

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LYRICAL BALLADS WITH
OTHER POEMS, 1800,
VOLUME 2

William Wordsworth
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Poems, 1800, Volume 2

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Lyrical Ballads with Other Poems, 1800, Volume 2:*

Содержание

HART-LEAP WELL	4
PART SECOND	9
There was a Boy, &c	13
THE BROTHERS, A PASTORAL POEM	15
ELLEN IRWIN,	39
Strange fits of passion I have known, &c	42
SONG	44
A slumber did my spirit seal, &c	45
The WATERFALL and the EGLANTINE	46
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	48

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HART-LEAP WELL

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road which leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
He turn'd aside towards a Vassal's door,
And, "Bring another Horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another Horse!" – That shout the Vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely Grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing Courser's eyes;

The horse and horsemen are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they gallop'd made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanish'd, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Brach, Swift and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and weary up the mountain strain.

The Knight halloo'd, he chid and cheer'd them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eye-sight fail, and, one by one,
The dogs are stretch'd among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the chace?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
– This race it looks not like an earthly race;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he lean'd against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither smack'd his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gaz'd upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter lean'd,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yean'd,
And foaming like a mountain cataract.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretch'd:
His nose half-touch'd a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetch'd
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
Was never man in such a joyful case,
Sir Walter walk'd all round, north, south and west,
And gaz'd, and gaz'd upon that darling place.

And turning up the hill, it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent, Sir Walter found
Three several marks which with his hoofs the beast
Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies."

I'll build a Pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small Arbour, made for rural joy;
Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

A cunning Artist will I have to frame
A bason for that fountain in the dell;
And they, who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it Hart-leap Well.

And, gallant brute! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be rais'd;
Three several pillars, each a rough hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have graz'd.

And in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour,
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure,
– The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure.

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretch'd above the spring.
And soon the Knight perform'd what he had said,

The fame whereof through many a land did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steer'd,
A cup of stone receiv'd the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter rear'd,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were interwin'd,
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter journey'd with his paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale. —
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade.
To curl the blood I have no ready arts;
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts,

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanc'd that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspins at three corners of a square,
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine,
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here in old time the hand of man has been."

I look'd upon the hills both far and near;
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seem'd as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one who was in Shepherd's garb attir'd,
Came up the hollow. Him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquir'd.

The Shepherd stopp'd, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehears'd.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old,
But something ails it now; the spot is curs'd."

You see these lifeless stumps of aspin wood,
Some say that they are beeches, others elms,
These were the Bower; and here a Mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms.

The arbour does its own condition tell,
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream,
But as to the great Lodge, you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And, oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guess'd, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

What thoughts must through the creature's brain have pass'd!
To this place from the stone upon the steep
Are but three bounds, and look, Sir, at this last!
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lull'd by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wander'd from his mother's side.

In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing,
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

But now here's neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone:
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain all are gone.

Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine;
This beast not unobserv'd by Nature fell,

His death was mourn'd by sympathy divine.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves.
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For them the quiet creatures whom he loves.

The Pleasure-house is dust: – behind, before,
This, is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

She leaves these objects to a slow decay
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

There was a Boy, &c

There was a Boy, ye knew him well, ye Cliffs
And Islands of Winander! many a time,
At evening, when the stars had just begun
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake,
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Press'd closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
That they might answer him. And they would shout
Across the wat'ry vale and shout again
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled, a wild scene

Of mirth and jocund din. And, when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mock'd his skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents, or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, receiv'd

Into the bosom of the steady lake.

Fair are the woods, and beautiful is the spot,
The vale where he was born: the Church-yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school,
And there along that bank when I have pass'd
At evening, I believe, that near his grave
A full half-hour together I have stood,
Mute – for he died when he was ten years old.

THE BROTHERS, A PASTORAL POEM

The BROTHERS.¹

These Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air.
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as their summer lasted; some, as wise,
Upon the forehead of a jutting crag
Sit perch'd with book and pencil on their knee,
And look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping son of Idleness
Why can he tarry *yonder*? – In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tomb-stone nor name, only the turf we tread.
And a few natural graves. To Jane, his Wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.

¹ This Poem was intended to be the concluding poem of a series of pastorals, the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologise for the abruptness with which the poem begins.

It was a July evening, and he sate
Upon the long stone seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, as it chanced that day,
Employ'd in winter's work. Upon the stone
His Wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards tooth'd with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who turn'd her large round wheel in the open air
With back and forward steps. Towards the field
In which the parish chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder, and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snowy ridge
Of carded wool – which the old Man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other lock'd; and, down the path
Which from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad: who ere his thirteenth year
Had chang'd his calling, with the mariners
A fellow-mariner, and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been rear'd
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a Shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard

The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees; and when the regular wind
Between the tropics fill'd the steady sail
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence would often hang
Over the vessel's aide, and gaze and gaze,
And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
Flash'd round him images and hues, that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep
Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that graz'd
On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,
And Shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.²

And now at length,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquir'd by traffic in the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is return'd,
With a determin'd purpose to resume
The life which he liv'd there, both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne

² This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, Author of the Hurricane.

In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother Shepherds on their native hills.
– They were the last of all their race; and now,
When Leonard had approach'd his home, his heart
Fail'd in him, and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one whom he so dearly lov'd,
Towards the church-yard he had turn'd aside,
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother liv'd, or to the file
Another grave was added. – He had found
Another grave, near which a full half hour
He had remain'd, but, as he gaz'd, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt, and he had hopes
That he had seen this heap of turf before,
That it was not another grave, but one,
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale he came that afternoon,
Through fields which once had been well known to him.
And Oh! what joy the recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And looking round he thought that he perceiv'd
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And the eternal hills, themselves were chang'd.

By this the Priest who down the field had come

Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopp'd short, and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
He scann'd him with a gay complacency.
Aye, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself;
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business, to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday,
The happy man will creep about the fields
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his check, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write Fool upon his forehead. Planted thus
Beneath a shed that overarch'd the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appear'd
The good man might have commun'd with himself
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approach'd; he recogniz'd the Priest at once,
And after greetings interchang'd, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

LEONARD

You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come

And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remember'd. Scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once, in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you.
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish. – I remember,
For many years ago I pass'd this road,
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side – 'tis gone – and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had.

PRIEST

Why, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same —

LEONARD

But, surely, yonder —

PRIEST

Aye, there indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false. – On that tall pike,
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two Springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: ten years back,
Close to those brother fountains, the huge crag
Was rent with lightning – one is dead and gone,
The other, left behind, is flowing still. —
For accidents and changes such as these,
Why we have store of them! a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract – a sharp May storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens, or a Shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge —
A wood is fell'd: – and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christen'd, a field plough'd,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house cloth is deck'd with a new face;

And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries, one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side,
Your's was a stranger's judgment: for historians
Commend me to these vallies.

LEONARD

Yet your church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past.
Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones or skull, type of our earthly state
Or emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture field.

PRIEST

Why there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me.
The Stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours:
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth.

We have no need of names and epitaphs,
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then for our immortal part, *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains:

LEONARD

Your dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these Graves?

PRIEST

With what I've witness'd; and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might, and, on a winter's evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round,
Yet all in the broad high-way of the world.
Now there's a grave – your foot is half upon it,
It looks just like the rest, and yet that man

Died broken-hearted.

LEONARD

'Tis a common case,
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves; —
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

PRIEST

That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produc'd by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
For five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflow'd the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage,
You see it yonder, and those few green fields.
They toil'd and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little – yet a little – and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land

With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still preserv'd
A chearful mind, and buffeted with bond,
Interest and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurr'd him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two Grandsons after him – but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel, and in these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer —

LEONARD

But these two Orphans!

PRIEST

Orphans! such they were —
Yet not while Walter liv'd – for, though their Parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,

The old Man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears
Shed, when he talk'd of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man in the day of his old age
Was half a mother to them. – If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Aye. You may turn that way – it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD

These Boys I hope
They lov'd this good old Man —

PRIEST

They did – and truly,
But that was what we almost overlook'd,
They were such darlings of each other. For
Though from their cradles they had liv'd with Walter,
The only kinsman near them in the house,

Yet he being old, they had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them! from their house the School
Was distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridg'd stream, such as you may have notic'd
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys perhaps
Remain'd at home, go staggering through the fords
Bearing his Brother on his back. – I've seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Aye, more than once I've seen him mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone
Upon the hither side: – and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety —

LEONARD

It may be then —

PRIEST

Never did worthier lads break English bread:
The finest Sunday that the Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep these boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks and every hollow place
Where foot could come, to one or both of them
Was known as well as to the flowers that grew there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills:
They play'd like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, aye and speak too, as well
As many of their betters – and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager twenty pounds,
That, if he is alive, he has it yet.

LEONARD

It seems, these Brothers have not liv'd to be
A comfort to each other. —

PRIEST

That they might
Live to that end, is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wish'd,
And what, for my part, I have often pray'd:
But Leonard —

LEONARD

Then James still is left among you —

PRIEST

'Tis of the elder Brother I am speaking:
They had an Uncle, he was at that time
A thriving man, and traffick'd on the seas:
And, but for this same Uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud.
For the Boy lov'd the life which we lead here;

And, though a very Stripling, twelve years old;
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold, and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbauks for a thousand years.
Well – all was gone, and they were destitute.
And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
Resolv'd to try his fortune on the seas.
'Tis now twelve years since we had tidings from him.
If there was one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the great Gavel³, down by Leeza's Banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a very festival,
And those two bells of ours, which there you see
Hanging in the open air – but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk – they'll never sound for him
Living or dead – When last we heard of him
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary Coast – 'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit, and, no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Lad

³ The great Gavel, so called I imagine, from its resemblance to the Gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale. The Leeza is a River which follows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

Was sadly cross'd – Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand and said to me,
If ever the day came when he was rich,
He would return, and on his Father's Land
He would grow old among us.

LEONARD

If that day
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be as happy then
As any that should meet him —

PRIEST

Happy, Sir —

LEONARD

You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother —

PRIEST

That is but
A fellow tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate,
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain boy
In him was somewhat check'd, and when his Brother
Was gone to sea and he was left alone
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek, he droop'd, and pin'd and pin'd;

LEONARD

But these are all the graves of full grown men!

PRIEST

Aye, Sir, that pass'd away: we took him to us.
He was the child of all the dale – he liv'd
Three months with one, and six months with another:
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love,
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he liv'd beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his Brother Leonard – You are mov'd!
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judg'd you most unkindly.

LEONARD

But this youth,
How did he die at last?

PRIEST

One sweet May morning,
It will be twelve years since, when Spring returns,

He had gone forth among the new-dropp'd lambs,
With two or three companions whom it chanc'd
Some further business summon'd to a house
Which stands at the Dale-head. James, tir'd perhaps,
Or from some other cause remain'd behind.
You see yon precipice – it almost looks
Like some vast building made of many crags,
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our Shepherds it is call'd, the Pillar.
James, pointing to its summit, over which
They all had purpos'd to return together,
Inform'd them that he there would wait for them:
They parted, and his comrades pass'd that way
Some two hours after, but they did not find him
At the appointed place, a circumstance
Of which they took no heed: but one of them,
Going by chance, at night, into the house
Which at this time was James's home, there learn'd
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still, he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarm'd, and to the Brook
Some went, and some towards the Lake; ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same Rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Lad, and there he lies.

LEONARD

And that then *is* his grave! – Before his death
You said that he saw many happy years?

PRIEST

Aye, that he did —

LEONARD

And all went well with him —

PRIEST

If he had one, the Lad had twenty homes.

LEONARD

And you believe then, that his mind was easy —

PRIEST

Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow, and unless
His thoughts were turn'd on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talk'd about him with a chearful love.

LEONARD

He could not come to an unhallow'd end!

PRIEST

Nay, God forbid! You recollect I mention'd

A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him, and we all conjectur'd
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
Upon the grass, and, waiting for his comrades
He there had fallen asleep, that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walk'd, and from the summit had fallen head-long,
And so no doubt he perish'd: at the time,
We guess, that in his hands he must have had
His Shepherd's staff; for midway in the cliff
It had been caught, and there for many years
It hung – and moulder'd there.

The Priest here ended —

The Stranger would have thank'd him, but he felt
Tears rushing in; both left the spot in silence,
And Leonard, when they reach'd the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turn'd round,
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother."
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
Pointing towards the Cottage, he entreated
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thank'd him with a fervent voice,
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reach'd a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopp'd short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, review'd

All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him in his heart: his cherish'd hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before.
All press'd on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seem'd
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquish'd all his purposes.
He travell'd on to Egremont; and thence,
That night, address'd a letter to the Priest
Reminding him of what had pass'd between them.
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart,
He had not dared to tell him, who he was.

This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey headed Mariner.

*ELLEN IRWIN,
Or the BRAES of KIRTLE.⁴*

Fair Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the Braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian Maid
Adorn'd with wreaths of myrtle.
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many Knights and many Squires
The Brace had been selected,
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!
For it may be proclaim'd with truth,
If Bruce hath lov'd sincerely,
The Gordon loves as dearly.

But what is Gordon's beauteous face?
And what are Gordon's crosses
To them who sit by Kirtle's Braes

⁴ The Kirtle is a River in the Southern part of Scotland, on whose banks the events here related took place.

Upon the verdant mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, couch'd behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing,
Beholds them bless'd and blessing.

Proud Gordon cannot bear the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
And, starting up, to Bruce's heart
He launch'd a deadly jav'lin!
Fair Ellen saw it when it came,
And, stepping forth to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus from the heart of her true-love
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sail'd away to Spain,
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish Crescent.

But many days and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing:
So coming back across the wave,

Without a groan on Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkconnel church-yard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid,
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn 'Hic jacet'.

Strange fits of passion I have known, &c

Strange fits of passion I have known,
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befel.

When she I lov'd, was strong and gay
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,
All over the wide lea;
My horse trudg'd on, and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reach'd the orchard plot,
And, as we climb'd the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And, all the while, my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse mov'd on; hoof after hoof
He rais'd and never stopp'd:
When down behind the cottage roof
At once the planet dropp'd.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head —
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

SONG

She dwelt among th' untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

A Violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the Eye!
– Fair, as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky!

She *liv'd* unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceas'd to be;
But she is in her Grave, and Oh!
The difference to me.

A slumber did my spirit seal, &c

A slumber did my spirit seal,
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force
She neither hears nor sees
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees!

The WATERFALL and the EGLANTINE

"Begone, thou fond presumptuous Elf,
Exclaim'd a thundering Voice,
Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A falling Water swoln with snows
Thus spake to a poor Briar-rose,
That all bespatter'd with his foam,
And dancing high, and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The Flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Briar suffer'd long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be pass'd:
But seeing no relief, at last
He venture'd to reply.

"Ah!" said the Briar, "Blame me not!

Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this, our natal spot,
Once liv'd a happy life!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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