

land o' cakes and brother Scots," and gazed in the sunny days of his youth enraptured, on the sweet holms and beautiful banks of the immortal Nith. Nor is it because of a stern orthodoxy of faith with which some are charged, that we feel disposed to look with our own eyes at the truth in regard to the cause of his death. We believe there is a moral in it; and, we believe, that to look this truth in the face, and learn its moral, is not to vilify the name of Burns. It is not to deny him a poet's fame, or a poet's honors, or a poet's genius,—it is not to prove ourselves unworthy of the country that gave us birth. Besides, to speak the truth, cannot injure the dead. It may benefit the living. And alas! one of the most sorrowful of all discoveries is, that the shield of the mighty, though raised in kindness, cannot protect him; and the eloquence of the highly gifted, though fully awaked on his behalf, cannot conceal from us the melancholy truth, that *intoxicating liquor killed Burns*—intoxicating liquor buried in the loathsomeness of a drunkard's grave, one of nature's own Poets—one who was elect for some great achievements, for the benefit of all men, through all time!

With the generous feelings of a brother Poet, Prof. Wilson endeavors with great ingenuity, and with a rich mellifluous flow of seeming reason, to obscure, if not to deny this fact. His solution of Burns' early death, seems to be that he sank into the grave overborne with the hardships of his situation. Carlyle, oftener an honest man than a wise one, has dealt somewhat more faithfully with Burns in this matter. He recites his history according to the facts, and asks: "Where then does the cause lie? We are forced to answer: with himself; it is his inward and not his outward misfortunes that bring him to the dust."

This is the truth, but not the whole truth. Before Burns went to Edinburgh he had tasted of the licentiousness of the times. When in that city, welcomed by its best society, and an object of the sincerest and deepest interest, the haunts of intemperance were almost constantly graced with his presence. Not that he had gone already into the profoundest depths of their foul waters. He was only on his way thither.

His eloquence—his brilliant impromptu poetry—his wit kindling in his large face, like the flush of the Aurora Borealis, and flashing from his great black eye—of which Sir Walter Scott has said—"such another eye I never saw in a human head;" his infinite good nature, and readiness to notice and honor the poorest fellow creature in the street; these traits introduced him into many a midnight revel, where boisterous mirth and deafening applause only allured him more quickly onward to his melancholy end.

With seasons of abstinence, the vicious habit slowly and surely grew upon him. Many saw it; many deplored it. They blamed, pitied, and finally shunned him. He resented; felt himself still a man; tried to drown his sorrows; poured forth snatches of exquisite poetry; devoted some of his best days to the composition of songs; was seen now and then at the tables of the rich; then plunged again into proud defiance of ruin. Consumed his strength and his immortal genius in these licensed porticos of Hell—the Taverns. Saw his plans all blasted; his family neglected, and on the brink of poverty; was admonished; but came to no determination to pause though mercy yet held out to him as they were, but on he rushed towards the deep, dark gulph of drunkenness, and in that gulph he perished—one of nature's true born sons of sweetest, loftiest, and immortal song—perished, the victim of intemperance! This is nothing less than a tragedy.

Alas! for that noble-hearted youth, in whom there was a soul of immortal worth, immortal vigor.

There comes over us a spirit of lamentation, and inconsolable sadness, as we see him led on to ruin, and falling at last, ignobly, into a drunkard's cold, hopeless, eternal grave.

It was not poverty that drew this archangel down; nor the proud man's contumely; nor the world's cold scorn; nor the hardships of his singular lot; nor any flaw inherent in his constitution; but the fiery element of intoxication, taken to excess and operating on his high toned, poetic temperament, as oil added to the flames. All his later poetry it contaminated. It took his Æolian harp, originally tuned for celestial harmony, and made it give out only tartarean discords. At last, it laid its murderous hand on the minstrel himself; quenched his lustrous eye in everlasting darkness, and poured into his cup the wormwood of despair and death.

It is not the whole of our sorrow that in the death of Burns we lost a Poet. Was he not a man with an immortal soul? In vain, you will search the pages of Carlyle, or of the great Christopher, for any such thing as a calm and deliberate avowal, or recognition of this fact. Hence, in vain, will you search these writers for anything like an estimate of his *moral character*. They concern themselves only with the genius of Burns—with the relation in which he stands to the judgment of critics in poetry and feats of the intellect. This is little short of literary blindness, and woe to the generation which lifts its eyes no higher for instruction, than the writings of such men. When a noble ship is dashed upon the rocks, do we concern ourselves merely for the loss of her timbers? When a city is destroyed by an earthquake, do we sorrow only over the bricks and the mortar? When the dark night of death descended on Burns, had he not a soul? If we would be instructed thoroughly, by his fate, we must consider that question. We are not to make a difference; for there is one law—one God—one judgment, for all. While one deplores his loss, in the style and creed of a Cicero—and another mourns over him, as a boon companion in mirth and song, and another weeps bitterly at his grave—he knows not why. May we not, with the Bible in hand, lament over him, in the spirit and faith of a Paul? Burns was a Poet, and he will long maintain a place among Poets. But here we imitate one of his own memorable stanzas:

For a' that, an' a' that,
A Poet's worth an' a' that;
Did a' the world say it nay,
The soul's the man for a' that!

What tho' through life we live at ease,
Grow rich, an' great, an' a' that,
Be drunk with wine—do what we please—
Still, we must die for a' that.

But then frae woe, frae guilt, an' fears,
Nor golden gems an' a' that,
Nor faith o' fools, nor vows, nor tears,
Can save the soul for a' that.

We see not why the whole truth should not be told. Let every cause have the benefit of all that properly belongs to it. We are the advocates of worthy clients. *There is a soul in man*; and, it is on that intoxicating liquor commits the greatest violence, and for that cause we condemn it. One may cry it down because it devours the wealth of a people: another, because it destroys domestic happiness: another because of his sympathy for the fatherless: another, because of its crimes and taxes: another because of its being a curse to genius. This is all well. But it is not from the eloquence simply of political economy that this cause is to receive and retain its momentum. Nor