

No name of mighty monarch, with captive nations crowned;  
No name of warrior, laurel-wreathed, is in that joyous sound;  
No name of hoary-headed sage is in those song-bursts heard;  
Sage, warrior, monarch, not for you, the people's heart is stirred.

Born of themselves, a man like they, one hundred years gone by,  
A peasant bard sprung forth to life beneath old Scotia's sky;  
His teachings were from moor and loch, from mountain stream and brae,  
From cattle byre, and ingle nook, from warlock, sprite and fay.

His books were from the peasants' lives, from cottage home and hearth,  
From week day and from Sabbath rest his stories had their birth,  
His songs were from the nation's heart, and ancient music wove  
Its golden chords with martial songs, and strains of peace and love.

He died ere yet the poet's wreath had circled round his brow,  
The living poet's crown of yore! alas! unheeded now—  
But where could civic crown or bays, a diadem of kings,  
Such triumph bring to living men, as dead thus homage brings?

Immortal Burns! From land to land, from sea to sounding sea  
This mighty chaunt for requiem, thy glorious minstrelsy,  
And we would lay our maple leaf in ever-living bloom,  
With roses, thistles, shamrocks twined, an offering on thy tomb.

## 6. REV. GEORGE WEIR, M. A.

(Professor of Classical Literature, Queen's College, Kingston.)

### SECRET OF BURNS' POWER OVER HIS COUNTRYMEN.

It naturally occurs to the mind to inquire—why do Scotchmen so enthusiastically love and admire him? Why does every true Scottish heart beat with responsive thrill at the name of Burns? How is it that, as if by a charm, or spell, he excites within us the strongest emotions, whether of pleasure, of sadness, of patriotism, or any of the varied sentiments or passions that sway the human heart. Whatever note he strikes on his many-toned instrument, the heart is immediately borne along with him, and fired, as it were, by his inspiration, it rises exultingly with him in his lofty flights—sinks with him to the depths of contrition and grief—glows with him in the fervor of his patriotism, and indignantly resents with him all oppression and wrong. How is it? we ask—whence this power over the heart which no other poet wields?

I. There is no doubt that much of this power was due to his uncommon *genius*, which I unhesitatingly pronounce to be of the highest order. I am aware that some may take exception to this statement, and deny its truth. Unquestionably Shakspeare stands the first of Dramatic, as Milton of Epic, poets; but as long as we have a Burns, to no nation or people shall we yield the palm of Lyric, and, to some extent, Didactic poetry. In what instances has either dramatic or epic poetry ever exercised the same influence over the masses of mankind? I ask you, do the hearts of the English, as a people, glow with the same responsive warmth to each line of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or even to Shakspeare's plays, as do the hearts of the Scots to the stirring and pensive lays of our own national bard? or are the writings of the former two so generally read as to become household words in each domestic circle? The greatness and versatility of his genius are displayed in his power of imagination, his sharp and keenly-pointed sarcasm, his graphic and vivid delineations of scenery, life and character, as well as in his didactic and moral pieces; and, considering the noble monuments of intellect he has left, for his short career, who can tell what he might have done, had his life been prolonged and his attention turned to them!

II. Not the least attractive feature in his poetry is his deep sympathy with all nature, and the force and beauty of his descriptive powers. His generous, warm heart, expanded with love to all creation: he would not willingly have harmed the meanest of God's creatures. Who can read his address to the gowan—his lines to his auld mare—his lament for his pet ewe, Maillie—the address to the mouse, and lines on a wounded hare—without being convinced that his kindly heart was ever brimming with the best of human sympathies. What could surpass in descriptive beauty the lines from his poem on Hallowe'en?

Again, for the expression of sympathy with the lower creation, the Poem on the field-mouse.

III. Another characteristic of the poet that must endear him to the hearts of his countrymen was his deep devotion in love and friendship. All of the audience were more or less familiar with his "Mary in Heaven," his verses to his Jane, and numerous other love ballads. It was certainly a becoming arrangement on the part of the committee of management to have the ladies present on this occasion. (Applause.) Had they not been here, we might have almost feared that the shade of Burns would have frowned upon us, for some of the noblest tributes of his genius have been paid to them. (Great applause.)

IV. Again, look at Burns as the firm and enthusiastic patriot. This seems to have been the ruling passion of his heart. We have only to read his poetry; it breathes in every line of it, and this all-pervading love and pride of country have drawn forth some of the finest aspirations of his genius. (Applause.) This is the secret of

his vast influence over Scotchmen and over the lovers of their country. (Applause.) This is the reason, together with his manly independence of spirit and ardent love of freedom, that he has been so greatly and so generally admired in the United States. (Applause.) If he can thus speak to the hearts of foreigners, need we wonder at the spell which binds his countrymen to him. (Applause.) The Rev. Professor again recited a number of the bard's choicest pieces, and said, do not such strains as these inspire the heart of each Scottish soldier with that daring bravery which has gained him a name over the whole world, and was lately so conspicuously displayed on the plains of India by a Havelock and a Campbell. (Applause.) Who would ever bring the stain of cowardice on his country while he remembers that model of patriotic songs, "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled?" (Applause.)

V. But not the least powerful or the least useful of the influences which he exercised over his countrymen, is the tendency of his writings to impart to them independence of spirit, a straightforward honesty of purpose, and a due appreciation of their dignity as individual men. With him it was always the man—the man independently of all advantageous circumstances. "A man's a man for a' that." (Applause.) In noticing the various influences which he exercises over his own countrymen; the extreme beauty, simplicity and thankfulness of his moral and religious views, he was aware that in his lifetime he was severely censured, and though by many he is still denounced as irreligious and profane; frequently too by men whose passion and intellect render them as incompetent to pass judgment on him or understand the working of a soul like his, as to rival his mighty genius. They forget, too, the times in which Burns lived—their society sanctioned customs that the world would not tolerate now. More of what was and is still regarded by such as irreligious and profane, is the keenest and most biting sarcasms on cant and hypocrisy—on every thing, in short, that was mere outward profession, without exercising any vital influence on the heart or life. No doubt he had faults, and what man is there without them? (Applause.) The torrent of his passion too frequently hurried him into the commission of sins which were deeply repented of in calmer moments; he had, however, yet to learn that he ever systematically changed conscience. It has been justly remarked of him—"he was not a faultless monster, nor yet a monster with all his faults." Can you tell me, asked the same person of a Scottish peasant, "what is it that makes Burns such a favorite with you all in Scotland?" Other poets you have and great ones, and of the same class, too; you had Hogg, but I do not perceive the same electric flash as it were of an electric feeling when any man is named but that of Burns." "I can tell," said he, "why it is—it is because he had the heart of a man in him; he was all heart and all man, and there is nothing at least in a poor man's experience of bitter or sweet which can happen to him, but a line of Burns springs into his mouth and gives him courage and comfort if he need it. It is like a second bible." Prof. Weir resumed his seat amid great applause. —*Kingston News.*

## 7. JOHN W. DAWSON, ESQ., LL.D.,

(Principal of McGill College, Montreal.)

### NOVA SCOTIA—THERE IS VIRTUE IN EVERY LAND—OUR NATION'S MISSION—BURNS' ERA.

I regard it as no small honor to be called on, upon this occasion, to represent the land of Burns, more especially as, though by parentage a Scot, the place of my birth is not Old Scotia, but that little British American peninsula which has the boldness to call itself the New Scotland of this western world; and since I have but few opportunities of speaking on behalf of the country dear to me as the land of my birth, I may be permitted to say that Nova Scotia is not unworthy of its name. It is a province full of the same intelligence and energy and manly virtue that distinguish old Scotland, possessing nearly the same natural resources; and it now holds forth its hand to grasp that of its great brother Canada, in friendly union,—a country worthy to be one in the brotherhood of British American nations. But though not by birth a Scotsman, I am a Scot in nearly everything else—my nearest friends and dearest connexions are of that land. I would not, however, be led away by the narrow-minded disposition to exalt Scotland, or any land indeed, above others. In every country and among every people there is something to be admired. The old Egyptians, three or four thousand years ago, so venerated the remains of their prophet Mizraim, whom they worshipped under the name of Osiris, that they hacked his body in pieces, and distributed these relics to be laid up in state in every city in Egypt. It is just so now with the common stock of beauties and virtues that once graced perfect man. They are to be found scattered among every people under heaven—every one has a share, none has all—and they cannot be reunited, except by the spirit of Christianity, arising in the kingdom that is to come. I hold, too, that the great nation of which Scotchmen form no small part has much of this to accomplish. Penetrating with its influence nearly the whole