

and cities. Did you ever sit down and brood over one? What a sweet melancholy there was in it all. Old stoves and stove pipes which burned many a cord of wood and ton of coal and cooked dinners for the rich and poor, broken dishes which served meals to family and friends, lamps and lamp glasses which watched many a weary stitch, followed many a line of book and paper, and lighted many a sleepless hour of fever-tossed child and loved one, old shoes the feet which once wore them now stilled and mouldering to dust. No matter how suggestive this backward look, who desires to dwell upon its sorrow laden poetry? Who would not willingly turn from such a scene of desolation to sky, flower, tree, life and all the grandeur of God's creation? Why then should we sit down by the "refuse valley" of a great man's life to brood over what "might have been," or as Bret Harte says of "what is and hadn't ought to been." Why not leave the depressing scene and pass through the portals of a man's greatness with inspiration as our charioteer.

To-night, then, I wish to turn away from the sins and follies of Burns and bring before you some of the gems from the treasury of his recorded thoughts, for surely, if no man is stronger than his weakest point, every man is, at least in some sense, as great as his greatest thought.

Again, I do not wish to approach this subject as the theologian might do, with preconceived systems to maintain and then condemn the poet because we could not discover that by which we might write him orthodox. Neither would I draw near as the critic of philosophy or rhetoric desiring to rend in pieces the whole fabric of his productions, scatter the bits to the four winds and gloat over the ruins. Nay, I would come as one into a great art gallery with plastic mind and impressionable heart. I would tread upon sacred ground with heart tuned by poetic touch and as a poet I would endeavour to interpret the heart of old Scotland's poetic child. This must after all be the right way to find the true life of our author, for no man without roses in his heart can see the beauty of the rose or guess its loveliness.