the ripple, and the sweet burst of bird-song. When the scene changed, and the wintry winds howled and moaned through wood and glen, the poet's soul responded to the weird music of wind and storm. Every shade of feeling, wrought by the chill of a lonely moorland night, or the merry laughter of the cottar's bairns, stirred within him the sensations of the true artist ; impelling him to breathe in song or paint in words those charming gems that have become the property of the wide wide world.

We cannot say that Burns was pre-eminently a humorist, but it would be strange indeed if, with all his sensitiveness, alertness and keen intelligence he should lack a strong sense of humor and the genius of irony.

That he was a keen and biting satirist everyone knows, and many of his choicest shafts were poison-tipped indeed. Living in constant contact with a spirituality that was cold and sulphuric, he was easily roused to deep resentment.

A brilliant example of humorous sarcasm, aimed with intent to wound and maim, is found in "Holy Willie's Prayer." We smile as we follow the poet's picture of a thorough-paced Pharisee solemnly addressing his Maker in this fashion :——

> " I am here, afore thy sight,
>   For gifts and grace,
> A burnin' and a shinin' light
>   To a' this place.
>
> I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
>   Strong as a rock,
> A guide and buckler, an example,
>   To a' thy flock."

The great " I," always prominent in the foreground, expands with brazen effrontery as he recounts his sins in detail and coolly informs the Lord that his lapses from the path of virtue were caused by his accidentally getting fou. Next comes the modest request that high heaven should blast his enemies in general, and some particular individuals in an especial manner—

> " Curse thou his basket and his store,
>   kail and potatoes."

There is something very humorous in picturing a man in the act of invoking the Almighty to invade his neighbor's potato-bin and kail-yard. But it is in the winding up of the prayer that we find a delicious touch of humorous sarcasm :