

"Carries them here and there; jumping o'er times; Turning the accomplishment of many years, Into an hour glass."

"The English stage might be considered equally without rule and without model," writes Scott, "when Shakspeare arose. The effect of the genius of an individual upon the taste of a nation, is mighty; but that genius, in its turn, is formed according to the opinions prevalent at the period when it comes into existence. Such was the case with Shakspeare. Had he received an education more extensive, and possessed a taste refined by the classical models, it is probable that he also, in admiration of the ancient drama, might have mistaken the form for the essence, and subscribed to those rules which had produced such master pieces of art. Fortunately for the full exertion of a genius, as comprehensive and versatile as intense and powerful, Shakspeare had no access to any models of which the commanding merit might have controlled and limited his own exertions. He followed the path which a nameless crowd of obscure writers had trodden before him; but he moved in it with the grace and majestic step of a being of a superior order; and vindicated for ever the British theatre from a pedantic restriction to classical rule. Nothing went before Shakspeare which in any respect was fit to fix and stamp the character of a national drama; and certainly no one will succeed him capable of establishing, by mere authority, a form more restricted than that which Shakspeare used." The celebrated critic, Jeffrey, observes of that remarkable man, Sir Walter Scott, that, "even in his errors there are traces of a powerful genius." With a mind as versatile and creative as that of Shakspeare, Scott, by an extraordinary force of nature, power of thought, and indefatigable study, amassed to himself such stores of knowledge as we cannot regard without amazement as having been acquired by any one man in the compass of the longest life. As a philosopher, historian, poet, and novelist the fame of "The great unknown," is equally imperishable. Time, in his ceaseless course, may consign the royalty of sovereigns to dark oblivion; "the race of yore who danced our infancy upon their knee," may be blotted from our remembrance; and nations may cease to exist; but the name of Scott will never die. A learned reviewer has truly remarked that "never has the analogy between poetry and painting been more strikingly exemplified than the writings of Scott. He sees every thing with a painter's eye. Whatever he represents has a character of individuality, and is drawn with an accuracy and minuteness of discrimination, which we are not accustomed to expect from verbal description. Much of this, no doubt, is the result of genius; for there is a quick and comprehensive power of discernment, an intensity and keenness of observation, an almost intuitive

glance, which nature alone can give, and by means of which her favourites are enabled to discover characteristic differences, where the eye of dulness sees nothing but uniformity." Burns was a genius; and despite the pedantry and perverseness of those whom the bard himself styles, "cut throat bandits in the path of fame," a great one too. Burns may be well termed "Fancy's pleasing son;" and it may be said of him, what was observed of Ossian, that, "he did not write to please readers and critics. He sung from the love of poetry and song. His poetry, more perhaps than that of any other writer, deserves to be styled 'the poetry of the heart.' It is a heart penetrated with sublime and tender passions; a heart that glows and kindles the fancy; a heart that is full, and pours itself forth; and, under this poetic inspiration, giving vent to his genius, no wonder we should so often hear and acknowledge in his strains the powerful and ever-pleasing voice of nature—

"—*Arte natura potentior omni—*
Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo."

How simple is the poet's description of himself! While he invokes, "a spark o' nature's fire," he despises "your jargon o' your schools."

I am na poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter.
Whene'er my muse does on me glance
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, how can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly *verse frae prose*
'To mak' a sang?'
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me a spark o' nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I trudge thro' dub an' mire
At plough or cart,
My muse tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

It is impossible to reflect on those extraordinary instances of genius without being raised into a con-