unequal in execution' and 'defective in versification.' The easy and masterful touches of the Doric portion of the poem are strikingly wanting in what follows, and one cannot help wishing that the poet had set his native muse to *the whole* task, instead of experimenting in unfamiliar fields.

See Amiens' song in 'As You Like It,' Act IV. Sc. vii. lines 173-189.

Icel. 'gustr,' a cold blast of wind.

Fr. 'frisson,' a shivering; Dut. 'vriesen,' to tremble with cold. Low Ger. 'vresen,' to be cold.

See 'bitter-biting North' in 'To a Daisy.' It is a favourite expression with the Poet.

Lat. 'descendere,'—from 'de' and 'scando,' I climb.

A.S. 'cyle,' cool; L. Ger. 'killen,' to smart; moderately cold. It occurs often in poetry. See 'Oft in the *stilly* night' for a parallel expression.

A.S. 'snorian,' to smother; Gael. 'smod,' dirt dust; Dut. 'smodden,' to dabble, to dirty; 'smooren,' to smoke, suffocate. Compare 'Out of the smoke into the *smother*.' Cf. also—

NOTES.

Not all your rage: the combined efforts of wind, frost, and snow, are not so harmful as man's ingratitude to his fellow-man.

United:

Hard: unfeeling; heartless.

Unkindness: harsh treatment; want of goodwill.

Unrelenting: merciless; without compassion.

Vengeful: spiteful; vindictive.

Malice: ill-will; disposition to injure.

Unrepenting: remorseless; without regret for injury done.

Heaven-illumin'd: heaven-enlightened; adorned with reason and all the Christian graces.

Brother-man: see 'fellow-mortal' in 'To a Mouse,' etc.

Bestows: gives; metes out.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

'And poor Lady Margaret and a' her weans
Were *smooed* in the dark reek o' Airlie.
(*'The Bonnie House o' Airlie.'*)

and

'Swelling pity *smooed* her wrath.'
(*'Duncan Gray.'*)

Lat. 'unitum,' to join together; Fr. 'unir.'

Kind: A.S. 'cyn'; Icel. 'kyn,' race, family; Dut. and Ger. 'Kind,' a child; A.S. 'cennan,' to beget.

Lat. 'relentescō,' I grow slack again—*from 're' and 'lentesco,' I become pliant.*

Lat. 'vindicare,' to avenge; Fr. 'venger.'

Lat. 'malitia,' ill-will,—*from 'malus,' evil; Fr. 'malice.'*

Fr. 'repentir,' to repent,—*from Lat. 're' and 'poenitere,' to cause to repent.*

Lat. 'illuminatum,' to light up,—*from 'il,' in or on, and 'lumen,' light. The expression is used here with a touch of bitterness.*

Brother: Sans. 'bhrater'; Gael. 'brathair'; Lat. 'frater.'

Man: A.S. and Goth. 'man'; Sans. 'man,' to think.

A.S. 'be' and 'stow,' a place.

8. ' See stern Oppression's iron grip,
 Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
 Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
 Woe, Want, and Murder o'er the land !
 Ev'n in the peaceful rural vale,
 Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
 How pamper'd Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
 The parasite empoisoning her ear,
 With all servile wretches in the rear,
 Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide ;
 And eyes the simple, rustic hind,
 Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show—
 A creature of another kind ;
 Some coarser substance unrefin'd—
 Plac'd for her lordly use, thus far, thus vile, below !

NOTES.

Stern : treating with unjust rigour ; tyrannical.

Oppression's : the state of being unjustly or unreasonably burdened ; the state of being cruelly imposed upon.

Iron grip : heartless and high-handed treatment.

Mad : unreasonable ; unrestrained ; rash.

Ambition's : a state of being eager for fame, power, wealth, or notoriety of some kind.

Gory : covered or clotted with blood.

Hand :

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Scot. 'stourne,' stern ; Icel. 'stura,' sorrow ; Norm. 'sturen,' sorrowful.

Lat. 'oppressio,' a pressing down ; from 'opprimo' ('ob' and 'premo') to press against, to press down.

Personification is used throughout.

Iron : Goth. 'eisarn' ; Dut. 'isern' ; Gael. 'iarun.'

Grip : Dut. 'grijpen' ; Ger. 'greiffen,' to seize ; Fr. 'griffe.'

O.E. 'mad,' to rave.

Lat. 'ambitio,' seeking eagerly for a favour,—from 'ambo,' around, and 'ire,' to go. Cf. Shakespeare's 'vaulting ambition' in 'Macbeth,' Act I. Scene vii. line 27.

A.S. 'ger,' wet filth, blood ; Norm. 'ger,' wet mud. See 'Macbeth,'—'gory locks'—Act III. Sc. iv. line 50.

A.S. 'hand,' probably as an instrument for seizing ; Lat. 'prehendere,' to seize. Cf. Napoleon, etc.

NOTES.	ADDITIONAL NOTES.
Blood-hounds : hunters after human blood; scenting their victims and tracking them down.	Hounds : Ger. 'Hund'; Gr. 'kuon.'
Slip : a leash or string which slips or becomes loose by relaxing the hand.	A.S. 'slipan,' to slip; Low Ger. 'slippen,' to slip away; Icel. 'sleppa,' to get loose from.
Want : poverty; destitution.	A.S. 'wan,' to be deficient in; Icel. 'vanta,' to be wanting or deficient in.
Peace :	A.S. 'pais'; Fr. 'paix'; Lat. 'pax.'
Rural :	Fr. 'rural,'—from Lat. 'ruralis,' belonging to the country,—from 'rus,' the country.
Vale : poetic form for 'valley.'	Lat. 'vallis'; Fr. 'vallée.'
Truth :	Dan. 'troe'; Ger. 'trauen,' to believe or confide in.
Weeping :	A.S. 'wepen,' to lament, to shed tears,—from 'wop,' a cry.
Mournful :	Fr. 'morne,' dull; Old H. Ger. 'mornen,' to grieve.
Tells and tale :	Icel. 'tala,' to speak; Dut. 'taele,' speech, 'teelen,' to count.
Pamper'd : surfeited; over-indulged.	Bav. 'pampfen,' to stuff; Low Ger. 'pampen,' 'slampampen,' to live luxuriously.
Luxury : an excessive indulgence in costly food, dress, furniture, or anything expensive, to gratify appetite or taste.	Lat. 'luxuria,' luxury, excess,—from 'luxus'; Fr. 'luxure.'
Flatt'ry : false praise.	Icel. 'pladra,' to wag the tail as a dog; Ger. 'flattern,' to flutter; Fr. 'flatter,' to pat, caress.
Her :	Lat. 'luxuria,' is feminine.
Parasite : hanger-on; the rich have always fawning flatterers who cling to them for what they can get of food or favour.	Gr. 'parasitos,' one who eats at another's expense at table,—from 'para,' beside, and 'siteo,' I nourish; Lat. 'parasitus,'; Fr. 'parasite.' One who frequents the table of the rich, and earns his welcome by flattery. See Shakespeare's 'Timon of Athens,' Act III. Sc. vi. lines 87-96. Refer also to parasites in the vegetable world.
Empoisoning : pouring harmful words into the ear like liquid poison; corrupting.	Fr. 'poison'; Lat. 'potio.'
Servile : menial; fawning; cringing; meanly obsequious.	Lat. 'servilis,' slavish,—from 'servus,' a servant.
Wretches : worthless, degraded creatures.	A.S. 'wraecca,' an exile, a miserable man. See same word in motto.

NOTES.

In the rear: in the train of; mean toadies or sycophants.

Proud Property: looks proudly on her broad acres.

Extended:

Rustic:

Hind: peasant; a farm-labourer is still called a 'hind' in many parts of Scotland.

The glitt'ring show: gaudy display or parade of riches.

Creature: a term of contempt and pity.

Kind: of an inferior race; of a lower species.

Coarser: more common; rough; rude.

Substance: material; creation.

Unrefin'd: not free from dross; of a baser metal; vulgar; barbarous.

Lordly; haughty; proud; tyrannical.

Vile: base; worthless; mean.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Rear: O. Fr. 'riere,'—from Lat. 'retro,' backwards.

Property: Fr. 'propriété,' propriety,—from Lat. 'proprietas,' peculiar nature, quality,—from 'proprius,' one's own.

Lat. 'extendo,' I spread out,—from 'ex,' and 'tendo.'

See note, stanza 20, line 3, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

A.S. 'hind,' a domestic; Icel. 'hion,' a family; servant, husbandman.

Lat. 'creatum,' to create; allied to Sans. 'kri,' to make; Fr 'créer.'

Probably a corrupted form of 'course,'—from the phrase 'of course,' meaning according to the regular order of things, and hence, homely, common, rude.

Lat. 'substantia,' that of which a thing consists,—from 'sub,' and 'sto.'

Lat. 're,' and 'fine'; Fr. 'raffiner.'

A.S. 'hlaford'; Icel. 'lavardr,' a master, lord; Scot. 'laird,' a land-owner, a proprietor.

L. 'vilis,' of small price or value; Fr. 'vil.'

10. 'Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
 Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
 Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
 Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
 Ill-satisfy'd, keen Nature's clam'rous call,
 Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
 While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
 Chill, o'er his slumbers, piles the drily heap!
 Think on the Dungeon's grim confine,
 Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
 Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
 But shall thy legal rage pursue
 The wretch, already crushèd low
 By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
 Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!

NOTES.

Wants: desires; longings.

Yourselves: ye yourselves;
 the compound pers. pron.
 emphasises the fact that such
 wants originate in self.

Create:

Moment:

Fate:

Friends: contrast with 'brother'
 in the last two lines of
 this stanza.

Fortune:

Disown: refuse to acknowledge
 as related to themselves.

Ill: badly; insufficiently.

Satisfy'd: provided for; not
 satisfied (content) in mind,
 but the *condition* of being
 satisfactory.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Not the want that feels the pinch of
 poverty.

See note on 'creature' above.

Lat. 'momentum,' movement, a very
 small portion of anything,—from Lat.
 'moveo,' I move; F. 'moment.'

See note, v. 9, l. 1, 'To a Mouse.'

A.S. 'freond,'—from 'freon,' to free,
 to love; Goth. 'frijon,' to love. Prov.
 xviii. v. 24, speaks of a 'friend that
 sticketh closer than a brother.'

Lat. 'fortuna,' luck, prosperity,—
 from 'fors,' chance; Fr. 'fortune.'

Lat. 'dis,' not; A.S. 'agen'; Scot.
 'awin,' what is possessed by anyone;
 Goth. 'aigan,' to possess.

Lat. 'satisfacere,' to satisfy,—from
 'satis,' and 'facio.' Insufficiently pro-
 tected from the inclemency of such a
 wild and stormy night.

NOTES.

Keen :**Clam'rous :** making a great outcry.**Clam'rous call :** importunate demand.**Straw :****Ragged :** in ruins; in disrepair; not water-tight or weather-proof.**Roof :****Chinky :** gaping; cracked; full of long, small gaps.**Chill :** causing a sensation of cold or shivering.**Slumbers :** slumbering body. Properly signifies a gentle or light sleep.**Piled :****Drifty :** for drifted or drifting. This usage is uncommon.**Heap :****Dungeon's :** gloomy prison. The lowest part of the strong tower of a fortress was always utilised as a prison. Refer to verse 9 of Longfellow's 'The Children's Home,' as a playful and poetic use of the word.**Grim :** gloomy; dismal. It radically includes the idea of anger or wrath.**Confine :** confinement; place of confinement; prison-house.**Guilt :** guilty prisoners; criminals.**Misfortune :****Poor :** helpless; pitiable inmates of a prison whom the force of adverse circumstances, rather than their own misdeeds, has placed there.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

See note to v. 4, l. 6, 'To a Mouse.'
Fr. 'clameur.' L. 'clamor,' a loud noise,—from 'clamo,' I cry out.

A.S. 'streow,' what is strewed to lie on; litter; usually a bed for horses or cattle.

A.S. 'hracod,' torn; Sw. 'ragg,' long coarse hair, as of a goat; Lith. 'ragas,' a horn, tooth of a wheel; Gael. 'rag,' a rag. Cf. 'loop'd and window'd raggedness' in motto.

A.S. 'hrof'; Old Dut. 'roef.'

O.E. 'chine'; A.S. 'cinan,' to gape. Not a common word. Dryden uses it.

A.S. 'cyle,' cool; Low Ger. 'killen,' to smart.

Ger. 'schlummern'; Dut. 'sluim-eren'; North Eng. 'sloom,' or 'slaum,' a gentle sleep or slumber.

Lat. 'pila,' a ball or globe of anything; Fr. 'pile.'

See note, verse 3 above.

A.S. 'heap'; Ger. 'Hauf'; Icel. 'hopr,' a crowd, heap. Compare lines 7 and 8 with Campbell's lines in 'Ode to Winter':—

'To shuddering want's unmantled bed

Thy horror-breathing agues cease to lend.'

Fr. 'donjon,' a large tower of a fortress,—from Mid. Lat. 'dominio,' 'domgio,' 'dongeo,' a tower, a work of defence,—from 'domus,' a house. Originally it meant the largest and strongest tower of a fortress to which the garrison could withdraw for safety.

Ger. 'Grimm,' fury, wrath; Dut. 'grim'; Ger. 'grimmig,' crabbed or enraged.

Lat. 'confinis,' bordering on,—from 'con,' and 'finis,' a boundary or limit.

See note to 'guilty,' stanza 15, line 2, 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

See note on 'fortune' above.

Lat. 'pauper'; Fr. 'pauvre.'

NOTES.

Pine: languish; wait in grief or torture.

Erring: wayward; sinful.

Relenting view: -

Legal: lawfully just; right in the eye of the law, though not from the standpoint of brotherhood.

Rage: resentment; persecution.

Pursue: persecute; hound to a felon's doom.

Undeserved blow: 'fortune has been unkind to them, and why should you continue the cruel treatment?' Suffering innocence is a common theme with our Poet.

Affliction's sons: those stricken with distress or misfortune.

Brothers in distress: there is a brotherhood even in distress,—a kindly and sympathetic feeling arising from their common lot.

Relieve: to raise up; to lighten the hard lot.

Exquisite: excellent; exceedingly fine; perfect.

Bliss:

How exquisite the bliss: how heavenly the joy.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Dut. 'pijne,' pain, ache; 'pijnen,' to torture; Ger. 'Pein,' torture. Akin to 'pain.'

See note on 'errands' above.

In these lines we have a strong appeal for pity and sympathy on behalf of the poor wretches who, by circumstance, or, it may be, by wrong-doing, are separated by the dreary walls of a prison from the ordinary comforts, companionships, or sympathies of life, on such a night of storms.

Lat. 'legalis,'—from 'lex,' law; Fr. 'légal.'

Fr. from L. 'rabies,'—from 'rabere,' to rave. So 'rave.'

Fr. 'poursuivre,'—from L. 'persequi,' to follow up.

Campbell expresses much the same idea thus—

'Alas! ev'n your unhallow'd breath
May spare the victim fallen low;
But man will ask no truce to death,—
No bounds to human woe.'
(*Ode to Winter.*)

L. 'ad,' and 'fictus,' a striking; stricken with pain of body or mind.

Brothers: See note, stanza 7, line 7, above.

Distress: Mid. Lat. 'districtio,' the judicial authority of exacting a fine or pledge; the pledge or fine exacted, and subsequently termed a *distress*.

Fr. 'relief,'—from Lat. 'relevare,' to lighten, to raise or lift up,—from 're,' and 'levo,' I make light.

Lat. 'exquisitus,' carefully sought out, excellent,—from 'ex,' out of, and 'quaesitum,' to seek or search for.

A.S. 'blis,' joy; happiness in a very high degree. 'Blithe,' 'blithesome,' are kindred words.

'And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is.'
—Milton.

'And from her (Virtue's) own she learned to melt at other's woe.'
(Gray, 'Hymn to Adversity.')

11. I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw,
 And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crow.
12. But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
 Thro' all His works abroad,
 The heart benevolent and kind
 The most resembles God.

NOTES.

Chanticleer: the cock.

Pouthery: powdery; resembling powder in its dust-like fineness. Cf. 'flaky,' 'feathery,' etc., above.

Hail'd: greeted familiarly.

Cheer: shout of joy.

Cottage-rousing: awakening the cottagers: raising from sleep with his 'shrill clarion' (Gray's 'Elegy').

Crow: crow; call.

Deep: deeply.

Impress'd: weighed upon; stamped upon; fixed deeply or indelibly.

Abroad:

Benevolent: wishing well to all; desiring to do good.

Resembles:

The most resembles God:

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

'Chant' and 'clear'; Lat. 'canticularius,' a singer or chanter; so a cock, from the loudness and clearness of his tones.

Powder: F. 'poudre,'—from Lat. 'pulvis,' dust.

Low Ger. 'anhalen,' to call to one; Dut. 'halen,' to send for. Connected with A.S. 'hal,' meaningsound, healthy.

See note on verse 3, line 3, 'To a Mountain Daisy.'

Cottage: see note to 'cote,' v. 5 above.

Rousing: Low Ger. 'ruse,' noise; Ger. 'rauschen,' to rustle. Cf. 'a rousing fire.'

Ger. 'krähen,' to crow; L. 'erocire'; Fr. 'croasser'; Gr. 'krozein,' to croak. Onomatopoeitic: an imitation of the cry of different birds.

Adj. used adverbially. See former notes.

Lat. 'impressum,' to form or make by pressing,—from 'im,' in or on, and 'pressum,' to press.

A.S. 'a,' on, and 'broad'; 'brad,' wide.

Lat. 'bene,' well; 'volo,' I wish.

Lat. 're,' again, and 'simulari,' to make like,—from 'similis,' like; Fr. 'sembler,' to seem; 'rassembler,' to be like.

'And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice.'

Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice.'

Act IV. Sc. 1, lines 13-14.

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