

warmly interested in their favour. The great contemporary master of wordmanship, and indeed of all literary arts and technicalities, had not unnaturally dazzled a beginner. But it is best to dwell on merits, for it is these that are most often overlooked.

*Burns.*—I have left the introductory sentences on Principal Shairp, partly to explain my own paper, which was merely supplemental to his amiable but imperfect book, partly because that book appears to me truly misleading both as to the character and the genius of Burns. This seems ungracious, but Mr. Shairp has himself to blame; so good a Wordsworthian was out of character upon that stage.

This half apology apart, nothing more falls to be said except upon a remark called forth by my study in the columns of a literary Review. The exact terms in which that sheet disposed of Burns I cannot now recall; but they were to this effect—that Burns was a bad man, the impure vehicle of fine verses; and that this was the view to which all criticism tended. Now I knew, for my own part, that it was with the profoundest pity, but with a growing esteem, that I studied the man's desperate efforts to do right; and the more I reflected, the stranger it appeared to me that any thinking being should feel otherwise. The complete letters shed, indeed, a light on the depths to which Burns had sunk in his character of Don Juan, but they enhance in the same proportion the hopeless nobility of his marrying Jean. That I ought to have stated this more noisily I now see; but that any one should fail to see it for himself, is to me a thing both incomprehensible and worthy of open scorn. If Burns, on the facts dealt with in this study, is to be called a bad man, I question very much whether either I or the writer in the Review have ever encountered what it would be fair to call a good one. All have some fault. The fault of each grinds down the hearts of those about him, and—let us not