

Some usefu' plan or book could make,  
 Or sing a sang at least.  
 The rough bur Thistle spreading wide  
 Among the bearded bear,  
 I turned my weeding-clips aside,  
 And spared the symbol dear."

From first to last, the love of country, "a tide of Scottish prejudice," as he himself modestly calls it, swelled high up in his heart. In all his personal cares and distresses this never left him, and in the indulgence of this feeling he seems to escape from the dark clouds which so often hung above him, into the light and sunshine. We cannot but love to see the manifestation of this deep and generous feeling; it is, perhaps, the best and noblest of all his characteristics, that one, at least, which is maintained throughout with the most perfect consistency; and as a Scotchman we cannot help sympathizing with it. This strong national feeling in the heart of Burns gave the key note to some of his noblest strains. It burns in every word of—

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

by far the finest war-hymn that exists in any language. The feeling dictated oftentimes the choice of subjects, and at all times the homely Scottish dialect—our loved mother-tongue. It is to Burns, above all men, that we are indebted for the revival of a national tinge and spirit in our literature. It shall be a sad day indeed, that day—which I hope shall never come—when Scotsmen shall be ashamed of Scotland; when love to their own mother-land shall die out of their hearts. Men may call it prejudice, or narrow-mindedness, or by any other hard name they please, but for our part we must confess that a man always rises in our estimation, when we can see the love of his country—whatever that country may be—strong in his heart.

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