

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Janet Little

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Janet Little

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**TO THE
COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.**

WILL gentle LOUDOUN deign to lend an ear,
When nature speaks, and sorrow drops a tear?
Within your walls my happiness I found
Luxuriant flourish, like the plants around:
Blithe as the birds that perch on yonder spray,
In joyous notes, I pour'd the willing lay.
Beneath your roof there humble lines had birth,
Whose honour'd Patrons now lie low in earth;
Or borne by Fate far from their native shore,
With smiles auspicious glad my heart no more.

Here youth and beauty, innocence and love,
I joy'd to see, to serve, and to approve:
Here honour'd Age to all around did show,
That virtue's paths alone can bliss bestow:
Here moral lessons spoke from ev'ry part,
And peace and kindness wrote them on my heart.
Hoary inhabitants around the place,
Whose faithful services obtain'd that grace,
'Mid ev'ry comfort rural life affords,

TO THE COUNTESS OF LOUDOUN.

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Show her prayers and blessings, on its former Lords.

To you the young are taught to lift the eye,
Mild morning sun of their unclouded sky.
Blest in a lot left nothing to desire,
Those happy scenes did future hopes inspire,
That thus my life in careless ease might run,
My age supported by my master's son;
In him, that goodness, and those virtues find,
Which grateful numbers meet in you combin'd.

Ah! like a changeful vision of the night,
Those scenes are fled, and death appals my sight!
Where'er I turn, lamented tombs appear,
Or parting sails extort the bitter tear!
To distant realms the darling child too gone;
O guard him heav'n, and let me weep alone!
For ev'ry tear, let countless blessings fall
On thy sad mother in thy grandsire's hall!

Forgive, fair nymph, the dictates of despair;
Grief flies, for comfort, to the tender fair.
The good and great, we fondly think have pow'rs,
Can charm to ease our sad and anxious hours:
Else why to you should I at Fate repine?
The friends I mourn, alas! were *doubly* thine!
For their dear sakes, bid lines they priz'd still live,
And grant that shelter they no more can give.
Yet, the sad verse how should you patronize
That wakes up anguish in a heart at ease!
For their dear sakes my pray'rs are ever thine,
Nor can I more were your protection mine.

TO THE PUBLIC.

I.

FROM the dull confines of a country shade,
A rustic damsel issues forth her lays;
There she, in secret, sought the Muse's aid,
But now, aspiring, hopes to gain the bays.

II.

"Vain are her hopes," the snarling critic cries;
"Rude and imperfect is her rural song."

But she on public candour firm relies,
And humbly begs they'll pardon what is wrong.

TO THE PUBLIC.

III.

And if some lucky thought, while you peruse,
Some little beauty strike th' inquiring mind;
In gratitude she'll thank th' indulgent Muse,
Nor count her toil, where you can pleasure find.

IV.

Upon your voice depends her share of fame,
With beating breast her lines abroad are sent:
Of praise she'll no luxuriant portion claim;
Give but a little, and she'll rest content.

POEMS.

TO
HOPE.

I.

HAIL meek-ey'd maid! of matchless worth!
Our best companion here on earth;
To thee sole pow'r is giv'n,
T' illumine our dark and dreary way,
As through life's mazy path we stray,
And bend our steps to heav'n.
'Tis thine to smooth the rugged vale,
To stem the trickling tear;

Thy whispers, as the spicy gale,
Do drooping trav'lers cheer.
Incline thou, to shine now
Upon me as I go;
Thy favour shall ever
Alleviate my wo.

II.

Thy presence calms the raging seas,
And to the throbbing breast gives ease
Amid the tempest's howl,
When waves appear as mountains high,
When swelling surges dash the sky,
And foaming billows roll;
When danger, with uplifted hand,
Proclaims th' approaching doom,
Thou gently dost the stroke withstand,
And dissipates the gloom.

III.

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When caring, despairing,
And deeming all as lost,
Thy rays will portray still
The long expected coast.

III.

Thou animates the hero's flame;
To him presents a deathless name
In the ensanguin'd field:
Thou dost his nerves with valour brace,
Bids him, with bold undaunted face,
Destructive weapons wield.
War's trumpet, breathing rude alarms,
Strikes terror all around;
Thy voice of fame, and honour's charms,
Outvies the direful sound.
When falling, appalling
The tumults wild increase,
On wings then, thou brings then
The harbinger of peace.

IV.

Thy power elates the student's views;
The paths of science kindly strews
With never-fading flow'rs.
Depriv'd of thee, how lovers mourn
Dejected, restless and forlorn,
In unfrequented bow'rs!
Attending still on Hymen's rites,
Thou decorates the chain;
Thy smile the sprightly maid invites
And lures the youthful swain:
Still easing, and pleasing,
When stern misfortune stares,
'Mid losses, and crosses,
Thou lightens all their cares.

V.

From life's fair dawn to liart eve,
We all thy flatt'ring tales believe,
Enamour'd of thy art:
Thy soft and salutary voice
Gives birth to unexpected joys,
And soothes the bleeding heart:
And even at our latest hour,
When earthly comforts fly,
Thou dost, by a superior Pow'r,

Death's terrors all defy.
Not grieving, when leaving
 This scene of dole and care,
But viewing, pursuing
 A more exalted sphere.

ON HAPPINESS.

O HAPPINESS! where art thou to be found?
What bow'r is blest with thy perpetual gleam?
From court, from cot, ev'n while they seek thy stay,
On thy soft pinions, rapid is thy flight.
Thy name, not substance, is to mortals known.

Repulse from thee makes drunkards stand aghast,
Who nightly revel o'er the flowing bowl.
In vain they seek thy progress to retard,
A guest too noble to be thus detain'd.
Thy quick elopement shews their sad mistake;
Baulks hope, and certain disappointment brings.

Misers for thee grope 'midst their bags of wealth,
Nor find thy residence in golden ore:
Fear, anxious care, bleak av'rice, and distrust,
Forbid thy access to the grov'ling soul.

Not riches, though in gorgeous pomp array'd,
With all the dazzling splendour of the east,
Secure thee 'mongst the gay, fantastic train.
Pride and Ambition, vulture-like, appear,
Gain access to the op'lent master's heart,
And bid defiance to thy sacred charms,
Now swiftly banish'd from his sumpt'ous seat.

Nor even the voice of honour can recal
Thy hasty steps: thee Pleasure sues in vain;
A stranger to the gay, licentious crowd,
The giddy flutt'ring sons of dance and song.
Thou to the libertine dost ever prove
An airy phantom; mock'st his eager grasp;
Leaves him to cruel disappointment's rage,
Remorse, despair, the inmates of his soul.

In hopes to meet thee in some distant clime,
The ardent warrior quits his native shore,
Inur'd to martial toil; at danger smiles,
And unconcern'd treads o'er the heaps of slain:
His en'mies fly before him; at his feet
Millions fall prostrate, and for mercy call:

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Yet still in vain he makes his court to thee;
Thou scarce vouchsafes him one auspicious smile.

See lovers too, in yon sequester'd grove,
Seek lonely walks, and spend their sighs in vain,
For thee! For what? for some bewitching fair,
Whose smiles they deem can boundless bliss secure:
Their views contracted would thee thus confine.

Nor art thou found in Hymen's sacred rites,
Though silken cords of sweet affection bind.
A thousand ills encompass the fond pair,
And mix their sweets with bitterness and wo.
Bent in pursuit, through many a devious track,
All seem to say, "Successless is the search;
To nobler objects henceforth bend your view."

All hail, Religion! thou celestial power!
Thy force alone can soothe the anxious breast,
And quite dispel the solitary gloom,
There sullen shades that steal upon the soul.
O let me hear thy salutary voice!
Thy sacred dictates let me still revere;
And ever prone in virtue's steps to tread,
My hopes, my wishes center'd all in Him,
Whose hand omnipotent the world did frame.

O Thou, great Source of all supreme delight!
Without reluctance may I ever prove
Submissive to thy providential sway,
To know and to observe thy laws divine,
My sole solicitude.
How mean soe'er my humble station be,
Content, and calm serenity of mind,
Shall pave my paths along the rugged vale;
And when the vain delusive vision's past,
Then happiness, in all its vast extent
Unmeasurable, ignorant of bounds,
Shall through eternal ages be my lot;
The lot of all whose hope is fix'd on thee.

**UPON A
YOUNG LADY'S
LEAVING
LOUDOUN CASTLE.**

WHAT means this silent, solitary gloom?
All nature in her dishabille appears;
Contracted flow'rets yield no sweet perfume,
And ev'ry grove a dismal aspect wears.

UPON A YOUNG LADY'S LEAVING LOUDOUN CASTLE.

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Nor do the joys of Autumn glad our plains;
Our landscapes are in sable weeds array'd;
No jocund sound is heard among the swains,
And nought but sighs from each dejected maid.

Rude Eurus echoing through the distant woods,
With harsh, discordant note, augments our wo;
While rains, impetuous, from the bursting clouds,
Our verdant walks and pleasure-grounds o'erflow.

Incumber'd by their foliage now, the trees,
With leaves, untimely dropp'd, bestrew the ground:
Because Matilda's presence does not please,
All bleak and dismal seem the fields around.

Her placid looks bespoke a mind serene,
Each feature wore an unaffected smile;
Her's was the pow'r to beautify the scene,
And sweetly gay the languid hours beguile.

Her count'nance milder than an April morn,
When Phoebus first emits his infant rays;
More radiant beauties do her mind adorn,
Than ere were brighten'd by his noon-tide blaze.

Fair Virtue, cloth'd in all it's native sweets,
Celestial precepts in her breast inlaid;
And oft, as friendly intercourse invites,
In softest accents from her lips convey'd.

But now she's gone, a sullen sadness reigns!
Absorb'd in grief we still her absence mourn,
Or beg that heaven would smile upon our plains,
And grant a blessing in her swift return.

**THE
FICKLE PAIR.**

DAMON and Phillis, 'tother day,
To Hymen's altar hasten'd;
They talk'd of love along the way,
And wish'd the knot well fasten'd.

A church the willing pair perceiv'd,
With portals wide expanded;
The priest a speedy audience crav'd,
And in the bride was handed.

When lo! a tremor seiz'd the fair,
In marriage robes adorned;

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She left the youth perplex'd with care,
The rites yet unperformed.

With eager steps he swift pursu'd
The object of his wishes,
And with redoubl'd ardour woo'd
Her to complete his blisses.

The maid, reluctant, turn'd again,
Some glances kind bestowing;
And well resolv'd appear'd the swain,
Though with resentment glowing.

Kind Hymen heav'd his torch, while they
Re-enter'd both together;
But Cupid slily took his way,
And went they knew not whither.

The bridegroom, next but what of that,
No bride his absence mourned;
He play'd his charmer tit for tat;
He went but ne'er returned.

Philander kindly fill'd his place;
To Damon Chloe consented.
That night they wed, O woful case!
And ere next morn repented.

**TO
A LADY,
A PATRONESS OF THE MUSES,
ON HER
RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.**

WHILE sickness, madam, on your vitals prey'd,
The sympathetic sisters shar'd your pain:
I mark'd them then in sable weeds array'd,
In concert sad assume the plaintive strain.

From Elly's Land was heard the harp of wo;
A shepherd, once the blithest of the throng,
Did mirth inspiring, sportive notes forego,
And steep'd in tears the melancholy song.

From *Irvine's* verdant banks, a doleful lay
Re-echo'd through the groves and distant dale;
Each vocal throat was fill'd with dire dismay,
And heart-felt sighs proclaim'd th' unwelcome tale.

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Quick and unstable are the turns of Fate;
'Twixt well and wo are thin partitions rear'd:
I mark'd the drooping choir with hearts elate,
Exulting o'er the ills so lately fear'd.

When brooding on the verge of deep despair,
A gladd'ning voice did through the groves resound;
Loud acclamations fill'd the ambient air,
And joy and pleasure triumph'd all around.

Health, blooming goddess, re-assum'd her sway,
And did the tender, captive frame release;
All seem'd intent the tidings to convey,
In notes more grateful than the whisp'ring breeze.

Some greet a patroness, all hail a friend,
Whose bosom feels seraphic virtues glow;
Nor further, madam, do your smiles extend;
Vice dreads your frown, and shuns you as a foe.

Long may you live ad'mir'd by all, and lov'd,
The honour of a long illustrious race;
Your worth innate, by Envy's self approv'd,
Which time nor sickness never can efface.

THE LOTTERY TICKET.

CELIA, fair, beyond description,
Soon became the fav'rite toast;
Charms unrival'd ev'n by fiction,
Did the lovely maiden boast.

Beaux and sages, panting, dying,
Did of love and her complain,
While the nymph, his darts defying,
Triumph'd o'er her thousands slain.

With their woes too rashly sporting,
Still more fatal darts were sought;
Anxious to augment her fortune,
She a lott'ry-ticket bought.

But old Plutus, sullen power,
Can the fair and brave withstand;
He, in the delusive hour,
Shov'd a blank to Celia's hand:

While Brunetta, short of stature,
Limbs distorted, shoulders round,

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Gain'd new charms, in spite of Nature,
By good thirty thousand pound.

Celia now, with looks dejected,
Seem'd the erring wheel to blame,
When the god, with brows erected,
Did a moment's audience claim.

Go bright Celia, fair and cruel,
Still of countless charms secure,
Would you heedless add more fuel
To the flames you will not cure?

View the maid to grief inclined,
Though she grasps the golden prize,
O how gladly she'd resign it,
For the conquests of your eyes!

**THE
MONTH'S LOVE.**

YE maidens attend to my tale,
Of love that sly archer take care;
His darts o'er all ranks do prevail,
The wealthy, the wise, and the fair.

When once his fierce arrow he throws,
Contentment will bid you adieu;
No potion the doctor bestows,
Can then be of service to you.

Experience prompts me to tell,
I felt his tyrannical sway;
The time I remember too well;
It was a long month and a day.

The youth, I'll not mention his name,
Who was the sole cause of my smart,
His deeds were unnotic'd by fame,
His manners unpolish'd by art.

His person could boast of no charm,
His words of no conquering power;
Yet his footsteps did give the alarm,
Which made my heart beat for an hour.

When absent from him I ador'd,
One minute as ages did prove;
Though plenty replenish'd my board,
I fasted and feasted on love.

THE MONTH'S LOVE.

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My couch but augmented my pain;
No sleep ever closed my eyes;
One glance of my rustic young swain
Was what I more highly did prize,

None ever bemoan'd my sad case;
They laugh'd at the ills I endur'd;
But time did my sorrows efface,
And spite of the imp I was cur'd.

I saw my lov'd youth in the shade,
Soft whisp'ring to Susan apart;
Resentment came quick to my aid;
And I banish'd him quite from my heart.

But be not too forward, ye fair,
Nor take too much courage from me,
How many have fall'n in the snare
That got not so easily free?

DAMON AND PHILANDER.

DAMON.

THE sun with keenness darts his sultry ray;
To some cool shade Philander haste away,
Nigh yon smooth riv'let, where the southern breeze
So softly plays among the bord'ring trees.
Beneath yon spreading elm let's rest a while,
And with our songs the tedious hours beguile:
There will I tune my pipe to Delia's praise,
While ev'ry swain's attentive to my lays.

PHILANDER.

O Damon! how insipid is thy theme?
Philander's sick of thy lov'd Delia's name:
Nor can the fairest nymph enslave my heart;
Man's soul was form'd to act a nobler part.
This gewgaw train can ne'er my thoughts employ;
Such would dispel but can't augment my joy.
I'll sing the beauties of the breathing spring,
The treasures Autumn to my barns will bring.
To notes of transport ever tune my reed,
While on the plains my num'rous flocks I feed.

DAMON.

Let Damon's breast such trivial joys disdain;
What though my flocks o'erspread the wide domain?

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What though my barns were with abundance stor'd,
And gen'rous nectar ever grac'd my board?
Nor honour, riches, though their force unite,
In Delia's absence ever can delight.
O Delia! sweeter than the op'ning dawn,
More bright than rays that cheer the dewy lawn.
Her sparkling eye the orient gem outshines,
Or brightest lustre of Golanda's mines:
Her cheeks of roseate hue, her flaxen hair,
In easy curls, waves gently in the air.
Her coral lips ambrosial sweets retain;
She rivals Juno in her air and mien;
She far exceeds what ancient painters drew,
When fancy's flights the Cyprian queen pursue.
Such excellence might grace a prince's arms;
Yet this must yield to her interior charms.
In her fair bosom virtue bears the sway;
There wisdom sheds a pure unmingl'd ray.
Truth, innocence, and modesty combine
T' adorn her mind, where all perfections shine:
Apollo's wit does to the maid belong;
Her voice more charming than the Syren's song.

PHILANDER.

Hold, hold, dear Damon, sure too much is said;
Your Delia's then a most bewitching maid:
As blind men judge of colours, so you trace
The matchless beauties of her charming face,
Recount her virtues, and, with partial eyes,
Admire in her what others would despise.
A sad delirium sure has seiz'd thy brain,
Which makes thee fancy what the poets feign,
Of love, and such like vain fantastic whims,
'Tis wild chimera all, and idle dreams.

DAMON.

And dost thou doubt of such a thing as love?
If once thy breast, like mine, the smart should prove,
More than is painted by the poet's art,
In genuine colours will affect thy heart.
But wherefore now contemn my rural lays?
Thy notes were swell'd once with Lucretia's praise!
Does she thy favours treat with disrespect,
Which makes thee now all other maids neglect!

PHILANDER.

Lucretia still appears in all her charms,
A match most fitting for Philander's arms.

DAMON AND PHILANDER.

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What she possesses yields most solid joy,
Since bags of wealth my pleasures ne'er can cloy,
These beauties catch; they set my heart on fire;
Her farm, her flocks, are all I do admire:
Her darts are powerful, of a yellowish hue,
More fierce than those the fam'd Alcides threw.
Her striking beauty in full bloom appears,
At the dull period of full fifty years:
Then Delia will no admiration claim,
But dear Lucretia ever is the same.

DAMON.

For this you love her; now I truly find,
That none but gilded cords your heart can bind;
Nor wit nor beauty can obtain your vow;
At Mammon's shrine you still devoutly bow.

PHILANDER.

Vain would th' attempts of either be to hold
My am'rous heart, without the force of gold:
Beauty an empty trifle still I deem,
A childish toy, unworthy of esteem.
Its gaudy foliage may attract the eye;
But as the tulip it will fade and die:
The glowing cheek enamour'd fops may prize,
But men of sense can ruby lips despise.
And what is wit? a giddy flutt'ring thing,
Which can no real satisfaction bring.
A thousand ills attend his wretched life,
Whose dear companion is a witty wife:
Still she is right, and ever in the wrong,
Such elocution dwells upon her tongue.
But if assisted by the Muse's skill,
He sure may dread the poison of her quill;
She with keen satire lashes all around,
And with the rest her husband feels the wound.
Should poverty, by sudden threats alarm,
Can wit with all its power now prove a charm?
The fairest flowers Parnassus ere could boast,
Yield to the treasures of the golden coast.
The maid who comes fraught with that precious ore,
Brings virtue, wit, and beauty all in store;
This gives the palid cheek a crimson glow,
The tawny skin the tincture of the snow.
This makes the dwarf complete in ev'ry part:
She wounds most sure who throws the golden dart.
Short of one foot, distorted of one eye,
Struck by its lustre, no defects I spy.

DAMON.

Thus does Philander waste his wits to prove
A happy marriage destitute of love.
Gold, cursed gold, the bane of ev'ry bliss,
Thy *summum bonum*, all thy happiness.
Say, to what purpose do thy words avail?
Beauty and wit to give us joy may fail.
Wit cease to please, and beauty may decay, [This and the following two lines are connected by a large brace in the right hand margin of the original printed edition.]
Riches make wings and swiftly fly away;
Depriv'd of all, what will Philander say?
But to secure thee of thy darling's charms,
Go to the mines, and lodge within her arms;
Enfold thy mistress in a fond embrace,
For ever banish'd from the shepherd race.
Nor quit thy mansion till thou breathe thy last:
Such sordid souls no social joys should taste.
Blest with my Delia on this happy plain,
Where peace and pleasure in perfection reign,
I'll more serenely pass life's hours away,
Than without her, though crown'd with princely sway.
To please my charmer all my care shall be;
Can I be wretched when she smiles on me?
But we must go, our fleecy charge attend.
Farewell, Philander, I am still thy friend.
The maid whose real charms the heart can hold,
Must not be deem'd one whit the worse for gold.

COLIN AND ALEXIS.

NOW from before Aurora's rays,
Stern darkness with its horror flies;
The mountain tops begin to blaze,
And Phoebus gilds the eastern skies.

See glist'ning dew drops on the bush,
Reviving odours cheer the morn;
The warbling blackbird and the thrush,
Make vocal ev'ry blooming thorn.

Alexis join the rural lay,
Give welcome to the op'ning spring.
Why sigh'st thou thus thy hours away?
Come take thy pipe, and softly sing.

ALEXIS.

Beneath these ivy mantled trees,
Allow me, Colin, to complain.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

No murm'ring brook, nor whisp'ring breeze
Can in the least divert my pain.

The maid, whose charms I oft have sung,
Has left the plain, 'twas what I fear'd,
And o'er her shoulders, careless hung,
A Caledonian plaid appear'd.

Of ancient note on Scotia's plain,
And by her grandam often wore,
Its crimson hue was free from stain,
Which made Calista shine the more.

Yea still she shines; her radiant eyes
Add lustre to the brightest day;
Each feature strikes with new surprise,
And various beauties still display.

But why should I recount them still?
'Tis only to increase my pain.
She bids these verdant fields farewell,
And goes to seek a richer swain.

Calista, with thy rapid flight,
Is vanish'd each delightful gleam.
Can Drife's fair banks give more delight,
Than Eckles' gently winding stream?

Do sweeter scents perfume the grove,
Or fairer flow'rs adorn the vale?
Do comelier swains now talk of love,
And cheer thee with their am'rous tale?

More sprightly youths may feel the smart,
And court thee with assiduous care;
But none of all who seek thy heart
Avows a passion more sincere.

Then haste Calista, save the swain,
Who in thy absence ever sighs;
Add fresher beauties to the plain,
And bid more pleasing prospects rise.

Give to the flowers a livelier hue;
Thy presence makes all nature gay.
O lovely maid! when blest with you,
Each season seems the month of May.

The warblers now, with plaintive note,
Seem to accord with ev'ry sigh;
The shepherds have their songs forgot,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

And laid their pipes in silence by.

Since thy retreat, O charming fair!
Day after day my hopes destroy.
O save Alexis from despair,
And crown succeeding scenes with joy.

ALMEDA AND FLAVIA.

FLAVIA.

WHILE dusky shades eclipse the solar ray,
And fanning zephyrs 'mong the branches play,
Where varied beauties deck the verdant groves,
Let us recount the story of our loves.
Say, dear Almeda, why this pensive mood,
Which does thy wonted cheerfulness exclude?

ALMEDA.

The cause of this to Flavia I'll reveal:
It is a youth whose power I can't conceal.
'Tis Strephon, who long since obtain'd my heart,
When artful Cupid gave the killing dart.
When Strephon's near, no anxious cares molest,
Nor access find to my enraptur'd breast;
But when he's gone, his absence still I mourn,
And spend my hours in sighs till he return.

FLAVIA.

You kindle into rapture at his name;
Be wise in time, and guard against a flame,
Which cherish'd, hopeless, will your charms efface,
And rob your features of each blooming grace.
The dear Castalia taught my heart to prove
The soft'ning charms and pleasing art of love,
Witness ye rural walks and verdant vales,
How charm'd I've listen'd to his melting tales;
While he, unskill'd in flatt'ry, did impart,
In flowing strains, the dictates of his heart.
Blind was my passion, long it bore the sway,
Suppress'd at last by the enliv'ning ray
Of Reason wak'd, by some celestial pow'r,
To my relief, in an auspicious hour,
With open'd eyes I did the charmer view;
Deaf to his accents, from his presence flew.
Observe, my precepts are with prudence fraught,
What heart so stubborn would remain untaught?

ALMEDA.

Command the briny waves no more to slow,
Bid southern breezes ever cease to blow;
Say to the flowers, no more your fragrance yield,
Nor Ceres crown with joy the fertile field;
Bid Phoebus cease to gild the op'ning morn,
And Cynthia be of all her beauty shorn:
Would these obedient as thy vassals prove?
No more can I, dear Flavia, cease to love.
A youth possess'd of ev'ry moving art,
Quick access gains to the securest heart.
When he appears, to cheer the drooping plain,
Each nymph enamour'd spends her sighs in vain:
And when in softest strains he tunes his lay,
Each shepherd, envious, throws his lute away.
In him all radiant virtues are combin'd,
True greatness centers in a humble mind;
Truth, candour, justice, in his gen'rous breast,
Firm fortitude and soft compassion rest.
Nor can the gods on mortals more bestow,
A bright example of their works below.
Young Strephon's charms, no tongue could e'er express;
I may be silent, but can't love him less.

FLAVIA.

Enough is said, Almeda dear, to prove
No fault is seen in those we truly love.
The son of Venus, by a magic art,
Deceives the sight, soon as he wounds the heart.
Blind as himself does all his vot'ries make,
Extremely happy in their own mistake.
In all his charms I have young Strephon seen,
Yet never by the youth have wounded been,
Yet were he, as you paint him, thus complete,
And fond to lay his garlands at your feet,
Sure young men's minds still subject are to change,
Though from our plains he were not doom'd to range.
A change of scenes may, with distorted brows,
Pour swift contempt on all your former vows.
But let indiff'rence lodge within your breast,
Nor Strephon's absence e'er your mind molest;
The more his charms, the surer he'll succeed
'Mong pow'rful rivals, whom you now may dread.

ALMEDA.

I know his charms the gentlest dame might move,
But he'll admit no rival in his love:
My image still remains within his breast,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

True to that hour I first my love confest.
This pleasing hope will soothe my anxious soul,
Nor let stern care its peaceful sway countroul,
Diffuse into my heart its soft relief,
Dispel my fears and dissipate my grief.
I'll say the youth, for me by heaven design'd,
Is good, as lovely, constant, as he's kind;
So smoothly shall the seasons glide along,
Till Strephon's presence animate my song,
Then shall my pleasure as my love abound,
'Till Hymen's rites with purest joys be crown'd.

FLAVIA.

So may you sing, and sigh your years away,
With flatt'ring hope, perch'd on the feeble spray
Of Strephon's faith, the efforts rend'ring vain
Of such as would essay your love to gain,
Till his own choice, or some disaster show,
Your promis'd pleasures vanish'd like the snow.
Your charms are fled, no lover then in view,
The paths of discontent you will pursue.
That you despis'd Philander then you'll mourn,
Nor gave Lothario's suit a just return;
Or for Alonzo sigh when 'tis too late,
And with reluctance meet your destin'd fate.
This will your slighted lovers laugh to see
Almeda then a maiden old will be.

ALMEDA.

The paths you paint I will not tread alone,
While Flavia lives I shall be sure of one.
Then hand in hand we'll smooth the rugged way,
And sigh for sigh shall bear our griefs away.

FLAVIA.

Why should we sigh? In smiles we will contend,
And laugh at what we have no power to mend.
Should fate deprive me of my darling swain,
Some braver youth perhaps may grace the plain,
And make me happy by the nuptial band,
When cheerfully he gives his heart and hand.
Or if despis'd and unadmir'd I rest,
I'll call my own sad destiny the best.
I'll bliss the fate I oft have sought to shun,
And scorn the fool who would to wedlock run.
See Nature now in contrast with thy grief;
The warbling songsters seem to chant relief;
Their notes are cheerful, nor with sighs depress'd;

ALMEDA AND FLAVIA.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

In concert join and soothe your cares to rest.

ALMEDA.

Nor warblers can give me delight,
How mournful and pensive their strain;
Nought sweet can appear to my sight,
Since Strephon's forsaken the plain.

With joy I these banks did survey,
With pleasure I've por'd on the stream:
Young Strephon then with me did stray,
And of nought but delight I could dream.

While he by my side did recline,
The flowers seem'd to brighten their bloom;
The sun with more lustre did shine,
And fragrance the fields did perfume.

Still pleas'd with his whispers of love,
Still charm'd with his amorous tale;
Now beauty's forsaken the grove,
And his absence I'll ever bewail.

How gloomy and dismal the shade,
Where Strephon was wont to appear,
Where oft his addresses he made,
And his accents delighted my ear.

Those paths I revisit in pain;
Yet love them without knowing why.
When fortune no favour will deign,
I deem it a pleasure to sigh.

In vain have my visitants strove
My woes to divert by a smile;
Though I seem'd of their jest to approve,
My heart was with Strephon the while.

Society, spoil'd of each charm,
Without him no pleasure can give;
In solitude cares will alarm,
In his absence 'tis painful to live.

When Sol, from the watery main,
Ascends to illumine the sky,
My thoughts to the loveliest swain,
More swift than the lightning can fly.

I muse on his charms all the day;
The theme seems enchantingly sweet,

ALMEDA AND FLAVIA.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Nor ends with bright Phoebus's ray;
In dreams I my wishes repeat.

Ye angels that succour the brave,
Prove guardians to the sweet youth;
Still may he with honour behave,
Integrity, wisdom and truth.

While through distant climes he may rove,
His image is fix'd in my view;
Let Strephon be constant in love,
And Almeda will ever be true.

**ON
THE SPRING.**

NOW winter, reluctant, the sway
Resigns to the genial spring;
Sol sheds an enlivening ray,
And warblers delightfully sing.

Fresh verdure adorns the gay plains,
So lately o'er-mantl'd with snow;
The rivers, releas'd from their chains,
Do now with soft murmuring flow.

The lark and the linnet unite,
The Cuckow too joins in the lay;
All nature's profuse of delight,
And soft fanning zephyrs now play.

How charming the garden appears?
Sweet primroses paint the gay vale:
Its head now the daffodil rears,
The sweetest of seasons to hail,

His team now the hind drives along;
Quite cheerful he ploughs the rude plain.
He hums his love's praise in a song,
Or whistling forgets her disdain.

The seed in the furrow he throws,
Indulg'd by bright Phoebus's rays;
Rich Ceres vast increase bestows,
When Autumn her bounty displays.

The lambkins now sport on the mead;
They skip round the heath-cover'd hill;
Their dams how securely they feed
By the side of yon murm'ring rill?

ON THE SPRING.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Near Damon appears with his lute,
And wakes the melodious lay;
The songsters, attentive and mute,
Are perch'd on the wav'ring spray.

As Phillis traverses the grove,
All nature more charming appears:
Leander's soft stories of love,
Still touchingly found in her ears.

They hand in hand trip o'er the plain;
No couple more cheerful and gay:
She counts him the lovelier swain;
He calls her the Queen of the May.

Of each others hearts they are sure;
The arts of no rival they dread.
From minds so unsull'd and pure,
No treachery e'er can proceed.

Few princes partake of such joys,
Remov'd from all faction and strife:
Sure riches and honours are toys,
But their's the endearments of life.

WILLIAM AND MARY.

YOUNG William once the blithest of the swains,
That grac'd the flow'ry bank, or trode the plains;
Not rustic, but from affectation free,
Still courteous, kind, and affable was he.
Of gentlest manners, ever form'd to please;
His mind unruffl'd, ever blest with ease;
His mien engaging, sweet beyond compare;
His breath delicious as the fragrant air;
His nature prone, attractive sweets t' impart,
Good without shew, and lovely without art.

Each nymph him priz'd, and oft they sought, in vain,
The noble conquest of his heart to gain,
Their gentlest arts unable were to move,
His soul serene, yet undisturb'd by love.
Ah! transient happiness! how short thy sway!
How swift thy flight! how sudden thy decay!
Thy absence now the youth, dejected, mourns,
While in his heart love's kindling passion burns.

A lovely nymph, adorn'd with ev'ry grace,
Fairer than fam'd, of old, Arcadia's race:
An easy shape, and graceful in her air,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

The virgins' envy, and the swains' despair.
Her name was Mary, from the banks of Clyde,
She came to taste the summer in its pride.
One fatal eve, this charming youth pass'd by,
And on this blooming damsel cast his eye:
Her charms, resistless, smote his gen'rous heart,
Surpris'd, confounded, then he felt the smart.
Sometime with wonder on the maid he gaz'd,
Then silence broke, and thus, like one amaz'd:
"What do I feel! from whence this magic spell!
Is this that love of which the poets tell?
It must be so; else why this pleasing pain,
These sweet enchanting hopes the nymph to gain?
This fear, this dread, which does my soul molest?
Such things till now were strangers to my breast."

He own'd 'twas love, and wish'd to find relief;
But warbling songsters can't assuage his grief.
The sweets of Spring no pleasure now can yield,
Nor all the verdure which adorns the field.
To this lost passion all his powers gave way,
And in his heart young Mary bore the sway.
Go then, fond youth, and tell the maid thy care,
Who knows, perhaps she may be kind as fair.
Yes, Mary sure will hear thy plaintive strain;
'Twas her who caus'd, she too must cure thy pain.
Thy passion urg'd, *her* tender love confest,
What maid so happy, or what swain so blest?

LOTHARIO.

JOIN now Apollo the harmonious strain,
O Muses, Graces, all ye gentle train;
Once more conspire to aid my humble lays,
And wake my harp to fam'd Lothario's praise.
A comedy youth, young Cupid's favourite care,
Handsome in shape, and graceful in his air:
In all respects he's form'd the fair to please,
Can sigh, and talk, and laugh, and love with ease.
But O what words, what numbers can express,
What muse can paint Lothario's late distress?
This I'll essay, although the task's severe,
While Delia drops a sympathetic tear.

And thus it happen'd, on a fatal morn,
Rous'd with the sound of hound and echoing horn,
This charming youth, on rural sports intent,
With some companions to the field he went:
Each hound he summons, they attend him there,
With eager steps pursue the timid hare.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Pleas'd with their toil, o'er various heights they went,
Nor did the craggy cliffs their speed prevent.
Too soon Lothario gain'd the wish'd for prize,
While horns and hounds re-echo to the skies.

The chase now past, their late inspiring toil,
Our jovial sportsman led to rest a while.
To the next inn with hasty steps they pass,
And quaff with social hearts the cheerful glass.
In foaming goblets pleasing draughts went round;
In sparkling liquors ev'ry care was drown'd.
But ah! the fumes affect Lothario's brain;
Once more he tries for pleasure on the plain.
The scene is chang'd, his pleasure now is gone,
Lost and forlorn he wanders all alone.
With wear'd steps, o'er barren heaths he past,
And in Bane's moss, alas! he lands at last.
His trembling hand, which held the lifeless hare,
Now casts it from him as not worth his care.
Three times he drops, three times he lifts his plaid,
Hope and despair by turns his breast invade:
He look'd for help, alas! no help was nigh,
And in the dreary moss he's forc'd to lie.
"Am I to Death become an easy prey,"
With quiv'ring lips methought he thus did say,
"Now farewell hope, my much lov'd friends, adieu;
"My dear companions, charming Delia too,
"O wert thou near to heave a tender sigh,
"Upon thy breast I would contented die:
"With ravish'd eyes I'll view thy charms no more;
"My race is run, life's fleeting vision o'er."

Thus did the sad Lothario vent his grief,
Till balmy sleep bestow'd a short relief.
On mossy pillows rests his drooping head,
While azure curtains hang around his bed,
All night expanded on the turf he lay,
Nor op'd his eyes till dawning of the day:
The chilling frost his tender form had seiz'd,
But Phoebus' beams the captive swain releas'd,
Abash'd, confounded, being thus confin'd,
To free himself part of his coat resign'd;
With tardy pace the plains he wander'd o'er,
Some cot or village wish'd to see once more.
Kind fortune now did her assistance lend,
And led him safely to a gen'rous friend.

Lothario view'd the mansion with delight,
And at the door he knock'd with all his might.
Impatience, by repeated strokes, confest,
Till they with joy receiv'd the welcome guest,

LOTHARIO.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Who seem'd as one from mortals long estrang'd,
His lost address and comely visage chang'd:
His clothes by nauseous mud bespatter'd o'er;
His hair dishevell'd, and his ruffles tore.
Struck with amaze, they view'd his dismal case,
Nor were they slow in rend'ring him solace,
Unto the parlour fire he first is led,
From thence into Matilda's downy bed;
Then with assiduous care they kindly soothe
And cheer the lonely, wand'ring, helpless youth.
Each friendly aid conspir'd to ease his pain,
And bring Lothario to himself again.

Ye lovely nymphs, now sing in softest strains
Lothario's praise, the pride of Scotia's plains;
Ye charming youths, blest with his company,
Pray that Bane Moss he never more may see.

AMANDA:

AN ELEGY
ON THE
DEATH OF MRS. ,
PERSONATING HER HUSBAND.

WHERE can the wretched find relief from wo,
Or sue for comfort in life's dreary vale?
Here can philosophy no aid bestow,
And reason must in all her efforts fail.

What bosom feels not, while with deepest sighs,
In fault'ring accents, I of Fate complain?
A pale and mangl'd corps Amanda lies;
O that by savage hands she had been slain!

It was her own, on fatal purpose bent,
To dark oblivion be the deed consign'd;
Nor let officious mem'ry thus torment,
With wild reflection my disorder'd mind.

Ah! what is happiness? an airy dream:
While stupid mortals fondly hope its stay,
Supinely basking in the transient gleam,
A sudden blast dispels the glimm'ring ray.

Amanda, late the fairest of the throng,
Of all our rural nymphs she was the pride:
I saw, I lov'd, nor did I languish long,
With modest blushes she became my bride.

AMANDA:

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

We then the sweets of social life did prove,
Blest in our lot, nor did we sigh for fame.
A comely boy, the pledge of mutual love,
Enhanc'd our pleasure, and our care did claim.

What words can paint the horrors of my breast,
While briefly I the tragic scene disclose?
Pale death our darling infant did arrest,
One direful night when sunk in soft repose.

No tender guardian mark'd his latest sigh;
No cordial did his quiv'ring lips receive;
So have I seen a flow'r of fairest die,
Bud in the morn, and fade before 'twas eve.

Amanda view'd the change with wild surprise;
Tumult'ous passions did her bosom swell;
Nor could she long the fervid flame disguise;
An awful victim to despair she fell!

She's gone, and Nature seems a blank to me;
No charm appears in all its large domain.
The songsters silent sit upon the tree,
Or pour their notes in melancholy strain.

The banks of Irvine yield me no delight,
Nor can bright Phoebus cheer me by his ray:
In restless tossing still I spend the night,
Nor comfort find at the return of day.

The briny tears in copious torrents flow,
Nor can my trembling hand the theme pursue:
The pangs I feel may Damon never know
Amanda's gone, my dearest friend adieu.

CELIA

**AND
HER LOOKING GLASS.**

AS Celia, who a coquette was,
O'er fading charms lamented,
She frown'd upon her looking-glass,
And thus her spleen she vented.

"Thou silly, stupid, worthless thing,
Of all discretion empty,
I o'er the window will thee fling,
If any more you tempt me.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Thou'rt incorrigible and bold,
Unworthy my attention:
What! must I ever more be told,
The thing I dread to mention?

A maiden old, kind heaven avert;
I hate the appellation.
The blood runs chill about my heart,
I'm choak'd with sore vexation.

Last night when at the ball I danc'd,
My air was counted charming;
My eyes gave pain where'er they glanc'd,
Each gesture prov'd alarming.

Philander saw, their pow'r confest,
And with love tales did tease me!
I sigh'd, I frown'd, he was distress'd,
But with my smiles seem'd easy.

But Chloe mark'd, that new made toast,
By other flirts surrounded,
Poor Celia now her charms had lost,
Which in last cent'ry wounded.

A whisper then and laugh went round,
Such scoffing I endured,
Nor did Philander heed my frown,
But by the jest was cured.

An easy passage through the crowd
I found, none did escort me;
No gallant youth my presence su'd,
Nor flatter'd to support me.

Now, Morpheus next I did address,
For slumbers more delightful;
But in my dreams I found distress,
With apes and spectres frightful.

Then unto thee, thou base ingrate,
I su'd for consolation,
Who rudely now foretels my fate
Without alleviation.

Though I'm abandon'd on that score,
Though fools and fops are changed,
Of thy impertinence no more,
Else sure I'll be revenged."

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Its head the looking-glass did bow,
With reverent low submission,
And to its angry mistress now,
Did utter this petition.

"O madam, deign to hear my tale,
And let my sorrows move ye;
My plain sincerity can't fail
To shew how much I love you.

Nor lap-dog, bird, or powder'd beau
Was more by you regarded,
Than I full fifteen years ago,
Though basely now discarded.

Each hour you paid me visits ten,
My counsel well you trusted;
Without my approbation then
No curls you e'er adjusted.

An artless smile adorn'd your cheek,
And grac'd each lovely feature,
Which I observe now, once a-week,
Distorted by ill nature.

The pallid cheek and wrinkl'd brow
Announce your charms declining;
And wont you take the vestal vow
Without so much repining?

The truth, though in unwelcome strain,
To you I must discover;
While youth or beauty sways the swain,
You'll never find a lover."

Poor Celia now could bear no more,
Her stars malignant cursed;
Her looking-glass cast on the floor,
And into tears she bursted.

She would have died, but Claudia came,
Preventing all her fears;
He wed the pensive, weeping dame,
And wip'd away her tears.

**THE
UNFORTUNATE RAMBLER.**

LATE on an evening I chanced to roam,
The night it was dark, and the streets they were dirty;

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

It was to attend the lov'd Celia home,
Engag'd in a company jovial and hearty.

I instantly hasten'd to put on my shield,
The shield of indifference, perhaps you may know it;
Appriz'd of the danger attending the field,
I judg'd it a piece of high prudence to shew it.

I went to the door of an elegant inn;
I heard who was there, and was fearful to venture:
Hope to embolden me then did begin,
And courage undaunted advis'd me to enter,

I quickly stepp'd forward, but struck with amaze,
By imminent danger I then was surrounded:
Three handsome young damsels upon me did gaze,
And all of a sudden, alas! I was wounded.

Their shafts were set right, and their arrows did fly;
I scarce could distinguish from whom they came thickest.
By Cupid's assistance at last I did spy
The person best tim'd in her motions, and quickest.

Each gesture was killing, and gave me surprise;
I grop'd for my breast-plate, it from me was taken:
My shield of indifference had left me likewise;
My courage did fail, and my heart it was shaken.

Thus finding myself in a pitiful plight;
A young maid so handsome I needs must admire:
I gave a deep sigh, and I bid them goodnight;
My only expedient was to retire.

A little of absence effected the cure,
So happily I of my wounds did recover;
But now at a distance to keep I'll be sure,
And laugh at the fate of a vanquished lover.

LUCINA:

AN ELEGY.

DIREFUL indeed are thy effects, O love!
When Reason's voice deserts thy frantic shrine;
Platonic lessons no asylum prove;
His dictates must obsequious yield to thine.

Religion, in majestic form array'd,
Attempts to soothe the wild, disorder'd breast,
Alas! too often fails the promis'd aid,

LUCINA:

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Nor can procure one tranquil moment's rest.

The wise, subdu'd by thy tyrannic sway,
Thy cruel and malignant influence feel;
Compell'd to act by thy delusive ray,
As humble vot'ries at thine altars kneel.

The Prince, the Peasant, drag an equal chain,
Nor high, nor low, thy subtle darts can brave.
Lucina felt the agonizing pain,
Then hopeless sunk amid the rapid wave.

She was of Annon's lovely nymphs the grace,
Of charms superior to the crowd possess'd:
Her shape was faultless, matchless fair her face,
Her virtues bright, by Envy's self confest.

Of all the sprightly youths that sought to gain
The envi'd conquest of her virgin heart,
Philander prov'd the dear distinguish'd swain,
Arm'd with the cruel, unrelenting dart.

He in soft accents urg'd his ardent flame,
And when Lucina would his suit deny,
Her beating bosom would assert his claim
Her modest blush, and more expressive eye.

At last her tongue, the purpose of her heart
Unto the youth convey'd, in tender strain:
Then mutual joy each whisper did impart,
So great the transport neither dream'd of pain.

But Ah! their joys were soon for ever lost,
Her sire, enrag'd, forbid the nuptial tie,
Because Philander no rich stores could boast:
Charms most attractive to a parent's eye.

The injur'd youth was by resentment sway'd;
To this his softer passion soon gave way:
Too rash, alas! he sought another maid,
And left Lucina to despair a prey.

From ev'ry hope, from all her wishes torn,
Depriv'd of what alone could give relief,
The lovely fair, dejected and forlorn,
Some time in heavy sighs did vent her grief.

The nymphs assembling us'd their utmost art,
The sad Lucina's sorrows to beguile:
Vain was th' attempt to ease her bleeding heart,
Or from her eye extort a cheerful smile.

LUCINA:

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

At latest hour, when each auspicious light
Seem'd hid in chaos Cynthia's silver beam
Withdrew its lustre on that fatal night,
Nor bless'd the shade nor wanton'd in the stream.

Her auburne locks the mournful maiden tore,
Her downy pillow could afford no rest;
She wander'd where the swelling surges roar,
In wild despair she beat her snowy breast!

From Annon's cliff, she view'd the breaking wave;
Philander was her last, her darling theme;
No hand was near the frantic maid to save,
And, Sappho-like, love's victim she became!

Ye rigid parents, with attentive ear,
Instruction learn from this sad tale of wo:
Ye heedless maids, in time the danger fear,
That wrought Lucina's fatal overthrow.

THE ENVIED KISS.

AND was it thine to share the bliss,
For which so many sigh in vain?
And did thy lips receive a kiss
From James that honest-hearted swain?

Oft has Belinda tri'd her art,
In this her radiant charms did fail;
Oft Sylvia sought to touch his heart,
But could not in the least prevail.

Oft Chloe sung in tender strain,
Calista danc'd upon the green;
But James in haste tripp'd o'er the plain,
And seem'd as though he had not seen.

Ulysses-like, he did defy
The Syren's most enchanting voice;
In vain Matilda's sparkling eye
Did labour hard to fix his choice.

Thou little, happy, smiling fair,
And didst thou then the victor prove?
Is James now caught in Cupid's snare,
And taught by thee to kiss and love?

If in thy early infant state,
Thou mak'st such stubborn hearts to yield,

What conquests do thy charms await,
When ripen'd beauties grace the field?

Does baleful Envy rear its crest,
For this one favour now obtain'd?
Sure rage will swell each female breast,
When o'er mankind thy empire's gain'd.

Then gentle charmer pity have,
Nor sigh for conquests ever new:
In haste some fond Amyntor save,
And let us hear no more of you.

THE YOUNG MAN'S RESOLUTION.

BY Cupid and Bacchus I'm sadly perplex'd,
Both parties to hear I incline:
The urchin for ever comments on this text,
Beware of the juice of the vine.

Then Bacchus appears, with a cup in his hand,
Says, "Drink, and you'll drown ev'ry care;
But mind, ere you taste, I'll a promise demand,
That you fly from the lips of the fair."

O, sad the dilemma! pray, what must I do?
With Bacchus I never can part:
Ah! dear little God, if neglected by you,
It will rend ev'ry string of my heart.

O why such a pother? I've found out a way,
I'll bind myself fast by an oath,
While life warms my breast, each his pow'r shall display,
And I'll henceforth be loyal to both.

TO A YOUNG MAN UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH FOR FORGERY.

FROM HIS MISTRESS.

IN awful solitude, in direful chains,
Where deep despair and sad reflection reigns,
If yet thy breast another's woes can feel,
Woes which no language ever can reveal,
Let the distresses of a hapless maid,

THE YOUNG MAN'S RESOLUTION.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Be to thy silent gloomy cell convey'd.
Life left my heart, I felt my blood run cold,
When the sad tidings of thy fate were told:
Then keenest anguish wrung my tortur'd frame,
Distraction seem'd to seize my madd'ning brain.
Depriv'd of thee, who could all pain remove,
My heaven on earth, my happiness, my love;
Depriv'd of hope, whose dear, delusive ray
Did softest scenes of happiness, portray:
Scenes now for ever fled! the poignant dart,
Deep wounds my soul, and tears my bleeding heart.

For thee, no more, I'll wait th' appointed hour,
No more I'll meet thee in the peaceful bower;
No more, enraptur'd, hang upon thy smile,
No more thy presence ev'ry care beguile.
Was it for me? grant support gracious heav'n!
Was it for me the fatal bond was giv'n?
Is it for me stern Justice must arise?
Is it for me he now a victim lies?
Distracting thoughts still crowd upon my mind!
O were my restless soul to heav'n resign'd!
O could I now my piercing griefs conceal,
Nor add fresh anguish to the wounds you feel!

'Tis vain, alas! my bursting heart o'erflows,
And death I feel will terminate my woes!
It was for thee alone I wish'd to live;
The world without thee can no pleasure give.
Now law for one rash act thy life demands
Tho' pure till then thy thoughts, unstain'd thy hands:
While villains hourly practis'd in deceit,
At freedom range, nor dread impending fate.
Ah! now I see thee to the scaffold walk,
I hear the gazing crowd unthinking talk.
Farewell, my love! O still on heaven rely,
I can no more, I tremble, faint and die!

**ON
AN UNLOOKED-FOR
SEPARATION FROM A FRIEND.**

TRANSIENT proves our sweetest pleasure,
Short our moments of delight;
While we grasp the darling treasure,
O how rapid is its flight?

Oft at morn ourselves we flatter,
That our comforts wont decay:
Fortune lavish seems to scatter

ON AN UNLOOKED-FOR SEPARATION FROM A FRIEND.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Fairest flowers along our way.

But the change by night is galling;
We lament our doom severe:
Joys, like snows on Ailsa falling,
In a moment disappear.

Such the plague of human nature,
Fond to trifle with our smart,
While we do escape the greater,
Little evils rend our heart.

I have lost no valu'd charter,
Nor lament a fickle swain;
But, alas! a friend's departure,
Fills my heart with piercing pain.

Pond'ring sharpens ev'ry arrow,
Sighing but augments my grief:
Now I mourn, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow,
But next hour may bring relief.

**WRITTEN
JANUARY FIRST, 1792.**

TO-DAY old wrinkl'd Time appears;
A smile adorns his brow,
While to our list of fleeting years,
He adds the ninety-two.

Our fav'rite hopes, that swiftly glide,
Announce his steps too slow,
Lest Disappointment's hazy stride
Should ev'ry bliss o'erthrow.

He softly creeps along the way,
While we his progress watch:
He turns his back, vain our essay
His bald-pate then to catch.

On his right hand a lovely dame,
In robes of crimson hue;
Her eyes our admiration claim,
Her form attracts our view;

Distant her air, staid, sapient, mild,
A figure fine and tall;
By Wisdom own'd, her legal child,
Who did her Prudence call.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

With vermil lips, in accents sweet,
Soft as that falling snow,
There words I heard the nymph repeat,
Address'd to all below:

"In Virtue's cause exert your pow'rs,
Let her your actions sway;
Employ with speed the passing hours,
Nor trust another day."

On his left hand, with tardy pace,
Here walks a maid forlorn;
Lank hunger painted on her face,
Her scanty raiment torn:

Rich Luxury her father deem'd,
Idle her dam confess'd;
In public by no man esteem'd,
In secret much caress'd.

With smirking smile, and speeches fair,
She does us kindly greet;
But sage Experience cries, "Beware!
She'll prove an arrant cheat."

This now the lazy warrior finds,
His sword with rust adorn'd;
Half plann'd as yet his dire designs,
His conquests unperform'd.

She'll spoil the politician's scheme,
The patriot's gen'rous toil;
For Sloth is the impostor's name,
O deign her not a smile.

She whisper'd in young Strephon's ear,
When Delia seem'd to frown,
That soon she'd change that look severe,
And all his wishes crown.

Lull'd in her soft, alluring chain,
His success did prevent;
Till Delia found an active swain,
And left him to lament.

Poor Chloe's comrade, air and late,
While pow'rs she had to charm;
Those gone, she feels the sad deceit,
And gives the loud alarm.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

In vain each specious art she tries;
Vain the cosmetic aid:
She must be what all ranks despise,
An old forsaken maid.

Sloth, of society the pest,
Of ev'ry bliss the bane,
May we the latent ills detest,
Which form thy direful train.

Our helm let Prudence ever steer;
She'll shield us from the blast;
And ev'ry new, revolving year,
Remind us of our last.

Direct our course to yonder shore,
Where virtue ever reigns;
Where time and seasons are no more;
Where death is bound in chains.

Unvari'd there the blissful scene,
'Mid seraphims above,
All pure, all placid, and serene,
All harmony and love.

**ON A
VISIT TO MR. BURNS.**

IS't true? or does some magic spell
My wond'ring eyes beguile ?
Is this the place where deigns to dwell
The honour of our isle?

The charming BURNS, the Muse's care,
Of all her sons the pride;
This pleasure oft I've sought to share,
But been as oft deni'd.

Oft have my thoughts, at midnight hour,
To him excursions made;
This bliss in dreams was premature,
And with my slumbers fled.

'Tis real now, no vision here
Bequeaths a poignant dart;
I'll view the poet ever dear,
Whose lays have charm'd my heart

Hark! now he comes, a dire alarm
Re-echoes through his hall!

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Pegasus kneel'd, his rider's arm
Was broken by a fall.

The doleful tidings to my ears
Were in harsh notes convey'd;
His lovely wife stood drown'd in tears,
While thus I pond'ring said:

"No cheering draught, with ills unmix'd,
Can mortals taste below;
All human fate by heav'n is fix'd,
Alternate joy and wo."

With beating breast I view'd the bard;
All trembling did him greet:
With sighs bewail'd his fate so hard,
Whose notes were ever sweet.

**GIVEN TO A LADY
WHO ASKED ME TO WRITE
A POEM.**

IN royal Anna's golden days,
Hard was the task to gain the bays:
Hard was it then the hill to climb;
Some broke a neck, some lost a limb.
The vot'ries for poetic fame,
Got aff decrepit, blind, an' lame:
Except that little fellow Pope,
Few ever then got near its top:
An' Homer's crutches he may thank,
Or down the brae he'd got a clank.

Swift, Thomson, Addison, an' Young
Made Pindus echo to their tongue,
In hopes to please a learned age;
But Doctor Johnston, in a rage,
Unto posterity did shew
Their blunders great, their beauties few.
But now he's dead, we weel may ken;
For ilka dunce maun hae a pen,
To write in uncouth rhymes;
An' yet forsooth they please the times.

A ploughman chiel, Rab Burns his name,
Pretends to write; an' thinks nae shame
To souse his sonnets on the court;
An' what is strange, they praise him for't.
Even folks, wha're of the highest station,
Ca' him the glory of our nation.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

But what is more surprising still,
A milkmaid must tak up her quill;
An' she will write, shame fa' the rabble!
That think to please wi' ilka bawble.
They may thank heav'n, auld Sam's asleep:
For could he ance but get a peep,
He, wi' a vengeance wad them sen'
A' headlong to the dunces' den.

Yet Burns, I'm tauld, can write wi' ease,
An' a' denominations please;
Can wi' uncommon glee impart
A usefu' lesson to the heart;
Can ilka latent thought expose,
An' Nature trace whare'er she goes:
Of politics can talk wi' skill,
Nor dare the critics blame his quill.

But then a rustic country quean
To write was e'er the like o't seen?
A milk maid poem—books to print;
Mair fit she wad her dairy tent;
Or labour at her spinning wheel,
An' do her wark baith swift an' weel.
Frae that she may some profit share,
But winna frae her rhyming ware.
Does she, poor silly thing, pretend
The manners of our age to mend?
Mad as we are, we're wise enough
Still to despise sic paultry stuff.

"May she wha writes, of wit get mair,
An' a' that read an ample share
Of candour ev'ry fault to screen,
That in her dogg'ral scrawls are seen."

All this and more, a critic said;
I heard and slunk behind the shade:
So much I dread their cruel spite,
My hand still trembles when I write.

**EPISTLE
TO NELL,**

WROTE FROM
LOUDOUN CASTLE.

DEAR Nell with your long silence griev'd,
Your welcome missive I receiv'd,
And have in haste tane up the pen,

EPISTLE TO NELL,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Some incoherent rhyme to sen':
As time for study is but scarce,
Accept extemporary verse.

To Loudoun Castle well I got;
It is a most delightfu' spot.
The house, tho' built before the flood,
Remains as yet both firm and good:
The more to decorate the place,
Our parents do the portals grace.
There Adam stands, a comely man,
Eve wi' the apple in her han':
In Eden's yard the fruit was sweet,
But here she has not got it eat.

A garden large, and hedges high,
O'er which an eagle scarce could fly;
Odorif'rous flowers of vari'd hue,
In ilka bord'ring walk we view.
Trees in full bloom, whose fruits excel,
When ripe, the rose's fragrant smell;
The plains a pleasing prospect yield,
And plenty decks the fertile field.
Each beauteous arbour forms a shade,
As if for contemplation made.
The trees in stately rows appear,
And ev'ry thing seems charming here;
Did not the hungry raven's throat
So far outvie the blackbird's note;
Did not the ill forboding owl,
At midnight, from dark caverns howl.

But Nell, in human life you know,
Our sweets are ever mix'd with wo.
In vain for happiness we sue,
While as the meteor keeps in view,
With hearts elate, we grasp the prize;
The charm is fled, the phantom dies!
What stock soe'er the misers have,
The heart will ever something crave;
Which, when possest, not soothes the mind,
But leaves an anxious blank behind.
What tho' no bags of gold we've got?
We may be happy in our lot;
And with our little still content,
Our all perhaps will ne'er be spent:
And while we something have in store,
Why should we sigh or pine for more?

NELL'S ANSWER.

WHILE you, my friend, in beauteous, rural lay,
The ancient pile, and circling scenes display,
Enthusiastic rapture fires my soul,
And admiration reigns without controul.
Methinks, while I your charming theme pursue,
That Loudoun castle rises to my view.
I see, or is it fancy that portrays?
The prospect stand before my ardent gaze:
Surpris'd I see a new Elysium rise,
In pomp august, before my wond'ring eyes.

With joy I view the sweetly, vari'd scene,
The winding vale, and groves of vernal green.
The garden will my fancy long detain,
And there fair fields that wave with yellow grain.
The blooming trees that form a sylvan shade,
And those sweet bow'rs for contemplation made.
Would some propitious pow'r but grant my boon,
Send some kind genii with an air-balloon;
Take me aloft, and safe convey with care,
Straight to the bonny blooming banks of Air;
To Loudoun castle soon I'd bend my way,
And all its beauties joyfully survey.
The gothic structure, and its fair domains,
Most amply would compensate all my pains.
With you, dear Jenny, I would pass some hours,
Amongst its shady walks and fragrant bow'rs.
Of poetry and poets talk by turns,
And pleas'd make comments on the far-fam'd Burns.

**ANOTHER
EPISTLE TO NELL.**

WHILE Phoebus did our summer arbours cheer,
And joys Autumnal crown'd our circling year;
Even then my thoughts to you excursions made,
And ardently the bypast scenes survey'd;
Where oft we met in Eccles' peaceful bow'rs,
While social pleasure mark'd the passing hours.
From there sweet scenes I found myself remov'd,
I fear'd no more remember'd or belov'd.
Forgot by Nell, whose friendship seem'd sincere,
Such cold neglect, who undisturb'd could bear?

Mild Autumn now resigns to rougher skies,
And frightful storms, in wild commotion, rise.
The tempest howls, while dark December reigns,
And scatters desolation o'er the plains.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Just as the sun bursts from the wintry cloud,
Which oft does now his native glory shroud,
Your welcome letter cheers my anxious soul;
For humour, wit, and friendship grace the whole.
Well pleas'd I find you on Parnassus' hill;
The more I read, the more I prize your skill.
The Muses coy, you seem to catch with ease,
And unfatigu'd attain the art to please.

Go on, dear Nell, the laureate-wreath pursue,
In time perhaps you may receive your due.
We'll beat the bushes for the rustic Muse,
Where ev'ry dunce her inspiration sues.
'Mongst the vast crowd, let you and I aspire
To share a little of Apollo's fire.
If Fortune prove, like Cupid, ever blind,
We may perhaps some petty favour find;
But if no more we gain by these our lays,
We'll please ourselves with one another's praise.

**AN EPISTLE
TO A LADY.**

November , 1789.

WHILE Morcham does your much lov'd presence share,
And Lydia's health claims your maternal care,
O Madam, deign with candour to peruse
A rustic lay, presented by the Muse.
From Loudoun's plains she now awakes the lyre,
And gladly would to arduous feats aspire.
On the smooth margin of the stream reclin'd,
She fondly hopes to please a taste refin'd.
What tho' she boast of no peculiar charm,
That would the critic of his force disarm?
She humbly deprecates your doom severe,
And fain would wish to find you partial here.
The Muse alone does this indulgence claim,
Else it were impious such a thought to frame.

Would you from Morcham cast your mental eye,
And the recesses of our castle spy,
You'd see Honoria, in her elbow chair,
A mind at ease, thoughts unperplex'd with care;
With aspect mild, explore the sacred page,
Guide of her youth, and comfort of her age;
In conduct prudent, and in counsel wise;
Her friendship ev'ry virtuous mind must prize.
Then view the pair, in bonds of Hymen blest,
With little Cupids flutt'ring round their breast.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

The bliss that's mutual, all their thoughts employ,
Whose social hearts partake no selfish joy.
To please each other proves their constant aim,
While ev'ry act endears the tender claim.

Matilda too, your notice must demand;
To paint would here require a Raphael's hand:
To trace the radiant beauties of her mind,
Shall be a task for nobler pens assign'd.
I'd rather far her little foibles scan,
Though strict inspection finds no more than one.
Such anxious care on others she bestows,
She quite forgets what to herself she owes.
Vouchsafe the charming Celia next a look,
Her mind serene, and in her hand a book:
Eyes, which at will, can pleasure give or pain,
On stupid Humphry Clinker shine in vain.

As through the hall and kitchen now you pass,
Pray deign to peep among the lower class:
The cook's at work; but, madam, who can know
Whether her hands or tongue more swiftly go?
They're nimble both; but different is th' effect;
One merits praise, the other disrespect.
Poor Mary sighs beneath a load of woes,
Hard and uneasy ev'ry turn she does:
How light soe'er the task, she'll pond'ring say,
"Ah! Is there not a lion in the way?"
Will seems in haste his master's boots to clean,
Old James is driving Turkeys o'er the green,
Our crazy-pated dairy-maid just now
Is scribbling o'er these senseless lines to you.
Hark! there's a call, O pardon what I've penn'd;
I'm sure you're glad my letter's at an end.

**FROM
SNIPE,
A FAVOURITE DOG,**

TO HIS
MASTER. *May*, 1791.

O BEST of good masters, your mild disposition
Perhaps may induce you to read my petition:
Believe me in earnest, though acting the poet,
My break feels the smart, and mine actions do shew it.

At morn when I rise, I go down to the kitchen,
Where oft I've been treated with kicking and switching.
There's nothing but quiet, no toil nor vexation,

FROM SNIPE, A FAVOURITE DOG,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

The cookmaid herself seems possess'd of discretion.
The scene gave surprise, and I could not but love it,
Then found 'twas because she had nothing to covet.
From thence to the dining-room I took a range sir,
My heart swells with grief when I think of the change there;
No dishes well dress'd, with their flavour to charm me,
Nor even so much as a fire to warm me.
For bread I ransack ev'ry corner with caution,
Then trip down the stair in a terrible passion.
I go with old James, when the soss is a dealing,
But brutes are voracious and void of all feeling;
They quickly devour't; not a morsel they leave me,
And then by their growling ill nature they grieve me.

My friend Jenny Little pretends to respect me,
And yet sir at meal-time she often neglects me:
Of late she her breakfast with me would have parted,
But now eats it all, so I'm quite broken hearted.
O haste back to Loudoun, my gentle good master,
Relieve your poor Snipy from ev'ry disaster.
A sight of yourself would afford me much pleasure,
A share of your dinner an excellent treasure,

Present my best wishes unto the good lady,
Whose plate and potatoes to me are ay ready:
When puss and I feasted so kindly together;
But now quite forlorn we condole with each other.
No more I'll insist, lest your patience be ended;
I beg by my scrawl, sir, you'll not be offended;
But mind, when you see me ascending Parnassus,
The need that's of dogs there to drive down the Asses.

ON THE DEATH OF J . H . ESQ.

JUNE, 1790.

ERE Phoebus' beams exhal'd the pearly dew,
While hoary moisture all the fields o'erspread,
Where ozier cypress, and the drooping yew,
Had form'd a musing melancholy shade.

Belinda sat, bedew'd with briny tears,
The echoing grove her deep-fetch'd sighs retain;
Her plaintive note distress'd my list'ning ears,
While in low accents thus she did complain.

"And is the pleasing scene, alas! no more!
Corrosive grief now on my vitals prey!
Distress'd, in sighs I spend the heavy hour,

ON THE DEATH OF J . H . ESQ.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Nor feel of comfort one auspicious ray!

Now gloomy visions hover round my bed,
More sadd'ning thoughts my waking hours employ!
Hope's balmy whispers are for ever fled,
And far remov'd is ev'ry gleam of joy!

My former days can never more return;
Each future prospect darkens on my view;
Life's rugged paths seem dreary and forlorn;
No kindly hand does there sweet flow'rets strew.

Alas! on life's tempestuous ocean tost,
Become a prey to each high swelling wave,
My ev'ry hope of happiness is lost
Laid in the silent, solitary grave!

No more, O death! thy pointed shafts I dread!
Thy keenest darts I hourly wish to share;
Since my lov'd HENRY'S number'd with the dead,
Nought in this world can now engage my care!

Ah! what to me avails the radiant sky,
The verdant meadow, or the vocal grove?
No kind companion shares the melting joy,
And tunes his lute to melody and love.

He was but oh! no language can express
What my lov'd HENRY ever was to me:
My joy in health, my support in distress,
My lover, friend, and tender husband he.

For me a parent's love he did forego,
With all the pleasures of his native shore:
On me alone did ev'ry care bestow;
He saw me happy, and he wish'd no more.

Keen recollection animates my pain,
And all my pleasures past augment my woes;
Yet fond remembrance shall those joys retain,
While vital life within this bosom flows."

Thus spoke Belinda, on the turf reclin'd;
No ray of hope her sadd'ning fancy cheer'd:
When from a thicket, as by heav'n design'd,
A nymph celestial in her sight appear'd.

Her flowing robes wav'd in the ambient air;
A flow'ry wreath her modest temples grac'd;
Her presence kindly smooth'd the brow of care,
And all the horrors of the scene effac'd.

ON THE DEATH OF J . H . ESQ.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Array'd in heav'nly smiles she onward came;
Vain phantoms her superior pow'r confest:
She view'd the sad, dejected, mournful dame,
And thus in soothing accents her address'd.

"Do not Belinda at thy fate repine,
Nor by thy tears augment the pond'rous load;
The lovely youth must be no longer thine:
He's gone, such is the sov'reign will of GOD.

He's gone to flourish in a fairer soil,
A plant too noble for this noxious clime:
Where virtue must triumphant ever smile,
He'll share of joys extatic and sublime.

Vain are thy sorrows, vain the sighs of those,
Who did his favour or his friendship share:
He's gone beyond the reach of human woes,
Above the weight of ev'ry worldly care.

Pure were the virtues center'd in his breast,
With unassuming rectitude they sway'd:
His tongue the dictates of his heart express'd,
While his mild manners more than words convey'd!

But human bliss is of a transient date,
Nor permanent thy woes, tho' now severe:
Soon shall you meet in a celestial state,
And then no more the pangs of parting fear.

**ON THE
BIRTH OF J . H . ESQ.'S SON.**

NOVEMBER 15, 1790.

DEAR lovely babe, with hearts elate,
We hail thy natal hour:
Here does the Muse impatient wait,
Libations kind to pour.

Upon a theme so new, so sweet,
She now attempts to sing:
No foreign aid she needs invite,
To touch the vocal string.

But while with anxious thoughts on thee,
And ardent look, I gaze,
Can I the valiant hero see,
To animate my lays?

The plodding philosophic eye,
Shall I attempt to scan?
Or in thy infant smiles descry
The politicians plan?

Too hard the task, my humble muse
Can boast of no such art;
Though hope, on flutt'ring pinions does
All this and more impart.

While fondl'd by a mother kind,
Thou checks the falling tears,
When thy lov'd father to her mind
In ev'ry charm appears.

The features sweet, attractive, mild,
Each soft, each winning grace,
She does in thee, her darling child,
With fond remembrance trace.

And that the virtues he possess'd
May in thy bosom glow,
She does indulgent heav'n request,
Who mitigates her wo.

May he, on whom her hope relies,
Protect thy lovely form,
While sudden blasts impetuous rise
In life's tempestuous storm.

For thee, be calm the rolling flood,
Be still the blust'ring wave:
May'st thou be bless'd with every good
A mother's heart can crave.

**ON A
GENTLEMAN'S
PROPOSING TO TRAVEL 300 MILES**

TO SEE J . H . ESQ.'S CHILD.

IS it true! does Alonzo from London propose
A visit to Scotia's bleak plain,
Ere the beams of bright Sol have dispersed our snows,
Or the warblers enliven'd their strain?

Does the city prove irksome, insipid the ball,
Nor the theatre claim a delay?
Is it friendship or int'rest that ushers the call,
Which he seems in such haste to obey?

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

I ask'd, and in whispers, by Fame I was told,
That his heart was by int'rest unmov'd,
That the ties of pure friendship were stronger than gold,
And it's exquisite charms he had prov'd.

But ah! he is gone, whose reception so kind,
Would have fully compensate his toil!
Can the sight of a babe give solace to his mind,
Or reward the fatigue by a smile?

Let the trifling vain clamours of stoics be mute,
While friendship directeth the scales:
Let them wonder, but never attempt to dispute,
While self o'er their feelings prevails.

In vain let them guess what Alonzo must know,
Since friendship each action inspires;
His presence will tend to alleviate wo,
That done, it is all he desires.

VERSES

WRITTEN ON A FOREIGNER'S VISITING THE GRAVE
OF A SWISS GENTLEMAN, BURIED AMONG THE
DESCENDENTS OF SIR WILLIAM WAL-
LACE, GUARDIAN OF SCOTLAND IN
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

OUR regal seat to Edward fallen a prey,
Our Chief's insulted corse his victim lay;
Our ruin'd land no monument could raise;
Yet grateful bards still sung his heart-felt praise.
Long ages hence her hero still she'll mourn;
Still her brave sons with emulation burn.
His spirit guarding still our native place,
Proclaims this mandate to his latest race:
"Let sacred truth bid living fame be thine;
"Ne'er trust for honour to a sculptur'd shrine.
"Those modest merits marbles ne'er impart,
"Love writes them deepest on the human heart."

Thus mid thy race did their lov'd Henry dwell,
Whose dust shall mix thy memory with Tell :
Truth, honour, spirit animate that form,
Which beauty, grace, and symmetry adorn.
Here that rich blossom dropp'd, scarce fairly blown;
The friend, the husband, father we bemoan!
Wail by the grave a mother's cheerless throes,
And share a widow's agonizing woes!

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Dear youth, thy name to latest time descends,
Where gentle virtues made mankind thy friends.
From no vain marble need you borrow fame;
Truth, love and friendship, here embalm thy name.
A parent's silver hairs bestrew thy shrine;
Her griefs were mortal, but her joys sublime:
In tears we mourn the body laid to rest;
She hails thy spotless soul 'mid angels blest.

**FROM
PHILANDER TO EUMENES.**

WITH pleasure I your welcome letter read,
While Cupid for a little from me fled.
With freedom write, dispel your trivial fears;
There's nought presumptuous in your song appears;
Tho' strange th' ideas which you now convey,
While you our lovely females thus portray.

No doubt, there are, in the promiscuous crowd,
The worthless fair, the virtuous and the good;
The haughty nymph, the maid of humble mind;
Th' imperious, yea, the gentle and the kind;
Such as an adamant heart could charm,
And furious tygers of their rage disarm.
In all vicissitudes of human life,
Man's greatest blessing is a virtuous wife:
Her smiles can't fail to sooth his anxious breast,
Diffusing joy, while various cares molest:
Her prudent counsel swift relief can bring,
As Abigail appeased Isr'el's king.

Nor need I thus the sacred annals trace,
In Britain's Isle they claim the highest place;
When dire oppression, with uplifted hand,
His yoke extended o'er our native land,
Our sires to abject slavery were doom'd,
Our mothers all their ancient claims resum'd:
You'll say my speeches do me partial prove,
And so ascribe the cruel cause to love.
Are you alone exempt from such a guest?
Are you of every antidote possess'd
T' effect a cure, or mitigate the pain?
Then may the archer cast his shafts in vain.

Of late dear friend I did such valour boast;
But by one fatal glance the field was lost.
While you are free of dangers, still beware;
Be warn'd by me, and shun th' alluring snare.
It is by some deem'd cowardice to fly,

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

But sure it more ignoble is to die:
To die, I'm frantic, sir; what did I say?
Reason once more resume thy wonted sway;
Kind heaven defend us from such dire alarms;
Who would a victim fall to female charms?
I find I'm better while your lines I read,
I'm almost from my Gallic fetters free'd.
As you alone were partner of my grief,
Pray now congratulate my quick relief.
I would not by prolixity offend;
Both bound and free, Philander is your friend.

SYLVIA AND ARMEDA.

ARMEDA.

WHY dost thou Sylvia pensive sit?
Why hangs that cloud upon thy brow?
Oft hast thou cheer'd us by thy wit,
Why thus reserv'd and sullen now?

Hast thou thy little lap-dog lost?
Can Celia's dress excite envy?
Is Flavia now the fav'rite toast,
Or dost thou for a lover sigh?

SYLVIA.

Be Flavia still the toast of beaux;
Such trifles ne'er could give me pain:
But know the cause of all my woes,
The dear Alonzo's left the plain.

His music oft has charm'd the grove;
So soft his pipe, so sweet his air:
None heard, but felt the power of love,
'Mong all the nymphs assembl'd there.

Not Philomel's delightful strain
Could such extatic joys impart,
As did thy notes, O darling swain!
Which well can cheer the anxious heart.

His count'nance as Aurora bright,
His smiles gave joy to all around:
In virtue, wit, and all that's right,
Alonzo's equal ne'er was found.

To Anna's banks, alas! he's gone;
To Eccles fam'd for maidens fair;

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

And, to augment my grievous moan,
I dread some pow'rful rival there.

ARMEDA.

O Sylvia, all your fears are vain;
I've seen the nymphs display their art,
To captivate your charming swain;
But none can there engage his heart.

Insensible he seems to grow;
Defies the little armed boy:
From his lov'd horse, a fatal throw
Does more his anxious thoughts employ.

Than Cupid's arrows more severe,
The wounds he got his cares now prove:
Can Sylvia think it strange to hear
Alonzo quite forgets to love?

SYLVIA.

Forgets to love! that must not be;
Sure Sylvia would be wretched then.
Alonzo, when depriv'd of thee,
Rough winter still deforms the plain.

O hasten and dispel my fears!
The birds with thee more sweetly sing.
O crown with joy revolving years!
Thy presence gives perpetual spring.

**THE
CAPTIVATED SOLDIER.**

YE swains unacquainted with love,
Attend to my pitiful lay:
My pipe shall resound through the grove,
And my woes in sad accents display.

Long time I with freedom did range;
With indifference I gaz'd on the fair:
Now my heart, how affecting the change!
Matilda has caught in the snare.

Ah me! how unlucky the day,
When thoughtless I hasten'd to view
A wedding was coming this way,
Nor dream'd I of what did ensue.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Matilda appear'd in her charms;
Her cheeks with soft blushes did glow:
My bosom was fill'd with alarms,
Nor knew I who wounded me so.

Her shape it is handsome; her air
Excels all the nymphs of the town:
Her eyes may with diamonds compare;
Her locks of the loveliest brown.

She swift from my presence did fly.
I call'd, but she answer'd me not:
She fear'd that some danger might be
Sly lurking beneath the red coat.

If red will affrighten my dear,
I'll dress in the good russet grey,
Abandon my sword and my spear,
And call my bright armour away.

No more I'll attend to the drum;
But take up my shuttle and weave:
From that sure no danger can come,
Such clowns have no art to deceive.

No razor shall come on my face,
Nor powder be seen on my hair:
I'll walk at no regular pace;
In brogues to my love I'll repair.

O then, will she hear my soft tale?
O then, will Matilda prove kind?
If rustics with her can prevail,
The rustic in me she shall find.

**ON READING
LADY MARY MONTAGUE AND MRS. ROWE'S
LETTERS.**

AS Venus by night, so MONTAGUE bright
Long in the gay circle did shine:
She tun'd well the lyre, mankind did admire;
They prais'd, and they call'd her divine.

This pride of the times, in far distant climes,
Stood high in the temple of Fame:
Britannia's shore, then ceas'd to adore,
A greater the tribute did claim.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

To sue for the prize, fam'd ROWE did arise,
More bright than Apollo was she:
Superior rays obtain'd now the bays,
And MONTAGUE bended the knee.

O excellent ROWE, much Britain does owe
To what you've ingen'ously penn'd:
Of virtue and wit, the model you've hit;
Who reads must you ever commend.

Would ladies pursue, the paths trod by you,
And jointly to learning aspire,
The men soon would yield unto them the field,
And critics in silence admire.

**UPON
A YOUNG LADY'S
BREAKING A LOOKING-GLASS.**

AS round the room, with tentless speed,
Young Delia tripp'd it finely,
A looking-glass, so Fate decreed,
She broke, but not design'dly.

A looking-glass of ancient date,
Its fall the belles lamented;
But all their sorrow prov'd too late,
Its ruin none prevented.

When Anne the British sceptre sway'd,
'Twas plac'd in firm position;
Nor did a forward chamber-maid
E'er alter its condition.

No mirror better could descry
Th' embrio of a pimple;
The rheum on a neglected eye;
The hoary hair or wrinkle.

Long time it did the chimney grace,
So awkward now and empty;
Its with a vengeance chang'd its place,
And broke in pieces twenty.

O Delia! mourn thy direful fate,
A thousand ills portending!
Black omens now thy stars await,
'Gainst which there's no defending.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Poor Delia now, bedew'd with tears
And piti'd by acquaintance,
Resolv'd to spend full fifteen years,
In doleful, deep repentance.

Do tears these lovely cheeks distain,
By thousand charms surrounded!
These eyes from weeping do refrain;
Their glance have many wounded.

T' adorn thy more accomplish'd mind,
Each radiant grace conspires:
Hence dread thou not their dark design,
Though rage each demon fires.

Let hope diffuse a gentle ray,
There magic spells defying:
Let prudence Delia's footsteps sway,
On virtue still relying.

But know the rake's alluring smile,
The heedless fair bewitches:
Let no fond youth your heart beguile,
By soft enticing speeches.

And if good counsel aught avail,
Attend Diana's classes:
For mind our sex is ever frail,
And brittle as our glasses.

**AN
ACROSTIC
UPON A
YOUNG WOMAN,
WRITTEN BY HER LOVER.**

HAIL sweetest charmer of the rural plain,
Accept the tribute of a humble swain;
Nor frown, tho' he presumpt'ous would essay;
No muse your matchless beauties can display.
All that is feign'd of the fair Cyprian queen.
Here in this lovely damsel may be seen.
In her fair form is ev'ry grace combin'd;
Virtue and modesty adorn her mind.
If Milton's eloquence did grace my lays,
Sure it would fail, and speak but half her praise.
O Cupid fix an arrow in her breast!
No more I'd wish, were I of her possess'd.

**AN
EXTEMPORARY
ACROSTIC.**

MY Muse, once more, thy aid I humbly claim;
Refuse not now to grace my rustic lays.
Johnston or Pope might well befit the theme
Of Grecian bards, who ever merit praise.
How dares my humble hand assume so high?
No common character inspires my song,
His growing fame long since has reach'd the sky:
All I can say but does his virtues wrong;
Let then my blund'ring pen in silence rest;
Lo, silent admiration paints them best.

**AN
EPISTLE
TO
MR. ROBERT BURNS.**

FAIRFA' the honest rustic swain,
The pride o' a' our Scottish plain;
Thou gi'es us joy to hear thy strain,
And notes sae sweet;
Old Ramsay's shade, reviv'd again,
In thee we greet.

Lov'd Thallia, that delightful Muse,
Seem'd long shut up as a recluse:
To all she did her aid refuse,
Since Allan's day,
Till Burns arose, then did she choose
To grace his lay.

To hear thy song, all ranks desire;
Sae well thou strik'st the dormant lyre.
Apollo, wi' poetic fire,
Thy breast did warm,
An' critics silently admire
Thy art to charm.

Cæsar an' Luath weel can speak;
'Tis pity e'er their gabs should steek:
They into human nature keek,
An' knots unravel;
To hear their lectures ance a week,
Ten miles I'd travel.

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Thy dedication to G H ,
In unco bonny, hamespun speech,
Wi' winsome glee the heart can teach
A better lesson,
Than servile bards wha fawn an' fleech,
Like beggar's messin.

When slighted love becomes thy theme,
An' woman's faithless vows you blame,
With so much pathos you exclaim,
In your Lament,
But glanc'd by the most frigid dame,
She wad relent.

The daisy too, you sing wi' skill;
An' weel ye praise the whiskey gill.
In vain I blunt my feckless quill,
Your fame to raise,
While echo sounds, frae ilka hill,
To Burns's praise.

Did Addison or Pope but hear,
Or Sam, that critic most severe,
A plough-boy sing, wi' throat sae clear,
They, in a rage,
Their works wad a' in pieces tear
An' curse your page.

If I should strain my rupy throat,
To raise thy praise wi' swelling note,
My rude, unpolish'd strokes wad blot
Thy brilliant shine,
An' ev'ry passage I would quote
Seem less sublime.

The talk I'll drop; wi' heart sincere
To heav'n present a humble prayer,
That a' the blessings mortals share
May be, by turns,
Dispens'd with an indulgent care
To Robert Burns.

**TO
MY AUNTY.**

MY ever dear an' worthy aunty,
Wha ne'er o' wit nor lear was vaunty;
Yet often could, like honest grandam,
Unravel dreams; an' whiles, at random,
Did truth in mystic terms declare,

TO MY AUNTY.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Which made us aft wi' wonder stare.

Last night, when Morpheus softly hurl'd
His silken sceptre o'er the world,
Some anxious cares within my breast
Were silently consign'd to rest;
Yet did in sleep their pow'r retain,
As shews the visions of my brain.

My works I thought appear'd in print,
And were to diff'rent corners sent,
Whare patrons kind, but scant o' skill,
Had sign'd my superscription bill.
Voracious critics by the way,
Like eagles watching for their prey,
Soon caught the verse wi' aspect sour,
An' did ilk feeble thought devour;
Nor did its humble, helpless state,
One fraction of their rage abate.

Tom Touchy, one of high pretence
To taste an' learning, wit an' sense,
Was at the board the foremost man,
Its imperfections a' to scan.
Soon as the line he seem'd to doubt,
The meaner critics scratch'd it out;
Still to be nam'd on Touchy's side,
Was baith their int'rest and their pride.

Will Hasty, in an unco rage,
Revis'd the volume page by page;
But aft was deem'd a stupid ass,
For cens'ring what alone might pass.

Jack Tim'rous gladly would have spoke,
But quiv'ring lips his sentence broke;
So much he fear'd a brother's scorn,
The whole escap'd his claws untorn.

James Easy calm'd my throbbing heart,
An' whisp'ring told each man apart,
That he the volume much esteem'd;
Its little faults he nothing deem'd:
An' if his vote they would receive,
It might through countless ages live.

While I poor James's speech admir'd,
Tom Touchy at the sound was sir'd:
And ah! it griev'd me much to find,
He prov'd him senseless, deaf, and blind:
Then quick as thought, ere I could tell him,

TO MY AUNTY.

Ilk critics club was up to fell him;
An' as he, helpless, met the stroke,
I, starting, trembl'd, syne awoke.

Now aunty, see this sad narration,
Which fills my breast wi' fair vexation
An' if you can some comfort gie me,
Make nae delay, but send it to me:
For I'm commanded by Apollo,
Your sage advice in this to follow.

ON HALLOWEEN.

SOME folk in courts for pleasure sue,
An' some ransack the theatre:
The airy nymph is won by few;
She's of so coy a nature.
She shuns the great bedaub'd with lace,
Intent on rural jokin
An' spite o' breeding, deigns to grace
A merry Airshire rockin,
Sometimes at night.

At Halloween, when fairy sprites
Perform their mystic gambols,
When ilka witch her neebour greets,
On their nocturnal rambles;
When elves at midnight-hour are seen,
Near hollow caverns sportin,
Then lads an' lasses aft convene,
In hopes to ken their fortune,
By freets that night.

At Jennet Reid's not long ago,
Was held an annual meeting,
Of lasses fair an' fine also,
With charms the most inviting:
Though it was wat, an' wondrous mirk,
It stopp'd nae kind intention;
Some sprightly youths, frae Loudoun-kirk,
Did haste to the convention,
Wi' glee that night.

The nuts upon a clean hearthstane
Were plac'd by ane anither,
An' some gat lads, an' some gat nane,
Just as they bleez'd the gither.
Some sullen cooffs refuse to burn;
Bad luck can ne'er be mended;

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But or they a' had got a turn,
The pokefu' nits was ended
Owre soon that night.

A candle on a stick was hung,
An' ti'd up to the kipple:
Ilk lad an' lass, baith auld an' young,
Did try to catch the apple;
Which aft, in spite o' a' their care,
Their furious jaws escaped;
They touch'd it ay, but did nae mair,
Though greedily they gaped,
Fu' wide that night.

The dishes then, by joint advice,
Were plac'd upon the floor;
Some stammer'd on the toom ane thrice,
In that unlucky hour.
Poor Mall maun to the garret go,
Nae rays o' comfort meeting;
Because sae aft she's answer'd no,
She'll spend her days in greeting,
An' ilka night.

Poor James sat trembling for his fate;
He lang had dree'd the worst o't;
Though they had tugg'd and rugg'd till yet,
To touch the dish he durst not.
The empty bowl, before his eyes,
Replete with ills appeared;
No man nor maid could make him rise,
The consequence he feared
Sae much that night.

Wi' heartsome glee the minutes past,
Each act to mirth conspired:
The cushion game perform'd at last,
Was most of all admired.
From Janet's bed a bolster came,
Nor lad nor lass was missing;
But ilka ane wha caught the same,
Was pleas'd wi' routh o' kissing,
Fu' sweet that night.

Soon as they heard the forward clock
Proclaim 'twas nine, they started,
An' ilka lass took up her rock;
Reluctantly they parted,
In hopes to meet some other time,
Exempt from false aspersion;
Nor will they count it any crime,

ON HALLOWEEN.

To hae sic like diversion
Some future night.

**ON SEEING
MR. BAKING CAKES.**

AS Rab, who ever frugal was,
Some oat-meal cakes was baking,
In came a crazy scribbling lass,
Which set his heart a-quaking.

"I fear," says he, "she'll verses write,
An' to her neebors show it:
But troth I need na care a doit,
Though a' the country knew it.

My cakes are good, none can object;
The maids will ca' me thrifty;
To save a sixpence on the peck
Is just an honest shifty.

They're fair an' thin, an' crump, 'tis true;
You'll own sae when you see them;
But, what is better than the view,
Put out your han' an' pree them."

He spoke, an' han'd the cakes about,
Whilk ev'ry eater prized;
Until the basket was run out,
They did as he advised.

An' ilka ane that got a share,
Said that they were fu' dainty;
While Rab cri'd eat, an' dinna spare
For I hae cakes in plenty.

And i' the corner stan's a cheese,
A glass an' bottle by me;
Baith ale and porter, when I please,
To treat the lasses slily.

Some ca' me wild an' roving youth;
But sure they are mistaken:
The maid wha gets me, of a truth,
Her bread will ay be baken.

**A
POEM
ON**

CONTENTMENT.

INSCRIBED TO JANET NICOL, A POOR OLD WAN-
DERING WOMAN, WHO LIVES BY THE WALL
AT LOUDOUN AND USED SOMETIMES TO
BE VISITED BY THE COUNTESS.

O JANET, by your kind permission,
My muse, in tatter'd low condition,
Would fain attempt, if you'll allow,
To dedicate a song to you.
Posses'd of few attractive pow'rs,
Her case does much resemble yours;
So lest none else should deign to hear,
She humbly supplicates your ear.

Imprimis, she should compliment ye;
A Venus or Diana paint ye;
Count o'er your virtues by the hunder,
And own they're more than she can number.
This she might do; but then 't would grieve her,
To find no mortal did believe her.
She calls you patroness and friend,
And begs that blessings may attend
Upon you in your humble cot,
And keep your 'scutcheon free frae blot.
May sweet contentment, hard to find,
With radient lustre light your mind;
While numbers of your sister train
Must for the treasure pant in vain.

Bright Celia, with her conquering eyes,
Attempts to win the doubtful prize:
She darts a glance, ah! cruel maid,
Philander drops! a strapping blade.
The youth as frantic now behaves;
Of love and flames, and darts he raves.
Not Esculapius' sons can cure,
Nor ease the pangs he must endure.
At last the charmer gives consent;
Then Hymen does them both torment,
With nameless ills unknown before,
And ev'ry month augments the score.

May stars propitious guard your life
From all the mis'ries of a wife:

Poor Delia's sighs and tears next prove
The pains of ill requited love.
She danc'd, had wit, was wondrous fair,

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And seem'd Alonzo's heart to snare.
True love and constancy he vow'd;
But this by all must be allow'd,
That young men's tongues do not impart
The real language of their heart.
He wed another, sad to tell!
And bad the mournful maid farewell.

O Janet, may you never know
The pangs that lovers undergo.

Cordelia too, with look demure,
Contentment wishes to ensure.
She flattering Cupid wont believe:
She knows that Hymen can deceive;
But fondly hopes in verse to shine,
Assisted by the tuneful Nine;
To call their treasures all her own,
E'en in despite of fortune's frown.
But weak, alas! is her pretence;
Her song proves destitute of sense.
Each cavilling critic does her vex,
And ev'ry censure sore perplex.

O may you never feel the pain,
We heedless scribbling fools sustain.

A thousand more from various views,
The gliding meteor swift pursues.
The Patriot toils, in pensive mood,
For honour and Britannia's good.
The Courtier deems his Sov'reign's smile
Would all his anxious cares beguile.
O Janet, shun the coxing tribe,
Who barter virtue for a bribe.
The Coxcomb's care we well can guess;
He thinks the charm consists in dress,
Pomatum, powder, linens white,
Wash-balls, perfumes, and mirrors bright.
The Miser hopes his joys to hold,
Fast lock'd within his bags of gold:
Thieves, moth and rust, corrupt his rest;
May all his sorrows be your jest.
The plodding sage long years has spent
In searching for the gem content,
Which often does, I know not why,
In heaps of rustic rubbish lie.

And may my honest friend just now,
Without much quest be found by you;
May your old shoes, your staff and plaidy,

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Be always for the journey ready:
And blithly may ilk neighbour greet you;
May cakes, and scones, and kibbocks meet you;
And may they weel ilk pocket cram,
And in your bottle slip a dram.
May your wee glass, your pipe and specks,
Be ay' preserv'd frae doleful wrecks.
May your wee house, baith snug and warm,
Be safe frae ev'ry rude alarm
Of wandering lovers, who'd essay
To make soft innocence their prey:
Or ruffians cast in rougher mould,
Whose sordid bosoms beat for gold.

Content grows joy, in meeting there [This and the following two lines are connected by a large brace in right hand margin of the original printed edition.]

The little, lovely, blooming fair,
Who makes thy cot and thee her care;
Whose gentle, gen'rous, noble mind,
Tho' great and rich, can here prove kind;
Whose footsteps mark her path with peace,
Whose smile bids ev'ry sorrow cease;
For age and want, and wo provides
And over misery presides.

Her father's worth, and mother's charms
Esteem and fond affection warms,
While kind D –f –s, with rapture spies,
The sighing breast and swimming eyes;
Whose rays have found in James and thee,
The melting charm of misery.
That charm much more the cherub moves,
Than did his gift of cooing doves;
Whose hearts, less tender than her own,
Breathe forth their ever pleasing moan.
Sweet innocence, in her we find;
Bright truth illuminates her mind:
Each action says, for her to give
It is more joy than to receive.
Let James and you for Loudoun pray,
Whose charms have lur'd me from my lay.

Janet farewell, you've lint and tow,
O keep your rock ay frae the low;
Tho' turmoils torture land and sea,
Content may smoke a pipe with thee.

ALCANZAR.

WHEN first Alcanzar to the town did come,

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The people all believ'd that he was dumb:
In troops, with hasty steps to him they went;
To get their fate presag'd was their intent.
The man well vers'd was in the mystic art,
And quick as thought could wondrous things impart.
Whoever were with anxious cares oppress'd,
Or on account of absent friends distress'd,
Unto Alcanzar swiftly did repair,
Each of his purse did amply make him share.
It matters not how great the distance be,
A ship is rear'd, he wafts him o'er the sea:
Tho' in distress, them frees from ev'ry pain;
Dead or alive they now must cross the main:
Bedaub'd with lace, of gold they've got great store,
And swift he lands them on Britannia's shore.

The nymphs and swains do next his aid demand;
He ties them all in Hymen's silken band:
He does young Strephon with lov'd Delia bless,
Tho' wont ere while to shun his fond address.
Sly Sanders too, who loves and woos for gold,
Sees Susan's charms down on the table told:
Cows, calves and horses, plac'd before his sight,
A widow rich will well his love requite.
Poor Celia next, who, for some fickle swain,
Spends days in sorrow, and whole nights in pain:
It was his absence caus'd the maid to mourn,
But fam'd Alcanzar made him soon return.
His antic gestures did the fair one cheer,
And home she went, releas'd from every fear.
Old Elspa now comes trembling for her fate;
She would be wed, but fears it is too late:
Her locks, alas! are silver'd o'er with grey;
Yet to Alcanzar swift she takes her way.
She gave a sixpence; Ladies mark the rest,
She's with a husband and five children blest.
Here maids of fifty, widows of fourscore,
May all get marri'd for a penny more.

But is the man like as his merit priz'd?
Ah no! he is by empty fools despis'd.
A crafty youth, Will Watson was his name,
Did strive to ruin great Alcanzar's fame.
He dress'd himself all in a maid's array,
Gown, stays and petticoat, extremely gay;
A muslin head-dress, with a large toopee;
Few of our Ladies look'd so fine as he.
Up street he walk'd with a majestic air,
And to Alcanzar's lodgings did repair.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

First gave a penny, then he shew'd his hand,
And did with down cast eyes dejected stand:
But who can tell the sequel without tears?
Alcanzar's chalk too soon a cradle rears.
Who wont bewail this maid's sad destiny?
She pregnant proves, her love gone to sea.
Now all around upon the youth did gaze,
Such dismal signs had fill'd them with amaze.
Will gave a penny more; the sage did bring
The lover home, and wed them with a ring.
Eight children too, he plac'd before their sight
Will seem'd well pleased, and bade them all good night.

This might have pass'd, had he the fact conceal'd;
But O 'twas cruel! Willy all reveal'd.
He thought indeed, but all his thoughts were vain,
The fam'd Alcanzar's character to stain.
For one spoil'd dish who would a meal despise!
Or for one small mistake condemn the wise?

**FROM
ALONZO TO DELIA.**

TO you my fair, the empress of my heart,
I'm urg'd to vent my pure, untainted flame;
Tho' language faintly can my thoughts impart,
My swelling sighs, your kind attention claim.

See Venus self outrival'd by your charms:
Vain my attempt thy virtues to portray
O come my darling hasten to my arms
Within my bosom still you bear the sway.

Life without thee no pleasure can bestow;
O might my suit thy tender pity move!
No muse can paint the ills I undergo;
And nought can cure them but my Delia's love.

No bold ambitious views inspire my breast:
And what is honour but an empty name?
While Delia scorns, I never can be blest,
Though sounding heralds did my praise proclaim.

Know, lovely charmer, that our ancient fire
Did languish, tho' in Eden's fragrant bow'rs;
Till the first nymph bade love his breast inspire,
And by her presence cheer'd the ling'ring hours.

But Adam's love could never equal mine,
Nor did bright Eve such radiant beauty share.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

O come, my darling, heart and hand resign,
And ev'ry muse shall hail the happy pair.

**FROM
DELIA TO ALONZO.**

WHEN Adam was in spacious Eden plac'd,
Where rural sweets luxuriant did abound,
All that could charm the eye or please the taste,
In this blest scene of happiness was found.

O'er wide creation, he an empire sway'd:
The creatures all with whom the world was stor'd,
His sov'reign mandates with delight obey'd,
And own'd him as their universal lord.

What would he more, to render bliss complete?
You say he lack'd the sweets of social life,
Until fair Eve, with charms divinely sweet,
Became his friend, his partner, and his wife

But think, fond youth, how transient was the bliss,
Scarce had he felt the joys of mutual love,
Scarce had he once receiv'd th' ambrosial kiss,
When ah! his darling did his ruin prove!

Did she, who was adorn'd with ev'ry grace,
Prove fatal to the father of mankind?
Who of her daughters, a degen'rate race,
Can boast more art the tranquil hours to bind?

To sue for better, sir, would be in vain:
None ever yet did mother Eve excel.
Be warn'd by Adam; shun the glitt'ring train,
Lest some fond nymph your pleasures all expel.

A single life we find replete with joys,
The matrimonial chain I ever dread,
A state of celibacy is my choice;
Therefore Alonzo never can succeed.

FROM
DELIA TO ALONZO. WHO HAD SENT HER A SLIGHTING EPISTLE.

SIR, I your letter did peruse;
So elegant the style you use,
Abash'd, confounded I did muse
Struck with amaze;
Great wit and learning you diffuse
In all your lays.

FROM DELIA TO ALONZO.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

You've been upon Parnassus' top,
More high than Alexander Pope;
And wild Arabia's plains you grope
For Phenix rare,
That useful knowledge you may drop,
While dunces stare.

Your Pegasus, still on the wing,
More sweet than Philomel you sing;
And swift from distant climes you bring
Notes hard to read:
Does Phenix, sir, from ashes spring?
'Tis strange indeed.

But more difficult 'tis to scan,
That dire, deceitful creature man;
Of all the work in Nature's plan,
Sure none can be
So intricate to understand,
As mystic he.

His breast is fill'd with mazy wiles;
His count'nance stor'd with fickle smiles:
His flatt'ring speech too oft beguiles
Pure innocence;
And when he writes, his lofty style's
Replete with sense.

Such eloquence does merit praise;
Deep erudition swells your lays:
You seem the laureate of our days;
And all the nine,
Your mighty character to raise,
Do now combine.

'Tis pity, sir, that such as you
Should agriculture's paths pursue,
Or destin'd be to hold the plough
On the cold plain;
More fit that laurels deck'd the brow
Of such a swain.

Yet Homer's parts few did commend,
Till death his doleful days did end;
Then seven cities did contend
A right to claim;
Each vow'd from thence he did descend,
So great his fame.

Perhaps, sir, in some future age,
Struck with the beauties of your page,

FROM DELIA TO ALONZO.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Old Scotia's chieftains may engage
Your name to raise;
More have they to excite their rage,
Than Homer's lays.

But I must drop the pond'rous theme,
Lest you my weak attempts should blame;
So sure your title is to fame,
Who runs may read;
Of such your merit to proclaim
You have no need.

Know then, that love within my breast,
Has never yet been known to rest;
Nor would I harbour such a guest,
To give me pain:
I wish you, sir, so much distress'd,
Soon well again.

**FROM
FLAVIA TO CARLOS.**

DEAR sir, accept this missive sent
From one whose mind's sincerely bent,
On ever acting so with you,
As shall evince her friendship true.
But how shall Carlos really know,
That friendship in her breast doth glow?
A friend is more than empty name:
Few justly can the title claim.
Were Flavia born in station high,
Her friendship soon you would descry;
Her op'lence quickly would reveal,
What pen'ry bids her now conceal.
Then Carlos would her favour boast,
Nor be so much by fortune cross'd.

Thus Flavia talks of her esteem,
As heroes conquer in a dream;
Or as a culprit, doom'd to die,
In dungeon where he's forc'd to lie,
Might boast of what he could effect,
Were kings attentive to his beck.

You laugh, dear Sir, and pray what then,
Must Flavia call you best of men?
Must high encomiums grace her lays,
And all her notes be swell'd with praise?
Know Sir, when friendship does commence,
All flatt'ry must be spurn'd from thence:

FROM FLAVIA TO CARLOS.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

No real friendship can exist,
In the dissembling flatt'rer's breast.
What can poor Flavia then bestow,
But wish you still may better grow?
Your wit still more and more refine,

[This and the following two lines are connected by a large brace in the right margin of the original printed edition.]

And all the beauties of your min',
With radiant lustre ever shine;
In virtue's paths, still on to tread,
Which to the fair Elysium lead;
May every action justly claim
The Poet's wish, that thing call'd Fame.

As through life's winding vale you rove,
May still your stars propitious prove,
And richest blessings on you shower;
May sweet contentment grace your bower;
By love and fortune ever crown'd,
May honour all your wishes bound.
Nor access find within your breast,
One thought your friend would wish suppress;
And may they soon at Tyburn swing,
Who would not sign what here I sing.

TO NELL

WHEN AT
MOFFAT WELL.

ON the delightful banks of Mein,
The muse laments in pensive strain;
The nymphs assembl'd on the green,
Of Nelly's absence all complain.

Our rural swains no joys can find,
But still in pensive silence mourn;
With heads upon the turf reclin'd
They sigh, and wish your swift return.

Oft have they curs'd fair Moffat town,
With all the virtues of the Well;
The sprightly Beau, and rustic clown,
Of Nelly's charms delight to tell.

Dear maid, it is for you alone,
They spend whole days and nights in sighs;

FROM FLAVIA TO CARLOS.

And will you disregard their moan,
And all their plaintive notes despise?

'Tis Autumn now, the fertile field,
Rich Ceres decks with yellow grain;
With joy we would our sickles wield,
If Nelly deign'd to grace the plain.

Come now and of our labours share;
None better can that weapon ply;
O mitigate Philander's care,
Whose toil seems less when you are nigh.

Once more, dear Nell, I'd wish to see
You cheerful join the rural throng;
Your presence would enhance our glee,
And sweetly animate my song.

A
YOUNG LADY'S LAMENTATION

FOR THE
LOSS OF HER SISTER BY MARRIAGE.

WHAT tongue can half my woes express?
What force of eloquence can tell?
The causes of my deep distress
Are such as ever seem to swell.

My parents not ignoble were;
My father once a merchant fam'd;
But now in a superior sphere,
'Mongst *landed gentlemen* he's nam'd.

My mother of no mean extract:
The famous Freyburgh gave her birth;
With wit and prudence still she'll act;
None more accomplished on earth.

My brethren all for valour fam'd,
Their merit great, what pen can show;
Their praise has been by fame proclaim'd,
While justly in esteem they grow.

I had one only sister dear;
Our parents' joy and pride were we;
Our charms attractive did appear
To men of high and low degree:

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Who often times, in soft address,
Did strive our favour to obtain,
While we of fortitude possess'd,
Refus'd their offers with disdain.

They vow'd we would their ruin prove,
Persisting in our cruelty;
But we were wont to laugh at love,
And little Cupid's darts defy.

We ever arm'd were cap-a-pee;
Indifference was our favourite shield;
But by some fatal destiny,
My sister languish'd in the field.

Depriv'd of all defensive arms,
(I sigh, my tears begin to flow)
And slain by a sea captain's charms,
She married was a month ago.

In an unlucky moment he,
From Plutus sure had learn'd the art,
Made his empoison'd arrows flee,
Till one of them did pierce her heart.

She did not wish to find relief,
But an ignoble victim fell,
Which fill'd our parents' hearts with grief;
Their sorrows great what tongue can tell?

The balsam of advice was brought,
With drops of strict authority;
Prescriptions still to shun she sought,
Nor would the medicines apply.

With water of forgetfulness,
She oft was bid to bathe the wound:
The search was vain, she did protest
This water never could be found.

It griev'd us much thus to behold
Our counsels slighted with disdain:
His feather'd darts were tipp'd with gold,
Which render'd every effort vain.

But conscious that our parents dear
Could not behold the fatal blow,
To make the stroke seem less severe,
She at a distance met the foe.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Her peerless charms she there resign'd,
Compell'd by love's supreme command;
A clown by travels much refin'd
Did eager clasp her beauteous hand.

I will lament a sister lost.
Ah! ladies hear my piteous moan,
Depriv'd of what I once could boast,
I now must keep the field alone.

What though I no assistance have,
I hope to act courag'ously,
The subtle foe still to outbrave,
And man's seducing arts defy.

The rich, the poor, the proud, the slave,
The fop, the clown, the low, the tall,
The gay, the giddy, or the grave,
I scornfully defy them all.

WHILE o'er the plains stern winter bore the sway,
And Sol from Capricorn diffus'd his ray,
Nigh Bolton Gate, beneath a hawthorn shade,
Two rural swains sad lamentations made:
Each for an absent damsel seem'd to mourn,
While throbbing breasts did sigh for sigh return.

Young D y's notes and T 's fond praises prov'd,
That D h T r was the maid belov'd.
Says D k, "O had I these sweet hours again,
I've spent with her; but ah! I wish in vain.
The nymph is fled; to Manchester she's gone,
Nor heeds my sighs, nor yet regards my moan:
Her cruel aunts did contribute their aid,
To banish from my sight the lovely maid.
O little Cupid, choose two fatal darts,
And with a vengeance, send them to their hearts;
May they endure the agonizing pain
Of love, yet ever unbelov'd remain;
And, when far hence, by death they're doom'd to go,
Then let their task be leading apes below.

Young D h was the fairest on the plain,
Admir'd and lov'd by ev'ry wond'ring swain.
Her charms exterior might a hero bind;
But ah! the beauty that adorns her mind,
To paint does far exceed my Muse's skill.
To you, dear T I'll now resign the quill."
Says T , "On her the Graces seem to wait;
Her form, how fair! enchanting is her gait.
Her youthful charms, no tongue could e'er express;

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Nor does her absence render them the less.
The soft impression with me still remains;
I'm captive, yet I glory in my chains.
With fond delight I retrospect the day,
When we to Eden took our way,
With hearts elate, to view the Scottish fair,
Lov'd Death sweeten'd all the pleasures there.
Blest with her company upon the road,
How charming seem'd each rugged path we trode?
Nor could the Scottish fair such charms display;
My darling reign'd the empress of the day.

But ah! reflection animates my pain,
Such happy days I'll ne'er behold again.
Alas! I languish now in deep despair;
O that I could forget my absent fair!"

While these two youths rehearsed their plaintive tale,
A third came stalking o'er a distant dale:
Ruth in his name, whose anxious looks did show,
His beating bosom much oppress'd with wo.
Of Janet's charms, he in soft concert sung;
Janet the gay, the beautiful, and the young;
She who of late, with parson Fether stay'd,
In the low station of a dairy-maid.
Yet there it was she gain'd young Ruth's heart,
And in her absence nought can ease his smart.

O hapless lads! can nought allay your pain,
Till these two charming maids return again?
Is there none else can ease your tortur'd mind?
None else so fair, so virtuous and so kind?
So may you think, and thus in sighs lament,
Till Hymen's fetters make you all repent.
Better bewail an absent love for life,
Than be tormented by a fractious wife.

**TO
A LADY
WHO SENT THE AUTHOR SOME PAPER
WITH A READING OF SILLAR'S POEMS.**

DEAR madam, with joy I read over your letter;
Your kindness still tends to confirm me your debtor;
But can't think of payment, the sum is so large,
Tho' farthings for guineas could buy my discharge.
But, madam, the Muses are fled far away,
They deem it disgrace with a milkmaid to stay.
Let them go if they will, I would scorn to pursue,
And can, without sighing, subscribe an adieu.

The Poetical Works of Janet Little, the Scotch Milkmaid

Their trifling mock visits, to many so dear,
Is the only disaster on earth I now fear.
Sure Sillar much better had banish'd them thence,
Than wrote in despite of good manners and sense:
With two or three more, whose pretentions to fame
Are slight as the bubble that bursts on the stream.
And lest with such dunces as these I be number'd,
The task I will drop, nor with verse be incumber'd;
Tho' pen, ink and paper, are by me in store,
O madam excuse, for I ne'er shall write more.