

A TALE OF POST-TERTIARY TIMES.

By J. REID.

What Bennachie hast thou to tell  
Since placed to ward as sentinel  
The Ury, Gadie and the Don ?  
Of strangest wonders come and gone  
Dost recollect the fatal day  
Earth yielded to the Ice-King's sway,  
And snow and ice from steep to steep  
More than a thousand feet lay deep ?  
Demoniac Winter's lethal train  
In hurricanes swept o'er the plain,  
And chilling fingers, long and lean,  
Had strangled all where life was seen.  
Beneath the desolation dread  
Ice-shrouded lay the uncoffined dead ;  
And long the Ice-King ruled the land  
With crushing grasp of iron hand.  
At last the sun with sword of flame  
Struck at his heart nor missed the aim ;  
Home went the thrust, death in the stroke,  
His Kingdom into fragments broke.  
Ice-floe and berg were now set free  
To wander o'er a foaming sea ;  
They danced and whirled at random driven  
By surges and the gusts of heaven,  
And as they rolled, the ceaseless shout  
"Free ! Free !" from each and all rang out.  
They wakened Echo, whose refrain  
Pealed booming o'er the ice-rocked plain,  
Until a berg that prisoned lay,  
Chained to a rock far, far away,

Heard the glad sound athwart the sea,  
And in a transport to be free  
The rock from its foundations rent;  
And careless of the burden went  
Out on that sea indifferent where—  
For freedom's sun was shining there.  
It drifted, drifted, far and wide,  
Tossed to and fro by wind and tide,  
Then touched on Kemnay's hills of sand,  
And dropt the boulder on the strand.  
Anon no more that berg was seen,  
It was as if it had not been.  
But not that boulder there alone  
Tells of these evil days long gone.  
At Kemnay too still plain to-day  
Stretched out along the King's highway,  
The ice-plough turned a furrow then  
Which men of science call Moraine.  
What needs describe that furrow now,  
Last furrow of the Ice-King's plough.  
A naked mass of grit and stone  
In scree and cairns confusedly thrown,  
Till Nature's decorating hand  
But touched it with her magic wand;  
Then flushed all fair that barren waste  
With shrub and tree from base to crest,  
Where year by year the blithe birds sing  
Old anthems to the new-born spring.  
Thus few that see it now would say  
"We wish that relic swept away."

*Castle Fraser.*