



T O

W. S * * * * N, OCHILTREE.

May——1785.

I Gat your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun fay't, I wad be filly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
Your flatterin strain.

But I'fe believe ye kindly meant it,
I fud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, fidelins sklented,
On my poor Musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My fenses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a *hope* to speel,
Wi' *Allan*, or wi' *Gilbertfield*,
The braes o' fame;
Or *Ferguson*, the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

(O *Ferguson!* thy glorious *parts*,
Ill-suited *law's* dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstone hearts,
Ye Enbrugh Gentry!
The tythe o' what ye waste at *cartes*
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

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

Auld COILA, now, may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten *Bardies* o' her ain,
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Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-fung praise.

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

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

Th' *Illissus*, *Tiber*, *Thames* an' *Seine*,
Glide fweet in monie a tunefu' line;
But *Willie* fet your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,

We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine

Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld COILA'S plains an' fells,

Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,

Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,

Where glorious WALLACE

Aft bure the gree, as story tells,

Frae Suthron billies,

At WALLACE' name, what Scottish blood,

But boils up in a spring-tide flood!

Oft have our fearless fathers strode

By WALLACE' fide,

Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,

Or glorious dy'd!

O sweet are COILA'S haughs an' woods,

When lintwhites chant amang the buds,

And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,

Their loves enjoy,

While thro' the braes the cushat croods

With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of *Ochiltree*

Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O NATURE! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!

Whether the Summer kindly warms,

Wi' life an' light,
Or Winter howls, in gusty storms,

The lang, dark night!

The *Muse*, nae *Poet* ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trottin burn's meander,

An' no think lang;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder

A heart-felt sang!

The warly race may drudge an' drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch an' strive,

Let me fair NATURE'S face describe,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, 'my rhyme-composin' brither!
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal:

May *Envy* wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
While moorlan herds like guid, fat braxies;
While Terra firma, on her axis,
Diurnal turns,

Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In ROBERT BURNS.

P O S T S C R I P T.

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bad me write you what they mean
By this *new-light*,*
'Bout which our *berds* fae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans,
At *Grammar*, *Logic*, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans,
Like you or me.

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

* A cant-term for those religious opinions, which Dr. TAYLOR of Norwich has defended so strenuously.

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

Some *berds*, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the *auld moon* turn'd a newk
An' out o' fight,
An' backlins-comin, to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The *berds* an' *biffels* were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd,
Than their auld dadies.

Frae lefs to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks;

An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt:

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' *auld-light* caddies bure sic hands,
That faith, the *youngsters* took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,
Till *Lairds* forbad, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But *new-light berds* gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an-stowe,
Till now amaißt on ev'ry *knowe*
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their *New-light* fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the *auld-light flocks* are bleatan;
Their zealous *berds* are vex'd an' sweatan;
Myfel, I've ev'n seen them greetan
Wi' girnan spite,

To hear the *Moon* sae fadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cove the louns!
Some *auld-light herds* in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' *balloons*,
To tak a flight,
An' stay ae month amang the *Moons*
An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An' when the *auld Moon's* gaun to le'ae them,
The hindmost *shaird*, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
An' when the *new-light* billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

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