

Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

"Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the Star of Hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me."

BURNS'S emotion is sensual, it is facile, but nevertheless, it is undoubtedly real, and in this, even more than in its matchless melody, lies the secret of his magic. The same true ring is heard in his convivial songs, whether like,

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

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

Which is a song of pure jollity, whether they have that touch of deener emotion, which has made "Auld Lang Syne," the more than national anthem of good fellowship:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days o' lang syne?"

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne."

AT other times, Burns shows the influence of a fashion prevalent amongst his English contemporaries. He displays an easily excited sentimentalism, and this is particularly exemplified, when he caresses the little mouse, which his ploughshare has turned up with the sod.

"We sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
Oh! what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na' start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle."

Or when, with the plough he turned down a daisy,

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem."

and we have another example of this sentimentalism, when in his "Address to the De'il," he says,

"But fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben,
Oh! wad ye tak' a' thought and men?
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
E'en for your sake."

ONE conversant with European history contemporary with Burns' writings cannot fail to recognise the influence, which that vague spirit of discontent with constituted authority—which eventually culminated in the French Revolution—had upon the Scottish poet. As a matter of fact, much of his finest poetry is the poetry of defiance. He is never tired of exalting what the world despises and despising what it exalts. Remember how, when the "Jolly Beggars" are revelling in the barn, he makes one sing,

"A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
'Churches built to please the priest."

IN Burns, we have a humorist of the first degree. Humour is such a predominant feature that there is little need for me to quote examples, but it is often in his humorous poems that Burns gives us the brightest glimpse of his real philosophy. Recall how the sight of a "louse" crawling up the bat of a lady sitting in front of him in church inspired him to write his "Address to a Louse," which address he concludes with that world-famous and oft-quoted passage,

"Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us.
It wad frae many a blunder free us
And foolish notion

What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us
And e'en devotion."

ONE of the most fantastic and irresponsible of his works is the story of "Tam o' Shanter," which, if for nothing else, would have become famous on account of at least one passage of brilliant poetic imagery,

"But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snow-fall in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flits ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm."

Time will not permit of a closer study of Burns as he is portrayed in his poems. One might as easily spend hours instead of minutes tracing the character of the poet—his religious beliefs, for example, will afford a long study in themselves; in fact, the themes of his poems could almost be said to provide a religion for all of us. If we are willing to accept Faith, Hope, and Charity as the principal tenets of religion, we have the first, well illustrated by "The Cottar's Saturday Night"; Hope, by his "Epistle to Lapraik"; and Charity, if by nothing better, by his "Address to the De'il," where his charity is not even bounded by the bottomless pit. How fully does his love of his brother man inspire the lines of "Man was Made to Mourn," and how well the principle of helping the poor and needy caused him to write as he did of the wounded hare, and his love of truth brought forth those terrible denunciations of hypocrisy, clothed in the mask of religion, which almost makes our flesh creep to read it.

But, above all else, Burns was inspired with a strong sense of the brotherhood of man, which is the grand end of all true teaching. This sense of brotherhood coloured everything he wrote, and seemed to fill him with brightest anticipations, even as he looked at the misery around him, or reflected on the misery which on occasions was his own portion. Even in his darkest moods, he was filled with hope; hope for an era of kindness, love, purity, and a truer and better manhood than the world had ever seen; and that hope found expression in one of his songs, one which the world will never allow to die, and whose grandest sentiment echoes the dearest aspirations of all true lovers of the human race:

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth o'er a' the earth
May bear the gree and a' that,
For a' that, and a' that
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that."

Radio and Elections

Recent Experience in America

THE part which radio broadcasting played in the Presidential election in the United States, is thus referred to by the Broadcasting Company's consultant in America, Mr. Edgar H. Felix, in the course of a recent letter:

"Broadcasting in the United States during the last month has been almost entirely a matter of election campaigns with a few of the standard programmes sandwiched in. The effect has been an amazing turn-out of the electorate and an amazing public interest in political problems of the day.

"It is believed by many that the broadcast voice quality of the respective candidates was the vital factor in determining the vote. Mr. Hoover is a serious, dignified speaker, who confined himself to the economic, social and political issues of the day and got over the impression by radio of his great executive ability. Mr. Smith, the defeated candidate, gave evidence of a decided lack of culture and more by the tone of voice, pronunciation and enunciation than by what he said, proved himself to the majority of the public to be unfit for the highest office which we have to offer.

"In recent elections, until the present one, considerable sums were spent for newspaper advertising, which, this year, were diverted to radio. The wisdom of this expenditure has been abundantly proved and radio is only now coming to its own as a political medium. I do not doubt that you will find this so in New Zealand at the next opportunity. However, there was so much political speaking over the air in the United States that I believe the public reacted unfavourably toward the end. On the other hand, the point was fully proved that radio's method of getting into the home brought about a more intimate acquaintance with the politicians, their characters and the respective trends of their administrations than the printed word or direct personal address would hope to accomplish."

AN Australian enthusiast has made the strangest loud-speaker ever heard of. The mechanism is contained in a human skull. Although its original owner was but a lowly aborigine the skull occasionally gives forth quite high-brow speech and music.

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