POEMS, CHIEFLY IN THE SCOTTISH DIALECT

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Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect by Robert Burns

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ROBERT BURNS

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BY

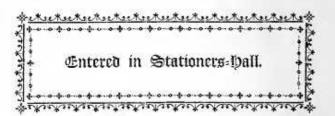
ROBERT BURNS.

THE Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art, He pours the wild effusions of the heart: And if infpir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs infpire; Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire.

ANONYMOUS.

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OF THE

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Janes Chithie

(iii)

PREFACE.

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocrites or To the Author of this, these and other Virgil. celebrated names their countrymen are, in their original languages, "A fountain shut up, and a 'book fealed.' Unacquainted with the necessary requifites for commencing Poet by rule, he fings the fentiments and manners, he felt and faw in himfelf and his ruftic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a Rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the fofter passions, it was not till very lately, that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of Friendship, wakened his vanity, so far as to

make him think any thing of his was worth showing; and none of the following works were ever
composed with a view to the press. To amuse
himself with the little creations of his own fancy,
amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to
transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs,
the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some
kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world,
always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind; these were his motives for courting the
Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be it's
own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast, at the thought of being branded as 'An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel, Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth.'

It is an observation of that celebrated Poet, * whose divine Elegies do honor to our language,

^{*} Sheaftone.

our nation, and our species, that 'Humility has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raifed one to fame.' If any Critic catches at the word genius, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himfelf as poffeft of fome poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him: but to the genius of a Ramfay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal unaffected fincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for fervile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most fincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he is indebted to Benevolence and Friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the Learned and the Polite, who may honor him with a perufal, that they will make every allowance for Education and Circumflances of Life: but, if after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of Dulness and Nonsense, let him be done by, as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.



CONTENTS.

- The Twa Dogs, a	Tale,	-	-	page 9
- Scotch Drink,	- 5	+	3	22
The Author's earn	and hor	norable, t	he Scot	ch
reprefentatives in	n the Fi	oure or c	omme	1000
The Holy Fair,		5 B	-	40
Address to the De		-	-	55
- The death and dyi	ng wor	ds of Poo	or Mail	lie, 62
 Poor Maillie's Ele 	gy,	-	=	66
- To J. S****,	_	- 2	-	69
A Dream, -	_	15	_	79
The Vision,	-			87
Halloween, -	-	-	-	101
The auld Farmer's tation to his auld her the accustor	Mare,	Maggy,	on givi	ng
fel in the new	year,	-	-	118
- The Cotter's Sat	urday	night, in	fcribed	to
R. A. Efq;	- 1	-	-	124
To a Mouse, on tu	rning l	ner up in	her No	est,
with the Plough				138
- Epiftle to Davie,				141
The Lament, occa	fioned	by the ur		ate
iffue of a friend	l's amo	ur, -	_	150
Defpondency, an	Ode,	U e t	77.	156
- Man was made to		n, a Dir	ge, -	160