

**ANSTER FAIR, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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Anster fair, and other poems by William Tennant

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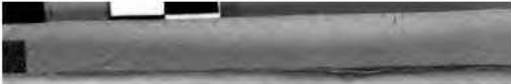
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WILLIAM TENNANT

**ANSTER FAIR, AND
OTHER POEMS**



PEOPLE'S EDITION.

A N S T E R F A I R,

AND

O T H E R P O E M S.

BY

WILLIAM TENNANT.

WITH A

PREFATORY MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

EDINBURGH:

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AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1838.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORIGINAL (AUTHOR'S) PREFACE.

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

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

In a humorous poem, partly descriptive of Scottish

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

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

Edinburgh, 23d June 1711.

ANSTER FAIR.

CANTO I.

I.

While some of Troy and pettish heroes sing,
And some of Rome and chiefs of pious fame,
And some of men that thought it harmless thing
To smite off heads in Mars's bloody game,
And some of Eden's garden gay with spring,
And Hell's dominion terrible to name—
I sing a theme far livelier, happier, gladder,
I sing of ANSTER FAIR, and bonny MAGGIE LAUBER.

II.

What time from east, from west, from south, from north,
From every hamlet, town, and smoky city,
Laird, clown, and bean, to Anster Fair came forth,
The young, the gay, the handsome, and the witty,
To try in various sport and game their worth,
Whilst prize before them MAGGIE sat, the pretty,
And after many a feat, and joke, and banter,
Fair MAGGIE'S hand was won by mighty RONNIE RANXER.

III.

Muse, that from top of thine old Greekish hill,
Bidst the harp-fing'ring Thelau younker view,
And on his lips bid bees their sweets distil,
And gav'st the chariot that the white swans drew,
Oh let me scoop, from thine ethereal rill,
Some little palmfuls of the blessed dew,
And lend the swan-drawn ear, that safely I,
Like him, may scorn the earth, and burst into the sky.

IV.

Our themes are like; for he the games extoll'd
Held in the chariot-shaken Grecian plains,
Where the vain victor, arrogant and bold,
A pickle parsley got for all his pains;
I sing of sports more worthy to be told,
Where better prize the Scottish victor gains:
What were the crowns of Greece but wind and bladder,
Compared with marriage-bed of bonny MAGGIE LAUBER!

V.

And oh that King Apollo would but grant
A little spark of that transcendent flame,
That fir'd the Chian rhapsodist to chant
How vied the bowmen for Ulysses' dame,
And him of Rome to sing how Atalanta
Piled, dart in hand, the suitor-slaught'ring game,
Till the bright gold, bow'd furth along the grass,
Betray'd her to a spouse, and stopp'd the bounding lass!

VI.

But lo! from bosom of yon southern cloud,
I see the chariot come which Pindar bore;
I see the swans, whose white necks, arching proud,
Glitter with golden yoke, approach my shore:
For me they come; Oh Phœbus, potent god!
Spare, spare me now—enough, good king!—no more—
A little spark I ask'd in moderation,
Why scorch me ev'n to death with fiery inspiration!

VII.

My pulse beats fire—my perieranium glows,
Like baker's oven, with poetic heat;
A thousand bright ideas, spurning prose,
Are in a twinkling hatch'd in Fancy's seat;
Zounds! they will fly out at my ears and nose,
If through my mouth they find not passage fleet;
I hear them buzzing deep within my noddle,
Like bees that in their hives confus'dly hum and huddle.

VIII.

How now!—what's this!—my very eyes, I trow,
Drop on my hands their base prosaic scales;
My visual orbs are purg'd from film, and lo!
Instead of ANSTER'S turnip-bearing vales,
I see old Fairyland's miraculous show,
Her trees of tinèd kine'd by frolish gales,
Her omphes, that cloak'd in leaf-gold skim the breeze,
And fairies swarming thick as mites in rotten cheese.

IX.

I see the puny fair-chinn'd goblin rise
Suddenly glorious from his mustard pot;
I see him wave his hand in seemly wise,
And button round him tight his fulgent coat;
While MAGGIE LAUBER, in a great surprise,
Sits startled on her chair, yet fearing not;
I see him ope his dewy lips; I hear
The strange and strict command address'd to MAGGIE'S
ear.

X.

I see the RANXER with baggage on back,
As to the Fair he rides jocosly on;
I see the crowds that press with speed not slack
Along each road that leads to ANSTER LEAN;
I see the suitors, that, deep-sheath'd in sack,
Hobble and tumble, hawl and swear, and groan;
I see—but fie, thou brainish Muse! what mean
These vapourings, and brags of what by thee is seen?

XI.

Go to—be cooler, and in order tell
To all my good co-townamen list'n'ing round,
How every merry incident befell,
Whereby our Lean shall ever be renown'd;
Say first, what elf or fairy could impel
Fair MAG, with wit, and wealth, and beauty crown'd,
To put her suitors to such waggish test,
And give her happy bod to him that jumped best.

XII.

'Twas on a loon December night, John Frost
Drave thro' mid air his chariot, icy-wheel'd,
And from the sky's crisp ceiling star-embost,
Whiff'd off the clouds that the pure blue conceal'd;
The hornless moon amid her brilliant host
Shone, and with silver-shedded lake and field;
'Twas cutting cold; I'm sure, each trav'ler's nose
Was pinch'd right red that night, and numb'd were all
his toes.

XIII.

Not so were MAGGIE LAUBER'S toes, as she
In her warm chamber at her supper sate
(For 'twas that hour when bourgeois agree
To eat their suppers ere the night grows late).
Alone she sat, and pensive as may be
A young fair lady, wishful of a mate;
Yet with her teeth, held now and then a-picking,
Her stomach to refresh, the breast-bone of a chicken.

XIV.

She thought upon her suitors, that with love
Besiege her chamber all the livelong day,
Aspiring each her virgin heart to move
With courtship's every troublesome essay—
Calling her angel, sweeting, fondling, dove,
And other nicknames in love's frivolous way;
While she, though their addresses still she heard,
Held back from all her heart, and still no beau preferred.

XV.
 "What, what!" quo' MAO, "must this it be my doom
 To spend my prime in maidhood's joyless state,
 And waste away my sprightly body's bloom
 In spouseless solitude without a mate—
 Still toying with my suitors, as they come
 Cringing in lowly courtship to my gate!
 Fool that I am, to live unwed so long!
 More fool, since I am woo'd by such a clam'rous throng!"

XVI.
 For was e'er heiress with much gold in chest,
 And dowr'd with acres of wheat-bearing land,
 By such a pack of men, in am'rous quest,
 Fawningly spaniel'd to bestow her hand!
 Where'er I walk, the air that feeds my breast
 Is by the gusy sighs of lovers fann'd;
 Each wind that blows wafts love-cards to my lap;
 Whilst I—ah stupid MAO!—avoid each am'rous trap!

XVII.
 Then come, let me my suitors' merits weigh,
 And in the worstlest lad my spouse select—
 First, there's our Avarice merchant, Norman Ray,
 A powder'd wight with golden buttons deck'd,
 That stinks with scent, and chats like popinjay,
 And struts with pliz tremendously erect:
 Four brigs has he that on the broad sea swim—
 He is a pompous fool—I cannot think of him.

XVIII.
 Next is the maltster Andrew Strang, that takes
 His seat 'tibe ballie's left on Sabbath-day,
 With paltry vineg' white as cotton cakes,
 As if on blood runs gurgling in his clay;
 Heav'n! what an awkward lurch the fellow makes,
 As to the priest he does the bow repay!
 Yet he is rich—a vey wealthy man, true—
 But, by the holy rood, I will have none of Andrew.

XIX.
 Then for the lairds—there's Melvil of Carnber,
 A handsome gallant, and a beau of spirit;
 Who can go down the dance so well as he!
 And who can fiddle with such manly merit!
 Ay, but he is too much the debauchee—
 His cheeks seem sponges oozing port and claret;
 In marrying him I should bestow myself ill—
 And so, I'll not have you, thou fuddler, Harry Melvil!

XX.
 There's Cunningham of Barrs, that still assails
 With verse and billet-doux my gentle heart—
 A bookish squire, and good at telling tales,
 That rhymes and whines of Cupid, flame, and dart;
 But, oh! his mouth a sorry smell exhales,
 And on his nose sprouts horribly the wart;
 What though there be a fund of lire and fun in him,
 He has a rotten breath—I cannot think of Cunningham!

XXI.
 Why then, there's Allardyce, that plies his suit
 And battery of courtship more and more;
 Spruce Lochmalonie, that with booted foot
 Each morning wears the threshold of my door;
 Auchmontie too and Bruce, that persecute
 My tender heart with am'rous buffets sore—
 Whom to my hand and bed should I promote!—
 Eh-lah! what sight is this!—what silly mustard-pot!"

XXII.
 Here broke the lady her soliloquy;
 For in a twink her pot of mustard, lo!
 Self-moved, like Jove's wheel'd stool that rolls on high,
 'Gan caper on her table to and fro,
 And hopp'd and filgoted before her eye,
 Spontaneous, here and there, a wondrous show:
 As leaps, instinct with mercury, a bladder,
 So leaps the mustard-pot of honny MAO'S LADDER.

XXIII.
 Soon stopp'd its dances th' impetuous steed,
 When from its round and small recess there came
 This curling wreath of paly smoke, that still,
 Fed by some magic unapparent flame,

Mount to the chamber's stucco'd roof, and fill
 Each nook with fragrance, and refresh the dame;
 Ne'er smelt a Phoenix-nest so sweet, I roe,
 As smelt the luscious fumes of MAO'S mustard-pot.

XXIV.
 It reeked censor-like; then, strange to tell!
 Forth from the smoke, that thick and thicker grows,
 A fairy of the height of half an ell,
 In dewfish pomp, majestically rose:
 Her feet, upon the table's establish'd well,
 Stood trim and splendid in their snake-skin hose;
 Gleam'd topaz-like the breeches he had on,
 Whose waistband like the bend of summer rainbow
 shone.

XXV.
 His coat seem'd fashion'd of the threads of gold,
 That intertwine the clouds at sun-set hour,
 And, certes, Iris with her shuttle bold
 Wove the rich garment in her lofty tower;
 To form its buttons were the Pleiads old
 Pluck'd from their sockets, sure by genie-power,
 And sew'd upon the coat's resplendent hem;
 Its neck was lovely green, each cuff a sapphire gem.

XXVI.
 As when the churlish spirit of the Cape
 To Gama, veyaging to Mozambique,
 Up-popp'd from sea, a langlo-tassell'd shape,
 With mussels sticking inch-thick on his cheek,
 And 'gan with tortoise-shell his limbs to scrape,
 And yawn'd his monstrous Hottentots to speak;
 Brave Gama's hairs stood bristled at the sight,
 And on the tarry deck sunk down his men with fright.

XXVII.
 So sudden (not so huge and grimly dire)
 Uprose to MAO'S the stounded cyne the sprite,
 As fair a fairy as you could desire,
 With roddy cheek, and chin and temples white;
 Her eyes seem'd little points of sparkling fire,
 That, as he look'd, charm'd with inviting light;
 He was, indeed, as bonny a fay and briek,
 As e'er on long moon-beam was seen to ride and frisk.

XXVIII.
 Around his bosom, by a silken zone,
 A little bagpipe gracefully was bound,
 Whose pipes like hollow stalks of silver shone,
 The glistering tiny avenues of sound;
 Beneath his arm the windy bag, full blown,
 Heav'd up; his purple like an orange round,
 And only willed orders to discharge
 Its blasts with charming groan into the sky at large.

XXIX.
 He wav'd his hand to MAO'S, as she sat
 Amaz'd and start'd on her curv'd chair;
 Then took his petty feather-garnish'd hat
 In honour to the lady, from his hair,
 And made a bow so dignifi'ly flat,
 That MAO was witch'd with his bosuiah air:
 At last he spoke, with voice so soft, so kind,
 So sweet, as if his throat with fiddle-strings was lin'd.

XXX.
 "Lady! be not offended that I dave,
 Thus forward and imperiously endle,
 Emerge, uncall'd, into the upper air,
 Intruding on a maiden's solitude;
 Nay, do not be alarm'd, thou lady fair!
 Why start'st thou so?—I am a fairy good;
 Not one of those that, envying bounteous maids,
 Speckle their skins with moles, and fill with spleens
 their heads.

XXXI.
 For, as covens'd in this clay-house of mine,
 I overheard thee in a lowly vein,
 Weighing thy lovers' merits, with design
 Now on the worstlest lad to fix thy choice,

* Langlo-tassell'd, hung round with langlo (sea-weed) as with tassels. I observe tangle in Haller's Dictionary, though not in Johnson's.

I have up-bolted from my paltry shrine,
To give thee, sweet-ey'd lass, my best advice;
For, by the life of Oberon my king!
To pick good husband out is, sure, a ticklish thing.

XXXII.

And never shall good Tommy Puck permit
Such an assemblage of unwonted charms
To cool some lecher's lewd licentious fit,
And sleep imboulded by his bolterous arms:
What though his fields by twenty ploughs be split,
And golden wheat wave riches on his farms!
His house is shame—it cannot, shall not be;
A greater, happier doom, O Ma, awaiteth thee.

XXXIII.

Strange are indeed the steps by which thou must
Thy glory's happy eminence attain;
But fate hath fix'd them, and 'tis fate's t'adjust
The mighty links that ends to means enchain;
Nor may poor Puck his little fingers thrust
Into the links to break Jove's steel in twain;
Then, MAGNET, hear, and let my words descend
Into thy soul, for much it boots thee to attend.

XXXIV.

To morrow, when o'er th' Isle of May the sun
Lifts up his forehead bright with golden crown,
Call to thine house the light-bee'd men, that run
Afar on messages for ANSTER TOWN,
Fellows of spirit, by nous in speed out-done,
Of hasty voice, enough a drum to drown,
And bid them his, post-haste, through all the nation,
And publish, far and near, this famous proclamation:

XXXV.

Let them proclaim, with voice's loudest tone,
That on your next approaching market-day,
Shall merry sports be held in ANSTER LEAN,
With celebration notable and gay;
And that a prize, than gold or costly stone
More precious, shall the victor's toils repay,
Ev'n thy own form with beauties so replete—
Nay, MAGNET, start not thus!—thy marriage-bed, my
sweet.

XXXVI.

First, on the Lean shall ride full many an ass,
With stout whip-wielding rider on his back,
Intent with twinkling hoof to pelt the grass,
And pricking up his long ears at the crack;
Next o'er the ground the daring men shall pass,
Half-coffin'd in their cumbrances of sack,
With heads just peeping from their shrines of bag,
Horribly hobbling round, and straining hard for Ma.

XXXVII.

Then shall the pipers gravely begin
In smouldering rivalry their merry strain,
Till Biliby's shall echo back the tin,
And Immergelly woods shall ring again;
Last, let each man that hopes thy hand to win
By witty product of profic brain,
Approach, and, confident of Pallas' aid,
Claim by an hum'rous tale possession of thy bed.

XXXVIII.

Such are the wondrous tests by which, my love!
The merits of thy husband must be tried,
And he that shall in these superior prove
(Our proper husband shall the Fates provide),
Shall from the Lean with thee triumphant move
Homeward, the jolly bridegroom and the bride,
And at thy house shall eat the marriage-feast,
When I'll pop up again." Here Tommy Puck succreant.

XXXIX.

He came'd, and to his wee mouth, dewy-wet,
His bagpipe's tone of silver up he held,
And underneath his down-press'd arm he set
His purple bag, that with a tempest swell'd;
He play'd and pip'd so sweet, that never yet
Ma had a piper heard that Puck exceed'd;
Had Midge heard a tune so exquisite,
By Heav'n's! his long base ears had quiver'd with delight.

XL.

Tingle the fire-ir'ns, poker, tongs, and grate,
Responsive to the blythesome melody!
The tables and the chairs inanimate
Wish they had muscles now to trip it high!
Wave back and forwards at a wondrous rate,
The window-curtains, touch'd with sympathy!
Fork, knife, and truncheon, almost break their steth,
And caper on their ends upon the table-cloth!

XLI.

How then could MAGNET, sprightly, smart, and young,
Withstand that bagpipe's blythe awak'ning air!
She, as her ear-drum caught the sounds, up-sprung
Like lightning, and despis'd her idle chair,
And into all the dance's grooves flung
The bounding members of her body fair;
From nook to nook through all her room she tript,
And whirl'd like whirligig, and reel'd, and bob'd, and
slipt.

XLII.

At last the little piper came'd to play,
And delfly low'd, and said, "My dear, good night;"
Then in a smoke evanish'd clean away.
With all his gandy apparatus bright;
As breaks soap-bubble, which a boy in play
Blows from his short tobacco-pipe aright,
So broke poor Puck from view, and on the spot
Y-smoking aloes-reek he left his mustard-pot.

XLIII.

Whereat the furious lady's wriggling foot
Forgot to patter in such pelling wise,
And down she gladly sunk upon her seat,
Faint'd and panting from her exercise;
She sat, and mus'd a while, as it was meet,
On what so late had occupied her eyes;
Then to her bed-room went, and duff'd her gown,
And laid upon her couch her charming person down.

XLIV.

Some say that MAGNET slept so sound that night,
As never she had slept since she was born;
But sure am I, that, thoughtful of the sprite,
She twenty times upon her bed did turn;
For still appear'd to stand before her sight
The manly goblin, glorious from his urn,
And still within the cavern of her ear,
Th' injunction echoing rung, so strict and strange to hear.

XLV.

But when the silver-harness'd steeds, that draw
The car of morning up th' empyreal height,
Had sorted day upon North-Berwick Law,
And from their glistering loose manes toss'd the light,
Immediately from bed she rose (such awe
Of Tommy press'd her soul with anxious weight),
And don'd her tissued fragrant morning vest,
And to fulfil his charge her earliest care address'd.

XLVI.

Straight to her house she hurried not to call
Her messengers and heralds swift of foot,
Men skill'd to hop o'er dykes and ditches; all
Gifted with sturdy brazen lungs to boot;
She bade them halt at every town, and hawl
Her proclamation out with mighty bruit,
Inviting loud, to ANSTER LEAN and FAIR,
The Scottish bean to jump for her sweet person there.

XLVII.

They took each man his staff into his hand;
They button'd round their bellies close their coats;
They flew divided through the frozen land;
Were never seen such swiftly-trav'ling Scots!
Nor ford, slough, mountain, could their speed withstand;
Such fleetness have the men that feed on cais!
They skirr'd, they flounder'd thro' the sleets and snaws,
And puff'd against the winds, that hid in spite each nose.

XLVIII.

They halted at each well-fenc'd town roun'd,
And ev'ry lesser borough of the nation;
And with the trumpet's welkin-rifling sound,
And tuck of drum of loud reverberation,