

THE NABOB.<sup>1</sup>

AIR—Traveller's Return.

WHEN silent time, wi' lightly foot,<sup>2</sup>  
 Had trod on thirty years,  
 I sought again my native land  
 Wi' mony hopes and fears :  
 Wha kens gin the dear friends I left  
 May still continue mine ?  
 Or gin I e'er again shall taste  
 The joys I left langsyne ?

As I drew near my ancient pile,  
 My heart beat a' the way ;  
 Ilk place I pass'd seem'd yet to speak  
 O' some dear former day ;  
 Those days that follow'd me afar,  
 Those happy days o' mine,  
 Whilk made me think the present joys  
 A' naething to langsyne !

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<sup>1</sup> I have met with many printed editions of this beautiful ballad, but scarcely two of them alike ; the best appeared in the “ Scots Magazine” for 1803, p. 130 ; a very inferior one was published in the same work in 1802, p. 594. The present version is printed from two manuscripts in the author's handwriting, a copy of the poem in the handwriting of her sister Mrs Brown, and from Miss Thomson's collection, mentioned in the preface ;

<sup>2</sup> A real incident.—Mrs Brown.

The ivy'd tower now met my eye,  
 Where minstrels used to blaw ;  
 Nae friend stepp'd forth wi' open hand,  
 Nae weel-kenn'd face I saw ;  
 Till Donald totter'd to the door,  
 Wham I left in his prime,  
 And grat to see the lad return  
 He bore about langsyne.

I ran to ilka dear friend's room,  
 As if to find them there,  
 I knew where ilk ane used to sit,  
 And hang o'er mony a chair ;  
 Till soft remembrance threw a veil  
 Across these een o' mine,  
 I clos'd the door, and sobb'd aloud,  
 To think on auld langsyne !

which collection, I may here add, was procured by Miss Rowlands directly from the author, they being related. Miss Thomson's set of the ballad is almost the same as that published in the "Scots Magazine" for 1803, with the exception of some verbal differences of very little consequence. Besides these differences, the stanza beginning "In vain I sought in music's sound," and the last half of the concluding stanza, are wholly omitted; a circumstance easily enough accounted for, by the carelessness of transcription. I have, of course, used this copy as my chief guide, with a word here and there from the other manuscripts, when I thought they were to be preferred; for I have been exceedingly solicitous of giving a correct edition of this exquisite ballad, which has now stood the test of public opinion for upwards of half a century, and by the aid of the author's

Some pensy chielz, a new sprung race,  
Wad next their welcome pay,  
Wha shudder'd at my Gothic wa's,  
And wish'd my groves away :  
“ Cut, cut,” they cried, “ those aged elms,  
Lay low yon mournfu' pine : ”  
Na ! na ! our fathers' names grow there,  
Memorials o' langsyne.

To wean me frae these waefu' thoughts,  
They took me to the town ;  
But sair on ilka weel-kenn'd face  
I miss'd the youthfu' bloom.  
At balls they pointed to a nymph  
Wham a' declar'd divine ;  
But sure her mother's blushing cheeks  
Were fairer far langsyne !

copies to free it from those interpolations which have so much disfigured it, and marred its engaging simplicity. For this endeavour I hope to obtain the approbation of every lover of lyric poetry; for, on comparing the present with the former editions, I am confident its superiority will be at once acknowledged. How much it occupied the author's thoughts, and the care she bestowed on its composition, will be manifested by contrasting the first rough sketch of the poem given at the end of this note, with that of the perfected copy in the text. Besides, it is a matter of real interest to mark the elaboration of any poem which has become established in our literature;—one which, like “The Nabob,” has so long clung to the affections of the lovers of song on both sides of the Border;—which has charmed the social meetings of all classes of the community, and claimed for its simple

In vain I sought in music's sound  
To find that magic art,  
Which oft in Scotland's ancient lays  
Has thrill'd through a' my heart :  
The sang had mony an artfu' turn ;  
My ear confess'd 'twas fine ;  
But miss'd the simple melody  
I listen'd to langsyne.

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beauties, and touching imagery, the willing tear from both old and young. I have heard it sung in the south of Scotland, when both singer and auditors were weeping. In the first copy we find the name *Peter* afterwards changed to that of *Donald*; perhaps *Peter* was the actual name of the faithful domestic, as the poem was founded on an incident which actually occurred. The first three stanzas are almost the same as that in the text;—the remainder is as follows :—

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Some haflin' chiels, a new sprung race,  
Wad next their welcome pay,  
Wha shudder'd at my Gothic walls,  
And wish'd my groves away :  
“ Cut, cut those odious trees,” they cried,  
“ And low lay yonder pine :”  
Deed no ; your fathers' names grow there,  
Memorials o' langsyne !  
When time has change o' seasons brought ;  
When flowers begin to fade ;  
When summer suns haste down the sky,  
And autumn thins the shade ;  
When wintry blasts are whistling round,  
Your hearts will feel like mine ;  
And e'en a sang will maist delight  
That minds ye o' langsyne.

Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,  
Forgie an auld man's spleen,  
Wha 'midst your gayest scenes still mourns  
The days he ance has seen :  
When time has past, and seasons fled,  
Your hearts will feel like mine ;  
And aye the sang will maist delight  
That minds ye o' langsyne !

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To wean me frae these antique thoughts,

They drew me to the toun ;

But there on brows where beauty sat

I saw a siller croun :

At balls they pointed to a nymph,

Whom all declare divine ;

But sure her mother's blushing cheek

Was fairer far langsyne !

Dear youths, an auld man's warning take,

Nor ance allow the mind

To dwell on scenes that can't return,

Or friends ye nae mair find ;

But as the fleeting moments pass,

To present joys incline ;

And for the hour prepare some bliss

That asks nought frae langsyne.

The ills o' life thus to beguile

Be still your constant aim ;

Nor let the joyful days o' youth

Too soft remembrance claim ;

Else, tho' the mavis sweetly sings,

The woods and flowers combine

Wi' mony a friend to charm the heart,

'Twill sigh for auld langsyne !