

Tam Samson's Elegy: When this worthy old sportman went out, last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields," and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.-R.B., 1787.

An honest man's the noblest work of God-Pope.

Has auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great Mackinlay thrawn his heel?
Or Robertson again grown weel,
To preach an' read?
"Na' waur than a'! cries ilka chiel,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
In mourning weed;
To Death she's dearly pay'd the kane-
Tam Samson's dead!

The Brethren, o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the Lodge an unco devel;
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the loughs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock?
Tam Samson's dead!
When Winter muffles up his cloak,
He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar,
In time o' need;
But now he lags on Death's hog-score-
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels, weel-ken'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since, dark in Death's fish-creel, we wail
Tam Samson's dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie muircocks, crouselly craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa;
Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
Saw him in shooting graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples free'd;
But och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters,

In vain the gout his ancles fetters,
 In vain the burns cam down like waters,
 An acre braid!
 Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
 An' aye the tither shot he thumpit,
 Till coward Death behind him jumpit,
 Wi' deadly feid;
 Now he proclaims wi' tout o' trumpet,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
 He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
 But yet he drew the mortal trigger,
 Wi' weel-aimed heed;
 "Lord, five!" he cry'd, an' owre did stagger-
 Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
 Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
 Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
 Marks out his head;
 Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyiming blether,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

There, low he lies, in lasting rest;
 Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
 Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest
 To hatch an' breed:
 Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
 Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
 And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
 Three volleys let his memory crave,
 O' pouter an' lead,
 Till Echo answer frae her cave,
 "Tam Samson's dead!"

Heav'n rest his saul whare'er he be!
 Is th' wish o' mony mae than me:
 He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
 Yet what remead?
 Ae social, honest man want we:
 Tam Samson's dead!

The Epitaph

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies
 Ye canting zealots, spare him!
 If honest worth in Heaven rise,
 Ye'll mend or ye win near him.

Per Contra

Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly
 Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie;
 Tell ev'ry social honest billie
 To cease his grievin';
 For, yet unskaited by Death's gleg gullie.
 Tam Samson's leevin'!