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REPORT
of
COMMITTEE ON EXAMINATION

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a Committee of the Graduate School, have given Ruth Elizabeth Fairbank final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts. We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Nov. 30 1917

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REPORT
of
COMMITTEE ON THESIS

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Ruth Elizabeth Fairbank for the degree of Master of Arts. They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sept. 15 1917

Carlson Brown
Chairman

Joseph Beal
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THE EPISTLES OF BURNS.

A Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota

by

UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA
LIBRARY

Ruth Fairbank

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER of ARTS

June

1917

Degree Granted 1918

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A CLASSIFIED OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLES OF BURNS.¹

1. The numbers used in this outline will be followed consistently thruout the thesis. The epistles enclosed in parenthesis are, for a reason to be explained later, out of the logical classification. The page references, when given alone, are to the Oxford Edition of the Poetical Works of Burns, edited by J. Logie Robertson, M.A., Oxford University Press, 1916.

A CLASSIFIED OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLES OF BURNS.

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INTRODUCTION.

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In the poems of the century of Burns is found a form of poetry with which we are not very familiar in the present day, - the poetical epistle. The poetical epistle is a poetical letter addressed to some person who is living at the time the poem is written. Epistles are to be found in abundance from the time of Chaucer through the time of Pope, becoming^{less} frequent in the time of Wordsworth. The business of this thesis will be to point out the various uses that were made of the epistle by Burns. In order to understand better the significance of these poems, comparisons will be made with similar poems that were written in England and Scotland before the time of Burns.

The epistles of Burns are so numerous and varied that it will be necessary to impose a classification upon them in order to discuss them intelligently. The epistles naturally fall into three groups.

(1) Formal Occasional Epistles were written on some special occasion, usually to a person in authority, not primarily because of the friendship of the poet for the person addressed.

(2) Occasional Familiar Epistles were also written on some special occasion, but the persons to whom they were addressed were personal friends of Burns.

(3) Friendly Letters were written for no obvious reason, except that the poet was a friend of the person to whom he addressed the

letter and wanted to chat with him.

Among these epistles I have chosen many that are not so-called epistles, but which can be classed as such because of their spirit and form. I shall discuss the most formal ones first, beginning with Formal Occasional Epistles.

= A. =

FORMAL OCCASIONAL EPISTLES.

I.

To Personages or Friends.

These formal epistles fall into natural groups that are akin in spirit and purpose. I shall make no hard and fast classification of these groups, but I shall discuss them in their natural relation to each other, not chronologically. After each group of Burns' poems has been discussed, I will give a brief comparison with English and Scottish poems of a similar nature, in order to bring out the significance of Burns' adaptations.

1.

Poems Dedicated To Personages Or Friends.

The first group of poems to be taken under consideration is that composed of poems dedicated to a patron or friend, although the naming of this patron is the only personal touch which is found in the poem. It is as if today a poet wished to write a poetical dissertation on the Draft Bill, and addressed his poem as a matter of courtesy to President Wilson.

To Robert Graham
of Fintry.202.

An illustration of this type of epistle is to be found in the so-called "election ballad" dedicated to Robert Graham of Fintry, on the close of the disputed election between Sir James Johnstone and Captain Miller, for the Dumfries District of Boroughs. Robert

Graham was a patron of Burns. Burns first met him in his northern tour of Scotland in August, 1786, and Burns later appealed to him for a position as excise collector.¹ In return for this favor granted, Burns addressed this epistle to Robert Graham.²

Fintry, my stay on wordly strife,
Friend o' my Muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra fleg,
O'er Pegasus I'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

After a brief dedication of five stanzas, Burns plunges into a discussion of the last election with no further mention of his patron. The poem without the dedication is similar to several other election ballads which Burns wrote on political subjects.³ This particular ballad was sent to Robert Graham on the tenth of June, 1790. The dedication was a courtesy to Graham written out of gratitude for his kindness. The ballad itself is written in a mock heroic style, talking of the contestants as mighty men, and all their efforts to gain election as valorous and mighty deeds.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody fate
Amid this mighty tulzie!

1. See Epistle Requesting a Favor. p. 195

2. Burns' Works, edited Henley & Henderson, Vol. II., p. 399.

3. Ibid, Heron Election Ballads, 1795, Vol. II., pp. 191-201.

Grim Horror girn'd - pale Terror roar'd,
 As Murther at his Thrapple shor'd,
 And Hell mix'd in the brulzie.

The stanza form seems to be an adaptation of the Habbie stanza.¹ It has a ringing sort of rhythm to it, and is decidedly jocular rather than dignified. The only claim that the poem has to be an epistle is that it is addressed to Robert Graham. The poem itself was inspired by a special occasion, which places it among the formal occasional poems. It shows that Burns wished to show his gratitude to Robert Graham, and considered that a dedication of such an epistle would give his patron public honor. The letter, however, is not to be considered or thought of as a private affair between the two men; it was a public affair like the open letters in the newspapers of today.

Another illustration of a poem that is dedicated to a person of quality is New Year's Day - to Mrs. Dunlop. p.252. This poem is not written to serve the purpose of a public opinion by any manner of means. It is a moralizing dissertation on the meaning of New Year's Day.

Will you (- - - - -
 From housewife cares a minute borrow-

1. See below, p. 36 .
 2. The relation of Burns to Mrs. Dunlop is necessary for the understanding of this poem. Mrs. Dunlop had lost her husband in 1785, and was in a state of deep mental depression when she happened to read the Kilmarnock volume of Burns' poems. The poems so revisited her mind that she felt she owed a debt of gratitude to Burns, which she expressed in a letter which started a staunch friendship between the two. The poem was probably addressed to her in 1791, and was possibly the

That grandchild's cap will do tomorrow -
And join with me in moralizing?
This day's propitious to be wise in.

Although the subject matter differs from that of the poem addressed to Robert Graham, yet it is dedicated in the same manner. But in this poem there is nothing mock heroic; the poem is a serious attempt to give a dignified effect. The result is not as happy as many of Burns' poems, but the seriousness is certainly there.

This day Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again;
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

When Burns tries to be formal he usually succeeds in becoming stiff. The rhyming in the above quotation is not felicitous: - chain - again, fellow - sallow. When he reaches his moralizing further on he becomes didactic and uninteresting.

The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies;

(note continued) moral reflections found in it were meant to cheer the mental depression of his friend. Henley & Henderson edition, Vol.II., p.352.

That on this frail , uncertain state
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woeful night.

Notice the stiffness of the trite expressions, "heavenly glory bright", "misery's woeful night". The thought is sound enough orthodoxy; that may give the poem its dullness, for Burns is usually brightest when he is going against orthodoxy. Besides these interesting attempts at elegance, it is important to note the fact that here again we have, as in the epistle to Robert Graham, a poem written on a special occasion - New Year's Day, and then the poem is dedicated to Mrs. Dunlop.

A poem of Burns which so closely resembles the two foregoing epistles in the dedicatory nature, that it seems necessary to study The Cotter's Saturday Night. p.26. it in this connection, is The Cotter's Saturday Night. In one sense it can not be termed an occasional epistle, because it is not written on any special occasion. It is dedicated to a dear friend of Burns, Robert Aiken; this dedication appears in the first stanza, and then the poem turns to a description of the simple joys of a peasant's life.

My lov'd, my honoured, much respected friend,
No mercenary bard his homage pays.
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest need a friend's esteem and praise:

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been -
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

The spirit of this dedication is not formal, with a suspicion of mercenary motives behind it as were so many in the eighteenth century, but friendly¹; it forms a part of the poem as a whole. These two facts are important to note about this dedicatory stanza, because they become significant in the light of English models.

An interesting use which Burns made of this poetical dedication inside the poem, appears in one of his To Robert Graham, 206. other epistles to Robert Graham. The evolution of the poem into its present form is illuminating. The poem at first consisted of two revised and retouched fragments written nearly three years before, and originally intended, according to his own statement - which need not be taken quite seriously - to form part of a Poets' Progress.² Later, for a reason I know not, he attached the first and last lines of the present poem, which contain an address to Robert Graham, and called it an epistle. In its finished form it is very similar to the type of poem we have been studying - a poem with a dedication within itself.

Late crippled of a arm and now a leg,
About to beg a pass for leave to beg,

1. See below, p. 24.

2. Henley & Henderson, Ibid, Vol. I., p. 428.

Dull, listless, teased, dejected, and depressed,
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?

Here is the dedication - very informal and very unusual, in comparison to the models before him.¹ At the end, after a long discussion upon the misfortunes of a poor poet, he turns again to Graham in a paeon of praise.

Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare!

- - - - -

Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

This poem is not exactly similar to the poems we have studied; the dedication is not called a dedication, but is merely a request to 'list to his wail'. The poem itself seems more of an outpouring of his grief before a sympathetic hearer, than a poem written from an impersonal view-point, like New Year's Day. It more nearly resembles The Cotter's Saturday Night than the epistle to Robert Graham and Mrs. Dunlop, because it is a descriptive poem rather than a poem written on a special occasion.

So far we have been speaking of poems in which the dedication appears within them. There are two types of these poems. It is necessary to speak in this connection of the dedication which does not appear in the poem itself, but which was usually placed just before the poem, or group of poems. We have an example of such a poetical dedicatory epistle in the epistles of Burns, and there are

1. See below, p. 29 .

several unique features to be mentioned in connection with this epistle.

To Gavin Hamilton
p.220.

Expect na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleechin', fleth'rin' Dedication,
To roose you up, and ca' you guid,
And sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye're sirnam'd like his Grace,
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tired -and sae are ye,
Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face how I stop short
For fear your modesty be hurt.

Burns is referring to the other epistles dedicatory of the day, which were evidently in his eyes flattering lies, written merely to gain favor, not from any affection for the patron.

m This may do -maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefou;
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin',
It's just sic Poet an' sic Patron.

Burns here makes a bold declaration of his own independence from any patron, or need for begging in this hypocritical way.

So, Sir, ye see it was nae daft vapour.
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to You:
Because (ye need not tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel'.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,
And your petitioner shall ever -
I had amaist said ever pray:
But that's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o't;

Notice here the lack of any cringing, or bowing low, in servile humility before a patron. Burns does not dedicate these poems to Gavin Hamilton because Hamilton is the most perfectly just and amiable critic he can find, or because he is sure his patron will be kind to him and enjoy his poor poems, which shine only as Hamilton casts upon them the light of his countenance; he gives a simple reason "I thought them something like yourself". Notice in the end, the further mention of his scorn of "complimentary effusion".

I will not wind a long conclusion
Wi' complimentary effusion:
But whilst your wishes and endeavors
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,

Your much indebted humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)

That iron-hearted carl, Want,

Make you as poor a dog as I am,

Your humble servant then no more,

If friendless, low, we meet together,

Then, Sir, your hand - my Friend and Brother!

Burns was very bold in this dedication and expresses his ideas about the hypocritical morality of the day. It was a favorite subject of his, and one in which Gavin Hamilton sympathized.¹

Morality, thou deadly bane,

Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!

Vain is his hope whose stay an' trust is,

In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

This bold attack made his publishers shy about printing the poem at all, and it did not appear in front of his first volume of poems where he had intended it to appear.

In connection with this poetical epistle dedicatory, it is interesting to note that Burns also wrote a Prose Epistle Dedicatory for the Edinburgh Edition of his poems which appeared in 1787. As the prose dedication has the same purpose as the poetical dedi-

1. See note to the Epistle to Rev. M'Math, pages 77-78.

cation, it is interesting to see how Burns dealt with his subject.

To the Gentlemen
and Noblemen of
the Caledonian
Hunt.

It is inscribed to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt.¹ It commences with a most formal salutation: "My Lords and Gentlemen"; and Burns explains that there is none to whom he could more fitly dedicate his works than to "those who bear the honours and virtues of their ancestors". Although the form, as is obvious, is formal and dignified, notice the sentiments in the following paragraph.

"Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours. That path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning that Honest Rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile author looking for a continuation of those favours. I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen, and to tell the world that I glory in the title".

So even if we do find in Burns an acknowledgement of the outward conventions necessary to a dedication, we do not find him bowing to those rules. He speaks with^a freedom that places him on an equality with his patrons.

1. Henly & Henderson, p.4.

So in Burns we find two ways of dedicating a poem to a personage - either by naming the person in the poem itself, or by writing another separate poem. The poem in which the dedication is within itself is either occasional or descriptive. This descriptive-narrative poem¹ is not a formal occasional poem, but it is discussed in this group because of the similarity of method. The dedicatory epistle to Gavin Hamilton is a formal occasional poem, but it is all dedication and nothing more, so neither is this poem discussed strictly according to classification. But the three different types gain in significance in their relation to each other, so it seemed wise to study them together. In discussing the English Epistles which resemble the poems of Burns which we have just discussed, we will see if this variety of manner is customary, or whether Burns was establishing a precedent of his own.

1. Cotter's Saturday Night.

POEMS DEDICATED TO PERSONAGES AND FRIENDS IN ENGLAND.

I do not pretend to have given an exhaustive study to the epistles of ~~HHHHH~~ England and Scotland. All I can do in such a limited space is to point out some of the main points of difference and similarity between Burns and the earlier poets.

There is a group of poems that began to appear in the last part of the seventeenth century and the first part of the eighteenth century, that contained a dedication inside the poem itself. As far as I know this type did not appear, or was very rare, before 1625.

Abraham Cowley There is one interesting, "half-way" poem that I discovered among Abraham Cowley's poems. It is called An Essay on a Garden, and is dedicated to one J. Evelyn. It starts out like any familiar essay. "I never had any desire so strong as that one which I have had that I might be master at last of a small house and a large garden." When you get farther along you discover that this is a complimentary address to J. Evelyn, in acknowledgement of a certain book, "Kalendarum Hortense", which J. Evelyn had dedicated to A. Cowley. Later still, you discover that this prose complimentary address is merely an introduction to a poem which follows. The poem is half of the essay, and is written in eulogy of J. Evelyn's garden. The interesting part for us is that in this poem is found, in the first verse, a dedication to J. Evelyn, which dedication forms part of the poem.

Happy art thou, whom God does bless,
With the full choice of thine own happiness,
And happier yet, because thou'rt blest
With Prudence, how to choose the best;
In books and gardens thou hast placed aright
Thy noble, innocent delight.

The whole essay, prose and poem, too, is dedicated to J.Evelyn in the title "Essay on a Garden, to J.Evelyn"; then the dedication appears in the poem half of the essay. This forms an interesting exception to most of the dedications of the day, which appeared, usually, separate from the poem itself. This poem more nearly resembles "The Cotter's Saturday Night" than "The Epistle to Robert Graham", because it is not written on a special occasion, but is descriptive of a garden, although the essay itself was occasioned by the dedication which J.Evelyn gave to A.Cowley.

When we come to Addison, Prio Rowe, Congreve and Gay, we find many illustrations of poems with dedication in the poems.

Addison addressed, "The Campaign, a Poem", to His Grace the
Addison Duke of Marlborough. The dedication appears at the
beginning of the poem.

While swords of princess your deserts proclaim,
Proud in their number to enroll your name;
While Emperors to you commit their cause,
And Anna's praises crown the vast applause;
Accept, great leader, what the Muse recites,
That in ambitious verse attempts your fights.

This poem was obviously occasioned by a series of events, the wars of Marlborough, and this resembles the Epistle to Robert Graham. Notice the dignity and reserve of Addison in addressing the great Duke. Compare this with the familiarity of Burns in addressing Robert Graham.

There is another poem by Addison that more nearly resembles "the Cotter's Saturday Night", in the affectionate terms of the dedication, and the descriptive nature of the poem. It is "An Account of the Greatest English Poets", to Mr. Henry Sacheverell, April, 3, 1694.

Addison, An Account
of the Greatest Eng-
lish Poets.

Since, dearest Harry, you will needs request
A short account of all the Muse possest,
That down from Chaucer's days to Dryden's times,
Have spent their noble rage in British rhymes;
Without preface, writ in formal length,
To speak the undertaker's want of strength,
I'll try to make their several beauties known
And show their verses' worth, though not my own.

It is interesting to notice the humorous knock that Addison gives to the long prefaces that used to precede so many poems; possibly this feeling might explain why the authors were coming to write the more informal dedication inside the poem rather than the formal prose and verse dedications that preceded the poems.

Both these dedications by Addison are dignified, even though affectionate as in the last example. There is an interesting dedi-

cation to one of Congreve's poems that is very much like Burns in
its humor and familiarity. The title
Congreve, An Impossible ¹ makes no mention of the dedication.
Thing, A Tale.

To thee, dear Dick, this tale I send,
Both as a critic and a friend -
I tell it with some variations,
(Not altogether a translation)
From La Fontaine, an author, Dick,
Whose Muse would touch thee to the quick.
The subject is of that same kind,
To which thy heart seems most inclined,
How verse may alter it, God knows,
Thou lovst it well, I know, in prose;
So without preface or pretense,
To hold them longer in suspense,
I shall proceed, as I am able,
To the recital of my fable.

This "fable" was occasioned by no special event, so it must
be classed with The Cotter's Saturday Night. From just three
illustrations given from Addison and Congreve, the variety of
material which was dedicated in this manner is obvious. In one in-
stance² a group of poems is dedicated
Gay, Fables, To His
Highness, William Duke
of Cumberland.
in this manner by placing the dedication
at the beginning of the first fable.

1. Chalmer's Anthology, Vol.10, p.304.
2. Chalmer's Anthology, Vol.X., p.509. Gay, Fables, To His Highness, William Duke of Cumberland.

Fable I. The lion, the tiger, and the traveller.
Accept, young prince, this oral lay,
And in these tales the mankind survey,
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest.

These four poems are characteristic of many more written¹
during this period.

1. For further illustrations see:

An Epistle to Charles, Earl of Dorset, occasioned by her Majesty's
victory in Ireland, by Halifax; Chalmers' Anthology, Vol. IX, p. 339.

Essay on the different styles in poetry. To Harry, Viscount Boling-
broke, by Parvell, - Ibid. Vol. IX, p. 412.

Henry and Emma - A Poem - to Chloe (real name); by Prior, Ibid.
Vol. X, p. 172.

The Mice, - to Mr. Adrian Drift, by Prior; Ibid. X. 237.

The Birth of the Muse, - to the Right Hon. Charles Lord Halifax, by
Congreve. Ibid. X. 272.

Of Pleasing, - an epistle to Sir Richard Temple, by Congreve.
Ibid. X. 298.

Rural Sports, - a Georgic, - inscribed to Mr. Pope, 1713, by Gay.
Ibid. X. 435.

Claremont - addressed to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Clare, afterwards
the Duke of Newcastle, by Garth. Ibid. IX. 446.

Poem, on the later glorious successes, etc., humbly inscribed
to the Lord Treasurer Goddwin, - by Rowe, Ibid. IX. 446.

The poems we have just discussed show the relation between Burns' epistles with the dedication within the poem, and the epistles of similar nature in the poets preceding him. We found indications¹ that the poets of the eighteenth century would be as affectionate as Burns.²

Now we turn to a discussion of the epistles dedicatory that appeared outside of the poem; we shall take up both the prose and poetical dedications, because they served the same purpose; and what we wish to ascertain is the relation between the two epistles of Burns which we noted and these English dedications.

What was the conventional type? There seemed to be no prescribed meter, but the attitude of the author must be humble and craven beside his exalted patron. Notice the abasement in the

following dedicatory epistle to
To Spenser's Fairy Queen. Spenser's Fairy Queen, chosen out of many similar ones that appear in connection with Spenser's Fairy Queen.³

To You, Right Noble Lord whose careful breast
To manage of most grave affairs is bent,
And on whose mighty shoulders most doth rest
The burden of this kingdom's government,
As the wide compasse of the firmament,

1. Addison, Greatest English Authors.

2. The Cotter's Saturday Night.

3. Anderson's Anthology, Vol. II. page 17.

On Atlas' might shoulders is upstayed.
Might I these idle rimes present,
The labor of lost time and wit unstayed.
Yet if their deeper sense be inly wayd
And the dim veile with which to commun vew
Their fairer parts are hid, aside be layd
Perhaps not vaine they may appear to you.
Such as they be, vouchsafe them to receive
And wpe their faults out of your censure grace.

The form of this is iambic pentameter, and it is written as a sonnet. But, as I have sad, the form is not uniform. In William

William Browne. Dedicatory Epistle. Browne's dedicatory epistle, written for Britannia's Pastoral, published in 1613, and inscribed to "the no lesse enobled by virtue, than ancient in nobilitie, the Right Honourable, Edward Lord Youch¹, we find an irregular combination of iambic pentameter and iambic dimeter. So it is not the form which was prescribed by convention for the poet. This poem, as in the former one of Spencer, shows the same spirit of abasement of self and exaltation of his patron.

Honor's bright ray
More highly crown'd with virtue than with yeares,
Pardon a rusticke Muse who thus appears
In shepherdes gay

1. Chalmers' Anthology, VI., p. 228.

Interesting your attention to a lay
Fitting a syl an bowre, not courtly traines;
Such choiser eares,
Should have Apollo's priests, not Pan's rude swains,
But if the musick of contented plaines
A thought uprears,
For your approvement of that part she beares,
When time, (that embrions to perfection brings)
Hath taught her straines,
May better boast their being from the spring
Where brave heroes' worth the sisters sing
In lines whose reignes
In spite of envy, and her restless paines,
Be unconfined as best eternities
The vales shall ring
Thy honoured name, and every song shall be
A pyrosis built to thy memorie.

This same spirit appears in the prose dedications which hold the
second place as the poetical epistle dedicatory. A short example from
the works of Abraham Cowley will illustrate
Abraham Cowley.
Prose Dedication.
this point. This dedication appeared with
the Juvenile Poems, and was addressed to
the Right Honourable and the Right Reverend Father in God - John -
Lord Bishop of Lincoln, and Dean of Westminster.

My Lord,

I might well fear lest these my rude and unpolished
lines should offend, your nobleness will, rather, smile at

Intreating your attention to a lay
Fitting a syl an bowre, not courtly traines;
Such choiser eares,
Should have Apollo's priests, not Pan's rude swains,
But if the musick of contented plaines
A thought uprears,
For your approvement of that part she beares,
When time, (that embrions to perfection brings)
Hath taught her straines,
May better boast their being from the spring
Where brave heroes' worth the sisters sing
In lines whose raignes
In spite of envy, and her restless paines,
Be unconfined as best eternities
The vales shall ring
Thy honoured name, and every song shall be
A pyromis built to thy memorie.

This same spirit appears in the prose dedications which held the same place as the poetical epistle dedicatory. A short example from the works of Abraham Cowley will illustrate this point. This dedication appeared with the Juvenile Poems, and was addressed to the Right Honourable and the Right Reverend Father in God - John - Lord Bishop of Lincoln, and Dean of Westminister.

Abraham Cowley.
Prose Dedication.

My Lord,
I might well fear lest these my rude and unpolished
lines should offend, your nobleness will, rather, smile at

the faults committed by a child, than censure them.
Howsoever, I desire your lordship's pardon for pre-
senting things so unworthy to your view; and to
accept the good will of him who ^{is} in all duty bound
to be

Your Lordship's

Most humble servant,

Abraham Cowley.

These dedications were written in the sixteenth and early
seventeenth centuries. There do not seem to have been so many dedi-
cations later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as far as
I have ascertained, yet those dedications which existed had this
same spirit of humility.

E. Fenton, epistle
dedicatory.

E. Fenton writes the following dedication to
a group of his poems.¹

To the Right Hon. Charles, Earl of Orrey. ONWARD

These poems are most humbly dedicated by his lordship's
most obliged and most obedient servant.

E. Fenton.

Even in that unique dedication of Dryden, committing Annus
Mirabilis to the City of London, this same spirit of exaltation of
of the patron is maintained.

Dryden, to the City
of London.

As perhaps I am the first whoever presented a
work of this nature to the metropolis of any nation,

1. Anderson's ANTHOLOGY Vol VII, p. 649

so it is likewise cons nant to justice , that he who was to give the example of such a dedication should begin it with that city which has set a pattern to all others of true loyalty, invincible courage, and unshaken constancy", etc.¹

Among Addison's poems is found a poetical dedication to Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, with the tragedy of Cato, Nov., 1714. This epistle differs not at all from the prose dedications except that it is written in verse. The sentiments are the same as if Addison had written it in prose.

Addison, Poetical Dedication, with Tragedy of Cato, Nov., 1714.

The muse, that oft, with sacred raptures fir'd,
Has generous thoughts of liberty inspir'd,
And boldly rising for Britannia's laws,
Engaged great Cato in her country's cause,
On you submissive waits, with hopes assur'd,
By whom the mighty blessing stands secured,
And all the glories that our age adorn,
Are promised to a people yet unborn.

After noting the conventional praise, the conventional humility, the conventional dignity of these English dedicatory epistles, the familiarity and simplicity of Burns, and the scorn he professes of such meaningless tribute, is all the more significant.

1. Anderson's Anthology, Vol. VI., p. 13.

In summary of this group of poems, I would say that Burns usually was following the customs of his ^{English} predecessors. His poems have no standard meter; neither had the English poems. To be sure, his form in the epistle to Robert Graham differed from any form in England, and showed a Scotch influence, as we shall note. In England we find all types of poems receiving dedications, from a dissertation on New Year's Day, to a celebration of a victory in war; so it is natural that the subject matter of the poetry of Burns varied so much. In the matter of the dedicatory epistle, we find a certain independence in Burns that was not common to that type of epistle. In other ways the poems of Burns show a normal adaptation of a familiar type.¹

1. Other examples of English dedications, both in prose and in verse.

Dedication of Hymen's Triumph, to the Most Excellent Majesty, the Highest Born Princess, Ann of Denmark, Queen of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, - by Daniel, Chalmers' Anth. III. p. 571.

To Sir Henry Godere, - by Drayton, Ibid. IV. 492

Dedication of Green's Arcadia, a Pastoral Tragi-Comedy, presented to her Majesty and Her Ladies by the University of Oxford, in Corpus Christi Church, Aug. 1605, - by Daniel, Ibid. III. 574.

Dedication of the tragedy of Cleopatra, to the Rt. Hon. Her Lady Mary, Countess of Pembroke, - by Daniel, Ibid. III. 575.

(note continued)

Dedication of Phaedra and Hyppolitus. To the Right Honourable Charles Lord Halifax, - by Edmund Smith. Anderson's Poets of Great Britain. VI.589.

Dedication of poems (I could find no definite mention of book or collection) to the Rev. Doctor Wilkins, Warden of Wadham College in Oxford. Chalmers, British Poets, IX.312.

The first Book of Homer's Illiad, dedicated to the memory of the Earl of Halifax. (The Earl had unfortunately died before the appearance of the book). Ibid. IX.116. By Tickell.

Art of Love, to Lord Halifax, eldest son of his Excellency, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery. By William King. Ibid. VIII.262.

House of Nassau. To His Grace, Charles, Duke of Somerset. By John Hugh. Ibid. X.15.

POEMS DEDICATED TO PERSONAGES AND FRIENDS IN SCOTLAND.

After considering the group of poems which deal with dedications in England we shall now turn to dedications in Scotland, and see what relation these early predecessors bore to Burns.

The poems in which a dedication appears within the poem are not numerous among the works of Scottish writers. There is one that

appears among the poems of Ramsay to show he knew the form, although he did not choose to use it very often. Heath, a poem inscribed to the Earl of Stair,¹ is a dissertation on the beauties of Heath; the dedication appears in the beginning of the poem.

Ramsay, Epistle Dedicatory.

Be't mine the honour once again to bear
And see the best of men for me appear,
I'll proudly chant: be dumb ye vulgar throng!
Stair bids me sing; to him these lays belong.
If he approves, who can condemn my song?

The same spirit is here that is found in some of the English dedications² - exaggerated praise. This is different from the independence and genuineness shown by Burns.³ This particular

1. Ramsay's Works, p. 69, edited by

2. See page 24

3. See Epistle to Robert Graham,^{p. 202} and Cotter's Saturday Night, p. 26.

dedication bears a closer resemblance to the English dedication than to Burns.¹ But still it is interesting to know that Ramsay used the form at all. All the rest of his dedications are written separately from the poem. At least three poems were written in dedication of "The Gentle Shepherd".² There is a prose dedication to Susanna, Countess of Eglinton,³ that is as formal as any in England. There is a curious feature about the other dedication that appears in connection with this poem. It was written for Ramsay by Hamilton Bangour, and addressed to the Countess of Eglinton. It reads just as if Ramsay himself had written it.⁴

"Accept, O Eglinton, the rural lays-That bound to thee, the poet humbly pays."

So there is a prose and a verse dedication to The Gentle Shepherd, which are both formal in tone. The Gentle Shepherd appeared in 1785, and as we have noted,⁵ dedications outside the poems were common during this period.

Very different from either of these dedications, is the merry dedication prefixed to the Tea-table Miscellany,⁶ a collection of songs. It is inscribed to

Ilka lovely British lass
Frae ladies, Charlotte, Ann and Jean,
Down to ilka bouny singing Bess
Who dances barefoot on the green.

1. See p. 24 . 2. POEMS OF ALAN RAMSAY, ed. by ALICE GARDNER, 1877 Vol. II p. 113

3. IBID p. 33

4. IBID p. 35

5. See NOTE pp. 29-30 above

6. IBID p. 137

The dedicaⁿ is as light and jolly as this inscription.

Dear Lassies,

Your most humble slave,

Wha ne'er to serve shall decline,

Kneeling wad your acceptance crave,

When he presents the sma' prôpine.

But it must be noted that even if this is jolly, it is, nevertheless, not unconventional. Ramsay keeps a light tone, but the humor could be forgiven long before the independence of Burns. Yet this epistle is the kind of gay address that Burns enjoyed using himself. It is written in Scotch, which also reminds us of Burns.

In summarizing, we find that Ramsay never steps beyond the conventions of the dedications, although he does descend to humor once. As a rule, his dedications are formal, like the English dedications.

II.

TO PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY.

The next group of poems to be discussed in the group of poems of either a complimentary or petitionary nature addressed to personages of rank or in authority.

Addresses: Formal Petitionary.

The most impersonal of all these poems are ~~Boon~~ addresses or petitions to people in authority. They are poems of the same nature as the legal petitionary documents presented to the king. There is a question whether these addresses can really be called epistles, because there is so little in them that has to do with the personal relation between author and correspondent, which we naturally accord to letters. Let us wait to decide this question until after the ^{word} discussion of the epistles. In spirit they resemble the ballad dedicated to Robert Graham, which discussed the election. That was an open letter for the public to read; these addresses are of a similar nature. The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer, to the Scotch Representatives in the House of Commons", The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer, p.79. is a political discussion written in a half-serious, half-humorous vein.

Ye Irish lords, ye Knights an' Squires,
Wha' represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple poet's prayers

Are humbly sent.
Tall them wha has the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
 On aqua vitae;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
 An' move their pity.

The stanza form which is used here is the "Habbie stanza", a familiar and favorite stanza with Burns.¹

1. The "Habbie stanza" has a long and varied history. It was borrowed originally from the Troubadours, and was freely known and used throughout England during the Medieval Period. The first known examples are in French. Although it was originally aristocratic, it became such a "rhythmus for the people that Chaucer and Henryson disdained to use it".

It was known to Medieval Scotland, though the first Scotsman whose name is attached to it is Sir David Lindsay, in Part I of *Ane Pleasant Satire of the Three Estates*. It fell into disuse with the decline of poetry after the Reformation, the next example being the famous Piper of Kilbarchan, and Ramsay named it the "Habbie stanza" because of the refrain in the last line "Hab Simson's deid". The form became very popular in Scotland, and Burns' *Thoughts and Fancies* fell naturally into the pace it imposes.

For a full discussion of this subject see the notes to volume I. of Henley and Henderson's edition of the works of Burns, p.340. The material for this note is drawn from that source.

The origin of the Earnest Cry and Prayer was the rigorous enforcement of the Excise Laws in 1786, which alarmed the Scottish distillers, and was the occasion of a great national outcry - to which Burns gave expression in this poem.¹ The manner in which Burns writes this address to the dignified Members of Parliament is characteristic of the poet. The off-hand way in which he refers to the dignitaries high in office would be likely to offend one who enjoyed formality. He calls Charles Fox, "you ill-tongued tinkler, Charlie Fox"; the Scottish representatives in Parliament he refers to as "hearty cocks". He is familiar when he ought to show respect; he is jocular when he should be serious, and though the poem is seriously meant, yet there is more of humour than dignity.² The whole has an abundance of boldness and jocularities which becomes even striking when we compare the manner in which ^{his} English predecessors addressed those high in authority.

Arouse , my boys! exert your mettle
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin whittle,
Anither sang.

There is no cringing before a person who is being flattered into bestowing a favor. Burns considers himself as good as any to whom he is writing. Notice the intimacy and pleasant familiarity

1. Notes. P. 572.

2. See stanzas 9-10-11.

of the last stanza before the postscript.

God bless your Honors a' your days,
Wi' soups o' kail an' brats of class,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes
That haunt St. Jamie's!
Your humble poet sings an' prays,
While Rab his name is.

These characteristics of boldness and jocularly show the spirit in which Burns approached those higher in rank than he. There is no meekness nor humility.

Another example of an address is The Dream, a poem addressed to his Majesty George III, on his birthday. I feel The Dream, p.67. that this poem is worthy of particular mention because so many poems of the day were addresses to the king and queen, that it is interesting to see how Burns handles such a popular subject. He starts off in his usual colloquial fashion.

Guid-mornin' to your Majesty.
May Heaven augment your blisses
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see -
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see
Amang thae birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

The stanza form¹, although not anywhere near to the stiffness of the heroic couplet, is, perhaps, not so jocular and unconventional as the Hebbie stanza. Neither does the poet use so much of his colloquial Scotch as he often does. So there is a tinge of reserve in the poem. But certainly through it Burns uses the greatest freedom in telling the king what he thinks of the government and how he thinks it ought to be mended.

For me, before a monarch's face -
Ev'n there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So nae reflection on your Grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's mony waur been o' the race,
And aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say ye wisdom want, or fire,

1. The stanza form is the same that Burns used for The Holy Fair,³¹ and the history of the form dates back before the time of Ramsay. It is a simplified form of the metrical stricture and bob wheel in Christ's Kirk on the Green, Peebles at Play, and can even be traced back to the nineteenth century Romance of Sir Tristram. Ramsay calls it the Royal Stanza, because of the supposed author (James V or I) of Christ's Kirk. For a full discussion of the subject see the works of Burns, edited by Henly and Henderson, Volume I, page 228. It is interesting to note in this case that Burns is using a Scotch form rather than an English form.

To rule this mighty nation,
But Faith! I muckle doubt ,my Sire,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps wha in a barn or byre
Wad better fill'd their station
Thancourts yon day.

Burns does not entirely leave out the complimentary note.

Hail, Majesty, most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonny bairntime Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

It is only natural to think that an address to such a high and mighty personage as the king ought to show at least an attempt at elegance, polish, and dignity. This poem is a daring adaptation of the regular type of epistle addressed to his majesty.¹ It is impudent in its daring. The only reason that he could safely dare was the reason he states himself.

For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor.

1. For other illustrations see page 60 below

Here again we find Burns doing what he has done so many times before - making humorous that which should be serious and dignified. Indeed, this poem was considered so outspoken that some of his patrons advised Burns to leave it out of his edition of poems. But Burns refused to show cowardice about any of his opinions and the poem appeared in the Kilmarnock edition of 1787.

The Humble Petition of Bruar Water is another illustration of an address or petition. Here Burns makes a slightly different use

The Humble Petition
of Bruar Water.
131.

of the form by making it a dramatic representation of a stream addressing a

lord. The stream petitions that trees be planted on its sides, so that "saucy Phoebus' scorching beams" may not entirely drink up its waters.

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain.
Emboldened thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phoebus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

There are several points of interest to notice about the foregoing stanza. There is a predominance of English words, with an evident intention to make the poem elegant and polished, as we see in the phrases: "saucy Phoebus", "crystal tide", and "foamy stream". Evidently here Burns is really trying to be dignified, not jocular.

The stanza form has eight lines, the four beat iambic line alternating with the three beat line. This stanza form is staid and more regular than the Habbie stanza, or the nine-line stanza of "The Dream" with its two-beat line tagged on at the end. This dignity and attempt at elegance extends throughout the poem.

Here haply, too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking dewy lawn,
And misty mountains gray.

The picture in the last two lines is good, and shows that there are places where Burns uses the English Language to advantage, although the poem lacks the spontaneous quality which is the peculiar charm of Burns.

These three addresses: to the Scotch representatives in English Parliament, to the King, and to the Duke of Athole, are all allied in that they are petitions to persons in authority, and even though they all are adaptations of the real formal address, they are all impersonal in tone and lack the intimacy of a familiar letter to a personal friend. Yet it seems to me that they are worthy of being classed as epistles, because they are addressed to some person or persons living at the time the letter is written. They serve the purpose of an open letter.¹

1. The Address of Beelzebub to the President of the Highland Society, page 226, is another illustration of a poem which has a dramatic form.

An interesting address which is similar to those already discussed is "The Farewell to the Brethren of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton. This is not called an address, and it is significant to notice that in the Oxford edition of Burns' Poems, it is classed with songs and ballads rather than with poems, epistles, etc. But to all purposes the poem is an address just as much as the Petition of Bruar Water. The occasion for the poem was Burns' intended journey to the West Indies. The poem starts with a direct salutation to the people addressed.

The Farewell to the Brethren
of St. James Lodge, Tarbolton.
p. 343.

Adieu! a heart-warm fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!

It is significant to notice how many of the addresses of Burns begin with "Ye - ", or "O - ".¹ He ends this address to his affectionate brethren, with a petition, not to forget him when he goes to the West Indies.

A last request permit me here:
When yearly ye assemble a', -
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the Bard that's far awa'.

The emotional quality of the poem may have led to its being classified under the songs and ballads, and it is certainly more

1. See: Earnest Cry and Prayer -79; Humble Petition of Bruar Water, 131; Address to the Deil, 71; Address to Edinburgh, 119.

emotional than any of the three we have studied, probably because it is more personal, and the petition is an intimate rather than a public affair. For this reason I did not class it with the three first addresses, which are essentially impersonal. This epistle shows how Burns can use the same type of poem both formally, as in the Address of Bruar Water, and informally as in the Address to the Brethren of St. James.

There are two more epistles that are interesting to discuss in connection with addresses, although they get farther away from the familiar epistle than do the first three we have been discussing. It is worth while to discuss them in this thesis because they show the flexibility of the epistolary form in the hands of Burns.

The Address to the Deil is a petition to the devil to lose his hold on poor, weak mankind, and let men have a rest from his torments. It is a "take-off" on the serious address such as the address of Bruar Water. Burns writes it with a twinkle in his eye. The first two lines are an evident imitation of Pope's Dunciad, book I, lines 19 and 20.

The Address to the
Deil.p.71.

O Thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clcotie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Eangie, for a wee,

And let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeal!

Burns forgets his petition as he goes on, and the rest of the poem is a description of the superstitions concerning Old Nick, evidently being an attempt to present a burlesque of Milton's Satan.¹ Burns ends by assuring "Auld Cloutie" that he'll cheat Nick yet. Throughout the poem the Scotch dialect is strong, as it usually is in the more humorous and intimate epistles of Burns. The poem can be classed as an epistle only as we class all addresses as epistles, and as we can consider the devil a person living at the time Burns wrote the poem! It is an interesting twist to the supposedly formal address.

Another variation worthy of discussion is the Address to the Unco Guid. Here Burns is addressing an indefinite group of people

Address to the Unco
Guid. 84.

and the way in which we can include this poem within our definition of an epistle is by allowing that the "Unco Guid" whom

Burns was addressing were certainly living at the time he wrote.

A ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've naught to do but mark and tall
Your neighbour's fauts and folly!

1. Benley and Henderson, 335.

These life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplid wi' store o' water;
The heaped happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter:

The poem starts by being written in rather broad Scotch, and ends by being almost pure English. Burns was writing from his heart when he wrote this poem, for it has force and earnestness, and none of the elegant figures of speech and the stilted phrases that come so often to him when he uses English.

Then gently ean your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
The both may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lazely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

The petition which marks the poem as an address is contained in these lines quoted above. Burns is honest in his appeal: although the poem lacks Burns' characteristic humour, yet it is one of his best serious poems because it is inspired by true earnestness. It is an excellent adaptation of the epistle form.¹

1. There are two further adaptations of this epistolary form: Address to Edinburgh, 112; Address to Ruin, 115. These can not be regularly classified as epistles, for they are addressed to things and not to persons. Moreover they are largely descriptive rather than petitionary, and both are very formal and impersonal in form. But the step between an address to an indefinite group of people like the "Uncle Quid", and an address to "Ruin" is small.

Epistles for Favors: Personal Petitionary.

Besides formal petitionary letters, or addresses, Burns wrote personal petitionary letters to his patrons asking for money. Robert Graham¹ was his special patron and friend, and to him Burns appealed for aid when in need.

An Epistle to Robert Graham was written in 1788, and was meant to imitate the manner of Pope's moral epistle².

An Epistle to Robert Graham, p.195.

The epistle is written to Robert Graham to ask for an appointment in the excise in the neighborhood of his farm at Ellisland. It begins, as he meant it to begin, in the manner of a moral essay.

When Nature her great masterpiece designed,
And formed her last best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
She formed of various parts the various man.

Then follows a discussion of the various types of man: "lumpish philosophic dough", "deep divine", "flashing element of female souls".

But ere she gave the creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she try'd one curious labour more;

1. See Epistle to Robert Graham at time of election, p. 8
2. In a letter to Miss Chalmers for the sixteenth of Sept., 1788, Burns refers to this intention of his: "I very lately wrote a poem not in imitation, but in the manner of Pope's epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pinions that way". Henley & Henderson, II., 372.

Some spumy, fiery, ignis fatuus matter,
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;

- - - -

She forms the thing, and christens it a Poet,-

After a touching description of the poet's life, Burns exclaims most aptly about the "standard tree" which will support his helpless, woodbine state. So he

Attach'd him to the generous truly great -
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

If Burns before this had avoided any bowing before those above him in rank¹, he certainly contradicts his boldness and independence here, although he seems to despise himself for it.

Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes.
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul, half-blushing, half-afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's prime sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.

I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift;
That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,

1. See "A Dream", page _____.

There, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

The poem here is much affected by the manner in which it is written. The verse form is Pope's heroic couplet; this follows Burns' own acknowledgement of his attempting to imitate Pope. Also the moral nature of the discussion in the introduction is distinctly characteristic of the eighteenth century. Burns hates to ask for favors¹, and possibly this sincere dislike of his may have affected the spontaneity of the poem. The whole poem is terribly moral, and overwhelmingly stiff, and unlike Burns. I warrant that if this poem were placed anonymously in an anthology, nobody but an intimate reader of Burns, would conjecture that it belonged wither to Burns or his school. The best part of it is where he asserts that he would rather go back to his plow than be a cringing beggar.

Here my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again;
The piebald jacket let me patch once more:
On eighteen pence a week I've lived before.

Though Burns tries to imitate Pope he succeeds only in imitating his stiffness and forced rhetoric. Examples are numerous:

Pity the tuneful muse's hapless train,
Weak, timid landsman on life's stormy main.²

1. See lines 75-97, page 107.

2. Also: "helpless, woodbine state", and lines 37-40, and 44-46.

This seems to me to be a serious attempt on Burns' part to do the proper thing. Pope was the ideal of the day. Burns was trying to be stylish. He succeeded to an unfortunate extent. The poem has great interest for us, however, for it is an adaptation of an epistle into a moral essay, which turns into a request for a favor.

Very different from either of these is the jolly appeal to

Mr. Mitchell, Collector of Excise, Dumfries.

To Mr. Mitchell,
Collector of Excise.

264.

Friend of the Poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle Deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin'! jig and reel,
In my poor pouches.

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one, I sairly want it:
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted,
I'd bear't in mind.

This is written in a more playful mood, and is a familiar, humorous adaptation of the formal address, written as it is in the Habbie stanza, and in jocular humour. Here Burns has used the form with little attempt at dignity beyond the address in the first stanza.

An interesting adaptation of this personal petitionary poem is

the Epistle to Gavin Hamilton, Recommending a Boy. This poem can

To Gavin Hamilton, Recom-
mending a Boy. page 185.

scarcely be called a formal occasional poem, because it is written to a good friend of Burns. But it is a petition to

Gavin to befriend the boy, so it seems to me to form an interesting change from the formal petition.

I hold it, Sir, my bounden duty,
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias Laird M'Gaun,
Was here to lure the lad away
'Bout whos ye spak the tither day,
An'wad hae done't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As faith I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then I'd have then
Your clerkship he should sair,
If see ye ^{to} say be
Not fitted elsewhere.

This poem is written in broad Scotch; the stanza form is the same as the epistle addressed to Guidwife of Wauchope House¹, and is distinctly Scotch in origin. Even though this is a petition like the epistle to Robert Graham, yet it is opposite in spirit and atmosphere. It is one of those whimsical turns which we find Burns so often giving to his poems.

1. See note, page 124 .

Complimentary Epistles.

So far we have been considering personal petitionary poems addressed to people of rank. There were other poems of Burns addressed to personages of rank which were not petitionary, but merely complimentary.

The poem To Terraughty, On His Birthday, 209. was written as a compliment to a descendant of Lord Harris on his seventieth birthday.

Health to the Maxwells' veteran Chief!
Health, aye unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspired, I turned Fate's sibyl leaf
 This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
 Scarce quite half worn.

When we read "Fate's sibyl leaf" and "this natal morn", it seems as if this was another attempt to be stylish. But the following verses are delightfully characteristic of Burns' genial spirit.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
 Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
 In brunstane stoure.

But for thy friends, - and they are mony,
Baith bonnet men and lassies bonnie,-
Day couthis fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blithe and e'enings funny
Bless them and thee!

Instead of indulging in hyperbole and conceits he is very simple in phraseology; it is a warm, friendly greeting from one man to another, though, of course, Terraughty originally came from a higher rank than Burns.¹ It is this lack of rhetorical polish that gives this poem an atmosphere of sincerity. The words of friendship seem to come from the heart and not from a mercenary motive. The epistle to Robert Graham² was written from distinctly mercenary motives, and the difference in the spirit of this epistle and the one to Terraughty is noticeable. It is important to notice the sincerity and simplicity of this complimentary address, for we shall have occasion to speak of it again when we are discussing similar English and Scottish poems.

In connection with this complimentary poem, I want to speak of another which is closely related to the complimentary address, but which cannot be rightly called an epistle.

It is called *On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies*. Burns is

On a Bard Gone to
the West Indies.

118.

here writing solely about himself, and not to himself or to anyone else. A letter must always be addressed to someone. The first

1. See page 378, Hanley & Henderson.

2. Page 195.

stanza at first looks like a contradiction of that statement.

A' ye wha live by sowps o' drink,

A' ye wha libe by crambo-clink,

A' ye wha live an' never think,

Come mourn wi' me!

Our billie's gi'en us a' a jink,

An owre the sea.

The poem is not addressed to "ye wha' live by, etc", but these are merely called in to mourn with Burns at the departure of the Bard. The same rhetorical device is carried out in the second and fourth stanzas: "Lament him, a' ye rantin core," and "O Fortune, they hae room to grumble". The poem also deceives by being written partly like an address: "A' ye", is the formal beginning which Burns uses in his other addresses.¹ But there is no hint of a petition involved, and the definition of an "address" tells us that an address is a petition. The poem expresses the grief of the poet because the Bard is going away, and relates the whys and wherefores of the departure using the third person throughout until it comes to the last stanza.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!

Your native soil was right ill-willie;

But may ye flourish like a lily,

Now bonnillie!

I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,

The owre the sea!

1. See: Earnest Cry & Prayer, 79; Humble Petition of Bruar Water, 131; Address to Deil, 71; Address to Unco Guid, 84.

It is this last stanza which makes the poem relevant enough to our subject to be discussed here. There is an address to somebody in this stanza, and it comes very near to being an epistle in consequence. But it does not seem to me that one stanza that is not a dedication of the poem and that is used more for rhetorical effect than for a personal address, can justify our calling the poem an epistle. The reason why I am discussing it under complimentary addresses is that it comes as near to being a complimentary address as it does to being any kind of an epistle. Burns talks quite freely and in complimentary terms of himself.

He ne'er was gi'en to great misguidin',
Yet coil his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin',
 He dealt it free:
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
 That's owre the sea.

The refrain, "owre the sea", gives it the same lyrical quality that is found in the Epistle to the Brethren of St. James.¹ The poem is interesting because it helps us to limit our idea of an epistle and also to show how Burns was able to adapt the epistolary form so that only the semblance remained.

1. Page 343.

To People in Authority : England.

As far as I can discover, there are few poems among the English verses of the day that correspond with the poetical addresses of Burns. Most of the epistles addressed to personages of quality were complimentary rather than petitionary. I do not pretend to have covered the ground; I am merely stating the general tendency as I noticed it in the poems I studied.

One interesting parallel which I discovered is an address by John Denham¹, To The Five Members of the Honourable House of Commons - the Humble Petition of the Poets. I could find nothing about the poem beside what is in the lines; but it is an address, and a petitionary address.

After so many concurring petitions
From all ages and sexes, and all conditions,
We come in the rear to present our follies
To Pym, Stroude, Hasling, Hampden, and Holles.
Set forms of petition find great approbation;
Therefore, as others, from the bottom of their souls,
So we from depth and bottom of our bowls,
According to the blessed form you have taught us,
We thank you first for the ills you have brot us;
For the good we receive, we thank him who gave it,
And you, for the confidence only to crave it.

The mention of the popularity of "set forms" of petitions is interesting as a reference to the legal petitions that were presented to the King. Just as *The Earnest Cry and Prayer*, by Burns, was a versified form of a legal petition, so is this.

And first to speak whatever we please
Without fear of prison or pursuivants fees,
Next, an old custom, our forefathers did name it,
Poetical license, and always did claim it.

The use of the Hudibrastic meter is as rollicking and informal in England as the habbie Stanza in Scotland. The poem lacks, perhaps, the underlying earnestness of *The Earnest Cry and Prayer*, but the attempt to frame a legal petition in verse form is very nearly akin to Burns.

There are several parodies on this formal petitionary mode of addressing men of rank and position. Among Swift's poems is found

a poem called Will Wood's Petition to the People of Ireland, "Being an excellent new song, supposed to be made and sung in the streets of Dublin, by William Wood, iron-monger and half-penny monger, 1725"¹. The poem is written in a rollicking manner, with a lyrical quality to the meter that makes it easy to sing.

My dear Irish folks,
Come leave off your jokes,
And buy up my half-pence so fine,
So fair and so bright,
They'll give you delight,

1. Chalmers' Anth. XI. 445.

Observe how they glisten and shine.

This is addressed to a number of people so it resembles The Earnest Cry and Prayer, but in the fact that it has a personal petition rather than one which concerned others beside Will Wood, it resembles the Epistle to Robert Graham. I have not been able to discover why and where this poem was written, but it is interesting to know of its existence, because it shows us that the English writers, as well as Burns, enjoyed adapting and changing set forms.

A "merry" petition by Matthew Prior, addressed to Sir Thomas Frankland, Bart., written to obtain the porter's place for Will Pigot, is an interesting parallel to the epistle to Gavin Hamilton Recommending a Boy.¹

Will Piggot must to Coxwoud go,
To live, alas! in want,
Unless Sir Thomas say, "No, no,
Th'allowance is too scant".
O, let him in thy hall but stand,
And wear a porter's gown,
Duteous to what thou mayst command,
Thus William's wishes crown.

There is a familiar jollity about this poem that reminds us of Burns, and particularly of Burns' epistle to Gavin Hamilton about the boy whom he wished Gavin to take under his care. There is much

1. See: CHALMER'S ANTHOLOGY vol. 1 p. 239.

that is similar between Prior and Burns, as we find not only in this poem, but in others which are to be discussed later.¹ Both are alive to the humorous possibilities of the subject about which they write.

These examples which are given show that there were versified petitions in existence in England, but most of the addresses to the king were complimentary rather than petitionary. There was always the greatest reverence and humility shown when addressing the king, and in this way the poets of England differed materially from Burns when he addressed the king.² In the following poem by Waller, To the King, on His Navy, this fact is clearly brought out.

Waller.³

Great Sir, disdain not in this piece to stand
Supreme commander both of sea and land.
Those who inhabit the celestial bower,
Painters express with emblems of their power;
His Alcides, Phoebus has his bow,
Jove has his thunder, and your navy you.

Small were the worth of valour and of Jove,
If your high wisdom governed not their course;
You as the soul, as the first mover, you
Vigour and life on every part bestow.

The king is here portrayed for us as a faultless monarch, with no possibilities of wrong in his kingly nature. If this was the customary form of address, it is small wonder that Burns' friends advised him not to publish in his poems his bold address to the

1. See page 142.

2. Page 67.

3. See: Anderson's Anthology Vol. 5, p. 475

king.¹

In summary of the English addresses in verse form which can be found in England before the time of Burns, it is safe to say that such types existed, although most of the verse addresses were not petitionary, but complimentary. It is in Scotland, as we shall see, that the most exact parallels of these addresses are to be found.

1. For further illustrations of this same type of address in England see:

Some Verses, written to His Majesty, by the author at the time of h
His Majesty's First Entrance into England: Chalmers' Anth. V. 438.

To the King on His Navy: Ibid. VIII. 37.

To the King on the Taking of Namur, by Congreve; Ibid X, 271.

To the King, at his Entrance into Saxham, by Carewe; Anderson's Anthology, III., 682.

To the Queen; Ibid. III, 700. By Carewe.

On His Majesty's Return out of Scotland, by Cowley: Ibid. V. 285.

To the Duke of Buckingham, Upon His Marriage with Lord Fairfax,
His Daughter, by Cowley: Ibid. V. 240.

To the Queen, Upon Her Majesty's Birthday, after her happy recovery
from a dangerous sickness, by Waller: Ibid. V. 488.

To People in Authority: Scotland.

There are many interesting parallels to the addresses of Burns to be found among the Scottish poems, especially the poems of Ramsay. Allan Ramsay wrote quite a number of addresses of a nature very similar to the addresses of Burns.

Allan Ramsay.

The Poet's Address to the Town Council of Edinburgh¹ reminds me of Burns' The Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives. Ramsay did not use the Habbie Stanza, but a long, complicated stanza, that is irregular. The poem is written in the Scotch dialect. Ramsay wished the council to interpose its authority and grant an act to ward off private hawkers who had reprinted his pastoral on Mr. Addison with so many mistakes that the poet was much mortified and angered by the result.

Your peots humbly means and shows
That, contrair to just rights and laws,
I've suffered mickle wrang
By Luky Reid and ballad singers,
Wha thumb'd with their coarse dirty fingers,
Sweet Addie's funeral sang.
They spoiled my sense and staw my cash.
My Muse's pride mirgully'd,
And printing it like their vile trash
The honest leeges whilly'd.

1. POEMS OF ALLAN RAMSAY, ed. BY ALEX. GARDNER Vol. I, p. 112.

Thus undone to London
It gade to my disgrace,
Sae pumpin and lumpin,
In rags wi' bluther'd face.

The difference between this, and The Earnest Cry and Prayer,¹ is that this is a personal petition, whereas the petition in Burns' poem concerned the country at large. As a personal petition it resembles the epistle to Robert Graham,² but it differs from that epistle because it is addressed to a group of men rather than to one man. But, at the same time, the Scotch dialect and the familiar atmosphere which the Scotch dialect always brings with it, are very much like Burns. It is not a formal address any more than The Earnest Cry and Prayer; this does not mean that it was not earnest. It lacked the dignity, however, that formality always brings.

Ramsay has another address to George Drummond, the Lord Provost and The Town Council of Edinburgh, which is more formal, and perhaps a more exact parallel to The Earnest Cry and Prayer in thought, because it is both an address to a group of men and also a petition that concerned the people at large. The form is more dignified; it is written in English, in seven-line stanza, with alternate rhyming scheme.

My lord, my patron, good and kind,
Whose every act of generous care
The patriot shews, and trusty friend,
While favours, by your thots refin'd,
Both public and the private share.

1. Page 79.

2. Page 195.

To you the muse her duteous homage pays,
While Edinburgh's interest annotates her lays -

Although in this first stanza the address is to one man, the address includes the whole council. The petition was written to ask that money be appropriated to make the town beautiful. It is a most public minded sort of a petition, going ahead of Burns in this respect. Burns' Earnest Cry and Prayer was against the enforcement of the excise laws, and although that was as public minded perhaps as Ramsay's, a strict prohibitionist would not consider it such a high-minded public interest.

There is one interesting poem of Ramsay's works that has many features similar to The Humble Petition of Bruar Water, because there is personification of inanimate objects in it that makes it dramatic. It is The City of Edinburgh's Salutation to the Marquis of Carnavon.¹

Welcome, my Lord, Heav'n be your guide,
And further your intention,
To whate'er place you sail or ride,
To lighten your invention.
The book of mankind lang and wide,
Is well worth your attention;
Wherefore please sometime here abide
And measure the dimensions
Of minds right stout.

¹ Poems, I, pp. 44-45. The Marquis was the eldest son of His Grace, the Duke of Chandois, who in May, 1720, was at Edinburgh for a tour through Scotland.

The stanza form is the same as in *The Dream*;¹ and the rest of the poem is in the Scotch dialect. It is an interesting poem because Ramsay personifies the City of Edinburgh even as Burns personified Bruar Water.²

Young Robert Ferguson's poem is found an interesting one entitled *The King's Birthday in Edinburgh*.³ It is not exactly an address, but the subject is so nearly allied to Burns' *The Dream*, that it is important to note his method of treatment. He writes the poem in the Habbie stanza, and though he observes certain formalities in the manner of his address, yet he uses many colloquial Scotch expressions which take off the atmosphere of stiffness. For example, notice the expressions in the first stanza.

I sing the day we often sung,
Wi' which our lugs he's yearly rung,
In whose loud praises the mass has
A kind o' print;
But, now! the linner's fatty flung;
There's nothing in it.

1. Page 57.

2. There is another poem which might be mentioned in this connection, although it is not strictly an epistle any more than Burns' *Address to Edinburgh*. But it shows again the use of personification in a poetical address. It is *The City of Edinburgh's Address to the Country*. The poem is mainly a petition to the country to come and cheer its devastating loneliness by "ay blazing fires, bright songs, and sparkling wine". There is no need to go further into a detailed discussion, but it is an interesting sidelight on one of the possible influences on Burns. *Poems, W. I.*, p. 29.

3. Page 2. *Works*.

In this use of colloquial Scotch, Burns is undoubtedly very much like Ferguson. The foregoing stanza might have been written by Burns as far as atmosphere and spirit are concerned.¹ The poem has not the boldness of Burns in *The Dream*; it is reverential to the King's greatness. But there is a freedom of expression, that was noted in the first stanza, which is characteristic of both poets.²

1. For an interesting discussion of the relation of Burns to Ferguson, see Robert Ford's edition to *Works of Robert Ferguson*, Intro. pp. IV-VIII.

2. For further illustrations of addresses in Scotland, see:

To the Principal and Professors of the University of St. Andrews on Their Superb Treat to Dr. Samuel Johnson. By Ferguson. Ed. Robert Ford. p. 60.

A Summons. By Ferguson. Ibid. p. 202.

An Address of Thanks from the Society of Bakers. By Ramsay. *Works.* Vol. I., p. 257.

III.

MISCELLANEOUS.

So far, under "Formal Occasional Poems", we have discussed:
1- Poems dedicated to others, with the poems related to these; 2- Poems addressed to people in authority: formal petitionary poems or addresses, personal petitionary poems, and complimentary poems. Now we come to "group 3", - a miscellaneous list of poems that will fall under no definite classification but which is composed of poems unique of their kind.

The first one I will discuss is The Inventory, a poem written in answer to the usual mandate sent by the surveyor of taxes, requiring a return of the number of horses, servants, carriages, etc., kept.

Sir, as your mandate did request,
I sent you here a faithfu' list,
O' gudes an' gear, an' a' my graeth,
To which I'm clear to give my aith.

The poem is humorously written, for Burns had few possessions. What possessions he has, he makes the most of.

Wheel carriage I hae but few,
Three carts, an' twa are feckly new;
An auld wheel barrow, mair for token,
As leg, an' baith the trains, are broken;
I made a poker o' the spindle,
An' my auld mother burnt the trin'le.

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run de'ile for rantin' an' for noise;

A gaudsman ane, a thrasher tother,
Wee Davock hands the nowte in fother.
I rule them as I ought discreetly,
An' often labour them completely.
An' aye on Sundays duly nightly,
I on the questions tairge them lightly;
Till faith, wee Davock's grown sae gleg,
Tho' scarcely langer than my leg
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling,
As fast as ony in the dwelling.

This extremely witty and clever piece of poetry shows Burns at his best in adapting the epistle form to suit his humour. He makes it even more of a take-off by the outwardly solemn signature at the close.

This list wi' my ain han' I wrote it,
The day and date as under notit:
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic - Robert Burns.

The reason why this particular call was made upon Burns was the fact that William Pitt "with view to liquidate ten millions of unfunded debt -- made a large addition to the number of taxed articles, and amongst them were female servants."¹ Burns answers Mr. Aiken (acting as collector of revenue) that,

I've nane an' female serwan' station,

(Lord keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This poem reveals the ingeniousness of Burns, and the capriciousness of his genius that could make a witty poem out of a dull, dry inventory list.

Another poem of Burns that is unique in its place, is the Poetical Epistle to a Tailor. This is a reply to a "trimming epistle" written by Tammy Walker, a tailor who lived near the village of Ochiltree. Burns is shown here at his coarsest. The poem has small merit from a poetical standpoint. It is written in the Habbie Stanza, and discusses, in broad Scotch and with coarse jokes, Burns' quarrel with the kirk.

What ails ye now, ye lousie bitch,
To thresh my back at sic a pitch?
Losh, man! hae mercy wi' your natch,
Your bodkin's bauld,
I didna suffer half sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.

Evidently the tailor had written Burns the opposite of a commendatory letter, and the answer to it is prompted in the same way that the answers to congratulatory notes were prompted.¹ This poem gives us an example of an epistle used to "trim up" a person, and might be compared with the trimming and satirical poems in England,

1. For a discussion of these poems, see page 92.

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, by Pope, "Hudibras" by Butler, and many others.

The epistle of Esopus to Maria is interesting from many points of view. In the first place it may be well to explain the poem. It

Epistle of Esopus to Maria. is a dramatic poem, Esopus representing a strolling actor, James Williamson, and

Maria representing "the post's once intimate friend, Mrs. Walter Riddell of Woodley Park, with whom he had a bitter

and lasting quarrel. Williamson, like Burns, had been an occasional visitor and guest at Woodley Park. What can be said in excuse of

Burns?"¹ Esopus is represented as in prison where the real James Williamson was reposing at the time, shut up for being a vagabond and

a vagrant. The poem is an evident imitation of Eloisa and Abelard, by Pope.² Esopus writes Maria from his cell, even as Eloisa wrote

Abelard from her pure convent walls. As an illustration of the often exact imitation of the two poems, I will compare the beginning of

both.

Pope:³

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever musing melancholy reigns,
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?

Burns:⁴

From those drear solitudes and frowny cells,
Where infamy with sad repentance dwells,

1. See p. 588, notes.

2. For explanation of this poem, see p. 586 OXFORD ENGLISH.

3. Chalmers' anthology, XII, 177.

4. Page 210.

Where turnkeys make the jealous portals fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare repast,
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
To tell Maria the Escopus' fate.¹

In spite of the obvious imitation there is a vast difference in spirit. Pope's epistle reveals a passionate earnestness; Burns' epistle reveals a coarse sarcasm. Certainly this epistle is not one of which Burns could ever be proud, because of the meanness and coarseness which it brings forth.

Who christened thus Maria's lyre divine?
The idiot strum of vanity bemused,
And even th' abuse of poesy abused -
Who called her verse a parish workhouse, made
For motley, foundling fancies, stolen or stray'd?
A workhouse !Ah, that sounds awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my racked repose.
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowy couch in sorrow steep,
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

This quotation will give an idea of the crudeness and coarseness of the thought. Burns is here venting his personal spite even as

1. For further illustrations, compare: Pope - "Then share thy pain, etc" with Burns, - "Maria, send me too thy grief and cares" - Pope: "I awake no more I bear, etc", with Burns: "Oh workhouse! Ah, that sound awakes my woes".

Pope often did his.¹ He makes use of the dramatic form of the epistle by having Esopus speak for himself, and this makes it a little worse probably, than if he had merely talked about the characters himself. The poem certainly does Burns no credit, although in form it is an interesting adaptation of Pope's earlier epistle.

It is interesting in connection with the dramatic epistle to speak of the heroic epistles of England. Pope's poem is really an heroic epistle, a letter from one historical hero to another. Drayton has the most interesting series of letters like these, and as the subject is not similar to any of Burns, but merely allied to Esopus and Maria, I feel that it will be sufficient to give a brief discussion of these epistles, and state the references where to find them. His letters are all love letters: Rosamund to King Henry, and Henry to Rosamund; King John to Matilda, when she had fled from him to a convent; etc. Some of them, as Drayton says,² are more poetical than historical. But the attempt is an interesting one, and may be a possible forerunner of Pope's epistle from Eloise to Abelard, which is of the same nature of a letter from one historical person to another.³

1. See Dunciad, Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, etc.

2. Chalmers' Anthology, vol. IV., p. 62.

3. Drayton's Heroical Epistles can be found in Chalmers' Anthology, Vol. IV., pp. 56-104.

= B. =

OCCASIONAL FAMILIAR EPISTLES.

So far we have been discussing the formal occasional poems of Burns. These have been addressed to people usually higher in rank than Burns, thus making them more impersonal in tone than the letters addressed to friends. The next group which we will discuss is another group of occasional poems, but these poems we shall call familiar occasional poems, because they are addressed to friends, and yet are written on occasions. The first group that shall be discussed is a group of epistles sent along with presents or poems.

POEMS SENT WITH PRESENTS AND POEMS

There is a large group of epistles that Burns wrote and sent along with the presents and the poems that he gave to his various friends. He enjoyed writing a poem in the fly leaf of a book, or tucking one in a present of a few bottles of wine.

With a present of Burns' picture to Mr. Tytler, he enclosed some verses, of which the following is a selection.
To Mr. Tytler.

Revered defender of beautiful Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,
A name which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected -
Though something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one mistake me disloyal;
A poor, friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more if that wand'rer were royal.

The poem is not one of Burns' best productions. The wording is often stiff - "moisture conglobes" - and there is nothing unusual or interesting in the sentiment.

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worth your care;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

There is little spontaneity in the above stanza. This may be partly due to the fact that it is written in English, and, as we

Have before noted, Burns' best work is usually done in Scottish vernacular, not in English. There is an interesting comment made in a prose letter Burns tacked on to his poetical epistle.

"My Muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces".¹

Evidently Burns himself realized the inadequacy of treatment. But nevertheless the poem is interesting as a type of what we are studying.

A much more interesting example is the epistle sent to Rev. John M'Wath, enclosing a copy of Holy Willie's Prayer, which the minister had requested. Holy Willie's Prayer is a most bitter satire written about the hypocritical elders of the parish of Mauchline. The Prayer was a daring piece of work, as Holy Willie represented one of the elders in the flesh, and the meanness and narrowness and ignorance revealed in the prayer is astounding. Rev. M'Wath, an assistant to the minister at Tarbolton, was evidently interested in the scandal, for he wrote to Burns to ask for the poem, and Burns' reply, which he sent along with the poem, is mostly a discussion of procedure.

I own 'twas rash, and rather hardy,
That I, a simple country bardie,
Shou'd saddle wi' a pack so sturdie,
Eha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowe hell upon me.

1. H. A. H. edition of Works, II, 386.

This poem is peculiarly interesting as a revelation of Burns' own ideas and thoughts. The epistle is a means which can be used to great advantage by the poet to reveal his own ideas and thoughts in a natural and easy manner. It is the opportunity that is found in prose letters; the writer is tempted to reveal himself because he is writing to a friend, who, he knows, will understand and sympathize. In this particular instance Burns felt keenly that Gavin Hamilton had not received a just treatment at the hands of the kirk; and in this letter he justifies his writing Holy Willie's Prayer by saying that a man who was so ignorant as to accuse Gavin Hamilton, deserved ill treatment.¹

There's Gawn, misca't waur than a beast,
Wha hae sair honour in his breast
Than many scores as gaid's the priest
 Wha see abus'd him:
An' may a bard no crack his jest
 What way they've used him?

A further revelation of his own intimate feeling about the matter is expressed in the following stanza.

God knows I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But, twenty times, I rather would be
 An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be,
 Just for a screen.

1. Gavin Hamilton had been brought before the kirk because of neglect.
(continued)

All of Burns' poems reveal his own personality; but certainly his epistles are especially good illustrations of this characteristic. His epistles reflect his moods and feelings; in this one, for instance, he shows the honest indignation which he felt towards the kirk which had so unjustly treated both himself and Gavin Hamilton.¹

Burns was fond of sending presents to the ladies; especially did he seem to enjoy sending copies of his poems or songs to his women friends, and, along with them, tuck in a short verse of presentation. Verses to a Young Lady, with present of songs, was written to Miss Graham of Fintry, sister of Robert Graham, Burns' patron and friend.

Verses to Young Lady.
287.

Here, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift: the humble he who gives,
Rich in the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian-feeling in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-cherds among!
But Peace attunethy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love, ecstatic, wake his seraph song!

Or Pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
Thine conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And Heaven-born Piety her sanction seals!

1. (continued)
of ordinances and other irregularities. Gavin insisted that the charges were brought because of private pique. Finally through the intervention of the Presbytery of Ayr, and the oratory of Robert Aiken, Hamilton secured a statement that he was free from public scandal. Cambridge edition of works of Burns, p. 41.

We should hardly know that the impulsive Burns had written this stiff, didactic poem. The personification of virtues and vices is interesting because it shows so clearly the influence of the 18th century writers in England.¹ This personification helps to give the poem its didactic atmosphere, and shows us the Burns was closely allied to his English contemporaries, even though his native, spontaneous, unconventional Muse was opposite from the the strict ideals set by Pope. It is interesting in our discussion to note that in one epistle, at least, Burns tries to adapt himself to the ideals of Pope. We have found more than one such attempt among Burns' epistles. The reason for the attempt at elegance in this case may be the fact that he is writing to a lady, and that lady was Robert Graham's sister. There was a special need to make a good impression.

1. See: Pope's Dunciad, Ward's English Poets, p.128.
"See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled, etc."

Johnson's Prologue spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre.
Ward's English Poets, 251.

"Exulting Folly hailed the joyful day,
And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway".
"Let not Censure term our Fate our choice".
"Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage".

William Shenstone, Pastoral Ballad, Ward's English Poets, 275.

"Soft Hope is the relique I bear,
And my solace wherever I go".

William Collins, Ode, Ibid. 287.

"There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell a weeping hermit, there."

The poem to Miss Jessy Lewars, which he sent her with a present of books, is also didactic and formal to a certain extent. None of the epistles of this group addressed to ladies seem to represent Burns' best work.

Thine be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the Poet's prayer-
That fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindest, best presage
Of future bliss, enrol thy name;
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill - but chief, man's felon snare.
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind -
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend, the Bard.

This is not quite so impersonal and uninteresting a poem as the former, but Burns was not at his best, as is seen in the awkward rhyme in the end and the trite phrasing. But the poem is of the same type as the preceding one, and is illustrative of others more or less alike that Burns wrote on similar occasions.¹

1. To John Rankine, 153; To James Tennant, 200; To James Smith, with some poems to print, 180; To Mr. Syme, with present of twelve porter; To John M'Murdo, Esq. with present, 289; To Captain Riddell, on returning a newspaper, 270; To Mrs Cruikshank, on blank leaf of book, 268; To Chloris, on blank leaf of last edition of poems; To a Lady with a present of a pair of drinking glasses, 274; To Miss Farrier, enclosing elegy on Sir J.H. Blair, 274; written on blank leaf of copy of first edition of poems presented to sweetheart, 275.

Epistles Sent With Presents; England and Scotland.

It is interesting to note in connection with these poems sent along with presents or poems that there are many parallels to be found in England and Scotland. From the number of these poems, and the fact that so many authors wrote them, it is evident that it was considered the pleasant and proper convention. In this way Burns was decidedly a follower of custom when he wrote the epistles.

We find several interesting examples of poems written in the fly-leaves of books when presented to the Queen. There is a unique view-point taken by Landsdowne in the poem written in a leaf of the author's poems presented to the Queen. He calls it The Muse's Last Dying Song.¹
Landsdowne.

O Muse expiring, who, with earliest voice,
Made kings and queens and Beauty's charms her choice,
Now on her death-bed this last homage pays:
O Queen! to Thee: accept her dying lays.

This poem is as complimentary as the rest of the poems addressed to the king and queen.

Hail, mighty Queen! whose powerful smile alone
Commands subjection, and secures the throne.

1. Chalmers' Anthology, IX, 37.

Conquering our hearts, you and the long dispute,
All, who have eyes, confess you absolute.

Just as highly complimentary is the poem inscribed to the Queen
by Waller in a book of poems.

Waller.

Madam! I here present you with the rage
And with the beauties of a former age,
Wishing you may with as great pleasure view
This, as we take in gazing upon you.¹

For an idea of the various occasions on which such poems were
written, it is only necessary to glance over the following list:

To the Lady Luise Lenox, with Ovid's Epistles, Chal. Anth. IV, 448.
by Garth.

To Richard, Earl of Burlington, with Ovid's Art of Love, Ibid. IV.
448; by Garth .

To her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, with the Tragedy of
Cato, Nov. 1714. Ibid. IX. 673; by Addison.

To Lady with the Tragedy of Cato, Ibid. X. 46; by Hughes.

To the Right Honourable Lady Margaret Cavendish Hanley, with poems
of Mr. Waller, Ibid. X. 419; by Fenton.

Epistle to Robert Nugent, Esq., with picture of Dean Swift; by Mr.
Dunkin; Ibid. XI. 534.

Epistle to Miss Hest, with the Works of Nature; by Pope. Ibid. XII.
273.

Epistle to Mr. Jervais, with Dryden's translation of Mr. Fresnay's
Art of Painting.

¹. Chalmers' Anth. IV. 448.

POEMS SENT AS "THANK YOU" NOTES.

Closely allied to the epistles sent along with presents and poems, are the "thank you" notes which Burns wrote in acknowledgement of presents sent to him.

An example of this type of epistle is the poem sent to a

To a Gentleman who had sent him a newspaper. 268.

Gentleman who had sent him a newspaper, and offered to continue it free of expense.

Kind Sir, I've read your paper through,
And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
How guessed ye, sir, what maist I wanted?
This mony a day I've grain'd and gaunted,
To ken what French mischief was brewin';
Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin';

Burns has a grand opportunity here to talk about all the great personages in the realm in the most disrespectful and colloquial terms. It is something which he enjoys!

That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;

If sleekit Chatham Will was livin',
Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the plea was cookin',

The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawls, and opera girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threshin' still at hizzies' tails;

- - - - -

A' this and mair I never heard of;
And, but for you, I might despair'd of.
So gratefu' back your news I send you,
And pray a' guid things may attend you!

The meter that Burns uses here is the Hudibrastic line, and this gives it a doggerel sound. The reason for his writing the poem is the most natural in the world, and is one which we can find illustrated in the correspondence of many people of today.

Another illustration among Burns' poems is his letter of thanks to Robert Graham, on receiving a favor which he asked¹ of Graham in a former epistle. To Robert Graham. 277. In that epistle he addressed his patron in the stiff heroic couplet of the eighteenth century. This "thank you" letter is written in the same way.

I call no Goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a Bard who feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons recorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer as the giver you.

¹ See page 195.

Not nearly so stiff and formal is the epistle to Captain
Riddell, Glenriddel, written
To Captain Riddell, Glenriddel. extempore, on returning a news-
paper.

Your News and Review, Sir, I've read through and through,

Sir,

With little admiring or blaming;

The papers are barren of home news or foreign,

No murders or rapes worth the naming.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your goodness

Bestow'd on your servant, the Poet;

Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,

And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

This is written in English, but is free of the stiffness which so often is the result of Burns' attempts to write in English. Probably there are many more short answers of this nature which were lost or forgotten, because it was the type of epistle sent directly to the correspondent and then lost through carelessness or mistake. Here again, as in the poems sent with presents and poems, we have an example of a pretty courtesy which Burns enjoyed bestowing on his friends.¹

1. For examples in England and Scotland, see:

To the Same (Donald M'Ewen, Jeweller, on receiving a present of a gold seal with Homer's Head. Ramsay's works, II, 30. Ed. by ALEX. GARDNER .

SHORT POEMS .

The third class of familiar occasional poems which we shall discuss is the group of epistles which were in the nature of informal answers to invitations, etc. The short letter to Mr. Renton,

Berwick, is a characteristic example.

To Mr. Renton. 296.

Your billet, sir, I grant receipt;
Wi' you I'll canter any gate,
Though 'twere a trip to yon blue warl',
Where birkies march on burning marl:
Then, sir, God willing, I'll attend ye,
And to his goodness I commend ye.

R. Burns.

This poem is of most prosaic subject matter, and can be called most truly a rhymed note. Of similar nature is the epistle,
To ----- 305.

Yours this moment I unseal,
And, faith, I am gay and hearty!
To tell the truth an' shame the Deil,
I am as fu' as Bartie:
But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o' your party,
If on a beastie I can speel,
Or hurl in a cartie.

Similar examples will be found on pages 306 and 309. On page 306: Extempore lines, in answer to a card from an intimate friend of Burns, wishing him to spend an hour at a tavern.

The King's most humble servant, I
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I'll be wi 'ye by an' bye;
Or else the Deil's be in it.

On page 309, Reply to a note from Capt. Riddell.

Dear Sir, at ony time or tide,
I'd rather sit with you than ride,
Tho' 'twere wi' royal Geordie;
And troth, your kindness, soon and late,
Aft gars me to mysel look blate;
The Lord in Heaven reward ye!

On page 302, to Mr. Mackenzie, Surgeon, Mauchline.

These notes are very characteristic of Burns, who enjoyed writing poetry and often dashed off extempore lines on various subjects.¹ This same kind of short letter is also found among English writers. In Prior's poems is found an extempore invitation to the Earl of Oxford, Lord High Treasurer.²

My Lord,

Our weekly friends tomorrow meet
At Matthew's palace in Duke's street
To try for once, if they can dine

1. Lines written extempore in a lady's pocketbook, 304; Burns - extempore in answer to a verse handed him across a dining table, 294; extempore in the court of session, 295.
2. Anderson's Anthology, VII, 456.

On Bacon, ham, and mutton chine.
If, unwearied with the great affairs,
Which Britain trusts to Harley's cares,
Thou, humble statesman, mayst descend,
Thy mind one moment to unbend,
To see thy servant from his soul
Crown with thy health the sprightly bowl,
Among my guests, which e'er my house,
Receiv'd, it never can produce
Of honour a more glorious proof,
Though Dorset us'd to bless the roof.

This has the atmosphere of Burns' short epistle, though his were written in answer to invitations rather than in giving invitations. Although the salutation is formal - "My Lord" - yet the spirit of the poem is informal and familiar. "To dine on ham, bacon, etc", has the same prosaic quality as the subject matter of Burns' short epistles.

Dr. Swift's Answer to a Friend's Question, about what kind of furniture he liked best, is very much like Burns in spirit, if not in form. It is a jocular and witty answer.¹

The furniture that best doth please
St. Patrick's dean, good sir, are these:
The knife and fork with which I eat;
And next, the pot that boils the meat;

And next to be preferred, I think,
Is the glass in which I drink,
The shelves on which my books I keep,
And the bed on which I sleep;
An antique elbow chain between,
Big enough to hold the dean!
And the stove that gives delight
In the cold, bleak, wintry night.

These are what the dean do please;
All superfluous are but these.

These examples, with the list of further illustrations given below¹, show that Burns in his short poetical notes was not doing anything out of the ordinary.

An interesting point in connection with the short poems is their relation to epigrams, which are also short poems, and also often addressed to persons. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether a poem is to be classed as an epigram or as an epistle. An epigram is not always in the third person, but may also be written in the first person. The epigram may be defined as a short poem which has only

1. To Sir John Mennis, being invited from Calais to Bologna, to eat a pig; by Denham, Chal. Anth. VII. 245.

- Cowley's answer to invitation to Cambridge; Anderson's Ath. V. 234.

An Epistle; by Prior; Chal. Anth. X. 244.

Another Epistle; by Prior; Chal. Anth. X. 244.

one subject, and which is ended by a witty and ingenious form of thought.¹

There are two main types of epigrams, those which are written about a person or thing in the third person, and those which are addressed to a person or thing in the second person. The first type is the type that we usually acknowledge and recognize to be an epigram.

The epigram on Captain Francis Gros², the celebrated antiquary, is an example of the first type.

The Devil got notice that Gross was a dying,
So whip! at the summons, old Satan came flying;
But when he approach'd where poor Francis lay moaning,
And saw each bed-post with its burden groaning,
Astonish'd, confounded, cried Satan, 'By God,
I'll want 'in ,ere I take such a damnable load'.

Here is one that is not called an epigram, but is easily to be recognized.³

As could a wind as ever blow,
A caulder kirk, and in't but few;
A caulder preacher never speak;-
Ye'ae a' be hot ere I come back.

1. Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia. This happy quotation from the Latin, author unknown, is here given:

The qualities rara in a bee we meet
In an epigram never should fail;
The body should always be little and sweet,
And a sting should be left in it's tail.

2. Page 308.

3. The Kirk of Levington, page 291.

1
Of this one "On Himself".

Here comes Burns

On Rosinants:

She's damned poor,

But he's lammed canty!

The discussion of the first class of epigrams is rather distant from the subject of this thesis. The variations that occur in this type of poems will be discussed in the footnotes, and we will proceed with the discussion of the second class.²

1. Page 300.

2. Sometimes an epigram is called an impromptu. There is one such epigram called Impromptu on an Inkeeper, who intruded himself into all companies. This poem can almost be classed in the second class, where there is a salutation to a person.

At Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer,
And plenty of Bacon each day of the year;
We've all things that nice - come, give me a reason,
But why always Bacon, - come, give me a reason.

In this last line there is a salutation, but it is addressed to nobody in particular, and is there for rhetorical purposes rather than for a direct address. I feel justified in saying this belongs more to the first class of epigrams where the author is talking about somebody, rather than to the class where he talks to somebody.

Here is another example of an epigram that stands on debatable ground: (295)

Then ---, deceased, to the devil went down,
'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown;
'Thy fool's head,' quoth Satan, 'that crown shall wear never,
I grant thou art wicked, but not quite so clever."

Here the author himself does not speak to anybody, but a person inside the poem does talk to the reader, so this makes the poem not wholly of one class or the other, but more truly an adaptation and variation of the first class.

Sometimes the epigram contains no sting but is complimentary instead. This seems to go against the definition given in the Latin stanza quoted above, but it does not go against the usage of the epigram in the poets before Burns. For instance here is a complimentary epigram by Burns: On a Friend. 286.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest:
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, the guide of youth.

(continued)

(note continued from preceding page)

Few hearts like his, with virtue warmed,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd;
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

This is written in the nature of an epigram - that is, it is an interesting thought represented happily.

The same quality of compliment rather than abuse is found in the following short poem. "Lines written in a pane of glass in the Inn at Moffat". 227.

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because that mankind should set
That higher value on it.

Here is another variation of class one, that is worthy of discussion. It is that type of poem called "A Sketch". This usually means a character description of the person addressed, and is written in epigrammatic manner, that is, with the emphasis on the ingeniousness and wittiness of thought. One example of this type of epigram is found in the poem entitled "Sketch", on page 276.

A little, pert, upright, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight;
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets:
A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
Learn'd vive la bagatelle, and vive l'amour;
So travell'd monkeys their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love!
Such specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense - by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

This poem is longer than the epigrams before studied, but it is, nevertheless, clearly epigrammatical in its attempt at wittiness. An even longer sketch, but one of a slightly different character, is the "Sketch" inscribed to the Rt. Hon. C. S. Fox. 250. This poem is much more complimentary than the former.

With knowledge so vast, and with judgement so strong,
No man with half of 'em e'er could go wrong;
With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
No man with half of 'em could e'er go right.

There are two points of difference between this poem and the former one. There is a certain amount of moralizing in it that takes it out of the realms of the epigrams into the realms of the essay. For example look at the moralizing in the following:

Some sort all our qualities each to his tribe,
And think Human Nature they truly describe:
Have you found this or t'other? There's more in the wind;
As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll find.
But such is the flaw or depth of the plan,
In the make of the wonderful creature called Man;

(note continued from preceding page)

No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor ever two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin brother to brother,
Possessing the one shall imply you've the other.

The other point of difference to the foregoing sketch is the fact that in the last part of the poem Burns resorts to personal address. He calls Fox, "his "much honoured patron", and advises him to "out-thieve Squire Billy", for he cannot "out-do him". This address in the end makes it seem like a personal letter, but as we find in discussing Class II, it is possible to have a personal address, and yet not claim the poem as an epistle, for the motive of the author of the poem is to be epigrammatical, not to write a personal letter, or even a public one.

The second class is so closely related to the epistle form that it is often hard to tell them apart. For example, the short eight-line stanza addressed To an Artist, on page 303.

Dear - - -, I'll gie ye some advice
You'll tak it no uncivil;
You shouldna pain' at angels mair,
But try and paint the devil.
To paint an angel's little wark,
Wi' auld Nick there's less danger:
You'll easy draw a weel-kent face,
But no see weel a stranger.

This almost seems like a short epistle. There is the informal address, and the title - To an Artist - is a form that is used again and again in regular epistles. But if we examine the thought closely we shall find that Burns' main purpose in writing the poem was not to write a versified note¹, but to give expression to the witty and ingenious turn of thought that is expressed in the last two lines:

You'll easy draw a weel-kent face,
But no see weel a stranger.

So it seems that here the motive of the poem would make it an epigram rather than an epistle. Another example of this same kind of poem is the one entitled, "To a Lady, who was looking up the text during sermon".

Fair madg, you need not take the hint,

1. of. To Mr. Mackenzie, Surgeon, Mauchline, p. 302.

For idle texts pursue:

'Twas guilty sinners that he meant -

Not angels such as you.

In this poem, as in the preceding one, the motive of the author is to express a witty and ingenious thought within the compass of a few lines. Another point to note in connection with both these poems is that they are addressed to an indefinite somebody - "To a Lady" - not to a definite person who is named in the title, as, "To Mr. Renton, Berwick". The indefiniteness in this case would be apt to make us suspicious that only an imaginary person was addressed, and that Burns was merely making an address for dramatic purposes.

The poem addressed to Dr. Maxwell, on Miss Jessy Staig's Recovery, is an epigram addressed to a real person.¹

Maxwell, if merit here you crave,

That merit I deny:

You save fair Jessy from the grave?

An angel could not die.

Here again, we have an epigram where the thought is essentially written for the sake of saying something that is witty or ingenious, not to write a personal communication to the man addressed. There is nothing personal in the saying. It is written to amuse the public. Yet in this case the resemblance outwardly to an epistle is very strong; it is addressed to a person living at the time the poem was written, so it seems to fit into one part of the definition of the epistle. But the motive and purpose of this poem make it an

epigram, not a letter, so ~~if~~ it does not fit the full form of our definition - a letter addressed to some person. As this subject is, as we have noted, not exactly relevant to the subject of the thesis, it seems unnecessary to do more than note the examples of similar cases in England and Scotland.¹

1. Epigrams in England and Scotland. By Ambrose Philips, To Miss Charlotte Fultency, in her mother's arms. Ward's English Poets, II. 132.

Epigram. By Prior. Ibid. II. 26.

A Comparison. Addressed to a Young Lady. By Cowper. Ibid. II. 454.

Stanzas on Women. By Goldsmith. Ibid. II. 381.

Sketch of his own Character. By Thomas Gray. Ibid. II. 335.

Epigram. By Byron. Ibid. II. 238.

COMMENDATORY POEMS.

A familiar type of epistle at the time of Burns was the commendatory letter to brother poets who had published new books or written new poems. Burns has not many that resemble this type of poem. There are two people to whom he addressed letters of commendation: John Goudie of Kilmarnock, and John Laprapp, an old bard who lived near him at Muirkirk.

The letter to John Goudie¹ was addressed to him on occasion of the publication of his essays. He was a wine and spirit merchant in Kilmarnock, and his essays evidently contained unorthodox material, for Burns is particularly jubilant over the blow against orthodoxy and superstition.²

To John Goudie.174.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did grapple,
But now she's got an unco' ripple;
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death;
See how she fetches at the trappie,
An' gasps for breath.

That which seems to interest Burns most in this commendation is the subject matter of the essays rather than the manner in which the essays are written.

'Tis you and Taylor are the chief,
Wha are to blame for this mischief;

1. Or Goldie. See Henley & Henderson, page 355, Vol. II.

2. John Goudie was especially fond of Burns, because he considered Burns to be the "poet laureate" of the New Light Party. He became one of Burns' sureties for the Kilmarnock edition, and entertained Burns while it was being published. The feeling of sympathy between the two men accounts for much of the jubilation of Burns over the blow at orthodoxy given in the essays.

But gin the Lord's ain folk get leave,
A toom tar-barrel
And twa red peats wad send relief,
An' end the quarrel.

For me, my skill's but very sma',
An' skill in prose I've nane ava,
But, quietlins-wise, between us twa,
Weel may ye speed!
An', tho' they sud you sair misca',
Ne'er fash your head.

At the very end Burns tags on a stanza of compliment to "honest nappy", that would be likely to please an honest wine and spirit merchant; so although Burns does not praise outright, he gives an indirect compliment that would be sure to please his reader.

There's naething like the honest nappy!
Where will ye e'er see men see happy,
Or women soupy, soft, an' sappy,
'Tween morn an' morn,
As them wha like to taste the drappie
In glass or horn?

The whole letter is singularly free from any ostentatious praise or exaggerated compliment. He approves of John Goudie's sentiment and tells him so.

There is a different spirit in the epistle to John Lapraik. The interesting feature there is that three letters are written to this correspondent. The occasion for the first letter was Burns' first

hearing of one of Lapraik's songs¹ sung at a "rockin' on Fasten-sen". He was so charmed and delighted by this "sang- - - that thirled the heart strings thro' the breast", that he immediately sat down to inscribe an epistle to the author. One of the differences in this epistle and the former is that this is written, not about some special publication or appearance of Lapraik's poems, but about a chance hearing of one of Lapraik's poems. It is interesting to see the indirect compliment which Burns pays the old bard when he says that when he heard the poem he immediately asked: "Can this be Pope, or Steele, - - Or Beattie's wark!" It gives an idea of the rank which Pope held among the Scotch. Burns takes occasion in this poem to give quite a little of his philosophy of poetry. In comparing this letter

with that of John Goudie, it is interesting to see the difference which appears in the poems because of the difference in the correspondents. To John Goudie he praised "honest nappy" because that is what John Goudie would enjoy; to John Lapraik he opens his heart about what poetry means to him, because he feels that the bard will understand his feelings.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning no pretense,
Yet what the matter?
When e'er my Muse does on me glance
I jingle at her.

1. The epistle referred to is the one of Lapraik's beginning: "When I upon thy bosom lean-". For a short account of John Lapraik, see Cambridge edition of Works of Burns, p. 44.

What's a' the jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools,
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shoole,
Or knappin'-hammers.

A set of dull, conceited hashees
Confuse their brows in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
Ah' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

Burns, too, cannot resist a little autobiographical touch.

I winna blaw about mysel,
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends, an' folks that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as mony still
As far abuse me.

There's a wee faut they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses - Gude forgive me!
For many a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me
They weel can spare.

In this epistle Burns is at his genial best. The spirit of warm friendliness and kindly affection is never more evident in Burns than in the last two stanzas.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
 'Each aid the others',
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
 My friends, my brothers!

But to conclude my lang epistle,
As my suld men's worn to the gristle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fisaie,
 Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whistle,
 Your friend and servant.

Lapraik answers the request for a letter, to Burns' delight. The second answer of Burns is similar to the first in kindness of spirit and skill of workmanship. Burns uses the Habbie stanza as he did in the first epistle.

While new-ca'd kye rowts at the stake,
An' pownies reek in plough or braik,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
 To own I'm debtor,
To honest-hearted auld Lapraik,
 For his kind letter.

This second letter does not logically come under this group of commendatory epistles, for it is written like a friendly letter in answer to one of John Lapraik's. I place it here because it would misplace it to discuss it except in relation to the other two epistles to John Lapraik. These three letters, growing out of a commendatory epistle, are particularly interesting as they reflect the influence of Burns' Scottish forerunners.¹ So even though the last two epistles are different in nature from the first, I feel justified in discussing them together, even though out of place in the classification. The second epistle has another discussion about Burns and his Muse. Burns enjoys talking about his flighty Muse, that gives him "mony a jirt an' fleg".

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge and care,
Tho' fortune use you hard and sharp;
Come, kittle up your moorland harp
 Wi' gleeesome touch.
Ne'er mind how fortune waft an' warp;
 She's but a bitch.

She's gien me mony a jirt an' fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;

1. See discussion of Scottish commendatory epistles below.

But, by the Lord, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Burns towards the last turns toward another favorite theme of his - democracy.

Were this the charter of our state,
'On pain o' hell be rich and great',
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heaven! that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For this the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
'The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!'

The diversity of subjects which is revealed here is one of the characteristics of Burns' familiar epistles. It is easily explained when we think of our ^{own} friendly letters. Naturally there is a certain amount of rambling from one topic to another, as we try to send our thoughts out to our friend.

The third letter is even more familiar and intimate than the second. Notice the commonplace subject matter in the following stanzas. It is a poetical phrasing of what we often say in prose ourselves.

I'm bizzie too, an' skelbin' at it,
But bitter, daudin showers hae wat itq
Hae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
 Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jockteleg an' whatt it,
 Like ony clerk.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your brow, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill-nature
 On holy men,
While Deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
 But mair profane.

There is no philosophizing on Muse or democracy in this letter; it is merely a merry versification of an ordinary prose letter. He finishes his epistle with an excuse that he is busy.

But stocks are cawpit wi' the blast,
An' now the sinn kecks in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest
 An' quit my chanter;
Hae I subscribe mysel in haste,
 Yours, Rab the Ranter.

It is a delightfully merry and interesting piece of poetry, and reveals an entirely new use of the epistolary form from any we have studied so far. There are more like it, which are discussed under another heading.^{1.}

1. Purely familiar epistles.

The three letters form an interesting evolution: first, a complimentary letter written in Burns' most friendly, most genial style, with a dash of philosophy to give it weight; secondly, an answer to the bard's reply, friendly and intimate still, with yet a bit of philosophy to give it depth; thirdly, an intimate poetical letter speaking of the commonplace events of everyday, merry and whimsical, but with no philosophy or dissertation. We shall have occasion to speak again of these last two epistles when we come to the purely familiar epistles.

Commendatory Epistles in England.

There is no form of epistle so widely used in England as the commendatory epistle. It is safe to say that there was not a poet from the time of Spenser to the time of Pope who did not write commendatory epistles. These commendatory epistles have no specified form; they are written in heroic couplet,¹ or in the irregular metre of the ode², or in the four line stanza rhyming abab,³ or in the Hudibrastic measure,⁴ and many other meters.

The nature of these commendatory poems is as varied as the forms. There is a delightfully informal commendation of Ben Jonson. "To my dear son, and right learned friend, Master Joseph Rutter. Prefixed to the Shepherd's Holiday, a pastoral tragi-comedy."⁵

You look, my Joseph, I should something say,
Unto the world in praise of your first play:
And truly, so I would, could I be heard,
You know I never was of truth afeared.

- - - - -

Now for my own part, and it is but due,
(You have deserved it from me) I have read,
And weighed your play; untwisted ev'ry thread,
And the woof, and warps thereof; can tell
Where it runs round and even: where so well

1. See Vision of Ben Jonson, Chalmers' Anthology, IV.3.
2. To His Worthily Affected Friend, Mr. W. Browne, Ibid. VI.233.
3. To the Author. Ibid. VI.234.
4. To his Worthy Friend Master Evelyn, Ibid. VIII, 56.
5. Chalmers' Anthology, V.543.

So soft, and smooth it handles, the whole piece,
As it were, spun by nature, off the fleece:
This is my censure.

Notice the informal appellation, "My Joseph", and the hint of intimacy in the line, "you have deserved it from me", and the suggestive rather than direct method of compliment. Jonson is to be congratulated on the spirit of this compliment. He knows what he is talking about - "I have read and weighed your play". There is no extravagant nor exaggerated praise which might mar the effect.

Compare this with the commendatory epistle from Carew to Master D'Avenant upon his excellent play, *The Just Italian*.¹

I'll not mispend in praise the narrow room
I borrow in this leaf; the garlands bloom
From thine own seeds, that crown each glorious page
Of thy triumphant work.

Notice the forced figure in the second and third lines; also the adjectives "glorious" and "triumphant", that sound so well, and definitely mean so little. This writer presents this same affect of hyperbolic compliment in the letter to Master George Sands, on his translation of the Psalms.²

I
I press not to the choir, nor dare ^I greet
The holy place with unhallowed feet;
My unwash'd Muse pollutes not things divine,

1. Chalmers' Anthology, V. 17.
2. Ibid. V. 616.

Her mingled her profaner notes with thine;
Here, humbly waiting at the porch, she stays,
And with glad ears sucks in thy sacred lays.

Carow has been peculiarly unhappy in his figures of speech, "unwashed muse", and "with glad ears sucks in". These epistles are illustrative of some of the forced letters which were written, just because it was the fashion.

Going on further into the seventeenth century, we find many solemn and dignified epistles commendatory among the poems of Dryden. All of these are written in the heroic couplet which Dryden knew how to handle so ably.

"To my Honour'd Friend Sir Robert Howard, on his excellent poems."¹

As there is music uninforced by art
In those wild notes, which with a sorry heart
The birds in unfrequented shades express,
Who, better taught at home, yet please us less;
So in your verse a native sweetness dwells,
Which shames composure, and its arts excels.

The figure of speech here is so aptly chosen that it adds to the thought rather than takes away. This has none of the easy familiarity that we find in Jonson's poem already noted, but it has a dignified charm of its own that rebukes any familiarity. The compliments are heavily exaggerated.

1. Chalmers' Anthology, VIII, 588.

'Tis strange each line so great a weight should bear,
And yet no sign of toil, no sweat appear.
We're both enriched and pleased, like them that woo
At once a beauty, and a fortune, too.

The other epistles are as formal and dignified as this.¹

Later still in the eighteenth century we come upon an interesting
commendatory poem by Richard Savage, called Verses Occasioned by
Reading Mr. Aaron Hill's Poem called "Gideon".
Richard Savage.

The meter is irregular, like that of an ode,
made up of four-beat iambic, and five-beat iambic lines.

Let other poets poorly sing
Their flatteries to the vulgar great.
Her airy flight let wandering fancy wing,
And rival Nature's most luxuriant store,
To swell some monster's pride, who shames a state,
Or form a wreath to crown tyrannic power.
Thou, who inform'd'st this clay with active fire,
Do, Thou supreme of powers, my thoughts refine,
And with thy purest heat my soul inspire,
That with William's worth my verse may shine,
As they lov'd Gideon once set Israel free,
So he with sweet seraphic lays
Redeems the use of captive poetry,
Which first was form'd to speak thy glorious praise.²

1. See references at the end of this section.

2. Chalmers' Anthology, XI. 730.

Richard Savage feels the dignity of the occasion so strongly that he was tempted to use many figures of speech to deck out his poem. Although he addresses this man in most lofty terms of praise, yet there is none of the glorious warmth of personal feeling which we find in Burns' epistle to John Lapraik.

These illustrations are enough to show the varied nature of the commendatory poems. They can be dignified or familiar, and written in any kind of meter. As far as I can judge from the material I have looked over, the dignified epistle seems to be the favorite, that is, the commendatory epistle in which the author addressed is praised in an impersonal, flattering manner, with no jocosness and with many figures of speech. If the reader will glance back at the previous discussion, he will see this illustrated.¹ It would be impossible in a thesis that is dealing primarily with Burns' epistles to give all the different varieties of commendatory epistles in England. It is

1. For further illustrations, see:

Verses to Mr. Drayton, upon his poems.

Upon the Battle of Agincourt; Written by his dear friend, Michael Drayton. By J. Vaughan. Chalmers' Anthology, IV. 3.

To my worthy friend, Mr. Michael Drayton, upon these his poems.

By John Reynolds. Ibid. IV. 3.

Vision of Ben Jonson, on the muse of his friend, Mr. Drayton.

Ibid. IV. 3.

To Mr. Garth, upon his dispensary. C. Boyle. Anderson's Anthology. VII. 38.

To my friend, the author of the Dispensary, desiring my opinion of his poem. Ibid. VII. 38.

Verses to the author of the Tragedy of Cato; by R. Steele. Ibid. VII. 200.

enough for our purpose to suggest the various types of epistles that existed, and comment upon the similarity to Burns. It seems to me that the two examples we have of congratulatory notes by Burns are unlike the usual congratulatory notes in England, because they are essentially familiar and intimate, not formal and dignified. Even the familiar commendatory epistles in England are different from Burns, because Burns uses ^{the} Scotch dialect and the Habbie stanza. In this instance, although Burns is doing the customary thing, yet there is no servile imitation.

(note continued)

To Mr. John Hughes, on his poem, entitled The Triumph of Peace.
W. Worts, Feb. 1697. Anderson's Anthology. VII. 271.

To Mr. Congreve. An Epistolary Ode, 1693, occasioned by the Old Bachelor.
Ibid. VII. 758.

To Mr. Pope. By Parnell. Ibid. VII. 13.

To Mr. Pope. By the Right Honourable Anne, Countess of Winchelsea.
Ibid. VIII. 4.

Epistle to Mr. Addison. By Pope. Occasioned by his Dialogue on Medals.
Ibid. VIII. 115.

Commendatory Epistles in Scotland.

When we come to the commendatory epistles in Scotland, the interesting point to notice is that here we find the same kind of familiar correspondence growing out of a commendatory letter, as in Burns. One of the most famous of these correspondences is the epistolary correspondence between Hamilton Bangour and Allan Ramsay. Hamilton

Hamilton Bangour.
Allan Ramsay.

was the man to start the letters by a commendatory epistle to Allan Ramsay.¹ This is like the letter which Burns wrote to John Lapraik.

O fam'd and celebrated Allan!
Renowned Ramsay, can't callan.
There's nowhere Highland man nor Lawlan,
In poetry,
But may as soon ding down Tamballan
As match with thee.
Of poetry the hael quintessence
Thou hast suck'd up, left the excrement
To petty poets, or sic messus,
Tho' round thy stool
They may pick crumbs, and learn some lessons
At Ramsay's school.

This letter has much the familiarity of tone which appears in Burns' later epistle. In one verse, Hamilton writes his friend an invitation to a bottle of claret in Edinburgh.

1. Burns, Vol. II, p. 232. Edited by Alex. Gardner

Now tho' I should baith reel and rattle,
And be as light as Aristotle,
At Edinburgh we shall hae a bottle
Of reaming claret,
Gin that my half-pay siller shottle
Can safely spare it.

In this last verse there is the same kind of intimate ending that appears in so many of Burns' poems.

Accept of this, and look upon it
With favor, tho' I've done it;
Sae I conclude and end my sonnet,
Who am most fully,
While I do wear a hat or bonnet,
Yours, Wanton Willy.

After this closing, there appears a postscript which is even more familiar than the rest of the poem.

By this my postscript I incline
To let you ken my hael design
Of sic a long imperfect line
Lies in this sentence,
To cultivate my dull engine
By your acquaintance.

Your answer therefore I expect;
And to your friend you may direct
At Gilbertfield; do not neglect,

When ye have lissure,
Which I'll embrace with great respect
And perfect pleasure.

The occasion for this letter in the first place was Hamilton's wish to commend Ramsay for his poems, but the expressed the wish to continue the friendship led to a correspondence, which went through somewhat the same evolution as Burns' correspondence with Lapraik. There is one exception; in these epistles there is not so much general philosophizing, and more intimate commonplace interchange of thought coupled with a great deal of compliment. There is a stanza or two of talk about his Muse, by Hamilton,¹ that resembles Burns' dissertations on the same subject.

The blythe and cheerfu' merry muse,
Of compliments is sae profuse,
For my good bairns dis me roose
Sae very finely,
It were ill breeding to refuse
To thank her kindly.

What she sometimes, in angry mood,
When she put on her barlichood,
Her dialect seem rough and rude,
Let's ne'er be fleet,
But tak our bit, when it is good
And buffet wi't.

For gin we ettle aisee to taunt her,
And dinna sawly thole her banter

1. Ramsay's Works, II, 245. Ed. Alex. Gardner

She'll tak the flings, verse may grow scanter

Syne wi' great shame

We'll rue the day that we do want her;

Then wha's to blame?

But almost all the rest of the seven epistles are written in a complimentary vein, of which the following verses are illustrative.

Thy verses nice as ever nicket,
Made me as canty as a cricket,
I ergh to reply, lest I stick it;

Beh winsom! how thy soft sweet style,
And bonny auld words gar me smile,
Thou's travell'd sure mony a mile
Wi' charge and cost,
To learn them thus keep rank and file,
And ken their post.¹

May I be licket wi' a bittle
Gin of your numbers I think little;
Ye're never ruggit, shan, nor kittle,
By blythe and gably,
And hit the spirit to a tittle
Of standard Habby.²

This reference to the Habbie stanza is peculiarly interesting, when we consider that Ramsay was the one to popularize the stanza

1. From Hamilton to Ramsay, p. 230.
2. From Ramsay to Hamilton, p. 236.

form.¹ The use of the Habbie stanza in these epistles probably influenced Burns to use it in his correspondence with Lapraik. Notice also the broad Scotch of these epistles and compare with Burns. Undoubtedly it seems to me that Burns shows more Scotch influence in the writing of his epistle to Lapraik, than English influence, although the custom of writing commendatory epistles was common to both England and Scotland.²

1. See note to Earnest Cry and Prayer, p. 36.

2. For further illustrations of Scottish commendatory epistles see below:

To Mr. Joseph Mitchell, on the successful representation of a tragedy, 1791. By Ramsay, Works, II. 26.

To Mr. Gay, on hearing the Dutchess of Queensbury commend some of his verses. Ramsay's works, II. 278.

Andrew Gray to Robert Fergusson, Works of Fergusson, by Robert Ford. 110. This letter brought a reply and a second epistle from Andrew Gray. 114-116. This is similar to Hamilton and Ramsay.

To Allan Ramsay, by C. Beckingham, Works of Ramsay, I. 5.

To Allan Ramsay, from S. Burchet, Works of Ramsay, D. 1.

In Answer to Congratulatory.

Very closely allied to commendatory letters are the letters that Burns wrote in answer to those addressed to him. This group of five letters forms the last group of occasional familiar epistles. The occasion for Burns' writing them, of course, was the receipt of the commendatory letter from his friend. The people to whom he writes are all on friendly terms with him, so that the poems are friendly rather than formal. The persons may be of a rank above him, as in the case of the Guidwife of Wauchoppe House, but I am placing the poems here, nevertheless, because of their intimate personal nature.

To William Simpson. 188.

I gat your letter, winsome Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

"Winsome Willie" was a schoolmaster at Ochiltree, a village on the Lugar, some eight miles south of the farm of Moseglie.¹ The use of the Habbie stanza, the Scotch dialect, the personal address, all make the poem seem intimate and personal. There is an interesting allusion in the third stanza to Allan Ramsay and Hamilton of Gilbertfield, who carried on a rhyming correspondence together. This

1. Notes, p. 582.

shows of a surety that Burns knew these poets and their poems. Indeed, the letter we are just discussing is very much of the same nature as some of the earlier correspondence. Burns enjoys nothing more than to have an opportunity to chat about his muse and her whims. We have already noted this characteristic in the epistle to John Lapraik. In this particular instance he speaks especially of his pride in his connection with Coila, who was the protective Goddess of the River which flowed through the middle of Ayrshire. He does not care how many sing of Yarrow and the Tweed.

We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himself he learn'd to wander
Adown some trottin' burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

There is an interesting postscript to the letter, which has so much material for discussion as the letter, and is fully as long. It seems that Simpson had asked him to tell him the meaning of the "New Light", a term referring to the religious opinions of Dr. Taylor, who was a radical thinker. Burns jocosely refers to the "New Light" as the moon.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,

Wore by degrees, till her last roon,
 Gaed past their viewin',
An' shortly after she was done,
 They gat a new one.

At last, he says, there began to be some new ideas about this moon; the controversy even grew so bold that the participants came to blows, and at last the conservatives even decided to go up and spend a month in the moon to see for themselves.

An' when the new-light billies see them,
 I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a 'moonshine-matter';
But tho' dull-prose folk Latin splatter
 In logic tuzie,
I hope we hardies ken some better
 Than mind sic brulzie.

This is another illustration of the way Burns uses the epistle to express his ideas of religion and philosophy.¹ Here he makes use of the epistle to write a satire about the controversy going on in the kirk at his time between the strict conservatives and the radicals like himself.

Another letter in answer to one of congratulation is the reply to a letter from Dr. Blacklock, congratulating Burns on his poetic career. Dr. Blacklock was a retired clergyman of the Kirk of Scotland.

1. See Epistle to John Lapraik, and John Goudie to Rev. M'Kath.

He was one of the literati of Edinburgh, and one of the first to discover Burns.¹

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and content?
I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
 Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you aye as weel's I want ye,
 And then ye'll do.

The poem was written from Mossgiel Farm, after Burns' marriage with Jean, for he speaks of his wife and babies, and also speaks feelingly in the same breath of the cares of this world.

Lord help me thro' this world o' care!
I'm weary sick o't late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
 Than mony ithers;
But why should we man better fare,
 And a' men brithers?

The letter ends with a touch that makes it seem like many a letter we ourselves might have written.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky,
I wat she is a daintie chuckie,
 As e'er tread clay!

1. Page 385, notes.

And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,
I'm yours for aye.

The sending of greetings to the family is a familiar and natural ending to a letter. It emphasizes the intimate and familiar nature of the poem, which makes it impossible to class with the formal poems even though Dr. Blacklock is a person in higher rank than Burns.

The epistle to Colonel De Peyster is not quite so informal as the two just discussed.

To Colonel De Peyster. 212.

My honour'd Colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Post's weal;
Ah! now sma' heart has I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses.

Here again Burns rambles off into a whimsical dissertation, this time starting with a sigh at the cares of the world and ending on the wiles of the devil.

O what a canty world were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And fortune favor worth and merit,
As they deserve: - - - - -
Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And inpaste gems and fripp'ry deck her,
Oh! flick'ring, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still, - - -

Then that curst carmaghale, suld Satan,
Watches, like baudrons by a rattan,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saul on,
He's off like fire.

The letter ends with an unusually quaint turn.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen;
The Lord preserve us frae the Devil!
Amen! Amen!

The epistle to the Guidwife of Wauchope House was written in answer to verses addressed to the poet by herself. She herself was the wife of the laird of Wauchope, -Mrs. Elizabeth Scott. Burns' letter to her is distinctly different from his poems written to men on similar occasions. The subject matter mostly has to deal with women and their charms, which shows again Burns' tactful writing of the subject matter of his epistles to his correspondent. He tells Mrs. Scott that the first inspiration that he received was from a lass, when he was shearing and clearing the caru.

But still the elements o' sang
In forlorn jumble, right an' wrang,

Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairet I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
 She rous'd the forming strain;
I see her yet, the sensic queen,
 That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een,
 That gart my heart-strings tingle;
I fired, inspired,
 At ev'ry kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
 I feared aye to speak.

From the praising of the one, Burns turns to a general exaltation of the sex as a whole.

Health to the sex! ilk guid chief says,
Wi' merry dance in winter days,
 An' we to share in content:
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heav'n below,
 Is rapture-giving woman.

This reminds us of some of Burns' songs, which form almost a panegyric in praise of women.¹ In the last stanza, Burns thanks Mrs. Scott very simply and naturally for the gift of "marled plaid" which she set him.

1. See, Green grow the rushes, O, p. 327; She's Fair and Fausie, p. 437.

I'd be mair vauntie o' my hap,
Douce hingin' owre my curple,
Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.

The poem is suggestively flattering, for by saying that it was a woman who first roused him to poetry, and then by giving his toast to all the "lovely dears", implying that she was one, he makes her feel complimented far more than if he had started on a list of her own virtues which she probably might not believe. It would not be thorough to leave the poem without mentioning the stanza form. It is a Scottish form, long and complicated, and shows that Burns was familiar with the old Scottish "makars".¹

The epistle to Mr. M'Adam, of Craigen-Gillan, in answer to an obliging letter he sent in the commencement of Burns' poetic career, is another example of an answer to a commendatory letter. This letter shows a variation of stanza form, for this letter is written in a four-line ballad stanza of four-beat iambic alternating with three-beat iambic.

To Mr. M'Adam. 1796.

Sir, o'er a gill I get your card,
I trow it made me proud;
'See what takes notice o' the Bard!'
I lap and cried fu' loud.

1. This epistle is written in the meter of Cherry and Bloss, by Mont-
gomery, which appeared in 1597. There is no reason to doubt that
Montgomery invented the meter. See p. 786. Vol. I. Poems of Burns, edited
by Henley and Henderson.

If this epistle had been the only one of its kind I should have been constrained to place it among the formal occasional epistles. Notice the formality of the address: "Sir"; whereas in the epistle to William Simpson it was "my coaxin billie". It seems to me to be enough of yielding to classification to recognize this difference between this poem and the other four, and then place it with these answers to commendatory letters where it belongs by right of subject matter. For further illustration of the formality of it, notice the admission of the difference in rank, and the repetition of the formal, "Sir", in the following stanzas:

'Twas noble, sir, 'twas like yourself,
To grant your high protection;
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' weel,
Is aye a blest infection.

All these letters of Burns show a warm appreciation of the kindness of the letters addressed to him. There is a close resemblance, as I have already said, between these letters and the commendatory epistles. These letters are but a grateful acknowledgement of a form of poem which we have already studied. For this reason, it seems to me unnecessary to go into a detailed study of similar poems in England and Scotland, but necessary only to give a list of poems for illustration.¹

1. Answer. (to a New civillie for the ladies). By Sheridan, 1753, to Dr. Swift. Chalmers' Anthology, XI. 521.

By Dr. Swift, *Ibid.* 522.

An answer to the foregoing. An Epistle from Dr. Soserville, Ramsay's poems, II. 288. Ramsay, Vol. II. p. 297.

An Answer to the foregoing. (An epistle from Mr. Soserville to Allan, on publishing the second volume of poems. Ramsay's Works, II, 295) By Ramsay, Poems, II. 297.

== C ==

PURELY FAMILIAR EPISTLES.

All the letters we have been considering have been occasional, either formal or familiar. There are some letters which Burns seems to have written for no other reason than that of friendliness; as far as I know there was no outward occasion that caused the letters to be written besides the fact that Burns felt that he wished to write a friendly letter to some bosom companion.

There are no letters of Burns that reveal so much of his personality, or reflect so many differing moods as do these familiar epistles. To each correspondent he shows a different face. When he wrote to Major Logan, he felt in a hilariously optimistic spirit.

Even in the first stanza we feel that in this poem Burns is in one of his happiest moods.

Hail, thair-~~ins~~pirin', rattlin' Willie!
Though fortune's road be rough an' hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But take it like the unback'd filly,
Proud o' her speed.

There is something peculiarly heart-warming in the poet's good wishes for his friend.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your sback jink and diddle,

To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' this wild warl',
Until you on a crummock driddle
A gray-hair'd carl.

Burns knows how to make the most of the charm of the Scottish dialect. I know of no poem where this charm is more clearly seen than in some of the stanzas of this epistle.

But come, your hand, my careless brither,
I' th'ither warl" if there's anither,
An' that there is I've little swither
About the matter;
We cheek for chow shall jog thagither,
I'se ne'er bid better.

Burns manages to tuck in a little bit of philosophy into nearly all his familiar epistles. In this one he discourses upon one of his favorite subjects, the joys of a cheery gang, -

Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
An' never think o' right an' wrang
By square an' rule,
But as the clegs o' feeling stang
Are wise or fool.

In contrast to these honest folk, he shows us the -

harry, hoodock, purse-proud race,
Wha count on poortith as disgrace -

Their tuneless hearts!
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

As we can see by the selections given, the material in the letter is varied, and Burns makes no attempt to keep to one subject. He ends the letter with a request to be remembered to Major Logan's family, which is also characteristic of a regular prose letter.

Faites me baissamains respectueuse
To sentimental Sister Susie,
An' honest Lucky; no to roose you,
Ye may be proud
That sic a couple Fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

Nea mair at present can I measure,
An' trowth my rhymin' ware's nae treasure;
But when in Ayr, some half hour's liesure,
Be't light, be't dark,
Sir Bard will do himself the pleasure
To call at Park.

This letter shows Burns at his optimistic best; the letter shows the cheery spirit and the friendly sympathy which made Burns so dearly loved by his friends, and has made us of a later generation, forgive faults that could not be forgiven in a less lovable sinner.

The epistle to Hugh Parker reveals a different mood. Burns

wrote this letter to his friend soon after his arrival at Ellisland,
when he was alone and felt melancholy and
To Hugh Parker, 104. miserable.

In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er cross the Muse's heekles,
Nor limpit in poetic shackles;
A land that prose did ne'er view it,
Except when drunk he stacher't through it;
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neck,
I hear it - for in vain I look.

Here, for ay wanted rhyming reptures,
I sit and count ay mine by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians,-
I'm dwindled down to mere existence,
Wi' nae convares but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae hand face but Jenny Geddes.

The atmosphere of this poem is disconsolateness itself. Burns is trying to console himself by pouring out his miseries into a friendly ear.

Wi' a' this care an' a' this grief,
And aye, aye, prospect of relief,
And naught but post reek i' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?

Tarbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye'll find me in a better tune;
But till we meet and wae our whistle,
Tak this excuse for me epistle.

The difference in the spirit of this poem and the epistle to Major Logan reveals to us the varying moods of Burns, and his impulsiveness of expression. As he feels at the time the poem is written, so he writes. There is a human touch here in the affection he shows for his horse Jenny, who has carried him so far and faithfully. Burns was always fond of animals of all kinds. There is little philosophy in this familiar epistle in comparison to the other ones.

Even the short epistle to John Kennedy has its verse of philosophy.

To John Kennedy.222.

It's na I like to sit an' swallow
Then like a swine to puke an' wallow,
But gie us just a true good fallow
Wi' right ingine
And anunkie ance to sake us mellow,
And then we'll shine.

This epistle was half a prose letter, showing how informal Burns was in writing and sending of these letters. It is proof of the fact stated before that Burns often writes his letters as merely a versifying of prosaic, commonplace material. Notice the subject matter in the first two stanzas.

Now Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline Corse,
Lord! man, there's lassies there wad force
 A hermit's fancy,
And down the gate in faith they're worse
 And mair unchancy.

But, as I'm sayin', please step to Dow's
And taste sic gear as Johnny brews,
Till some bit callan brings me news
 That you are there,
And if we dinna had a bouze
 I'se ne'er drink mair.

In these last two stanzas we find the charm that Burns can give to even the most prosaic subjects. You almost forget that he is asking his friend to step into a saloon to have a drink! Perhaps it is the glamor of the Scotch dialect; "dinna" is so much more effective than "did not", "mair" than "more", "wad" than "would". But I think it is partly Burns' gift to write easy, graceful, spontaneous poetry. "Till some bit callan brings me news" - we are charmed by the turn to this expression. In an epistle like this Burns loses all the stiffness of his didactic attempts which he inscribed to Robert Graham. He is at his easy natural beat.

The letter to Davie, a brother poet, was written during the early part of 1785, when he was at Mossiel. Davie was David Sillar, the son of a crofter, in Burns' own parish of Tarbolton, Ayrshire.¹

1. Page 580, notes.

Notice the reason that Burns gives for writing the letter.

To Davie, a Brother Poet.156.

While winds frae off Ben-Lomong blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down, to pass the time,
And spin a verse or two o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.

The rest of the letter is a revealing and interesting discussion of the relation of the poor to the rich. I will give quotations of the best portions.

I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien an' snug;
I kent less and I want less
Their roomy fireside;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursed pride.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress.
Yet then content could mak us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.

It's na in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;

If happiness hae not her seat
And center in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:

The letter gradually shifts into a paean of praise about Davie and his "Jean". This poem reveals a love and a tenderness for Jean that is not consistent with his later songs.¹ Not only his songs, which reflect but his moods, but his actions belie the endearing words which he writes here.

When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent prayer;
Still take her, and make her,
Thy most peculiar care!

The poem does not end with any personal signature which is so common in many of Burns' letters. In fact, the letter seems to be written to set forth Burns' ideas about the joys "that riches ne'er

1. See: O that I ne'er been married, 512; The Weary Fund o' Tow. 499.

can buy", and before it ends he has turned his thoughts into a poem of praise for Davie, his friend, and Jean, his wife.

O, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin', rank and file,
Amangst before I ken!
The ready measure rime as fine,
As Phoebus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin' owre my pen.

On the whole, the poem is mainly dissertation, rather than a letter, yet the two are so closely allied that it is impossible to tell them apart, and say that this is the address, and this the dissertation. It is a discursive letter, written at a time when Burns felt the need of expressing his feelings to a friend.

The second epistle to Davie is in answer to an epistle sent to him. It begins in a friendly, cordial, familiar way, that was Burns' greatest charm in these letters.

AULD NEIBOR,
I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant, friendli' letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak so fair;
For my pair, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair.

The letter is mainly to encourage Davie to write poetry himself. Davie liked to write poetry, and later, in 1789, he published a

book of poems, which are said to be more or less in imitation of Burns.¹ It is very natural that Burns should write to Davie about poetry, because that was one of the common interests which was very vital to both poets.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
 O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
 Your auld gray hairs.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The aarl' may play you mony a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave you,
 Tho' e'er so puir,
Na, even tho' liapin' wi' the spavie
 Frae door to door.

The poem could almost be called a psalm of praise for poetry. The Muse is Burns' dearest friend, and he is here trying to make his friend realize the joy of his companionship if he would seize upon its pleasures. There are no poems of Burns which are more filled with genial friendliness and honest democracy. Here he is in his best mood when his poverty is a blessing to be proudly borne, and when the world seems a glorious place to live in.

1. The above poem was written in 1785. See Henley and Henderson, Volume I, p. 365.

This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;

In this epistle, and in the epistle to John Lapraik which comes so near to being a purely familiar letter, Burns reveals all the better things of his nature for which we cannot but admire him. Some of his familiar epistles are merely commonplace in verse form; some of his occasional epistles are merely legal documents with humor and meter added; some are stiff and didactic imitations of a form unsuited to his genius; but in these familiar epistles we find the truest revelation of the man's best nature which can be found among his letters. It is significant that we find quotations from the epistle to John Lapraik in many of the selections made of Burns' poetry, where his other epistles are unnoticed. The philosophy we find in these letters is not only good morality but excellent poetry.

There is one more letter which I have to discuss, which is rather alone in its purpose. Technically it is an occasional poem, written at the time a young friend of his was going to the country and needed advice; but I am discussing it under familiar epistles, because the occasion of the letter is so incidental, and the friendliness of the letter so apparent, that it seems to belong near the discursive epistles to Davis rather than in any other place.

The epistle to a Young Friend was written to the son of Robert Aiken, Andrew Aiken, apparently at a time when the young man was just going out into the world.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,

Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:

Some of this epistle reminds us of the advice of Polonius to his son.

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure;
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer.

A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may take a neighbor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han', your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man
Wi' sharpen'd eely inspection.

In spite of Burns' objections to the decisions and actions of the kirk, he often reveals a true love and affection for religion. Here he seems to be in a solemn mood, as if he wished his young friend to believe in realities.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker -
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
Is sure a noble anchor.

Burns is so full of wisdom and morals here that we lose some of the charm of his usual unorthodox opinions. This is a different mood from any we have seen yet; we could hardly believe that the author of the "Epistle to ^{Dr} Taylor" could be the same one who wrote this worldly-wise, solemn warning to a youth. It is like the Epistle to Davie because it is more or less of a dissertation; here it discourses on the wiles of the world and the way to withstand them, and yet it is a letter, too, and very personal.

It seems to me that these personal familiar epistles of Burns are the highest expression to be found in his epistles. There is nothing original in the conception, but the warmth and friendliness of his personality give them a charm that is peculiarly his own.

Familiar Epistles in England.

There are many familiar epistles in England. An interesting example is the epistle by Congreve to the Right Honorable The Lord Viscount Cobham. This letter is very much like the Congreve epistle to Davis, for the author rambles off into moralizing to his friend.¹

Sincerest critic of my prose or rhyme,
Tell how thy pleasing Stowe employs thy time.
Say Cobham, what amuses thy retreat?
Or stratagems of war, or schemes of state?
Dost thou recall to mind with joy or grief
Great Marlborough's actions; that immortal chief,
Whose slightest trophy raised in each campaign
More than sufficed to signalize a reign?
Or dost thou, weary grown, these works neglect,
No temple, statues, obelisks erect,
But catch the morning breeze from fragrant meads?
Or shun the noontime ray in wholesome shades?
To meditate on all that's wise and good?
Amidst the pangs of such intestine strife
Still think the present day the last of life,
Defer not till tomorrow to be wise.
Tomorrow's sun to thee may never rise.

1. Anderson's Anthology, Vol. VII., pp. 587-8.

Another letter that reflects a melancholy somewhat akin to the unhappiness revealed in the epistle to Hugh Parker, is shown in the following poem from Duke to his friend Otway.¹

Dear Tom, how melancholy I have grown,
Since thou hast left this learned, dirty town,
To thee by this dull letter be it known;
While all my comfort, under all the care,
Are duns, and puns, and logic, and small beer.

A letter that is as prosaic, in subject matter, as any of Burns' letters, is found in the following selection from Sheridan to Dr. Swift, about bottling wine.

I'd have you know, as sure as you're dean,
On Thursday my cask of Orien I'll drain,
If my wife is not willing I say she's a queen,
And my right to the cellar, egad, I'll maintain,
As bravely as any that fought at Demblain.
Go tell it her over and over again.
I hope as I ride to the town it won't rain,
For should it, I fear it would cool my hot brain,
Entirely extinguish my poetical vein.
Now Wardell's in haste, and begins to complain,
Your most humble servant, dear Sir, I remain,

T. Sheridan.

Get Helsham, Walmsay, Delany,

1. Chalmers' Anthology, VIII, 234.

And some Gralton, if there be any,
Take care your do not bid too many.

The impromptu nature of this postscript, the humour, the use of a rollicking meter, all are akin to the character of Burns' familiar epistles.

Another epistle which resembles Burns' familiar epistles in its humour and familiarity is Prior's epistle to Fleetwood Shepherd.

It was evidently his custom to send this friend every Prior year a homely letter, and he makes it very clear that no petition prompted the writing.¹

Then take it, Sir, as it was writ,
To pay respect, and not show wit,
Nor look askew at what it saith,
There's no petition in it - Faith!

The letter evolves into a whimsical dissertation on the art of writing.

If once for Principle 'tis laid,
That thought is trouble to the Head,
I argue this: the world agrees,
That he writes well, who writes with ease.
Then he by sequel logical
Writes best who never thinks at all.

'Tis not how well an Author says,
But 'tis how much that gathers praise.

1. Poems on Special Occasions, p. 10.

Tonson, who is himself a wit,
Counts writers' merit by the sheet.
Thus each should down with all he thinks,
As boys eat bread, to fill up chinks!

Toward the end there is an expression that resembles so many of Burns', with its personal greeting and message.

Kind sir, I should be glad to see you,
I hope you're well; so God be with you;
Was all I thought at first to write,
But things, since then, are altered quite.
Fancies flow in, and Muse flies high;
So God knows where my clack will lie.

These letters which we find among the works of the English authors, are alike in purpose to Burns'. They were written in a friendliness of spirit, which I have no doubt was as sincere as Burns'. They were filled with rambling philosophizing and common pleasantries. But the way in which Burns expresses himself is his own. Of course the use of the Scottish dialect, and his fondness for the Habbie stanza, make an outward difference from the language and meter of the English poets. It will now be interesting to see how the Scottish poets, who did use the same outward expressions as Burns, expressed themselves in the familiar epistles.¹

1. Further illustrations of familiar epistles in England.

To Sir Henry Wooten, by Donne, Chalmers' Anthology, V, 167.
To Mr. R. W., by Donne, Ibid. V. 169.
To Mr. George Sandys, by Drayton, Anderson's Anthology, III, 542.

Familiar Epistles in Scotland.

Among the epistles of Allan Ramsay, there is found an epistle to James Clerk, Esq., of Pennycuick. This letter is discursive, like the epistles of Burns to Allan Ramsay¹ Davie, and the epistle of Matthew Prior to Fleetwood Shephard. In the last few lines of the poem, he himself gives the reason for the poem.

Thus far, sir, with no mean design,
To you I've poured out my mind,
And sketched you forth the toil and pain
Of them that have their bread to gain,
With cares laborious, that you may,
In your blest sphere be ever gay,
Enjoying life with all that spirit
That your good sense and virtues merit.
Adieu, and ma' ye as happy be
As ever shall be wished by me,

Your ever obliged,

Humble servant,

Allan Ramsay.

The letter is, as he says, a discourse on the hardships of poverty. But he has a good deal of Burns' point of view about the respectability of honest poverty.

Tho' born to not an inch of ground,
I keep my conscience white and sound;

1. Works. II. p. 307-310.

And tho' I never was a rich heaper,
To make that up I live the cheaper;
By this ae knack I've made a shift
To drive ambitious care adrift;

There is a courage in the spirit of the above lines that is worthy of Burns.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
Nor make our scanty pleasure less,
By pining at our state;

Ramsay, also, enjoys discoursing about his Muse, and her arrogant ways, in much the same way that Burns enjoys such a fling.

Now seventy years are o'er my head,
And thirty more may lay me dead;
Should dreary care then stunt my Muse,
And gar me aft her joys refuse?
Sir, I have sung, and yet may sing,
Sonnets that o'er the dales may ring,
And in gash glee couch moral saw,
Reese virtue, and keep vice in aw;
Make villainy look black and blue,
And give distinguished worth its due;
Fix its immortal fame in verse,
That men till doomsday shall rehearse.

The above poem, as is noted, is not written in Burns' favorite Habbie stanza, nor is there as much Scottish dialect as Burns

usually favors; but the subject matter is singularly alike, even though Burns' expression gains charm from his personality.¹

For a further discussion of Scottish familiar epistles I refer the reader to the discussion above on the congratulatory letters written in Scotland by Allan Ramsay and Hamilton of Gilbertfield. Although this correspondence was primarily of a congratulatory nature, the poems resemble the familiar epistles in their personal atmosphere, just as the correspondence with John Lapraik was closely allied to the familiar epistles of Burns. The correspondence of Andrew Gray and Robert Fergusson is another example of a congratulatory correspondence which was very nearly akin to the nature of familiar epistles. There is the personal address:

Dear R., I s'an maun dip my pen;
But how to write I dinna ken;
For learning, I got scarce a grain,
 To tell me how
To write to any gentleman
 Sic like as you -

There is the familiar nature of the ending:

When this ye see, tak up your pen
And write word back to me again;

1. Compare the above discourse on the value of poetry to the following stanza by Burns, and the charm of personality can be distinctly noted.

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire,
 At plough or cart,
My Muse, tho' hamely in attire
 Maun touch the heart.

And fair you are, mind let me ken
Without delay;
To hear ye're weel, I'll be right fain;
Yours, Andrew Gray.

There is the talk about commonplaces:

Gin ever ye come here awa',
I hope ye'll be so gude as ca',
For Andrew Gray, at whistle ha',
The riddle maker,
About a rig-length frae Coosla,
Just o'er the water.¹

The difference ^{here} between the occasional poems and the familiar epistles of Burns is a matter of technicality only, and surely Burns must have received much inspiration from epistles such as these, which is revealed not only in the exactly similar epistles to John Lapraik, but in his familiar epistles, written for friendship only. These Scotch epistles are nearer to Burns than the epistles in England, although probably all Scottish writers were influenced by the customs of the English poets.

There is not much to say in summary but a repetition of what has so often been reiterated throughout this thesis. Burns invented no new use of the epistle, unless possibly the "Inventory" can be

1. See also for further illustrations of these points:
Stanzas 9-10, Ferguson to Andrew Gray, Works of Ferguson, 113.
Andrew Gray to Robert Ferguson, *ibid*, 114.

taken as an example; but over all his epistles Burns casts the glamour of his personality. His dedicatory epistles show a freedom ~~of~~ from servile flattery; his addresses are boldly critical rather than complimentary; his congratulatory letters are free from unmeaning flattery and full of a genuine appreciation; most of all his familiar epistles are the revelation of his inner self, and of the best inner self. Some of his epistles sent with presents and poems are stiff and forced; sometimes he consciously tries to imitate his English forerunners, Pope in particular. He is strongly influenced by the forms and methods of his Scottish forerunners, particularly Ramsay and Fergusson; but as a rule he gives us his own personal charm, with no attempts at imitation. Throughout all the many and varied uses of the epistle which he gives us, he manages to give the old forms a new and unique touch of his own personality.