

poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart of the story still lies hard and dead." On the other hand, Sir Walter Scott has recorded this verdict: "In the inimitable tale of *Tam o' Shanter*, Burns has left us sufficient evidence of his abilities to combine the ludicrous with the awful and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakespeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of death in the poem on Dr. Hornbrook, borders on the terrific; and the witches' dance in the Kirk of Alloway is at once ludicrous and horrible." Sir Walter, I believe, is right, and the world has sided with him in his judgment about *Tam o' Shanter*. Nowhere in British literature, out of Shakespeare, is there to be found so much of the power of which Scott speaks—that of combining in rapid transition almost contradictory emotions—if we except perhaps one of Scott's own highest creations, the tale of Wandering Willie, in *Redgauntlet*.

On the songs of Burns a volume might be written, but a few sentences must here suffice. It is in his songs that his soul comes out fullest, freest, brightest; it is as a songwriter that his fame has spread widest, and will longest last. Mr. Carlyle, not in his essay, which does full justice to Burns's songs, but in some more recent work, has said something like this, "Our Scottish son of thunder had, for want of a better, to pour his lightning through the narrow cranny of Scottish song—the narrowest cranny ever vouchsafed to any son of thunder." The narrowest, it may be, but the most effective, if a man desires to come close to his fellow-men, soul to soul. Of all forms of literature the genuine song is the most penetrating, and the most to be remembered; and in this kind Burns is the su-

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