

direct, no subtilizings, nor refinings about it, nor any of that nature-worship which soon after his time came in. Quite unconsciously, as a child might, he goes into the outward world for refreshment, for enjoyment, for sympathy. Everywhere in his poetry, nature comes in, not so much as a being independent of man, but as the background of his pictures of life and human character. How true his perceptions of her features are, how pure and transparent the feeling she awakens in him! Take only two examples. Here is the well-known way he describes the burn in his *Halloween*—

“Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro’ the glen it wimpl’t;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl’t;
Whyles glitter’d to the nightly rays,
Wi’ bickerin’, dancin’ dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.”

Was ever burn so naturally, yet picturesquely described?
The next verse can hardly be omitted—

“Amang the brachens on the brae,
Between her an’ the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an’ gae a croon:
Poor Leezie’s heart maist lap the hool;
Near lav’rock height she jumpit;
But miss’d a fit, an’ in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi’ a plunge that night.”

“Maist lap the hool,” what condensation in that Scotch phrase! The hool is the pod of a pea—poor Lizzie’s heart almost leapt out of its encasing sheath.

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