

themselves after the manner of Falconer, Cunningham, and Ramsay, the untaught poets of Scotland received but little help from the patronage of their countrymen. The aristocracy of Scotland made Burns a gauger; and employed one of the noblest intellects which his country ever produced, in "searching," as he himself in bitter mirth expressed it, "auld wives' barrels." And neither Alexander Wilson nor poor Tannahill ever received even the miserable measure of patronage that gave Burns seventy pounds a year, and demanded, in return, that he should waste three-fourths of his time in a half-reputable and uncongenial employment. Poor Tannahill, the harmless, the gentle, the affectionate, was left to perish unhappily when he was but little turned of thirty; and Wilson, a stronger, though not a finer spirit, quitted his country in disgust, and made himself an enduring fame in the United States as a naturalist, by the great work which Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte did not disdain to complete. We cannot point to a single untaught poet in the literary history of our country that ever enjoyed a pension. Pensions were reserved for the friends and relatives of the statesmen to whom Toryism in Edinburgh and elsewhere built senseless columns. But though the untaught poets of Scotland fared thus differently from those of England, it was certainly not because they deserved less: On the contrary, if we except Shakspeare,—one of those extraordinary minds that, according to Johnson, "bid help and hindrance alike vanish before them,"—our untaught Scotchmen have been men of larger calibre, and greater masters of the lyre, than the corresponding class in England. Passing over the John Taylors and Ned Wards, as deserving of no special remark, we would stake Ramsay with his "Gentle Shepherd," against his brother poet and brother bookseller Dodsley with his "Miller of Mansfield" and his "Toy Shop," taking odds of ten to one any day; Bloomfield, though a worthy personage, and pos-