

Verses On The Destruction Of The Woods Near Drumlanrig

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As on the banks o' wandering Nith,
 Ae smiling simmer morn I stray'd,
 And traced its bonie howes and haughs,
 Where linties sang and lammies play'd,
 I sat me down upon a craig,
 And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
 When from the eddying deep below,
 Up rose the genius of the stream.

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
 And troubled, like his wintry wave,
 And deep, as sughs the boding wind
 Amang his caves, the sigh he gave-
 "And come ye here, my son," he cried,
 "To wander in my birken shade?
 To muse some favourite Scottish theme,
 Or sing some favourite Scottish maid?

"There was a time, it's nae lang syne,
 Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
 When a' my banks sae bravely saw
 Their woody pictures in my tide;
 When hanging beech and spreading elm
 Shaded my stream sae clear and cool:
 And stately oaks their twisted arms
 Threw broad and dark across the pool;

"When, glinting thro' the trees, appear'd
 The wee white cot aboon the mill,
 And peacefu' rose its ingle reek,
 That, slowly curling, clamb the hill.
 But now the cot is bare and cauld,
 Its leafy biield for ever gane,
 And scarce a stinted birk is left
 To shiver in the blast its lane."

"Alas!" quoth I, "what ruefu' chance
 Has twin'd ye o' your stately trees?
 Has laid your rocky bosom bare-
 Has stripped the cleeding o' your braes?
 Was it the bitter eastern blast,
 That scatters blight in early spring?
 Or was't the wil'fire scorch'd their boughs,
 Or canker-worm wi' secret sting?"

"Nae eastlin blast," the sprite replied;
 "It blaws na here sae fierce and fell,
 And on my dry and halesome banks
 Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell:
 Man! cruel man!" the genius sighed-
 As through the cliffs he sank him down-
 "The worm that gnaw'd my bonie trees,
 That reptile wears a ducal crown."