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THE PEOPLE'S EDITION.

Price 8d.

ANSTER FAIR,

(1812)  
AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM TENNANT.

WITH A

PREFATORY MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS;  
W. S. ORR AND COMPANY, LONDON; W. CURRY JUNIOR AND COMPANY,  
AND G. YOUNG, DUMFRIES; G. PHILIP, LIVERPOOL; W. MCCOMB,  
BELFAST; JOHN MACLEOD, GLASGOW;  
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1838.

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19, WATERLOO PLACE.



## PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION—MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

THE author of *Anster Fair* is a native of Anstruther, the town which he has endeavoured to celebrate in his poem—a royal burgh on the south-eastern shore of the county of Fife, noted also as the birth-place of the most celebrated pulpit orator of our times, Dr Chalmers. These two alumni of the same parish school, possessing, as it appears, the same enthusiasm for mental achievement, shot out in very different directions, the one as a playful and romantic poet, the other as a serious and romantic preacher—each original in his peculiar department, and each endowed with a dash of powerful, yet at times puerile, though richly diversified invention. After receiving, from the town schools, all the instruction, vernacular and classical, which was there supplied, Mr Tennant, for further advancement, was sent in 1799 to the University of St Andrews, where he had the happiness of attending the prelections of Dr Hunter and Dr Hill, by both of whom his taste for classical learning was encouraged and confirmed. Circumstances prevented the prosecution of his studies at that university longer than two years. He left it in May 1801, and not long thereafter became clerk to his brother, then corn-factor, first at Glasgow (in 1803-4), and latterly at Anstruther (1805-6, &c.), in which distracted and precarious situation, he, by a studious disposition of time, found opportunities of cultivating the muses in secret, and of reading in their own languages the productions of the most celebrated poets of ancient and modern Europe. Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Wieland, Camoëns, were all perused during the intervals of counting-house employment. Nor did he less gratify his literary curiosity in the severer and more dignified studies: history and archæology—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy—were studied with equal avidity. Above all descriptions of literature, he delighted in the books of the Hebrew writers, which, apart from all considerations of another kind of importance, he regarded, and still regards, as containing the finest and sublimest poetry to be found in the world. As a literary anecdote, and at the same time as an excitement to the juvenile student, it may be mentioned, that Mr Tennant's first reading of the Hebrew Bible was accomplished in half a year and three days, with no assistance but the grammar and dictionary. It may be instructive also to consider how this passion for Hebrew literature, cultivated at an early period of life and in secret, unencouraged and unpatronised, brought, thirty years thereafter, its own reward.

In the year 1811, being in his 27th year, and living in his father's house at Anstruther, much perplexed by commercial embarrassments into which he had been innocently drawn, he conceived and wrote his poem of *Anster Fair*, which, in the course of the ensuing year, was produced anonymously, in a small volume of plain appearance, by the bookseller of his native town.

Its provincial origin, limited sale, and perhaps, in some degree, the startling novelty of manner which characterised the poem, contributed to keep it in obscurity for more than a twelvemonth. The late Lord Woodhouselee, so distinguished as a polished scholar and critic, appears to have been the first member of the metropolitan learned world to become aware of the merits of the poem. In August 1812, he addressed the following letter to Mr Cockburn, the Anstruther publisher:—

"SIR—I have lately read, with a very high degree of pleasure, a small poetical performance, which I observe bears your name as publisher on the title-page. The author of *Anster Fair* cannot long remain concealed. It contains, in my opinion, unequivocal marks of strong original genius; a vein of humour of an uncommon cast, united with a talent for natural description of the most vivid and characteristic species, and, above all, a true feeling of the sublime—forming altogether one of the most pleasing and singular combinations of the

different powers of poetry that I have ever met with. Unless the author has very strong reasons for concealing his name, I must own that I should be much gratified by being informed of it. ALEX. FRASER TYTLER."

The notice of a few other such critics soon brought the name of the author before the public; and in the latter part of 1814, the merits of the poem were blazoned to the world at large by a generous notice from the pen of Mr Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review.

"We consider this volume," says the writer, "not only as eminently original, but as belonging to a class of composition hitherto but little known in the literature of this country—to that species, we mean, of gay or fantastic poetry which plays through the works of Pulci and Ariosto, and animates the compositions of many inferior writers both in Spain and in Italy—which is equally removed from the vulgarity of mere burlesque or mock-heroic, and from the sarcasm and point and finesse of satirical pleasantry—which is extravagant rather than ridiculous, and displays only the vague and unbounded licence of a sportive and raised imagination, without the cold pungency of wit, or the practised sagacity of derision. It frequently relaxes into childishness, and is sometimes concentrated to humour; but its leading character is a kind of enthusiastic gaiety—a certain intoxication and nimbleness of fancy, which pours out a profusion of images without much congruity or selection, and covers all the objects to which it is directed, with colours that are rather brilliant than harmonious, and combines them into groups that are more lively than graceful. This effervescence of the spirits has been hitherto supposed almost peculiar to the warmer regions of the south; and the poetry in which it naturally exhales itself, seems as if it could only find a suitable vehicle in their plastic and flexible idioms, or a fitting audience among the susceptible races by whom they were framed.

We are by no means certain that the present attempt will unsettle that opinion; and are very far from thinking, either that its success has been perfect, or that the author has been fortunate in the choice of a subject, or in all of the details of his execution. The attempt, however, is bold and vigorous; and indicates both talent and enterprise that may hereafter be more worthily employed. Hitherto, it is proper to mention, they have been exerted under circumstances the most unpropitious; for Mr Tennant is a kind of prodigy as well as Mr Hogg—and his book would be entitled to notice as a curiosity, even if its pretensions were much smaller than they are on the score of its literary merit." \* \*

"The subject, which we do not think very fortunately chosen, is borrowed from some ancient legends, respecting the marriage choice of a fair lady, whose beauty is still celebrated in the ballads and traditions of Mr Tennant's native district, and whose hand, it seems, was held out as the reward of the victor in an ass race, and a match of running in sacks—a competition of bagpiping, and of story-telling. Upon this homely foundation Mr Tennant has erected a vast superstructure of description, and expended a great treasure of poetry. He has also engrafted upon it the airy and ticklish machinery of Shakspeare's, or rather of Wieland's Oberon—though he has given the less adventurous name of Puck to his ministering spirit, who, with the female fairy to whom he is wedded, patronises the victor in these successive contentions, and secures not only his success, but his acceptance with the devoted fair." \* \*

"The great charm of this singular composition consists, no doubt, in the profusion of images and groups which it thrusts upon the fancy, and the crowd and hurry and animation with which they are all jostled and driven along; but this, though a very rare merit in any modern production, is entitled perhaps to less

distinction than the perpetual sallies and outbreaks of a rich and poetical imagination, by which the homely themes on which the author is professedly employed are constantly ennobled or contrasted, and in which the ardour of a mind evidently fitted for higher tasks is somewhat capriciously expended. It is this frequent kindling of the diviner spirit—this tendency to rise above the trivial subjects among which he has chosen to disport himself, and this power of connecting grand or beautiful conceptions with the representation of vulgar objects or ludicrous occurrences, that first recommended this poem to our notice, and still seem to us to entitle it to more general notoriety. The author is occupied, no doubt, in general, with low matters, and bent upon homely mirth, but his genius soars up every now and then in spite of him; and ‘his delights’—to use a quaint expression of Shakspeare—

‘his delights  
Are dolphin-like, and show their backs above  
The element they move in.’

With reference to the allusion to Mr Hogg, whose *Queen's Wake* was the subject of the antecedent article, it may be mentioned, that the latter individual always protested against the propriety of putting Mr Tennant and him into one category, as authors who had cultivated poetry in lowly and difficult circumstances, seeing that the Anstruther poet was, even at this early period of his life, a man of extensive and varied learning, while he of Ettrick was a totally uneducated shepherd. There was some justice in this remark; but it must be allowed that the reviewer was quite right in applauding Mr Tennant for the zeal and success with which he had unassistedly prosecuted those studies which gave him the advantage pointed out by Mr Hogg. The *Anster Fair*, when fully known, experienced considerable popularity, and was several times printed. It is worthy of observation, that it proved the means of reviving a form of stanza—the *ottava rima*—which the English poets of the sixteenth century derived from the Italian, but which had since then fallen into complete disuse. Some years after, this stanza was also used by Lord Byron in his *Beppo*, without any acknowledgment of its having been suggested to him by the *Anster Fair*. He afterwards employed it in *Don Juan*; and it became a favourite mode with other poets, particularly Mr Hookham Frere, though without the two additional syllables to the concluding lines, which Mr Tennant had thought desirable for the sake of impressiveness.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1813, the author of *Anster Fair* was preferred to the situation of schoolmaster in the parish of Denino, an upland district at the eastern angle of Fife, between Anstruther and St Andrews. The office brought him an income of about forty pounds a-year, and was to be rejoiced in by the poet chiefly for its giving him rural quiet, and access to the library of the neighbouring university. He here continued his studies, with all his former assiduity, and by means of books, without a master, acquainted himself with the Arabic, Syriac, and Persian languages. In respect of society, he would have been in a truly deso-

late condition, but for the friendship of a very accomplished country gentleman of his neighbourhood, Hugh Cleghorn, Esq. of Stravithie. He continued to officiate at Denino till 1816, when, chiefly through the kind intervention of Mr George Thomson, of Edinburgh, well known as the friend and correspondent of Burns, he was transferred to the more lucrative situation of parish schoolmaster at Lasswade, a village delightfully situated on the Esk, about six miles to the south of Edinburgh. The appointment was valuable, from its bringing Mr Tennant into contact with the literary men of the capital. He performed the duties of his laborious function at Lasswade till January 1819, when he was elected by the trustees of Dollar Institution to be the teacher of classical and oriental languages in that new and rising seminary. He there officiated till the beginning of 1835, when he attained a fit summit to the ambition of a modest scholar of his peculiar tastes, in being appointed by the crown to the vacant chair of Oriental Languages in St Mary's College at St Andrews. Since that time Mr Tennant has spent his winters at St Andrews, in the exercise of the duties of his professorship, though he still (1838) resides, during the summer months, at his beautifully situated villa of Devongrove, near Dollar.

Since the publication of *Anster Fair*, Mr Tennant has given to the world *The Thane of Fife*, a poem, *Cardinal Beaton*, a tragedy, and a spirited descriptive poem in the manner of Sir David Lyndsay, under the title of *The Dinging Down of the Cathedral*—meaning the metropolitan church of Scotland at St Andrews, which was destroyed by the followers of Knox in one day.

It should perhaps have been mentioned, at an earlier part of this brief memoir, that Mr Tennant, though born without any personal malformation, lost, at an early period of his childhood, the use of his feet, so that all his motions through life have been performed on crutches. We have heard him state, that this, instead of diminishing his enjoyment of life, has rather added to it, and instead of retarding, has rather promoted his advance in the world, having not only tended to concentrate his mind upon his studies, but also to procure for him a sympathising friendship in many quarters where he had no other claim. We are to recollect, however, that lameness was, in his case, connected with none of that proud impatience which made it a source of unmingled misery to Byron, but with a temper of the serene and blandest elements, which no friend, to our knowledge, has ever seen ruffled.

The present edition of *Anster Fair* comes before the world by virtue of an arrangement between Mr Tennant and the publishers, who were anxious that their series of cheap Standard Works, and more particularly their series of the Scottish Poets, should be graced by a work combining the humour of James the First and Dunbar, with that of Ariosto and Tassoni, and which, they are persuaded, nothing but *price* could have so long kept out of the hands of the humblest as well as the highest of the people. In addition to the main poem, they have been enabled to present a selection of Mr Tennant's shorter pieces, chiefly in the department of the familiar and the humorous.

## ORIGINAL (AUTHOR'S) PREFACE.

THE following poem is presented to the public with that diffidence and anxiety which every young author feels when the good or bad fate of his first production must check his rashness and vanity, or enliven his future efforts with the confidence arising from popular approbation.

The poem is written in stanzas of octave rhyme, or the *ottava rima* of the Italians, a measure said to be invented by Boccaccio, and after him employed by Tasso and Ariosto. From these writers it was transferred into English poetry by Fairfax, in his translation of “Jerusalem Delivered,” but since his days, has been by our poets, perhaps, too little cultivated. The stanza of Fairfax is here shut with the Alexandrine of Spenser, that its close may be more full and sounding.

In a humorous poem, partly descriptive of Scottish

manners, it was impossible to avoid using Scottish words. These, however, will, it is hoped, be found not too many. Some old English words are likewise admitted.

The transactions of ANSTER FAIR may be supposed to have taken place during the reign of James V.—a monarch whom tradition reports to have had many gamesome rambles in Fife, and with whose liveliness and jollity of temper the merriment of the FAIR did not ill accord. Yet a scrupulous congruity with the modes of his times was not intended, and must not be expected. Ancient and modern manners are mixed and jumbled together, to heighten the humour, or variegate the description.

Edinburgh, 23d June 1814.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

## SONG—MINNIE TO HER SPINNIN'-WHEEL.

*Imitated from the German of Burger.*

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!  
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!  
 The roofs and wa's are dash't wi' rain;  
 The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;  
 But here I sit fu' warm and dry,  
 And care na for the blasts out-by,  
 Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!  
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!  
 Hey, how the towslet tow comes down!  
 Hey, how the wheel rins roun' and roun'!  
 How merrily, hey, the tirlin' pirn  
 Snaps wi' its iron teeth the yairn,  
 Aye followin' fast the birrin' wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!  
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!  
 Kate's bridal day will soon be here,  
 And she maun hae her pairt o' gear;  
 The weaver's hands are toom o' wark,  
 He's crying loud for sheet or sark,  
 And flytes you, lazy spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!  
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!  
 Haud aff, ye bairns, touch nae the rock,  
 Play farrer aff, wee Jean and Jock;  
 For Minnie is taskit, and set to hae  
 A braw linen wab ere sweet May-day,  
 Wi' birrin' at her spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel:  
 Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!  
 The roofs and wa's are dash'd wi' rain;  
 The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;  
 But here I sit fu' warm and dry,  
 And care na for the blasts out-by,  
 Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

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He that the angels made on high,  
 These holy children of the sky ;  
 He breath'd into her form a mind  
 So pure, angelical, and kind !  
 Oh praise, Great Maker ! to thine art,  
 And thanks warm-bursting from my heart,  
 That beauty's type enchants me so,  
 Crown'd with each grace thy world can show ;  
 Oh praise, Great Maker ! to thine art,  
 And thanks warm-bursting from my heart ?  
 But ah ! for whom on earth below  
 Smiles she, attired in beauty so ?  
 Oh God ! might I have ne'er been born,  
 Ne'er seen thy blissful light of morn,  
 If not *for me* in beauty so,  
 Smiles she, that fair one whom I know !

---

 THE FAIR ONE WHOM I MEAN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BURGER.

Oh, in what pomp of love serene  
 Smiles she, the fair one whom I mean !  
 Tell it, my pious mouth, to earth  
 Whose wonder-working hand shines forth,  
 Whereby in pomp of love serene  
 She smiles, that fair one whom I mean !  
 Who has illum'd and kindled bright  
 Like Paradise her eyes' blue light !  
 Ev'n he whose pow'r o'er sea and land,  
 Heav'n's blue bright bending arch hath spann'd ;  
 He hath illum'd and kindled bright  
 Like Paradise her eyes' blue light !  
 Who with such master-skill hath spread  
 Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red ?  
 He who to th'almond's blossom lent  
 Its beauteous tincture, dew-besprent ;  
 He, with such master-skill, hath spread  
 Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red !  
 Who form'd her purple mouth so fair,  
 So rich with sweetness living there ?  
 He who with lusciousness so mild,  
 Fills the red berry, July's child ;  
 He-made her purple mouth so fair,  
 So rich with sweetness living there !  
 Who made her silken tresses flow  
 All-waving round her neck of snow ?  
 He whose sweet west-wind o'er the plain,  
 Rocks the glad stalks of golden grain ;  
 He bade her silken tresses flow  
 All-waving round her neck of snow !  
 Who touch'd for heav'nly speech or song  
 Her voice with rapture all day long ?  
 He who did lend the lark his note,  
 And philomel his tuneful throat ;  
 He touch'd for heav'nly speech or song  
 Her voice with rapture all day long !  
 Who hath so arch'd her beauteous breast,  
 Where pleasure has his golden rest ?  
 He that the swan's white bosom fair  
 Curves out with plumage rich and rare ;  
 He hath so arch'd that beauteous breast  
 Where pleasure has his golden rest !  
 What artist fram'd, in high design,  
 Her waist, so delicate, so fine ?  
 He from whose perfect mind beam'd forth  
 Beauty's each form in heav'n and earth ;  
 That mighty Artist did design  
 Her waist, so delicate and fine !  
 Who breath'd into her form a mind  
 So pure, angelical, and kind !

## LEONORE.

If the following translation of Burger's most celebrated poem has any merit, it must consist principally in its compression and brevity. The author's peculiar stanzas, with the same collocation of rhymes, is here used by the translator; the lines, as to number of syllables, having the same metrical length, saving that the 2d, 4th, 7th, and 8th lines, which in the original terminate in double, here end in single rhymes. Each stanza, therefore, of this translation is less, by four syllables, than each of the original.

Young Leonore with light of morn  
Up-rose from dreams of dread;  
"My William! wilt thou ne'er return?  
Art thou untrue or dead?"  
He had, with royal Fred'rick's might,  
March'd off for Prague to share the fight;  
Nor tidings to his home  
Had of his safety come.

Emp'rour and Empress, of that feud  
Now weary, did surcease  
Their bitterness of ireful mood,  
And to the land gave peace;  
And either host, with shouts that rang,  
With cymbal's chime and clank and clang,  
Crown'd with gay branches green,  
Are homeward marching seen.

And far and near and round about,  
On high-road, path, and street,  
Come young and old all swarming out,  
That homeward host to meet:  
"Thanks, thanks to God!" wife, children cried;  
"Welcome," cried many a blithesome bride.  
But ah! for Leonore  
Were kiss and bliss no more!

She question'd all the line along  
Of him she lov'd so dear,  
But none of all that soldier-throng  
Gave to her word of cheer;  
And when the troops had all pass'd by,  
Her locks she tore with scream and cry,  
And threw herself on ground  
In plight of woe profound.

"Mercy, oh God!" her mother mild  
Ran crying with alarms,  
"What aileth thee, my dearest child?"  
And caught her in her arms.  
"Oh mother! what is done is done;  
Now, farewell all beneath the sun!  
With God no pity lies—  
Woe, woe, to me!" she cries.

"Help, God! look on us from above!  
Child! pray thy soul to peace;  
What God hath done is done in love;  
God is a God of grace!"

"Oh mother, mother! vain that thought—  
God not to me in love hath wrought;  
What boots thine idle prayer?  
God hath of me no care!"

"Help, God! who best the father knows  
Knows best his filial love;  
To thy sad soul a sweet repose  
God's sacrament shall prove."  
"Oh mother, mother! to my woe  
No sacrament can rest bestow—  
That the dead man should live,  
What sacrament can give?"

"How if that false false man, my child,  
In Hung'ry's distant land,  
(His faith renounc'd) hath thee beguil'd  
For some new marriage-band?  
Let his heart whirl about as wind,  
No gain, no true-love shall he find;  
When his soul seeks the pit  
His sin shall punish it."

"Oh mother! thus to fret is vain—  
My loss must needs be borne;  
Death, death is now mine only gain;  
Would I had ne'er been born!

Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!  
Perish my soul in gloom and night!  
God's mercies cease to flow—  
Woe to me, poor one, woe!"

"Help, God! nor into judgment go  
With this thy poor weak child:  
What her tongue saith she doth not know;  
Forgive her wand'rings wild!  
Oh child! thine earthly pain forget—  
Heav'n's bliss and God before thee set;  
So shall thy soul be join'd  
To bridegroom true and kind."

"Oh mother! what is heavenly bliss?  
Oh mother! what is hell?  
With him, with him is heavenly bliss!—  
Without my William, hell:  
Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!  
Perish my soul in gloom and night!  
Without him, nor on earth  
Nor heav'n, for me is mirth!"

Thus in her bosom and her brain,  
Wild, wild despair did rage,  
And with God's providence in vain  
A rash war did she wage;  
She wrung her hands, she smote her breast,  
'Till the sun vanish'd in the west,  
And up heav'n's golden arch  
The golden stars 'gan march.

And hark! without, a trampling sound,  
As if of hoof of steed;  
And, down with clatter on the ground,  
A rider bounds with speed;  
And hark! and hark! the door's loose ring  
'Gins tingle with a kling-kling-kling;  
Then through the valve's close frame  
Audible words there came:—

"Holloa! holloa! Up!—open, dear!  
Dost wake, my girl, or sleep?  
Continues yet thy love sincere?  
Dost thou or laugh or weep?"  
"Ha! William there!—so late at night!  
Wept, watch'd, have I, a weary wight;  
Ah, suffer'd direful woe!  
Whence com'st thou riding so?"

"At midnight saddle we our steeds—  
I from Bohemia ride;  
Late, late I donn'd my bridal weeds,  
To take thee hence, my bride."  
"So quick!—ah William! first come in;  
Hark to the wind's leaf-rustling din!  
Ah, come! within my arms  
Be warm'd from night's chill harms!"

"Let the wind blow, dear; let it stir  
The leaves with rustling din;  
My horse paws proud—loud clangs the spur—  
I dare not house within:  
Come, tuck thee up! spring, spring with speed  
Behind me on my coal-black steed!  
A hundred miles, dear bride,  
We home to bed must ride!"

"This night a hundred miles wilt thou  
Me home to bride-bed bring?  
Hark! how the clock still hums—e'en now  
Eleven hath ceas'd to ring!"  
"Look here, look here! The moon shines bright!  
We and the dead ride quick by night!  
Ere twelve's long hour shall ring  
Thee home to bed I bring!"

"Where is thy chamber, then?—oh where  
The bed of our repose?"  
"Far hence—'tis narrow, silent, drear,  
Six boards its frame compose!"  
"Room in't for me?" "For me and thee;  
Up! spring thou, swing thou close to me!  
The marriage-guests are met;  
Doors open—meats all set!"

The maid tuck'd up, and up she sprung  
 High on the horse in haste,  
 And fast her lily-hands she flung  
 Around the rider's waist ;  
 And hurry, hurry !—hop, hop, hop !  
 They gallop'd off sans stay or stop ;  
 That horse and horseman blew,  
 And sparks and splinters flew !

On right hand and on left how fleet  
 Before their eyes did scud  
 Hedges and heaths !—how 'neath their feet  
 The bridges thunder'd loud !  
 " Fears yet my love ? The moon shines bright !  
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fast at night !  
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"  
 " Ah no !—yet leave the dead !"

What din this on the highway's verge ?  
 Why flit the rav'n's o'erhead ?  
 Hark ! clink of bell !—Hark ! dead man's dirge !—  
 " *Let us entomb the dead.*"  
 And aye the fun'ral-folk drew near,  
 Coffin, and crape, and pall, and bier ;  
 The song was like the shriek  
 Of frogs, in pools that squeak.

" When twelve's long hour hath struck, with song  
 And howl, then tomb thy dead ;  
 Now, my young wife I bear along  
 With me to bridal-bed !  
 Come, sexton, with thy chaunter-crowd,  
 Shriek, shriek our bridal hymn aloud !  
 Come priest, and speak the blessing,  
 Ere bed-ward we be pressing !"

The song was at his bidding hush'd—  
 Evanish'd bier and pall ;  
 And at his horse's heels they rush'd—  
 Priest, sexton, choir, and all ;  
 And onward scudding without stop,  
 They flurried, hurried—hop, hop, hop !  
 That horse and horseman blew,  
 And sparks and splinters flew !

How flew on right hand, how on left  
 Huge forests with their hills !  
 How flew on left, and right and left,  
 Towers, turrets, rivers, rills !  
 " Fears yet my love ? The moon shines bright !  
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fleet by night !  
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"  
 " Ah ! let them rest, the dead !"

Look, look beside the gallows-tree,  
 All round the murd'rous wheel,  
 An airy people, dire to see,  
 Doth in the moonshine reel !  
 " Ha ! gloomy group ! come hither, come,  
 And follow me with whine and hum !  
 Trip ye our bridal dance  
 As bed-ward we advance !"

The gloomy group, with wings that brush,  
 Come flying fast behind,  
 As rustles through the hazel-bush  
 Amid dry leaves the wind ;  
 And onward, onward !—hop, hop, hop !  
 Flick'ring they flew, sans stay or stop !  
 That horse and horseman blew,  
 And sparks and splinters flew !

How flew what seemed the moon on high  
 Down to th' horizon far !  
 How scudded heav'n's vast zodiac by,  
 With planet and with star !  
 " Fears yet my love ? The moon shines bright !  
 Hurrah ! the dead ride fleet at night !  
 For dead folk art a-dread ?"  
 " Woe's me ! let rest the dead !"

" Hey ! onward, horse ! the cock now crows—  
 Our sand's nigh run, my steed ;  
 On ! on ! the morning breeze now blows ;  
 I smell it !—onward ! speed !  
 Finish'd—ha !—finish'd now our race !  
 The bride-bed opes its small chill space !  
 Dead folk, how fast they trot !  
 We are upon the spot !"

They stood beside a trellis-gate  
 Of iron, drear to view ;  
 'Twas touch'd—with clank and clang, the grate,  
 Bar, bolt and lock, up-flew !  
 The trellis'd valves rebound with force,  
 And over graves was now their course ;  
 Thick in the moonshine shone  
 Tombs dark of carved stone !

Look, look ! e'en in a moment's space,  
 (God's grace, how terrible !)  
 Like tinder, dropping piece by piece,  
 The rider's doublet fell !  
 His head, so tufted late and fair,  
 Grinn'd a grin skull, sans skin and hair—  
 A skeleton the rest,  
 With scythe and death's gear drest !

High pranc'd the steed with head elate—  
 Fire flash'd as he did neigh ;  
 When lo ! beneath her as she sate  
 He vanish'd quite away !  
 Loud howlings bellow'd down from air ;  
 From graves low whimp'ring of despair  
 The heart of Leonore  
 'Tween death and life beat sore.

Now, round and round, by moon's pale glauce  
 Of ghosts the sheeted throng  
 Gambol'd their grim and hideous dance,  
 And shriek'd their shrilly song !  
 " Be patient ! albeit hearts be riv'n,  
 Yet quarrel not with God in heav'n ;  
 Now thou'rt from flesh disjoin'd—  
 God to thy soul be kind !"

END OF TENNANT'S POEMS.



EDINBURGH:  
 PRINTED BY W. AND R. CHAMBERS,  
 13, WATERLOO PLACE.