

chronic. And, remembering this, we ought perhaps to pity instead of despise him. But I suppose it is an instinct which makes society adopt the latter tone—an instinct of self-preservation. Even in the rare case, where there are qualifications, it does not do to encourage them. Archimedes was obliging enough to say that if any one would give him standing room somewhere in space, he would move the world. A wonderful undertaking that; but, on the whole, perhaps it was quite as well that he let it alone. The world might have been none the better for the move. It was a risk. Certainly it is not desirable to have any number of persons of his ability shifting it about just as they like. No one can tell what would come of it. Society is instinctively conscious of this; and so (taking into consideration all the points above indicated) feels that, on the whole, the wisest course is to heap discouragement, even to the verge of ridicule, on the devoted head of the would-be world mender.

Quædo Redivivus.

BURNS'S ANNIVERSARY.

Reverence for the illustrious dead is commendable in itself, and indicates intensity and breadth of culture. Those who have founded the faiths, fought the battles, sung the songs of the race, or in any special way helped to unfold the struggling life of humanity, are justly held "in everlasting remembrance." That Robert Burns was one of these will hardly be disputed any longer, and it is a hopeful sign that among Canadians the anniversary of his birth should have been commemorated in some special manner.

Into a world out of joint, and surrounded by an atmosphere of unreality and empty formalism, Burns came as from the very heart of Nature itself. The spirit of a new time and higher order seized upon and incarnated itself in a poor Ayrshire ploughman. From the first he was in contradiction with his time. The empty husks of worn-out systems of truth failed to satisfy the cravings of his spirit. "In glory and in joy he walked behind his plough upon the mountain side," face to face with Nature itself. And the fact that Burns rose superior to his time, and felt its utter insufficiency, would of itself stamp him as no ordinary man. The details of his life are known to all. As it now stands in the calm, clear light of history, disentangled from its temporary clothings, it is a melancholy, tragic life upon the whole. Not statue-like with a unity of aim and purpose visible through all its parts; but a broken, fragmentary life, majestic in its ruins. Burns stood solitary in the world: like every earnest soul treading the wine-press *alone*. His life was a long struggle towards self-harmony and completeness. It was a struggle towards a loftier platform, but carried on without a guide to help him; the narrow-minded and intolerant spiritual leaders of the time being unable to understand one who was so far removed beyond the range of their crude theories. Burns perished in the struggle, it is true. But mere *apologies* for his life come now too late. From whom is most apology due for that tragedy? And where among his contemporaries can be found one who, under like conditions, could do what Burns accomplished? In a century or more, one may conquer where he failed, but in the meantime, mere apologists, much more hostile critics, should be silent.

The works of Burns give but a faint impression of the immense spiritual force within the man. Electric-like, he rushes grandly through the world, the mighty forces of his nature concealed behind the flashings of his genius. Of what he could have done under more favourable conditions, no idea can be formed. With one side of his nature at war against the other, in hand-to-hand conflict with the shallow life around him, fighting "the devil, the world and the flesh" all leagued to crush him, his greatest poem must ever be his life. Yet, in the midst of all this there were also distilling from his heart those immortal songs of his,—like "dew-drops of celestial melody," and destined to become the heritage of the race. Sometimes, though seldom, the dark shadow of his life projects into his poems. But there is nothing of morbid sentimentality in all his life and writings. Throughout both, as their great characteristic, there is a genuine sincerity.

In Burns are merged the poetry and music of the past; but from him these issue with intenser pathos. He is at once the mirror of the past and the prophet of the future. His genius surrounds the common things of life with a glory, immortal as the forms in which it is expressed. He holds the mirror up to human nature, and feeling in himself, he discovers to others the genuine worth and dignity of man. His intense patriotism finds expression in war songs echoing the thunder and storm that gave them birth, and immortal while the spirit of liberty remains upon the earth. His genius was universal. He was Scotland condensed into a personality, it has been well said. But a wider view is possible. His soul is like an *Æolian harp* whose strings vibrate responsively to influences from the world and life around him. He stands not apart from, but feels himself mysteriously united to the universe. He is awe-struck before the sublime grandeur of Nature, and his great heart goes out in sympathy to all lower forms of life. While to the mass of struggling men around him he feels himself united by the hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows which go to make up the sum of human existence, and the pulsations of a life of universal brotherhood coursed through his veins.

It is now more than eighty years since the "flood-gates of his life were shut

in their eternal rest." But Time, the impartial arbiter, is slowly allotting Robert Burns his true place in the temple of the world's great men. His works and life still remain. The accidental and temporary elements that gathered round them are gradually dropping out of sight. The lines of humanity running through them—the universal, essential and eternal elements that underlie them, are becoming more and more apparent as they are removed from the intolerance and prejudice of his age. And amidst the vulgar materialism which has so largely infected modern society in general, it is a hopeful sign that so many are found able to appreciate at their true value the life and genius of a man like Burns. The Caledonian Society of Montreal in particular, by the splendid dinner given on the occasion of the anniversary of his birth, are to be congratulated for bringing his name prominently before the public mind, and thus still further preparing the way for the universal recognition of Robert Burns as indeed one of the foremost spirits of his time.

FASHIONABLE SOCIETY.

It is often maintained that scandals occur more frequently in fashionable than in other circles, and that it is generally the married women who are involved in them. This we do not wish to believe; but, if it be so, we must look around for the cause. There can be no darker episode in life than that which marks the desertion of home, husband and children by a wife and mother. What leads to these dark episodes, and what may be done to prevent their recurrence in future? A woman does not lightly cast aside her principles and purity. She must wander far and heedlessly along the crooked path ere she reaches the point from which there is no turning. The society in which she moves must see whither her steps are tending, and if she is allowed to stray unwarned along the slippery paths of sin until shame and sorrow overtake her, then society is to blame; and it is high time that its rules regarding the conduct of married women should be reconstructed.

How seldom do we hear the lightest breath of gossip in connection with society young ladies. They are guarded by clever mammas and careful friends, and the freedom of manners and behaviour permitted to independent girls of less fashionable society would be in their circle deemed preposterous; but no sooner is an eligible husband and elegant home secured, than all restraint is cast aside, and the fashionable married woman is allowed to flaunt her flirtations openly. Now we would fain have society learn to frown upon the flirtations of married women, and we would wish the flirting women to realize that even should they find other men foolish enough to trust to them their honour and happiness, the divorce and remarriage which must be sought in other lands is but a flimsy farce with which to regild their tarnished honour; and even should society pardon them, slur over their sins, and sympathise with their sorrows, yet they cannot escape the retribution which awaits every erring soul? Sin must bring sorrow, which wealth and position can never ward away. Even the hardest-hearted mother must have some natural affection for her children, and the bitter thought that she has disgraced them cannot sweeten her reflections or brighten her path in life. Then, since society cannot sanctify sin by ignoring it, nor modify misery by pretending it does not exist, would it not be better that we should openly avow our horror of such sin, and close our doors against all who may seem to be treading in the same paths?

Surely we have had sufficient desolated homes, dishonoured husbands and deserted children, and it is time that we should look well to our ways ere fashionable society becomes such a term of reproach that no pure woman will care to be of it. Fortunately the women who leave their own husbands seldom take with them the husbands of others; they are generally accompanied by misguided youths whose mothers must certainly have hoped for them a brighter fate. For where can we find a mother who would willingly look forward to such a wife for her son? What mother could wish her son to lay waste a happy home that he may build his own upon the ashes of its happiness, and what happiness may be hoped for from such a union? How different this woman whose heart is torn with conflicting passions—sympathy for her husband, sorrow for her children, shame for herself, mingled with the guilty passion which has led her to this mad forgetfulness of every pure and womanly feeling—how different is she from the fair young girl, dressed in robes as spotless as her own purity, whom the mother's loving heart has pictured standing by her son's side at God's holy altar! Yet who can tell whose son may be the next victim of these feminine wolves in sheep's clothing, unless society will unite in frowning upon these married women's flirtations, and compel everyone received by it to behave with the dignity and decorum becoming their position. It seems strange that greater leniency should be extended to women than would be shown to men in like circumstances; yet so it is. Were the married men to behave in the same manner, carrying away respectable girls and leaving desolate homes, what would be said of them? How many horsewhips would be raised, and how many pistols pointed? While words of denunciation could not be found strong enough to express the depth of our indignation. Yet are not our sons as dear to us as our daughters, and does not a mother's misconduct disgrace home far more than a father's ever can? Then is it not time to