



Burns Day

# SOUVENIR

Barre, Vermont  
July 21st, 1899



HISTORY  
OF THE  
BURNS MONUMENT  
AND UNVEILING CEREMONIES

Barre, Vermont  
July 21st, 1899

*Gift of Francis M. Cadger, March 1975*

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## PREFACE.

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IN placing this booklet before the public, the Burns Club endeavors to meet a growing desire on the part of our fellow citizens to possess, in convenient form, a short history of the Burns Monument, the unveiling ceremonies, and other matter and incidents relating thereto. If this object is accomplished, the mission of this publication is fulfilled; and when the busy hands that erected the memorial shall have ceased to fashion, and the voices that were heard thereat shall be hushed forever, future generations, gazing on its enduring beauty, and catching its undying inspiration, may turn to these pages and read therein the story of the long ago.

THE BURNS CLUB

Barre, Vermont, October 25, 1899.

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT

## History of the Project.

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A warm, sultry July day was closing; the sun had sunk behind a canopy of golden clouds and the rugged peaks of the green mountains, and as he sank from sight there disappeared with him one full century since the death of Robert Burns, the peasant poet, the world's pride. It was the 21st of July, 1896, the centenary of Burns's death; and the Club, with their guests, were met to commemorate the occasion. At that meeting the erection of a monument to Burns in this city was advocated. The Club heartily endorsed the movement but deferred action until the members should have time to think over and consider such an undertaking; and this they did, and the more they thought the more they were inclined to attempt it. One thing alone was uncertain—that of raising sufficient funds; for as this was the granite center of the country they felt that the monument must be the finest work of art in granite the world had yet produced. With this conception in view, the months sped quickly, and the 25th of January, 1897, the anniversary of Burns's birth, found them celebrating that occasion, when the hearts of all present were gladdened by an offer of such generous proportions that a business meeting of the Club was called to take action thereon; at which meeting it was decided to undertake the mission, and a ways and means committee of twelve was elected to carry it to completion. This committee was assisted by sub-committees, and, in fact, by almost the entire population of the city, but they were in charge and guided the entire movement. Money was raised by the open-hearted gifts of the admirers of Burns throughout the state, but largely through the generosity of the people of Barre. Invi-

tations were sent out for the submission of designs, and from all those received the Club selected three. From these three, a citizens' committee, composed of Mayor John W. Gordon, George Lamson, Alex. Gordon, John Robins and John McDonald. selected the design submitted by William Barclay, and this was the result: On the 21st of July, 1899, three years after its inception, amidst the largest concourse of people ever gathered in our city, surrounded by military and civic organizations, a host of eminent and honored guests, amidst music and flowers, Miss Florence Mary Inglis, a little maid of seven years, dressed and crowned as the Scottish Muse, drew a slender cord and unveiled to the admiring gaze of the assembled multitude the exquisite statue of Robert Burns on a pedestal of unsurpassed beauty, one of the world's art treasures, enduring as the eternal hills from whence it came and by which it is surrounded.

The ways and means committee elected to carry this project to completion was composed as follows: James Campbell, president; Alex. M. Smith, secretary; Charles W. Laing, treasurer; William Barclay, William Scott, Alex. J. Stephens, James Scott, Alexander Milne, George T. Troup, Robert Inglis, James S. Mackie and William Duthie.

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WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE.

## Unveiling Day.

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The culminating event of three years of effort came when, in the presence of the Governor and his staff, various dignitaries, guests of honor, and thousands of men and women of Vermont, the monument was unveiled. It was preeminently a day for the Scotch people of the city. The monument was a gift from the Burns Club to the city in a special sense, but in a larger one it was a gift from the Scotch people of Barre and vicinity to their adopted home, showing alike their patriotism and loyalty to the land of their birth and its traditions and their devotion and love for their new allegiance.

Lowering skies hung dark over Barre that morning, typical perhaps of the clouds that shrouded the life of the great Scotch poet, but as the burning light of time has cleared away all that prevented a clear vision of the real Burns while he was yet on earth, and left him standing in the clear light of the mountain-top as one of the few really great human voices speaking to his brother men down through all the ages, so the bright summer sun burned away the mists and vapors of the morning, but left a hot, showery July day.

Undeterred by frowning skies, the people of Barre were early astir. Business houses and private residences were decorated with flags and bunting and no one lacked in patriotic ardor. Altogether the display was highly creditable to the enthusiasm and artistic taste of the citizens. With the arrival of the first trains the crowd was largely increased. The trains from the hills were crowded, and, in fact, there was not an arriving passenger car on any of the roads leading to the city that did not swell the number of visitors. A conserva-

tive estimate of the number of people who witnessed the various exercises places it at not less than eighteen thousand. Among the guests of honor were Governor Smith, Senator Ross, Congressman Grout, Gen. W. H. Gilmore, Col. J. G. Brown, Col. Frank L. Greene and Judges Taft, Rowell, Ross and Watson.

An event of the kind is never complete without a procession, and on this occasion there was no exception to the rule. The parade was the best and most imposing ever seen in the Granite City. It started in the midst of a gentle shower a little before two o'clock. It was fully a mile in length and required fully half an hour to pass a given point. Chief Marshal Alex. Bruce and Marshals D. R. Bisbee, W. A. Smith and J. W. Jackson were in charge.

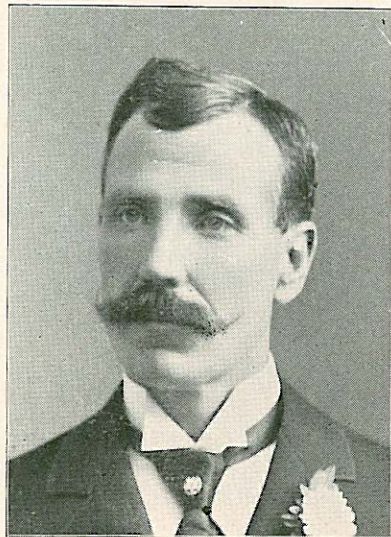
The procession was made up as follows:

#### FIRST DIVISION.

Montpelier Military Band, twenty-five pieces, T. R. Merrill, leader; Company E, U. S. Volunteers, Capt. E. J. Badger commanding; Crandall Post, G. A. R., George T. Conner, commander; Barre Fire Department, N. D. Phelps, chief.

#### SECOND DIVISION.

Williamstown Cornet Band, twenty pieces, Alfred House, leader; St. Aldemar Commandery, K. T., Edward W. Bisbee, eminent commander; Canton Vinton, I. O. O. F., D. V. Stone, captain commanding; Minnehaha Encampment, J. E. Geddes commanding; Hiawatha Lodge, Dr. L. W. Hanson, N. G. commanding; Vermont Lodge, Montpelier, George Hall, N. G., commanding; Williamstown Lodge, Frank



CHIEF MARSHAL BRUCE.



Godfrey, N. G., commanding; Gill Lodge, East Barre, C. H. McAllister, N. G., commanding; Green Mountain Lodge, Manchester Unity, Alex. Dobie, N. G., commanding.

THIRD DIVISION.

East Barre Cornet Band, twenty pieces, A. C. Dickey, leader; Uniformed Rank K. of P., Ned J. Roberts, captain commanding; Knights of Columbus, D. M. Miles, Grand Knight, commanding; St. John's Court, C. O. F., F. A. Duffy, chief ranger.

FOURTH DIVISION.

Transatlantic Band, twenty pieces, Louis Filipini, leader; Court Granite City, F. of A., Barre, John F. McDonald, C. R.; Court Rob Roy, F. of A., Graniteville, D. W. McLane, C. R.; Court Phil Sheridan, F. of A., East Barre.

FIFTH DIVISION.

Sherman Military Band of Burlington, thirty pieces, George D. Sherman, leader; Governor Smith and Staff; Senator Ross and Congressman Grout; Supreme Court Judges; Orator of the day; Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and Miss Inglis; Chaplain; Mayor and City Council of Montpelier; Mayor and City Council of Barre; School Commissioners; Citizens' Committee.

SIXTH DIVISION.

Royal Scots Band, fifteen pieces, Montreal; Clan Gordon, O. S. C., James Coutts, chief; Chorus of male voices, George Murray, leader; Burns Club, Robert Inglis, president.



# The Unveiling.

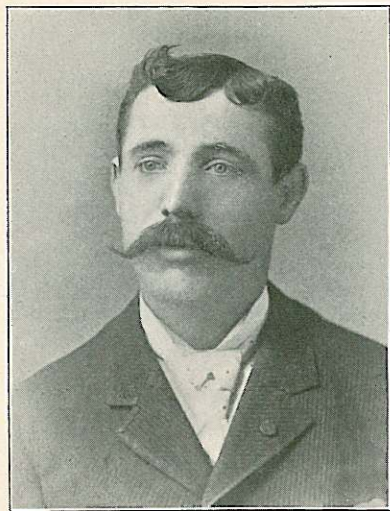
## CEREMONIES ATTENDANT ON GIVING AND RECEIVING THE MONUMENT.

As the parade returned up Main street the crowds, which had up to that time made the line of march almost impassable, surged toward the Spaulding campus, where the noble monument stands facing down toward the heart of the city, which for the time was deserted as all its people were assembled about the monument. As the different organizations and the crowds of people placed themselves where they could best see and hear, James Campbell, master of ceremonies, signified that all was ready. Rev. S. N. Jackson, pastor of the Congregational church, offered prayer:

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hast determined their times and the bounds of their habitation; accept our hearty thanks for the lives of those in the past generations which thou hast so richly endowed with genius and whose words are the inheritance of the present age. Especially do we thank thee for Scotland's great bard, whose



REV. S. N. JACKSON.



JAMES CAMPBELL, MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

council. Grant that the righteousness exalting a nation may be ours. We ask all through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

memory we honor this day, and whose poetry has throughout the century past proved such an inspiration, solace and joy to multitudes among the kindred of mankind. Give thy blessing, we beseech thee, to all the exercises of this day, and may their influences and memories become a lasting benefit. Continue to show thy favor to Scotland, to her sons and daughters at home, and to the thousands scattered over the face of the earth. Especially bless those of them who form so large a part of this community, and who, by this great gift, not only honor this city, but also impart lasting good to the future generations. May this monument prove an inspiration not only to the children of Scotland dwelling here, but also to all of America's sons and daughters, as they pass by it in the pursuit of knowledge to the educational institution within the grounds of which it is placed. Bless our nation, the president, our governors, our representatives, and our mayor and

Mr. Campbell then spoke as follows:

We are met here to-day to witness the unveiling and presentation to the city of Barre of this statue of the poet Burns.

It is not the business of the committee to allude to their own labors, nor the manner in which these labors have been performed. What degree of success they have attained in this undertaking you will soon have an opportunity to determine. It is capable of speaking for itself through its proportions and its style. If these fail to impress you any words of mine would prove worse than useless. It has been deemed appropriate that these exercises should be under the direction of the Burns Club of this city, so we, as representatives of the country which gave the poet birth, think it is in every way a fitting manner in which to commemorate this the one hundred and third anniversary of the poet's death.

In order to have these exercises successfully carried out it was necessary to have the assistance of one of the fair sex; so following out the line of our printed programme I now introduce to you Miss Florence Inglis, the young lady who will unveil the memorial.

The crowd expected to see a woman of mature years come forward, but Miss Inglis is a



FLORENCE MARY INGLIS.



ROBERT INGLIS, PRESIDENT OF BURNS CLUB.

rate the one hundredth anniversary of the death of the poet Robert Burns. At the meeting Mr. J. P. Marr, the then president of the Club, delivered an address on "The Home and Haunts of Burns," and in closing advocated the erection of a statue to the memory of Burns in this city.

charming little miss of only seven years. The crowd was surprised but delighted and she was given a round of applause. At her magic touch the draperies that had hidden the monument fell away and Barre's splendid statue of the Scotch poet stood revealed amidst the admiring multitude, who greeted it with a spontaneous burst of applause. When the enthusiasm had subsided a male chorus of forty voices, under the leadership of George Murray, sang "There was a Lad was Born in Kyle."

Mr. Campbell again stepped forward and said:

As a committee we feel as though our labors were ended, and the time had now arrived for the memorial to be placed in the custody of the city. To perform that duty I will introduce to you the president of the Burns Club, Robert Inglis.

Mr. Inglis said:

On the 21st of July, 1896, just three years ago to-day, the members of the Burns Club met to commemo-

The seed thus sown must have fallen in good soil, for at the anniversary of Burns's birth, on the 25th of January following, Mr. William Barclay promised that if the Burns Club would erect a pedestal he would crown it with a statue. At the following meeting of the Club it was decided to erect a monument, and a committee of twelve was appointed and constituted a ways and means committee to carry the project to completion. It was at first intended to confine the subscription list entirely to Scotchmen, but owing to the earnest request of a large number of American citizens who, though not Scotchmen, were great admirers of Burns, it was decided to open the list to all admirers of Burns, irrespective of nationality, with the result that, owing to the untiring efforts of the ways and means committee and the liberality of the admirers of Burns, not only in Barre but all over the state, we are enabled to erect this monument, which stands second to none in the world of art in granite today, and which is a credit not only to the manufacturer, but to the citizens of Barre in general.

And now, citizens of Barre, I present to you, through your mayor, Mr. Gordon, this monument, and hope that you will see to it that it is carefully protected and preserved, so that in future years, when we who are present here today shall have vanished into the ob-



JOHN W. GORDON, MAYOR OF BARRE.

scurity of the past, this monument shall still stand a noble and lasting tribute to the memory of one of the world's greatest poets, Robert Burns.

Mayor Gordon accepted the monument in the following words:

And it was Robbie Burns that sang so sweet  
Of lovely Ayrshire braes and Bonnie Doon;  
All of the melodies in song lid meet  
To swell the chorus of his lyric tune.

And side by side the rose and thistle grew,—  
The daisy and the mouse were noble theme;  
Twa Dogs, philosophers as wise and true  
As those who delve in classic learning's stream.

Of rant and cant the strong and certain foe,  
As keepers of Twa Herds fu' well can tell,  
And quackish Doctor Hornbooks well may know,  
In scanning lines their woful shams befell.

The deil, like sin, a brunstane roasting got  
That left him sair as Tam O'Shanter's mare;  
'Twas worse by far, since Angel Michael's shot,  
When hosts on heavenly plane were 'gaged in  
war.

As moralists, oft-times sagacious, true,—  
To him our pleasures were like poppies spread,  
Like river-melted flake or rainbow hue,  
Like flowers seized, or flitting light that's fled.

He gave the highest place to woman fair;  
He told us how that Nature first made man  
With 'prentice hand, and then, with greater care,  
She made the lassies on a better plan.

Lang, lang as hearts shall know the tender flame  
And body make a body laugh or cry,  
The tongue shall not forget the singer's name  
Who sang the song of "Comin' Thro' the Rye."

When age shall whiten beard and bend the form,  
And friends of youth their place must soon re-  
sign,  
In simmer's sultry heat or winter's storm,  
The voice shall con the lines of Auld Lang Syne.

When auld companions, on life's further slope,  
Recall the canty days of long ago,  
They'll walk with firmer step and brighter hope  
Remembering "John Anderson, My Jo."

When titled lords look down on kith and kin,  
Despising hoddin gray and simple samp,  
As if the common wore the badge of sin,  
We'll know the rank is but the guinea's stamp.

In every patriot's veins for aye shall burn  
The Godlike praise that Highland heroes won  
For doughty deeds at bloody Bannockburn,  
When Edward's day of tyranny was done.

And Scotia's grandeur stronger yet shall spring  
From prayerful scene beneath the Cotter's roof,  
And every clime and age shall joy to bring  
Its praise and laurels as affection's proof.

We take the gift that you so freely give ;  
Be thankit for the purpose and the art ;  
His nobler thoughts you'll make us better live,  
His name shall be a truer treasure of the heart.

Oft fortune was severe, but sad or gay,  
Aboon the ills o' life he wore a smile  
That makes the world rejoice to bless the day  
And hour "There was a lad was born in Kyle."

To-day our poet stands in granite mold,  
So weel and deftly wrought by loving hands ;  
But half the good he did is still untold ;  
In song he worketh yet in all the lands.

His deed was broader than a plan or book ;  
"For Puir Old Scotland's Sake" he sang a song,  
And earth and sky a fresher glory took,  
As over all his light shone bright and strong.

Still flowers bloom beside the Bonnie Doon,  
The heather sweetly grows on Highland brae ;  
Unchanged as these, as cycles forward run,  
Shall be the songs that gladden us today.





WENDELL, PHILLIPS STAFFORD, ORATOR OF THE DAY.

The bands then rendered The Star Spangled Banner, which was followed by the Oration of the day. The speaker was introduced by Mr. Campbell in the following words: Upon occasions like the present, when a statue is unveiled to the public, it is customary, and the people generally expect, to hear something in regard to the original. We do not intend the present occasion to prove any exception to the rule, as we have invited one to be present with us to-day who is able, and in every way competent, to speak to us about the poet's life and works. In selecting the material of which the memorial is composed the committee were unanimously in favor of a native production, and it might be said that in the selection of an orator their notions took a turn in the same direction, as we are credibly informed that the gentleman to whom I refer is a Barre boy, one who is no stranger among you, who needs no words of mine to introduce him to a Barre audience. I now take much pleasure in presenting to you as the orator of the day, Honorable Wendell Phillips Stafford of St. Johnsbury. The Oration was delivered partly on the campus and partly in the opera house, where the audience adjourned to escape a shower.



## ORATION.

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ONE hundred and three years ago this very day Robert Burns lay dying in Dumfries. Thank God, there have been few sadder deaths than that. His four little sons had been brought in from a neighbor's house to hear his parting words. In the next room his wife, his "bonnie Jean," dearer to his wayward heart than he himself had ever known, lay waiting her hour in childbed. Poverty sat upon his hearthstone, and his last words were mingled with curses for the cruel legal agent whose threatening letter had tortured and embittered his dying hours. His country had praised and petted and then had shunned and neglected him, and he had been his own worst enemy, until now in a rude tenement, surrounded with all the circumstances of misery, poor, heart-broken and abandoned, he was passing away from life. Thus was being fulfilled at last the very prophecy he had uttered in verse one bright spring morning ten years before, "following his plow along the mountain-side," and musing over the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" his share had crushed and buried :

Even thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,  
That fate is thine—no distant date ;  
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate,  
Full on thy bloom,  
Till, crushed beneath the furrow's weight,  
Shall be thy doom.

Outside in the streets men were gathered in hushed groups waiting the news that he was dead, half conscious that the greatest of Scotchmen had been living in their midst. Whatever they may have thought, we know to-day that the young man who lay dying there that morning, too poor to pay his debts, was leaving to his country the richest heritage she ever possessed, or perhaps ever would possess,—leaving his countrymen a name and fame that would be their strongest bond, that would be their pride and boast wherever the scattered clans should be foregathered, in lands beyond the sea and in a century unborn!

We have a proof before us; for here to-day upon a foreign shore, thousands of miles from the scene of all his sorrows and joys, among mountains beautiful as his own Scotland's, but which his eye or fancy never saw, men of his blood, whose fathers' fathers' fathers may have seen his face, have raised to him, from the eternal granite of these hills, a shape of beauty and of power, to testify forever of Scotia's undying loyalty and love.

It was difficult for his neighbors a hundred years ago to realize his greatness. They saw him at his common tasks, day by day, and knew the passions and weaknesses that marked him for a man—and he was indeed humanest of the human. They had not before their eyes the image of Burns that we behold to-day, the glorious bard whose fame has been growing through the century, the figure that walks the fields of song in immortal youth and steps out to us from the pages of other poets wearing the brightest wreaths of praise that can be woven out of words. They only saw the man. To-day the difficulty is reversed—we only see the poet; and what we covet most to-day is that nearer, more familiar sight. We wish to know the poet, but we wish to know the man as well, feeling sure that as our conception of the poet has exalted and idealized the man they saw and knew, so their sight and knowledge of the man, if we could only share it, would warm and humanize our conception

of the bard. This is our delightful task to-day—to form, if possible, one whole, true, admiring yet unflattering conception of Robert Burns.

One thing we must not forget, and that is that Burns never looked upon himself as we look upon him. He never dreamed of the immortality of fame unto which he was born. He never wrote for us, for the unknown future. He never wrote for a great unseen public even of his own time. The modest, manly words with which he prefaced his poems when he printed them, show clearly how humble his ambition was. To himself he was but the Ayrshire bard; and it was an accident that he published at all. Penniless and hiding from arrest, he was persuaded by friends that a small edition of his songs might yield him a profit and help him on his way to the West Indies. So the Kilmarnock edition came out, six hundred copies from an obscure country press. The unpretentious little book contained, among the rest, that perfect love song, *It was upon a Lammas Night*, *The Twa Dogs*, *The Mouse*, *The Mountain Daisy*, and *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. No such body of verse had come to light since the age of Elizabeth. We know what a sensation it made. The whole course of the poet's life was turned. The venture brought him in three hundred dollars, and took him up to Edinburgh and made him the lion of the hour. But the remarkable thing is that scarcely one of these wonderful productions had been written to be printed at all. They had eased his own morbid or passionate hours; they had passed from hand to hand among his friends; and that was all he had ever expected. And, when you think of it, what were the subjects of his verse? Merely his own experiences, his own loves and hates, or some incident that set him moralizing or stirred the deeper and finer forces of his nature. Look at his poem to the mouse. As he walks behind the plough one day the share turns up a mouse's nest, and the "wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous, beastie" scurries away across the field. Now

what shall Rob do? Go to the house and sharpen the quill and write a great poem to be read a century afterwards? Pish! It never enters his head. He only calls back the lout who is running after the mouse to kill it, asking him what harm the mouse has ever done him, and then, as he steadies the plough, he falls a-talking to himself.

Crooning to a body's sel'  
Does weel eneugh.

We owe it to no vanity or care of his that we are permitted to day to overhear him. We owe it to that larger providence which somehow or other does manage to preserve to the world the world's richest things:

I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
Has broken nature's social union,  
And justifies that ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,  
And fellow-mortal!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,  
And weary winter comin' fast,  
And cozie here, beneath the blast,  
Thou thought to dwell,  
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past  
Out through thy cell.

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane  
In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best-laid schemes o' mice and men  
Gang aft a-gley,  
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain  
For promised joy.

How close and human it all is, and nearer, more pathetic still, when the mouse's sad case minds him of his own:

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee:  
But, och! I backward cast my e'e  
On prospects drear!  
And forward, though I canna see,  
I guess and fear.

In *The Twa Dogs* he makes his own collie and some nobleman's New Foundland keep up an imaginary conversation on the life and manners of the high and low. But literature can not show a sharper, shrewder, merrier commentary on the characters and fortunes of the rich and poor. The peasant life is here pictured. Burns's dog admits that their lot is hard, but there is a brighter side, for

—whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy  
Can mak' the bodies unco happy;  
They lay aside their private cares,  
To mind the Kirk and State affairs.

Love blinks, Wit slaps and social Mirth  
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

Then it is the New Foundland's turn, and he proceeds to lay bare the vices and follies of the great:

At operas and plays parading,  
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;  
They mak' a tour, and tak' a whirl,  
To learn *bon ton* and see the worl'.

Burns was sometimes taken to task by his highborn patrons for choosing such homely subjects. Thank goodness, he never paid any heed to them. He sat one day behind a fine lady in church. She had a louse on her bonnet. The louse is there still—it always will be. The world will never get over laughing at it and wishing

O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as ithers see us!

That poem has pricked more bubbles of vanity than all the preachers that ever stood in pulpits. And yet, do not imagine Burns wrote it to teach a great moral lesson. I feel certain he wrote it out of pure mischief. There was almost as much truth as mockery in that disclaimer of his:

For me, an aim I never fash;  
I rhyme for fun.

But turn now to his love songs. How warm and thrilling they are. Why? Because he wrote them for his mistress, not, as the poet does now, for his magazine.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string  
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',  
To thee my fancy took its wing—  
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:  
Though this was fair, and that was braw,  
And yon the toast of all the town,  
I sighed, and said, amang them a',  
Ye are na Mary Morrison.



Then there is that little drama, *The Jolly Beggars*. Critics have called it the most finished and perfect of the poet's works. Sir Walter Scott pronounced it unsurpassed of its kind in the whole range of English poetry. Yet Burns gave away the only copy he possessed, and actually forgot that he had ever written it. How did he come to write it in the first place? "Poosie Nansie's" was a low-down public house in Mauchline village, the resort of thieves and beggars. Burns, with two companions, passing that way one late autumn evening, were attracted by the sounds of revelry within. They entered and were rapturously welcomed by the "merry core of randie, gangrel bodies," drinking, carousing, singing, in the full swing of their rough debauch. The poet took it all in, went home and made a word-picture of the scene, drew every character to the life, and put into their mouths the raciest songs that have ever expressed the sentiments of the outcast, railing against the powers that be :

Life is all a variorum,  
We regard not how it goes ;  
Let them cant about decorum  
Who have characters to lose.  
A fig for those by laws protected,  
Liberty's a glorious feast ;  
Courts for cowards were erected,  
Churches built to please the priest.

You see how even beggary and thievery could grow poetic under his touch, the touch of the same hand, too, that pictured the *Cotter's Saturday night*. And even *The Cotter's Saturday Night* we owe to the simplest of causes. It was composed in a mood of reverence

induced by the peculiar solemnity with which Burns's father conducted their own family worship. Such was the origin of that unfading picture. Burns did not know that it was immortal—He only felt that it was true.

Most of his poetry was only another form of his conversation. It dealt with the same topics, and was addressed to the same persons. His brightest and pithiest words are often to be found in those rhyming epistles he sent his friends. One year he made his tax inventory in verse. It offers still a half-humorous, half-sorrowful picture of his poverty. Some of the poems,—and some of the best, too,—bristle all over with the names of his neighbors. So it is, for instance, in *The Twa Herds*, otherwise called *The Holy Tulzie*, all about a shameful quarrel between two ministers over their parish boundary. It was never printed while Burns lived. It was handed about and laughed over among the unregenerate for the slaps of wit and stings of sarcasm, all, unhappily, too well deserved. It was exactly as if a great genius should drop down here in our midst, take a hand in all our quarrels, ridicule our weaknesses, avenge himself upon us for our slights, and draw with merciless fidelity the characters we meet day by day upon the street. The most conspicuous example of all this is probably *Holy Willie's Prayer*,—by common consent the most terrible satire in the English language. It was only a piece that Burns set going the rounds in *Mauchline* to gratify his grudge against a hypocrite, who no doubt had rejoiced to see Burns sitting on the penitent's stool in the kirk, and who had had Burns's friend, *Gavin Hamilton*, hauled up in the same place for getting in his potatoes on the Sabbath. It was written solely for the men and women who knew and who despised *William Fisher*; but the whole world has read it. It was nothing but a neighborhood skit; and yet Calvinism itself has met with no such arraignment as in the literal statement of its doctrine in that blood-curdling first stanza:

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,  
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,  
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,  
A' for thy glory,  
And no for ony guid or ill  
They've done afore thee!

After Burns came back from Edinburgh, a London paper offered him fifty pounds a year if he would send it a poem now and then. He refused. Yet he needed the money, and his family needed it. He had a foolish scruple against writing for pay; but he would fill the countryside with songs and satires and epitaphs and witty epistles—just for fun. The fact is, that everything he wrote that was really original, really excellent, and that shines by its own light to-day, was not only the fruit of something that deeply touched his own life, but was written to be read by the men and women he knew. And so far from being strange, that was the very pivot of his power, the very secret of his success. If he had written for the world, not even Mauchline would have read him; but when he wrote so that Mauchline had to read him, he enchained the attention of the world. The whole thing lies there in a nut-shell: he knew his subject, and he knew his hearers. He had perfect mastery of his theme and perfect sympathy with his audience. Now stop and tell me if those are not the conditions of achievement in every branch of art. Is not the great painter the man who knows what he is painting and whom he is painting for, and makes his picture an appeal to these people? Is not the great orator the man who knows his subject to the core, and knows his audience to the core? And the poet whose wit and wisdom become a part of the world's precious store, whose phrases become household words, whose songs thrill in the hearts of soldiers and live

on the lips of lovers—he is not the poet who shuns his fellow men and polishes his lines for posterity, but the man who laughs and cries with them, and lives and works and suffers at their side. Poetry is an intense expression of the individual life. Nearness is power. You can not get too close to your subject, nor too close to the hearts that you would touch and the lives that you would move.

Burns knew well enough how to write the smooth, elegant-English verses that had been fashionable before him. He did write them at times, in some fit of weakness, or when he hadn't anything in particular to say. I presume you can find forty such among his poems. But there isn't one of them that would have kept his name alive ten years. He was writing of something he knew nothing about, and writing for people he cared nothing about; and the result is that nobody cares about what he wrote. Now if Burns had received that fine university education which so many people think it was his great misfortune to have lacked, the chances are that all of his poetry would have been of this elegant, good-for-nothing order. It is not when he tries to be fine that he is eloquent; it is when he lets himself go, in the dialect. The English of the schools was like a foreign tongue to him. He had to learn it; but the dialect he never had to learn. He spoke it before he knew what learning meant—he drew it in with his breath. Macaulay said truly that no man ever wrote an immortal work in any language except the one he heard about his cradle. These are the words in which thought kindles into flame. It is in moments of tremendous excitement that the finest poetic expressions have birth, and in those moments the soul always speaks in the tongue of its childhood—all other language is forgotten. You may give a Scotchman all the culture of the schools, until his ordinary conversation shall not betray his race; but the first excitement will betray him. Let him get angry, and if he swears he'll swear in Scotch. When he falls

in love, he'll woo in Scotch. When he tells a thrilling story, he'll tell it in Scotch; and if he gets "fou and unco happy," he'll sing in Scotch. Read Tam O'Shanter. Burns composed it all in one winter's day. His wife saw him walking back and forth by the river side, swinging his arms, slapping his thighs, and laughing as if he would burst. Then he came in and wrote it down. Part of it is easy enough for English readers, but when he warms to his story we need a glossary at every line. Recall his description of the witches' dance as Tam saw it through the ruined windows of the old haunted kirk:

As Tammie glower'd, amazed and curious,  
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:  
The piper loud and louder blew,  
The dancers quick and quicker flew,  
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,  
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,  
And coost her duddies to the wark,  
And linket at it in her sark.

How was it when he spoke with the deepest pathos and his heart became a fountain of tears?

We twa hae run about the braes,  
And pu'd the gowans fine;  
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot  
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,  
Frae morning sun till dine;  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd  
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty freen,  
And gies a hand o' thine;  
And we'll tak' a right guid willie-waught  
For auld lang syne.

His merriment, too, went the same gait :

Oh, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,  
And Rob and Allan came to pree ;  
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night,  
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

Hear him in his tenderest mood :

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
When we were first acquent  
Your locks were like the raven,  
Your bonny brow was brent ;  
But now your brow is beld, John,  
Your locks are like the snaw ;  
But blessings on your frosty pow,  
John Anderson, my jo.

Or in his frankest confession :

I lo'e her mysel', but darena weel tell,  
My poverty keeps me in awe, man,  
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,  
Does little or naething at a', man.

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,  
But just a drappie in our e'e;  
The cock may crawl, the day may daw,  
And aye we'll taste the barley-bree.

John Anderson, my jo, John,  
We clamb the hill thegither,  
And mony a canty day, John,  
We've had wi' ane anither ;  
Now we maun totter down, John,  
But hand in hand we'll go ;  
And sleep thegither at the foot,  
John Anderson, my jo.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,  
Nor hae't in her power to say na, man ;  
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,  
My stomach's as proud as them a', man.