

# VARIOUS

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**Various**  
**The Mirror of Literature,**  
**Amusement, and Instruction.**  
**Volume 14, No. 407,**  
**December 24, 1829**

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*The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction / Volume 14, No. 407,  
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**PREFACE**

Wassailing, prefaces, and waits, are nearly at a stand-still; and in these days of universality and everything, we almost resolved to leave this page blank, and every reader to write his own preface, had we not questioned whether the custom would be more honoured in the breach than the observance.

My Public—that is, our readers—we have served you seven years, through fourteen volumes; in each renewing our professions of gratitude, and study for your gratification; and we hope we shall not presume on your liberal disposition by calculating on your continued patronage. We have endeavoured to keep our engagements with you—to *the letter*<sup>1</sup>—as they say in weightier matters; and, as every man is bound to speak of the

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<sup>1</sup> This is not intended exclusively for the *new type* of the present volume.

fair as he has found his market in it, we ought to acknowledge the superabundant and quick succession of literary novelties for the present volume. There is little of our own; because we have uniformly taken Dr. Johnson's advice in life—"to play for much, and stake little" This will extenuate our assuming that "from castle to cottage we are regularly taken in:" indeed, it would be worse than vanity to suppose that price or humble pretensions should exclude us; it would be against the very economy of life to imagine this; and we are still willing to abide by such chances of success.

Cheap Books, we hope, will never be an evil; for, as "the same care and toil that raise a dish of peas at Christmas, would give bread to a whole family during six months;" so the expense of a gay volume at this season will furnish a moderate circle with amusive reading for a twelvemonth. We do not draw this comparison invidiously, but merely to illustrate the advantages of literary economy.

The number *Seven*—the favourite of Swift, (and how could it be otherwise than odd?) has, perhaps, led us into this rambling monologue on our merits; but we agree with Yorick in thinking gravity an errant scoundrel.

A proportionate Index will guide our accustomed readers to any particular article in the present volume; but for those of shorter acquaintance, a slight reference to its principal points may be useful. Besides, a few of its delights may have been choked by weeds and crosses, and their recollection lost amidst the lights

and shadows of busy life.

The zeal of our Correspondents is first entitled to honourable mention; and many of their contributions to these pages must have cost them much time and research; for which we beg them to accept our best thanks.

Of the Selections, generally, we shall only observe, that our aim has been to convey information and improvement in the most amusing form. When we sit down to the pleasant task of cutting open—not cutting *up*—a book, we say, "If this won't turn out something, another will; no matter—'tis an essay upon human nature. (We) get (our) labour for (our) pains—'tis enough—the pleasure of the experiment has kept (our) senses, and the best part of (our) blood awake, and laid the gross to sleep." In this way we find many good things, and banish the rest; we attempt to "boke something new," and revive others. Thus we have described the Siamese Twins in a single number; and in others we have brought to light many almost forgotten antiquarian rarities.

Of Engravings, Paper, and Print, we need say but little: each speaks *primâ facie*, for itself. Improvement has been studied in all of them; and in the Cuts, both interest and execution have been cardinal points. Milan Cathedral; Old Tunbridge Wells and its Old Visitors; Clifton; Gurney's Steam Carriage; and the Bologna Towers; are perhaps the best specimens: and by way of varying architectural embellishments, a few of the Wonders of Nature have been occasionally introduced.

Owen Feltham would call this "a cart-rope" Preface: therefore,

with promises of future exertion, we hope our next Seven Years may be as successful as the past.

143, *Strand*, Dec. 24, 1829.

# MEMOIR OF THOMAS CAMPBELL, ESQ



Of the subject of this memoir, it has been remarked, "that he has not, that we know of, written one line, which, dying, he could wish to blot." These few words will better illustrate the fitness of Mr. Campbell's portrait for our volume, than a laudatory memoir of many pages. He has not inaptly been styled the Tyrtæus of modern English poetry, and one of the most chaste and tender as well as original of poets. He owes less than any other British poet to his predecessors and contemporaries. He has lived to see his lines quoted like those of earlier poets in the literature of his day, lisped by children, and sung at public festivals. The war-odes of Campbell have scarcely anything to match them in the English language for energy and fire, while their condensation and the felicitous selection of their versification are in remarkable harmony. Campbell, in allusion to Cymon, has been said to have "conquered both on land and sea," from his Naval Odes and "Hohenlinden" embracing both scenes of warfare.

Scotland gave birth to Thomas Campbell. He is the son of a second marriage, and was born at Glasgow, in 1777. His father was born in 1710, and was consequently nearly seventy years of age when the poet, his son, was ushered into the world. He was sent early to school, in his native place, and his instructor was Dr. David Alison, a man of great celebrity in the practice of education. He had a method of instruction in the classics purely his own, by which he taught with great facility, and at

the same time rejected all harsh discipline, substituting kindness for terror, and alluring rather than compelling the pupil to his duty. Campbell began to write verse when young; and some of his earliest attempts at poetry are yet extant among his friends in Scotland. For his place of education he had a great respect, as well as for the memory of his masters, of whom he always spoke in terms of great affection. He was twelve years old when he quitted school for the University of Glasgow. There he was considered an excellent Latin scholar, and gained high honour by a contest with a candidate twice as old as himself, by which he obtained a bursary. He constantly bore away the prizes, and every fresh success only seemed to stimulate him to more ambitious exertions. In Greek he was considered the foremost student of his age; and some of his translations are said to be superior to any before offered for competition in the University. While there he made poetical paraphrases of the most celebrated Greek poets; of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, which were thought efforts of extraordinary promise. Dr. Millar at that time gave philosophical lectures in Glasgow. He was a highly gifted teacher, and excellent man. His lectures attracted the attention of young Campbell, who became his pupil, and studied with eagerness the principles of sound philosophy; the poet was favoured with the confidence of his teacher, and partook much of his society.

Campbell quitted Glasgow to remove into Argyleshire, where a situation in a family of some note was offered and accepted

by him. It was in Argyleshire,<sup>2</sup> among the romantic mountains of the north, that his poetical spirit increased, and the charms of verse took entire possession of his mind. Many persons now alive remember him wandering there alone by the torrent, or over the rugged heights of that wild country, reciting the strains of other poets aloud, or silently composing his own. Several of his pieces which he has rejected in his collected works, are handed about in manuscript in Scotland. We quote one of these wild compositions which has hitherto appeared only in periodical publications.

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<sup>2</sup> For a view of this retreat, see the MIRROR No. 337.

# DIRGE OF WALLACE

They lighted a taper at the dead of night,  
And chanted their holiest hymn;  
But her brow and her bosom were damp with affright  
Her eye was all sleepless and dim!  
And the lady of Elderslie wept for her lord,  
When a death-watch beat in her lonely room,  
When her curtain had shook of its own accord;  
And the raven had flapp'd at her window-board,  
To tell of her warrior's doom!

Now sing you the death-song, and loudly pray  
For the soul of my knight so dear;  
And call me a widow this wretched day,  
Since the warning of God is here!  
For night-mare rides on my strangled sleep:  
The lord of my bosom is doomed to die:  
His valorous heart they have wounded deep;  
And the blood-red tears shall his country weep,  
For Wallace of Elderslie!

Yet knew not his country that ominous hour,  
Ere the loud matin bell was rung,  
That a trumpet of death on an English tower  
Had the dirge of her champion sung!

When his dungeon light look'd dim and red  
On the high-born blood of a martyr slain,  
No anthem was sung at his holy death-bed;  
No weeping was there when his bosom bled—  
And his heart was rent in twain!

Oh, it was not thus when his oaken spear  
Was true to that knight forlorn;  
And the hosts of a thousand were scatter'd like deer,  
At the blast of the hunter's horn;  
When he strode on the wreck of each well-fought field  
With the yellow-hair'd chiefs of his native land;  
For his lance was not shiver'd on helmet or shield—  
And the sword that seem'd fit for Archangel to wield,  
Was light in his terrible hand!

Yet bleeding and bound, though her Wallace wight  
For his long-lov'd country die,  
The bugle ne'er sung to a braver knight  
Than Wallace of Elderslie!  
But the day of his glory shall never depart,  
His head unentomb'd shall with glory be balm'd,  
From its blood-streaming altar his spirit shall start;  
Though the raven has fed on his mouldering heart,  
A nobler was never embalm'd!

From Argyleshire, where his residence was not a protracted one, Campbell removed to Edinburgh. There he soon became introduced to some of the first men of the age, whose friendship

and kindness could not fail to stimulate a mind like that of Campbell. He became intimate with the late Dugald Stewart; and almost every other leading professor of the University of Edinburgh was his friend. While in Edinburgh, he brought out his celebrated "Pleasures of Hope," at the age of twenty-one. It is perhaps not too much to say of this work, that no poet of this country ever produced, at so early an age, a more elaborate and finished performance. For this work, which for twenty years produced the publishers between two and three hundred pounds a year, the author received at first but £10, which was afterwards increased by an additional sum, and by the profits of a quarto edition of the work. By a subsequent act of the legislature, extending the term of copyright, it reverted again to the author; but with no proportional increase of profit. Campbell's pecuniary circumstances are said to have been by no means easy at this time and a pleasant anecdote is recorded of him, in allusion to the hardships of an author's case, somewhat similar to his own: he was desired to give a toast at a festive moment when the character of Napoleon was at its utmost point of disesteem in England. He gave "Bonaparte." The company started with astonishment. "Gentlemen," said he, "here is Bonaparte in his character of executioner of the booksellers." Palm, the bookseller, had just been executed in Germany, by the orders of the French.

After residing nearly three years in Edinburgh, Campbell quitted his native country for the Continent. He sailed for Hamburgh, and there made many acquaintances among the

more enlightened circles, both of that city and Altona. At that time there were numerous Irish exiles in the neighbourhood of Hamburgh, and some of them fell in the way of the poet, who afterwards related many curious anecdotes of them. There were sincere and honest men among them, who, with the energy of their national character, and enthusiasm for liberty, had plunged into the desperate cause of the rebellion two years before, and did not, even then, despair of freedom and equality in Ireland. Some of them were in private life most amiable persons, and their fate was altogether entitled to sympathy. The poet, from that compassionate feeling which is an amiable characteristic of his nature, wrote *The Exile of Erin*, from the impression their situation and circumstances made upon his mind. It was set to an old Irish air, of the most touching pathos, and will perish only with the language.

Campbell travelled over a great part of Germany and Prussia—visiting the Universities, and storing his mind with German literature. From the walls of a convent he commanded a view of part of the field of Hohenlinden during that sanguinary contest, and proceeded afterwards in the track of Moreau's army over the scene of combat. This impressive sight produced the *Battle of Hohenlinden*—an ode which is as original as it is spirited, and stands by itself in British literature. The poet tells a story of the phlegm of a German postilion at this time, who was driving him post by a place where a skirmish of cavalry had happened, and who alighted and disappeared, leaving the carriage and the

traveller alone in the cold (for the ground was covered with snow) for a considerable space of time. At length he came back; and it was found that he had been employing himself in cutting off the long tails of the slain horses, which he coolly placed on the vehicle, and drove on his route. Campbell was also in Ratisbon when the French and Austrian treaty saved it from bombardment.

In Germany Campbell made the friendship of the two Schlegels, of many of the first literary and political characters, and was fortunate enough to pass an entire day with the venerable Klopstock, who died just two years afterwards. The proficiency of Campbell in the German language was rendered very considerable by this tour, and his own indefatigable perseverance in study. His travels in Germany occupied him thirteen months; when he returned to England, and, for the first time, visited London. He soon afterwards composed those two noble marine odes, *The Battle of the Baltic*, and *Ye Mariners of England*, which, with his *Hohenlinden*, stand unrivalled in the English tongue; and though, as Byron lamented, Campbell has written so little, these odes alone are enough to place him unforgotten in the shrine of the Muses.

In 1803 the poet married Miss Sinclair, a lady of Scottish descent, and considerable personal beauty, but of whom he was deprived by death in 1828. He resided at Sydenham, and the entire neighbourhood of that pleasant village reckoned itself in the circle of his friends; nor did he quit his suburban retreat until, in 1821, literary pursuits demanded his residence

in the metropolis. It was at Sydenham, in a house nearly facing the reservoir, that the poet produced his greatest work, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, written in the Spenserian stanza. About the same time Campbell was appointed Professor of Poetry in the Royal Institution, where he delivered lectures which have since been published. He also undertook the editorship of *Selections from the British Poets*, intended as specimens of each, and accompanied with critical remarks.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after the publication of his "Specimens," he revisited Germany, and passed some time in Vienna, where he acquired a considerable knowledge of the Austrian court and its manners. He remained long at Bonn, where his friend, W.A. Schlegel, resides. Campbell returned to England in 1820, to undertake the editorship of the *New Monthly Magazine*

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<sup>3</sup> This work is in seven handsome library volumes; a new edition was announced two or three years since, but has not yet appeared.

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