

They seem born for others, not for themselves. Alas for the hapless companion of my early youth! Alas for him, the pride of his country, the friend of my maturer manhood! But my narrative lags in its progress.

My vessel lay in the Clyde for several weeks during the summer of 1794, and I found time to indulge myself in a brief tour along the western coasts of the kingdom from Glasgow to the borders. I entered Dumfries in a calm, lovely evening, and passed along one of the principal streets. The shadows of the houses on the western side were stretched half-way across the pavement, while on the side opposite the bright sunshine seemed sleeping on the jutting irregular fronts and high antique gables. There seemed a world of well-dressed company this evening in town; and I learned, on inquiry, that all the aristocracy of the adjacent country, for twenty miles round, had come in to attend a country ball. They went fluttering along the sunny side of the street, gay as butterflies, group succeeding group. On the opposite side, in the shade, a solitary individual was passing slowly along the pavement. I knew him at a glance. It was the first poet, perhaps the greatest man, of his age and country. But why so solitary? It had been told me that he ranked among his friends and associates many of the highest names in the kingdom, and yet to-night not one of the hundreds who fluttered past appeared inclined to recognize him. He seemed, too,—but perhaps fancy misled me,—as if care-worn and dejected,—pained, perhaps, that not one among so many of the great should have humility enough to notice a poor exciseman. I stole up to him unobserved, and tapped him on the shoulder. There was a decided fierceness in his manner as he turned abruptly round; but, as he recognized me, his expressive countenance lighted up in a moment,