

"Dear land of my birth! I may see thee no more,
But memory treasures the bright days of yore;
And my heart's fondest wish, the last sigh of my breast,
Shall be given to thee, Dearest Isle of the West:

O cushamachree,
My heart beats for thee!
Erin, Erin, my heart beats for thee!"

My feeling is as Burns's feeling, that that man is devoid of the instincts of human nature that does not love, beyond every other country on the earth, be its features what they may, his own, his native land. And how beautifully does he express this! We all remember that intense affection which induced him

"To turn the weeder clips aside,
And spare the symbol dear"—

that affection which infused the cherished hope

"That he for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

And, Sir, did he not sing a song—did he not, for poor old Scotland's sake, sing a song that has done honor to the land of his birth and elevated himself to the proud position of a worthy compeer of the greatest bards that ever swept the lyre? (Applause.) That song was originally uttered in his native Ayrshire, and its voice was at first low, faint and feeble, as the tones that are uttered by an Æolian harp when the wind elicits music from its dormant strings. But that song soon acquired fulness and force; that song soon diffused its notes far beyond the region where the minstrel sang. Its truth to nature had won the ear of all around the bard. The ploughman sang it in the field—the milkmaid in the pasture—but soon it spread amongst the educated and refined. With surprise and delight was it received amidst the polished circles of the northern capital. It crossed the border, and won the admiration of the rank, wealth and intelligence of England. (Applause.) Onward moving still, it passed the narrow channel and came to my own country, and there in the north it was welcomed with delight by people who could fully appreciate its beauties, as they were acquainted with the dialect in which it was written. Onward—still onward—the glorious song proceeded in its triumphant course. Over the surging Atlantic it sped its way, and as it passed, the mariner's voice, giving forth its tones to the breeze, mingled with the chimes of old Ocean. By our neighbors in the States—

"A man's a man for a' that"—

was welcomed as a spell of freedom, a watch-word of liberty. On—still on—until it reached this fair land of our adoption, not then as now dotted over with cities and towns and villages, but overspread with primeval forests. Through the thick bush, however, its tones penetrated, and the solitary backwoods man in some sequestered corner hailed its voice with rapture—threw down his axe—and dropped a tear for the heather-clad hills he left behind him. (Applause.) But its course was not limited to the West; North and South it held its way, and in the far East its voice nerved many an arm and gladdened many a heart—

"Where Ganges rolls its yellow tide:"

Ganges—once associated with proud memories of British achievement and British supremacy; but now, alas! awakening in too many bosoms but bitter recollections of that hideous tragedy enacted on its banks, which I know not how I can more appropriately designate than as the Cawnpore slaughter of the Innocents. But the glorious song sung "for pair auld Scotland's sake" not merely spread far and wide, but its influence has continued permanent and durable. This very meeting and hundreds of others bear witness, not merely to the vast extent the songs of Burns have traversed, but also to the strong affection whereby they are indelibly fixed on the mind. (Applause.) Truly it is a proud and unparalleled spectacle which this centennial celebration presents. On this day throughout the earth, when Hesperus, as the shades of evening fall, leads on the starry host, he looks down on a scene such as he never before beheld, the globe girdled with a festal wreath of speech and song: eloquence pouring forth the choicest treasures of language; music with its odorous breath scenting the air with sweet familiar melodies, all redolent of home and auld lang syne; the ruddy wine flowing in brimming bowls, and, for "those who prefer it," the more healthful "cup that cheers but not inebriates;" and all this as homage to the genius of a man, humble in station and straitened in circumstances, but rich in talent and noble in mind. (Applause.) Yes—depend upon it, when Hesperus is called upon to discharge that other duty which devolves upon him, of ushering in "the rosy-fingered Aurora, daughter of the dawn," when he is obliged to herald the morning, that summons men to the stern duties of the day, depend upon it, many a long and lingering look will he throw back on halls flashing with light, ringing with acclamation, sparkling with decoration, radiant with joy-lit countenances, on "Mirth with all her jocund train" holding high festival—and all in honor of Scotland's peasant bard, of Ayrshire's ploughman poet. (Applause.)

3. DANIEL WILSON, ESQ., LL. D.

(Professor of History and English Literature, University College.)

BURNS—HIS SHORT CAREER—HIS SONGS AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF THEIR DIFFUSION.

Dr. WILSON, the chairman of one of the Toronto Burns's Celebrations, on rising to speak, was warmly cheered. He said:—This day we mark, by a peculiarly significant symbol, the lapse of another century of time. Throughout the world-wide empire, won to itself by the Anglo-Saxon race, it is being commemorated this day, that one hundred years ago, the mean clay bigging of a Scottish peasant became, by the birth of Robert Burns, one of the sacred shrines—the Meccas of the world. The hard lot of toiling poverty was his heritage, from the cradle to the grave. In "the world's broad field of battle," life was to him one stern warfare, sweeping onward through all its brief scenes as a grand but fearful tragedy—gloomy, yet lighted up with the glory and beauty of a loving and gifted soul. (Applause.) For Burns' art and culture, the sophistical philosophy and the refined artificialities of the eighteenth century did nothing. All the sterling worth of Scotland's peasant bard was born of her rugged soul, and of the genial nurture of that sainted father of her "Cotter's Saturday Night." Life was to him real and earnest. (Cheers.) With a tenderness tearfully tremulous as the loving pity of a mother, there was sunshine still behind the clouds; there was wealth of treasure for his large heart in the sympathies of nature; and he seems to us as if sent into that eighteenth century to reveal once more to men where the true beauty of life lay; and to tell us how the daisy in the furrow, and the man of honest, independent worth, are alike fulfilling great Nature's plan. (Applause.) In the genius of Scotland's peasant bard we discern the pulsations of a musical instrument of the widest compass. From his rustic lyre come notes joyous and earnest—laughter-moving, and tremulous with tears. (Cheers.) Alas! its heavenly notes were jarred in the dread struggle with temptations, with passions, with the social environments of that poor country to which he was given as a teacher and a guide. It is not for us to pity him who, tried before the impartial tribunal of posterity, has been adjudged one of those whose memory and whose works posterity will not willingly let die. It is not for us to pity—to blame the mighty dead; neither is it for us now to attempt his panegyric. Nay, rather, may we say of his poems, they are imperfect, and of very small extent; for his life itself was a mere broken fragment. His sun went down ere it was noon, darkening on one of the saddest tragedies of the eighteenth century; and the world only learned when too late the priceless value of the treasure it had cast beneath its feet and trodden in the mire. (Cheers.) Robert Burns had only attained his 37th year, when, casting one lingering look of anguish on the orphanage of his love, he lay down amid the stern realities of life's battle-field to die. Let us think of this if we would estimate rightly what he did accomplish. Was there not, in the genial drollery and pregnant life of that "Tam O' Shanter" of his, the promise of a whole series of Scottish Canterbury Tales, had he but lived to the maturity to which Chaucer attained ere he gave form and utterance to his immortal song? (Great applause.) Dying at 37, Milton would have left to us no Paradise Lost or Regained. Dryden at that age would only have been known, if known at all, as the courtly sycophant who penned his "Annus Mirabilis;" and even Pope, who lisped in numbers, would have left unaccomplished the poems on which chiefly rest the enduring foundations of his fame. Yet the author of the "Cotter's Saturday Night" stands in need of no such apology. (Cheers.) Burns has bequeathed to us his songs, and that is fame enough to win for him the poet's immortality. His songs were a noble patriotic offering—and how generously bestowed on that country for which her poet mourned that he could do so little, while laying on her altar the priceless tribute. What lyric in any language surpasses in pathetic tenderness his "Mary in Heaven?" What glorious battle-song ever rang with more thrilling patriotic fervor than his "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled?" Or what noble, manly lay can equal in pith and power his "Man's a man for a' that?" The songs of Burns are already a part of the living language of our common race; and may not our hearts thrill within us this night, when gathered here around this festive board, on a spot hewn in our own day out of the old savage-haunted pines of Ontario's wooded shores—as we think that the same songs are being this night sung wherever the free banner of England floats on the breeze; and wherever the language is spoken inherited by her sons. (Applause.) Under the straw-clad roofs of Scotland, in the cottage-homes of England and of Ireland, the songs of Burns have been chanted in triumph to-day. By the echoes of their music, repeated from land to land, may fancy follow the flag of British freedom round the world. Where it proudly floats above the rocky heights of Gibraltar, and on Malta's ancient knightly towers, there their music has given voice to the breeze. At Aden, on the old Red Sea; in Africa, on her Atlantic coasts and her far-southern Cape of