

humour. How amusing to see Tam tear himself away from his friends at the inn, and set out on his faithful horse to his home, when suddenly it occurs to him he has forgotten the commands of his "gude wife." To add to his discomfiture phantoms of night appear to hover about him, while with open eyes he peers around "lest bogles catch him unawares," as he comes up to the well-known Kirk-Alloway, all in a blaze, and resounding with mirth and music. The poet here displays his powers of invention as he passes from scenes of common humour to describe a dance of infernal spirits, to whom Tam makes known his presence by an involuntary burst of applause, whereupon the lights go out, the music ceases, and the infernal beings rush at Tam who succeeds after a hard chase in safely gaining the middle of the bridge, beyond which they could not pass.

Burns has succeeded admirably in producing the pleasing effect of the union of humour with tenderness. This quality of tenderness is the characteristic feature of his poetry, and has merited for him, according to Mr. Dewey, the proud title of "prince of lyric poets." This learned writer ranks him second to the great masters of the epos and the drama, but superior to all others. These great men moved in a sphere of action different from that of Burns, having occupied themselves in the production of the highest species of poetry, the epic, while he excelled in works of the second order, lyric poetry. The union of these two qualities we find beautifully exemplified in *The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie*, while tenderness and sweetness pervade his *Highland Mary*. The poet manifests great tenderness and affection in all his references to this interesting personage, to whom he was engaged to be married in early life but who was snatched from him by the hand of death. Throughout his whole life she was almost constantly in his memory, and in many short pieces he has befittingly celebrated her charms and graces, and the noble qualities of her soul. His allusions to beings in the lower walks of life in many short pieces simple though they are, yet amply show how deep rooted in his heart was this tenderness.

So proper a quality of Burns' works is humour, that we find it in almost every species of composition he has written.

United with the highest powers of imagination it constitutes the famous *Death and Dr. Hornbrook*. An acquaintance of the poet's having taken an opportunity of displaying an extensive knowledge of medical science, the satirical genius of Burns immediately gave to the public the above named poem. Burns is returning home in the evening, when a grotesque being with a scythe arrests him on the way, and a conversation ensues in which the latter informs him that he is the great Destroyer, but has been injured in business by Dr. Hornbrook whose dispensing of drugs is so effective and kills off so many people that his business is hardly worthy of attention. The interview is extremely satirical and highly amusing.

His *Address to the Deil* is another example of this kind of poetry, "Auld Nickie Ben" is addressed in a familiar but apprehensive strain, and reproached with being the father of all the ills and woes with which the earth has been afflicted, commencing with the Deil's action in the Garden of Eden.

"Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog!
You came to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue
(Black be you fa!)
And gi'd the infant world a shog,
Maist ruin'd a'."

Burns' satirical lash was applied to men in all stations and frequently, not even the clerical cloth protecting the object of the poet's disfavor. An unseemly wrangle between preachers of the gospel, brought forth the *Twa Herds*, the first poem that really merited for Burns public applause. This was followed by two others, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, and the *Holy Fair*, in the latter of which our attention is thus attracted to a reverend expounder:

"Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin' an' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
His stamplin' an' he's jumpin'!
His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!"

Even the dead in their graves the poet is unwilling to leave quiet, the number of epitaphs he has written affording a plenteous store of satire, though unfortunately too often gross and altogether improper:

"Here lies John Bushby, honest man,
Cheat him, devil, if you can."