

Or look at this other picture :

“ Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
 When Nature's face is fair,
 I walkèd forth to view the corn,
 And snuff the caller air.
 The risin' sun owre Galston muirs
 Wi' glorious light was glintin ;
 The hares were hirplin down the furrs,
 The lav'rocks they were chantin
 Fu' sweet that day.”

I have noted only some of the excellences of Burns's poetry, which far outnumber its blemishes. Of these last it is unnecessary to speak ; they are too obvious, and whatever is gross, readers can of themselves pass by.

Burns's most considerable poems, as distinct from his songs, were almost all written before he went to Edinburgh. There is, however, one memorable exception. *Tam o' Shanter*, as we have seen, belongs to Ellisland days. Most of his earlier poems were entirely realistic, a transcript of the men and women and scenes he had seen and known, only lifted a very little off the earth, only very slightly idealized. But in *Tam o' Shanter* he had let loose his powers upon the materials of past experiences, and out of them he shaped a tale which was a pure imaginative creation. In no other instance, except perhaps in *The Jolly Beggars*, had he done this ; and in that cantata, if the genius is equal, the materials are so coarse, and the sentiment so gross, as to make it, for all its dramatic power, decidedly offensive. It is strange what very opposite judgments have been formed of the intrinsic merit of *Tam o' Shanter*. Mr. Carlyle thinks that it might have been written “all but quite as well by a man, who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent ; that it is not so much a