

of the English people,—by Robert Burns, and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

In his "Literary History of America," Mr. Barrett Wendell describes Burns as the 'greatest poet of the English people.' Mr. Wendell does not wait to explain why he accounts Burns the greatest poet—Shakespeare and Milton, we presume, always aside—of the British people. Agreeing, however, with Mr. Wendell as to the fact, there are two reasons why Burns may be thus honored, of which only one is pertinent to this essay. Burns marks a return to Nature for the subject and inspiration of poetry. The elemental passions and the commonest face of nature are treated by him with feeling that can be described only as human; and the treatment itself is winsomely expressed in simple and natural verse-forms. Ignoring Burns' historical position, many, no doubt, would hold that these things could be said as justly of Cowper and Wordsworth. Still, given as Cowper and Wordsworth were to reflection, Burns, it must be said, not only writes with absolute spontaneity, natural abandon, and sincerity, but also, literally, sings forth the purest poetry. He does not sing so sweetly as Chaucer, or so daintily as the cavalier poets and Herrick, or so compellingly as Browning, who lilt us into a lust of love and of life. None the less Burns' 'songs' are the songs which the English-speaking peoples sing in their humanest moments, and sing perennially.

This happens not so much because Burns' songs