

THE
EDINBURGH MAGAZINE,
AND
LITERARY MISCELLANY.

OCTOBER 1818.

and which used to be found in former works of the kind in great abundance, has now altogether disappeared, to the no small disappointment of the numerous lovers of light and pleasant jesting, who still exist. I, therefore, who profess only such kind of talent in rhyming, did yesterday take with me, on a walk into the country, the small volumes of the celebrated Gottfr. Aug. Bürger, and, during my peregrinations, did transfer, into such English, at least, as I can write, the following delectable pieces, which are very much at your service; and, although they have not many of those honied words which make up the usual style of magazine poetry, verily it appeareth unto me, that they have something far better, which I leave to your sagacity to discover. Yours to command,

PETER.

Sept. 22, 1818.

I.—*The Alehouse Dog.*

A traveller once, on business bound,
Pursued his quiet path,
When from an alehouse door, a hound,
Yelling to aid his collar's sound,
Displayed his teeth in wrath:
But honest Darby, passing on,
Without uplifting stick or stone,
Moved only at a smarter pace,
And Pugnose ceased his boisterous chace.

It chanced a beau, dressed *a-la-mode*,
Came dashing up the self-same road:
"Confound your soul! you surly bitch,
A stone within your brains I'll hitch,"—
He fiercely cried—while Pugnose yelling,
His back and beard with vengeance swelling,
Gave battle to his dashing foe,
Who stones began and turfs to throw,
And sternly grasped at all around him,
And cursed the dog—to death he'd wound him.

The puppy snarled at every stone,
And, keeping up the war with might,
Hurled bold defiance in his spite,
And sought now coat, now stick to bite,
Till, favoured by his foe's sad plight,
He fairly bit him to the bone,
And yelled so loud, that neighbours all,
Children and mothers, great and small,
To doors and windows ran;
And schoolboys, glorying in the fun,
Huzza'd and cheered bold Pugnose on,
To prove himself a man.

But now the beau began to find
His toil and wrath were vain;
And, slow retiring from the din,
Which Pugnose gloried to have won,
He paced his road again;

TRANSLATIONS FROM BURGER.

MR EDITOR,

It appeareth unto me, that those of your correspondents who furnish you with those small madrigals which fill up what is denominated, in such repositories as yours, "the poet's corner," are truly a very solemn generation:—no muscle of their cheeks or lips has yet been seen to relax itself into a smile; and that kind of poetry or rhyme (for where's the difference?) which is best suited to magazines,

While boys, and dogs, and all about,
Sent forth a glorious triumph shout ;
And still prolonged the joyous route,
Till, o'er the village sward of green,
The humbled beau no more was seen.

This story, friend, a maxim tells,
Beware of dogs that shake their bells.

II.—*A Spinning Song.*

Go round, my wheel, go round
With ceaseless thrumming sound,
And spin a thread as long and fine,
As is the Gossamer's silky twine,
To form the veil that now must cover
This heart that beats but for its lover.

Go round, my wheel, go round
With ceaseless thrumming sound,
And spin a kerchief fine and rare,
To deck my bosom at the fair,
Where soon the bright-haired youth I'll
see,

Whose heart of love is gold to me.

Go round, my wheel, go round
With ceaseless thrumming sound,
Like the veil thou spinn'st to me,
Must my spotless bosom be,
As free from stain, as softly fine,
As is thy loveliest, purest twine.

Go round, my wheel, go round
With ceaseless thrumming sound,
He for whom the badge I twine,
Of a kerchief pure and fine,
Loves a heart in virtue drest,
Better than the gaudiest breast.

Go round, my wheel, &c.

III.—*Gretchen.* *

From Scotia's bleak and rocky coast,
A wide and wildering sea I've crost ;
To seek my love mid Erin's bowers,
I've toiled through hot and misty hours.
Wake, sweetest, wake thine eye of blue,
And list my song of love so true.

'Tis now the still and mirky hour,
In which pale ghosts delight ;
No cottage lamp is seen to pour
Its solitary light.

All but the eye of love or grief,
In balmy sleep finds soft relief.

The peasant's dull and weary head
Is now in love's soft bosom laid.

The cock, in kingly majesty,
Amidst his haram, veils his eye ;
The swallow, in his downy nest,
Beside his feathered mate's at rest.

Oh when will this toss'd head of mine,
Sweet maiden, on *thy* breast recline ;
Oh when in love's long-wished embrace,
Will I my lasting woes solace ?

* *Germanice pro Maggie.*

When shall that tie, but death can sever,
Bind Gretchen to my fate forever ?

Oh with what fond and sleepless zeal,
I'd chase from thee each dire alarm ;
What heavenly bliss my hope would seal,
When circled in thy fondling arm.

Bear up, my heart, time's flood stops ne-
ver,

And Gretchen may be thine for ever.

And now my sweetest love, adieu,
Close soft again thine eye of blue ;
May heavenly spirits guard thy bed,
And on thy breast sweet dreamings shed ;
My song is sung, and with the light,
To Scotia's shore I take my flight.

THE
EDINBURGH MAGAZINE,

AND

LITERARY MISCELLANY,

BEING A NEW SERIES OF

The Scots Magazine.

NOVEMBER 1818.

TRANSLATIONS FROM BÜRGER; WITH
A PROEMIUM: BY PETER.

No. II.

1. *Epistle of Jack Shears*—2. *Poor Susan's Dream*—3. *Song of a Brave Man*.

MR EDITOR,

SITH it hath seemed good unto thy superior sagacity to give those small essays in the art of rhyming, which, in much humility, I did send unto thee last month, not only a place in thy much esteemed work, but a place even among the productions of original genius, (notwithstanding they were professedly but imitations or translations,) it hath seemed good to me, (who, though a singular, am yet a generous man,) to give thee somewhat more of the same ware. I now therefore transmit to thee the following pieces, translated from the same author, premising only a word or two, by way of comment or critical dissertation, preparatory to the production of these effusions of my pen.

Among the many varieties of authors with whom your occupation as editor must bring you into intimacy, there are two, (besides men of superior intellect, like myself,) which probably make up the majority of your correspondents. There are, in the first place, the young and inexperienced, who feel within themselves some uncertain indications of genius or talent, and are desirous of essaying their unripened vigour in such safe vehicles as your work presents. Besides these, there are, in the second place, old stagers on the boards of literature who have gained a habit of speaking to the public, and who, wanting the talent or the enterprise to engage with success in greater works, yet continue to flatter themselves with some likeness of authorship, by regularly venting their ingenious dreams through the medium of your miscellany. To both of these characters, the first of the following poems may probably convey some useful reflections. For those destined to a life of literary penury, and those who are already immersed in its horrors, must equally sympathize with the situation of one who,

in a subordinate sphere and a lower occupation, was yet conscious of the same propensities which govern their conduct; and an attentive examination of the origin of these propensities, as they are here displayed at some distance from the observer, may probably suggest the idea that vanity, or a want of steady sense, are as often the sources of the sufferings we are alluding to, as either superior talent or an evil destiny. Nor let it be thought that there is absurdity in the idea of genius being ever the characteristic of a tailor; for to me, at least, it is evident, that as much of this quality may be necessary to enable a man to cut well a suit of small-clothes, as to carve sentences into trimness and form; or if your readers choose to have the comparison reversed, I cannot see how the stirrings of mind which lead a tailor to neglect his board, may not be the same with those which daily allure thousands, under pretence of asserting their native superiority of talent, to a disregard of that steady attention to their duties which alone can lead to success in life. At any rate, it is plain, that whatever may be the essence and spring of genius, it is most assuredly a very dangerous possession, and may either lead to transcendent glory or to the lowest sphere of uselessness and shame.

The second of the pieces which I now transmit to you, seems to me to have much value on a different account; I mean the striking illustration which it offers of a peculiarity of our dreams which has not yet been sufficiently considered by philosophers, namely, the fine allegorical character which they sometimes assume. When some event which either elevates or depresses us has taken place, we are apt to dream in consequence of that event; and it is in those dreams which occur *after* the fact, and not in those which are supposed prophetic, that this allegorical character may be perceived. A person, for example, who has suffered some great calamity, or is in dread of some such event befalling him, will dream, it may be, of wandering upon a wild and desolate heath amidst bogs and mist,—of walking by night amidst grave-stones and ruins,—or of being abandoned upon a stormy ocean to the fury of the waves. A person who has met with some piece of good fortune, on the other hand, will dream per-

haps of flying through the air, or of wandering amidst flowery arbours with heavenly maidens, or of hearing celestial voices singing hymns of holy rapture. It is plain enough that, in all such instances, our dreams are both prompted, and receive their tinge, either of melancholy or of cheerfulness, from the feeling which had predominated in our minds during our waking hours. But the striking observation is not only with how much regularity and well managed symmetry of parts such dreams are often constructed, but upon how exquisite an idea of allegory the mind often proceeds in arranging the images which are presented to its notice. I beg leave very humbly to recommend this subject to the consideration of some of the inquirers into the Philosophy of Mind, who I see are already beginning to enrich your work with their profound lucubrations; the solution of such problems will probably prove both more entertaining and more useful than the most ingenious discussion of the long agitated question respecting Cause and Effect; and I venture to lay before them the second of the following poems, as an example of what I mean.

The last of the poems which I now send you, is one of the best productions of its celebrated author. *Bürger*, indeed, has, in many respects, a manifest resemblance to our own *Burns*,—although the most superficial reader will perceive, that these two popular poets have many sufficiently distinct points also of dissimilitude, and that perhaps two better instances could not be selected than those offered by these kindred spirits of the discriminating traits of Scotch and of German genius. Yet *Bürger*, like *Burns*, delighted to sing of love as it is known to those whose feelings have not been corrupted either by vicious indulgence, or by much commerce with the world,—of that pure and ardent, and entrancing love, which glows in the breasts of healthy peasants, and which, to those who are under its influence, gives a character and interest to every thing in life of which cooler minds have not the slightest idea. *Bürger* too, like *Burns*, could well depict those feelings, somewhat akin to love, by which the breasts of youthful or enthusiastic men are agitated, when they give full

play, in some hour of conviviality and joy, to all the social propensities of their nature;—and though the perfect calmness, and unbroken regularity of my own life, have made me but little acquainted, *in propria persona*, with such feelings, I can yet enter into the compositions of both these authors with a sympathetic experience of the joys which they describe, and in occasional moments of friskiness, have actually felt a passing desire to mingle for a little with so much gaiety and happiness. A second thought, however, has always convinced me, that such capers were altogether unsuitable to the decorous and placid physiognomy and mien of your friend Peter; and, therefore, without saying any more upon this subject at present, I proceed to remark another point of resemblance between these celebrated poets which is more particularly to the purpose I have now in view,—I mean the unfeigned rapture with which both of them can depict an act of generosity, and the power which they possess over those moral sensibilities of our nature, from whose operation all high active virtue must proceed. Burns, indeed, has not painted any thing of this kind in a regular tale. But all those who are acquainted with his works, are aware by what powerful touches of indignation or of triumph he incidentally awakens our abhorrence or our admiration, and in what glowing letters he could write *villanous* or *praise-worthy* on such characters or actions as he thought fit to contemplate. His instances of these qualities, too, like those of the German author, are commonly selected from humble life; and there is no reader of poetry in this country whose heart has not beat with a livelier pulse in favour of honest and undisguised conduct, when he read such verses as occur throughout the whole of the song,

“Is there for honest poverty,”

and in many other of the productions of this powerful author. The last of the poems which I now transmit to you, is in the finest vein of this moral pathetic; and I have only to regret, that I have not been able to give it, in my poor version, the thousandth part of the heart-awakening energy which it breathes in the immortal verse of the original author.

I am ever, as heretofore, yours to command,

PETER.

I. *The necessitous Epistle of the renowned Tailor, John Shears, to his most bountiful Mæcenas.*

This humbling truth to human worth and pride,
May the wide world proclaim from side to side,
That all the Wise and Great who ever lived,
Have toiled through penury, and never thrived;
Homer and Kepler, and ten thousand more,
Have lived neglected, and have died most poor;
And only found, when all their wits were gone,
A trophy vain of monumental stone.

To me, as to these other spirits, is given
Transcendent genius, and a spark from heaven.

As they the pen, so I the needle drive,
And by the shears and thread I ought to thrive.

Yet by my finer skill what have I got,
But famished paunches, and a tattered coat,
A world of mockery to stain my name,
And only after death my everlasting fame.

Yet what avails it that by poet's tongue,
In solemn dirge my praises *shall* be sung;
That thousand eyes shall shed the piteous tear,

While preachers' voice sounds hollow o'er
my bier;

That marble monument, and sculptured urn,

Which needle, shears, and clue of thread,
adorn—

The thimble and the goose most proudly
placed—

By which, of right, a tailor's tomb is
graced,

Should to the listening *world* this truth
proclaim,

“The first of tailors has received his
fame;”—

If, while I live, like horse I'm forced to
creep

To straw-laid stall, to gain a little sleep;
If o'er the world in nakedness and need,
From door to door my weary way I speed?

'Tis true, the shabbiest blockhead of the
trade

Will oft bedaub my well deserved-fame,
And say, Jack Shears a fortune might have
made,

Did he but know his love of drink to tame;
If with a portion but of common sense,
He loved his needle more, and less old
Lucky Spence.

Oh! sheerest envy! for suppose the fact,
That I a bottle and a joke can crack,
And love at times to wander as I will,
And dine with comrades on a roll and gill,
Is it not plain to all who know this earth,
That ever since high intellect had birth,

A wandering mood, a wild unsettled aim,
Hath been of Genius but the altered name ?

They who the spark divine within them
feel,
Guide not like other men a tacking keel,
But as the wind of humour fills their sail,
Fearless and free they drive before the
gale.
They are, indeed, the choicest things on
earth,
And should be valued as of rarest birth.
And if a monkey, or a cat, or bear,
Their master's kindness and attention
share ;
If butterflies or blossoms from the Line
As being rare appear most wondrous fine ;
What silken couches should for him be
wove
Whose soul was nurtured by divinest love ?
How should the world that man enrich
with pelf,
Whose spirit is too fine to mind himself ?
But ah ! this niggard world can ne'er dis-
cern
What most of all it interests it to learn.

Oh see in me of this an awful proof,
And stand not from my piteous case aloof.
But while in splendid room with well-dress-
ed spouse,
You sit midst children sporting through
the house,—
Oh from your window cast a pitying gaze
On him who now for food and shelter
prays,
And think how dismal is the case of him
Whose hand has formed the silk in which
you swim,
Yet must himself in coat which rents de-
form,
Bide the chill pelting of the pitiless storm,
And often sigh for but a piece of bread,
While you on daintiest cakes are richly
fed.
Oh yes, I know your tender heart is mov-
ed
By the sad plight of one you erst have
loved ;
I know your best advice and ready aid
Are ever to the poor and friendless paid.
Oh send me then what but a coat may gain
To shield my carcass from the cold and
rain,
And I, beside the praise of one who well
Your Honour's merits to his friends can tell,
Will ever strive by finest, stoutest sewing,
To shew I well deserved the mite of your
bestowing.

2.—*Poor Susan's Dream.*

I DREAMT that at the hour of night,
When only ghosts are seen,
My false one's form rose to my sight
As clear as life I ween.

He took the ring from off my hand,
The pledge of love so true,
And in its stead a pearl-in band
Around my neck he threw.
Methought then 'mid the garden's sweets
In pensive guise I strayed,
And sought 'bove all its best retreats
My much lov'd myrtle shade.
My pearl-in band amid the stems
It seemed to break in two,
And rolling from their string, the gems
Quite vanished from my view.
I sought, and sought in that sad hour
My pearl-ins lost to gain ;
But as I sought, alas, my bow'r
Seemed changed to Rosmarin.
Alas ! my dream was but too true,
Its sense no more is dark,
No dream-book need I now read through,
Nor ask a learned clerk.
Yes, break my heart ! no true-love ring
Now decks my feeble hand,
My myrtles all are Rosmarin,
I wear but death's black band.
And soon a wreath of Rosmarin
Shall blossom o'er my head ;
For, broken like my ring, this heart
Shall soon in death be laid.

3.—*Song of a Brave Man.*

A BRAVE man's praise I mean to sing
In loftiest tone, on loudest string ;
For gold is dross, and lofty lay
Alone the brave can well repay :
Thank God, who taught my lips to frame
The lay that speaks a brave man's fame.
Now fresh and moist the south wind blew
From Europe's farthest strand,
The rolling clouds before it flew
And blackened all the land ;
The fields were swept,—the forest bent,
And ice-bound lakes and streams were rent.
From loftiest hills the melted snow
In thousand torrents poured ;
An ocean clad the vales below,
And loud the river roared ;
Its furious surges swept the shore,
And onward rocks and icebergs bore.
An ancient bridge bespans the flood,
With arches wide and strong ;
Its pillared rocks had long withstood
The waves that dashed along :
And half-way 'bove the watry waste
The taxman's little hut was placed.
Loud and yet louder roared the stream,
And heaved the rocks amain ;
The taxman sought, with piteous scream,
His cottage roof to gain,
And, while each sign of fear he made,
He called on man and heaven for aid.
The rocks from either shore were riven,
As rushed the swelling wave ;

Its loosened blocks were forward driven,
Whose might alone could save ;
And, compassed by his wife and child,
The taxman's cries grew sadly wild.

Still forward drove the loosened rocks
From every falling prop,
And soon amid such rending shocks
The central arch must drop.
Almighty Heaven, make bare thine arm,
To save these sinking souls from harm !

On the far shore a mighty throng
Loud lamentation made ;
Yet none, while bore the wreck along,
A helping hand displayed.
And louder than the storm that roared
The sufferers' agonies were heard.
But why 'mid hope's last sinking rays
Resounds my triumph song ?
And is there none to whom the praise
Of valour may belong ?
One other shock the arch will sever,
And human aid is gone for ever.

Quick rushed a knight on breathless horse,—
His horse all foam bespent,—
And, raising high his dazzling purse,
These accents forth he sent :—
“ Two hundred pistoles here I give
To him who bids yon wretches live.”

And was it, then, this valiant knight
For whom my song is sung ?
—It was, no doubt, a gallant sight
In one so nobly sprung—
But yet a braver man, I ween,
In that last hour of hope was seen.
Still higher, higher, rose the flood,
And louder blew the storm ;
In speechless woe each gazer stood,
Dark fears each face deform ;—
One only arch is left behind,
The fated prey of waves and wind.
“ Oh is there none,” loud cried the knight,
“ That this my pledge will take ?
None whom yon heart-astounding sight
A hero now can make ?”
All stood aghast as howled the flood,
O'er which the taxman's cottage stood.

A peasant now in sight appeared,
In rustic frock bedight,
With staff in hand,—and as he neared
He saw and heard the knight ;
His honest face with joy was flushed,
And to the rescue straight he rushed.

He leaped into a little boat
That weltered on the wave ;
And still, through wind and storm, afloat
He came in time to save.
But oh ! his boat was all too small,
At one behest, to save them all.

Thrice through the wave's tumultuous
roar
He urged his little boat,
And thrice with dauntless hand he bore
A sinking soul afloat ;

And scarce the last he reached to save
When, lo ! the hut went down the wave !

Say on, my ardent song, say on,
Was this the glorious man
For whom the prize of valour shone ?
For whom my lay began ?
He risked his life, 'tis true, but then
Sought he not gold alone to gain ?

“ Take thy reward, my friend, my son,”
The knight in joyance cried,
And as he spake each looker on
Felt in his worth a pride ;
But yet a heart of nobler stock
Was hid beneath the peasant's frock.

“ My life for gold I venture not,
I'm poor, but still have bread ;
The inmates of yon perished cot
Will now your kindness need ;
Give them the gold,” he frankly cried,—
And forward on his journey hied.

A brave man's praise I now have sung,
With thrilling harp, with willing tongue ;
For gold is dross, and lofty lay
Alone the brave can well repay :
Thank God, who gave me voice and string
The praises of the brave to sing.