He took the book and pencils from her, as she rose from her chair and gave him her place, and with a few strong and rapid strokes finished the sketch.

"After all," she said to herself, with hearty appreciation, "men do have the advantage of girls. He bothered me dreadfully, and I did not bother him in the least. And yet I stood as near to him as he did to me."

Mrs. Belding came in a moment later. She was in high spirits. They had had a good meeting — had converted a Jew, she thought. She admired the sketch very much; hoped Alice had been no trouble to Farnham. He walked home with the ladies, and afterward smoked a cigar with great deliberation under the limes.

Mrs. Belding asked Alice how they had got on.

"He did not eat you, you see. You must get out of your ideas of men, especially men of Arthur Farnham's age. He never thinks of you. He is old enough to be your father."

Alice kissed her mother and went to her own room, calculating on the way the difference between her age and Captain Farnham's.

(To be continued.)

A BURNS PILGRIMAGE.

A SHINING-BEACHED crescent of country facing to the sunset, and rising higher and higher to the east till it becomes mountain, is the county of Ayrshire, fair and famous among the southern Scotch Highlands. To a sixty-mile measure by air, between its north and south promontories, it stretches a curving coast of ninety; and when Robert Burns strolled over its breezy uplands, he saw always beautiful and mysterious silver lines of land thrusting themselves out into the mists of the sea, pointing to far-off island peaks, seeming sometimes to bridge and sometimes to wall vistas ending only in sky. These lines are as beautiful, elusive, and luring now as then, and in the inalienable loyalty of nature bear testimony to-day to their lover.

This is the greatest crown of the hero and the poet. Other great men hold fame by failing records which moth and fire destroy. The places that knew them know them no more when they are dead. Marble and canvas and parchment league in vain to keep green his memory who did not love and consecrate by his life-blood, in fight or in song, the soil where he trod. But for him who has done this,— who fought well, sang well,— the morning cloud, and the wild rose, and broken blades of grass under men's feet, become immortal witnesses; so imperishable, after all, are what we are in the habit of calling the "perishable things of this earth."

More than two hundred years ago, when the followers and holders of the different baronies of Ayrshire compared respective dignities and values, they made a proverb which ran:

"Carrick for a man; Kyle for a coo;
Cunningham for butter and cheese; Galloway for woo."

Before the nineteenth century set in, the proverb should have been changed, for Kyle is the land through which "Bonny Doon" and Irvine Water run; and there has been never a man in all Carrick of whom Carrick can be proud, as is Kyle of Robert Burns. It has been said that a copy of his poems lies on every Scotch cottager's shelf, by the side of the Bible. This is probably not very far from the truth. Certain it is, that in the villages where he dwelt there seems to be no man, no child, who does not apparently know every detail of the life he lived there, nearly a hundred years ago.

"Will ye be drivin' over to Tarbolton in the morning?" said the pretty young vice-landlady of the King's Arms at Ayr, when I wrote my name in her visitors' book late one Saturday night.

"What made you think of that?" I asked, amused.

"And did ye not come on account o' Burns?" she replied. "There's been a many from your country here by reason of him this summer. I think you love him in America a'most as well as we do oursel's. It's vary seldom the English come to see anythin' aboot him. They've so many poets o' their own, I suppose, is the reason o' their not thinkin' more o' Burns."

All that there was unflattering in this speech I forgave by reason of the girl's sweet low voice, pretty gray eyes, and gentle, refined hospitality. She might have been the daughter of some country gentleman, welcoming a guest to the house. And she took as much interest in making all the arrangements for my drive to Tarbolton the next morning as if it had been a pleasure excursion for herself. It is but a dull life she leads, helping her widowed mother keep the King's Arms — dull, and unprofitable too, I fear, for it takes four men-servants and seven women to keep up the house, and I saw no

symptom of any coming or going of customers in it. A stillness as of a church on week-days reigned throughout the establishment. "At the races and when the yeomanry come," she said, there was something to do; but "in the winter nothing, except at the times of the county balls. You know, ma'am, we've many county families here," she remarked with gentle pride, "and they all stop with us."

There is a compensation to the lower orders of a society where rank and castes are fixed, which does not readily occur at first sight to the democratic mind naturally rebelling against such defined distinctions. It is very much to be questioned whether, in a republic, the people who find themselves temporarily lower down in the social scale than they like to be or expect to stay, feel, in their consciousness of the possibility of rising, half so much pride or satisfying pleasure as do the lower classes in England, for instance, in their relations with those whom they serve, whose dignity they seem to share by ministering to it.

The way from Ayr to Tarbolton must be greatly changed since the day when the sorrowful Burns family trod it, going from the Mount Oliphant farm to that of Lochlea. Now it is for miles a smooth road, on which horses' hoofs ring merrily, and neat little stone houses, with pretty yards, line it on both sides for some distance. The ground rises almost immediately, so that the dwellers in these little suburban houses get fine off-looks seaward and a wholesome breeze in at their windows. The houses are built joined by twos, with a yard in common. They have three rooms besides the kitchen, and they rent for twenty-five pounds a year; so no industrious man of Ayr need be badly lodged. Where the houses leave off, hedges begin—thorn and beech, untrimmed and luxuriant, with great outbursts of white honeysuckle and sweet-brier at intervals. As far as the eye could see were waving fields of wheat, oats, and "rye-grass," which last being just ripe was of a glorious red color. The wheat-fields were rich and full, sixty bushels to the acre. Oats, which do not take so kindly to the soil and air, produce sometimes only forty-eight.

Burns was but sixteen when his father moved from Mount Oliphant to the Lochlea farm, in the parish of Tarbolton. It was in Tarbolton that he first went to dancing-school, joined the Freemasons, and organized the club which, no doubt, cost him dear, "The Bachelors of Tarbolton." In the beginning, this club consisted only of five members besides Burns and his brother; afterward it was enlarged to sixteen. Burns drew up the rules, and the last one—the tenth—is worth remembering, as an unconscious defining on his part of his ideal of human life:

> "Every man proper for a member of this society must have a friendly, honest, open heart, above everything dirty or mean, and must be a professed lover of one or more of the sex. The proper person for this society is a cheerful, honest-hearted lad, who, if he has a friend that is true, and a mistress that is kind, and as much wealth as genteelly to make both ends meet, is just as happy as this world can make him."

Walking to-day through the narrow streets of Tarbolton, it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of such rollicking good cheer having made abiding-place there. It is a close, packed town, the houses of stone or white plaster,—many of them low, squalid, with thatched roofs and walls awry; those that are not squalid are grim. The streets are winding and tangled; the people look poor and dull. As I drove up to the "Crown Inn," the place where the Tarbolton Freemasons meet now, and where some of the relics of Burns's Freemason days are kept, the "first bells" were ringing in the belfry of the old church opposite, and the landlord of the inn replied with a look of great embarrassment to my request to see the Burns relics:

"It's the Sabbath, mem."

Then he stood still, scratching his head for a few moments, and then set off, at full run, down the street without another word.

"He's gone to the head Mason," explained the landlady. "It takes three to open the chest. I think ye'll na see it the day," and she turned on her heel with a frown and left me.

"They make much account o' the Sabbath in this country," said my driver. "Another day ye'd do better."

Thinking of Burns's lines to the "Unco Guid," I strolled over into the church-yard opposite, to await the landlord's return. The bell-ringer had come down, and followed me curiously about among the graves. One very old stone had carved upon it two high-top boots; under these, two low shoes; below these, two kneeling figures, a man and a woman, cut in high relief; no inscription of any sort.

"What can it mean?" I asked.

The bell-ringer could not tell; it was so old nobody knew anything about it. His mother, now ninety years of age, remembered seeing it when she was a child, and it looked just as old then as now.

"There's a many strange things in this grave-yard," said he; and then he led me to a corner where, inclosed by swinging chains and stone posts, was a carefully kept square of green turf, on which lay a granite slab. "Every year comes the money to pay for

keeping that grass green," he said, "and no name to it. It's been going on that way for fifty years."

The stone wall around the grave-yard was dilapidated and in parts was falling down.

"I suppose this old wall was here in Burns's time," I said.

"Ay, yes," said the bell-ringer, and pointing to a low, thatched cottage just outside it, "and yon shop—many's the time he's been in it playin' his tricks."

The landlord of the inn now came running up, with profuse apologies for the ill success of his mission. He had been to the head Mason, hoping he would come over and assist in the opening of the chest, in which were kept a Mason's apron worn by Burns, some jewels of his, and a book of minutes kept by him. But "bein' 's it's the Sabbath," and "he's sick in bed," and it was "against the rules to open the regalia chest unless three Masons were present," the kindly landlord, piling up reason after reason, irrespective of their consistency with each other, went on to explain that it would be impossible; but I might see the chair in which Burns always sat. This was a huge oaken chair, black with age, and furrowed with names cut deep in the wood. It was shaped and proportioned like a child's high chair, and had precisely such a rest for the feet as is put on children's high chairs. To this day the Grand Mason sits in it at their meetings, and will so long as the St. James Lodge exists.

"They've been offered hundreds of pounds for that chair, mem, plain as it is. You'd not think it; but there's no money'd buy it from the lodge," said the landlord.

The old club-house where the jolly "Bachelors of Tarbolton" met in Burns's day is a low, two-roomed, thatched cottage, half in ruins. The room where the bachelors smoked, drank, and sang is now little more than a cellar filled with rubbish and filth,—nothing left but the old fire-place to show that it was ever inhabited. In the other half of the cottage lives a laborer's family,—father, mother, and a young child: their one room, with its bed built into the wall, and their few delf dishes on the dresser, is probably much like the room in which Burns first opened his wondrous eyes. The man was lying on the floor playing with his baby. At the name of Burns, he sprang up with a hearty "Ay, weel," and ran out in his blue stocking feet to show me the cellar, of which, it was plainly to be seen, he was far prouder than of his more comfortable side of the house. The name by which the inn was called in Burns's day he did not know. But "He's a Mason over there: he'll know," he cried; and, before I could prevent him, he had darted, still shoeless, across the road, and asked the question of a yet poorer laborer, who was taking his Sunday on his door-sill with two bairns between his knees. He had heard, but had "forgotten." "Feyther'll know," said the wife, coming forward with the third bairn, a baby, in her arms. "I'll rin an ask feyther." The old man tottered out and gazed with a vacant, feeble look at me, while he replied impatiently to his daughter: "Manson's Inn, 'twas called; ye've heard it times eneuch."

"I dare say you always drink Burns's health at the lodge when you meet," I said to the laborer.

"Ay, ay, his health's ay dronkit," he said, with a coarse laugh, "weel dronkit."

A few rods to the east, and down the very road Burns was wont to come and go between Lochlea and Tarbolton, still stands "Willie's mill,"—cottage, and mill, and shed, and barn, all in one low, long, oddly joined (or jointed) building of irregular heights, like a telescope pulled out to its full length; a little brook and a bit of gay garden in front. In the winter the mill goes by water from a lake near by; in the summer by steam—a great change since the night when Burns went

"Todlin' down on Willie's mill,"

and though he thought he

"Was na fou, but just had plenty,"

could not for the life of him make out to count the moon's horns.

"To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel';—
But whether she had three or four
I could na tell."

To go by road from Tarbolton to Lochlea farm is to go around three sides of a square, east, north, and then west again. Certain it is that Burns never took so many superfluous steps to do it; and as I drove along I found absorbing interest in looking at the little cluster of farm buildings beyond the fields, and wondering where the light-footed boy used to "cut across" for his nightly frolics. There is nothing left at Lochlea now of him or his; nothing save a worn lintel of the old barn. The buildings are all new, and there is a look of thrift and comfort about the place, quite unlike the face it must have worn in 1784. The house stands on a rising knoll, and from the windows looking westward and seaward there must be a fine horizon and headlands to be seen at sunset. Nobody was at home on this day except a barefooted servant-girl, who was keeping the house while the family were at church. She came to the

door with an expression of almost alarm, at the unwonted apparition of a carriage driving down the lane on Sunday, and a stranger coming in the name of a man dead so long ago. She evidently knew nothing of Burns except that, for some reason connected with him, the old lintel was kept and shown. She was impatient of the interruption of her Sabbath, and all the while she was speaking kept her finger in her book—"Footprints of Jesus"—at the place where she had been reading, and glanced at it continually, as if it were an amulet which could keep her from harm through the worldly interlude into which she had been forced.

"It's a pity ye came on the Sabba-day," remarked the driver again, as we drove away from Lochlea. "The country people 'ull not speak on the Sabbath." It would have been useless to try to explain to him that the spectacle of this Scottish "Sabba-day" was of itself of almost as much interest as the sight of the fields in which Robert Burns had walked and worked.

The farm of Mossgiel, which was Burns's next home after Lochlea, is about three miles from Tarbolton, and only one from Mauchline. Burns and his brother Gilbert had become tenants of it a few months before their father's death in 1784. It was stocked by the joint savings of the whole family; and each member of the family was allowed fair rates of wages for all labor performed on it. The allowance to Gilbert and to Robert was seven pounds a year each, and it is said that, during the four years that Robert lived there, his expenses never exceeded this pittance.

To Mossgiel he came with new resolutions. He had already reaped some bitter harvests from the wild oats sown during the seven years at Lochlea. He was no longer a boy. He says of himself at this time:

"I entered on Mossgiel with a full resolution, 'Come, go; I will be wise.'"

Driving up the long straight road which leads from the highway to the hawthorn fortress in which the Mossgiel farm buildings stand, one recalls these words, and fancies the brave young fellow striding up the field, full of new hope and determination. The hawthorn hedge to-day is much higher than a man's head, and completely screens from the road the farm-house and the outbuildings behind it. The present tenants have lived on the farm forty years, the first twenty in the same house which stood there when Robert and Gilbert Burns pledged themselves to pay one hundred and twenty pounds a year for the farm. When the house was rebuilt, twenty years ago, the old walls were used in part, and the windows were left in the same places; but, instead of the low, sloping-roofed, garret-like rooms upstairs, where Burns used to sleep and write, are now comfortable chambers of modern fashion.

"Were you not sorry to have the old house pulled down?" I said to the comely, aged farm-wife.

"'Deed, then, I was very prood," she replied; "it had na 'coomodation, and the thatch took in the rain an' all that was vile."

In the best room of the house hung two autograph letters of Burns's plainly framed: one, his letter to the lass of ——, asking her permission to print the poem he had addressed to her; the other, the original copy of the poem. These were "presented to the house by the brother of the lady," the woman said, and they had "a great value now." But when she first came to this part of the country she was "vary soorpreezed" to find the great esteem in which Burns's poetry was held. In the North, where she had lived, he was "na thocht weel of." Her father had never permitted a copy of his poems to be brought inside his doors, and had forbidden his children to read a word of them. "He thocht them too rough for us to read." It was not until she was a woman grown, and living in her husband's house, that she had ever ventured to disobey this parental command, and she did not now herself think they were "fitted for the reading of young pairsons." "There was much more discreet writin's," she said severely; an opinion which there was no gainsaying.

There is a broader horizon to be seen, looking westward from the fields of Mossgiel, than from those of Lochlea; the lands are higher and nobler of contour. Superb trees, which must have been superb a century ago, stand to right and left of the house,—beeches, ashes, oaks, and planes. The fields which are in sight from the house are now all grass-grown. I have heard that, twenty years ago, it was confidently told in which field Burns, plowing late in the autumn, broke into the little nest of the

> "Wee sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,"

whom every song-lover has known and pitied from that day to this, and whose misfortunes have answered ever since for a mint of re-assuring comparison to all of us, remembering that "the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men" must "gang aft aglee"; and the other field, also near by, where grew that mountain daisy,

> "Wee, modest, crimson-tippéd flower,"

whose name is immortal in our hearts as that of Burns. This farm-wife, however, knew nothing about them. The stern air of the

north country in which she had been reared still chilled somewhat her thoughts of Burns and her interest in his inalienable bond on the fields of her farm.

It is but a mile from Mossgiel's gate to Mauchline, the town of "bonnie Jean" and Nansie Tinnoch and Gavin Hamilton. Surely a strange-assorted trio to be comrades of one man. Their houses are still standing: Jean's, a tumble-down, thatched cottage, looking out-of-place enough between the smart, new houses built on either side of it; Gavin Hamilton's, a dark, picturesque stone house, joined to the ruins of Mauchline Castle; and Nansie Tinnoch's, a black and dilapidated hovel, into which it takes courage to go. It stands snugged up against the wall of the old grave-yard, part below it and part above it — a situation as unwholesome as horrible; a door at the head of the narrow stair-way opening out into the grave-yard itself, and the slanting old stones leering in at the smoky windows by crowds. In the days when all the "country side" met at the open air services in this church-yard,

"Some thinkin' on their sins, an' some on their claes,"

no doubt Nansie Tinnoch's was a lighter, whiter, cheerier place than now; else the "Jolly Beggars" would never have gone there to tipple.

It was the nooning between services when I reached Mauchline, and church-goers from a distance were taking their beer and crackers decorously in the parlor of the inn. As the intermission was only three-quarters of an hour long, this much of involuntary dissipation was plainly forced on them; but they did not abuse it, I can testify. They partook of it as of a Passover: young men and maidens as sober and silent as if they had been doing solemn penance for sins, as indeed, from one point of view, it might perhaps be truly said that they were.

By dint of some difficult advances I drew one or two of them into conversation about the Mossgiel farm and the disappearance of the old relics of Burns's life in that region. It was a great pity, I said, that the Mossgiel house had to be taken down.

"'Deed, then, it was na such thing," spoke up an elderly man. "It was na moor than a wreck, an' I'm the mon who did it."

He was the landlord of the farm, it appeared. He seemed much amused at hearing of the farm-wife's disapproval of Burns's verses and of her father's prohibition of them.

"He was a heepocritical auld Radical, if ye knows him," he said, angrily. "I hope we'll never have ony worse readin' in our country than Robert Bur-r-r-ns." The prolongation of the "r" in the Scotch way of saying "Burns" is something that cannot be typographically represented. It is hardly a rolling of the "r," nor a multiplication of it; but it takes up a great deal more time and room than any one "r" ought to.

After the landlady had shown to me the big hall where the Freemasons meet, "the Burns' Mother Lodge," and the chest which used to hold the regalia at Tarbolton in Burns's day, and the little bedroom in which Stedman and Hawthorne had slept, — coming also to look at Burns's fields, — she told me in a mysterious whisper that there was a nephew of Burns's in the kitchen, who would like to see me, if I would like to see him. "A nephew of Burns's!" I exclaimed. "Weel, not exactly," she explained, "but he's a grand-nephew of Burns's wife; she thet was Jean, ye know," with a deprecating nod and lowering of the eyelid. So fast is the clutch of a Scotch neighborhood on its traditions of offended virtue, even to-day poor Jean cannot be mentioned by a landlady in her native town without a small stone cast backward at her.

Jean's grand-nephew proved to be a middle-aged man; not "ower weel-to-do," the landlady said. He had tried his hand at doctoring both in Scotland and America,— a rolling stone evidently, with too much of the old fiery blood of his race in his veins for quiet and decorous prosperity. He, too, seemed only half willing to speak of poor "Jean"—his kinswoman; but he led me to the cottage where she had lived, and pointed out the window from which she was said to have leaned out many a night listening to the songs of her lover when he sauntered across from the Whiteford Arms, Johnny Pigeon's house, just opposite, "not fou, but having had plenty" to make him merry and affectionate. Johnny Pigeon's is a "coöperative store" now; and new buildings have altered the line of the street so that "Rob Mossgiel" would lose his way there to-day.

The room in which Burns and his "bonnie Jean" were at last married in Gavin Hamilton's house, by Hamilton himself, is still shown to visitors. This room I had a greater desire to see than any other spot in Mauchline. "We can but try," said the grand-nephew; "but it's a small chance of seeing it the Sabba."

The sole tenant of this house now is the widow of a son of Gavin Hamilton's. Old, blind, and nearly helpless, she lives there alone with one family servant, nearly as old as herself, but hale, hearty, and rosy as only an old Scotch woman can be. This servant opened the door for us, her cap, calico gown,

and white apron all alike bristling with starch, religion, and pride of family. Her mistress would not allow the room to be shown on the Sabbath, she said. Imploringly it was explained to her that no other day had been possible, and that I had come "all the way from America."

"Ye did na do weel to tak the Sabbath," was her only reply, as she turned on her heel to go with the fruitless appeal to her mistress. Returning, she said curtly,

"She winna shew it on the Sabbath."

At this crisis my companion, who had kept in the background, stepped forward with:

"You don't know me, Elspie, do ye?"

"No, sir," she said stiffly, bracing herself up mentally against any further heathenish entreaties.

"What, not know —— ——?" repeating his name in full.

Presto! as if changed by a magician's trick, the stiff, starched, religious, haughty family retainer disappeared, and there stood, in the same cap, gown, and apron, a limber, rollicking, well-nigh improper old woman, who poked the grand-nephew in the ribs, clapped him on the shoulder, chuckling, ejaculating, questioning, wondering, laughing, all in a breath. Reminiscence on reminiscence followed between them.

"An' do ye mind Barry, too?" she asked. (This was an old man-servant of the house.) "An' many's the quirrel, an' many's the gree we had."

Barry was dead. Dead also was the beautiful girl whom my companion remembered well — dead of a broken heart before she was eighteen years of age. Forbidden to marry her lover, she had drooped and pined. He went to India and died. It was in a December the news of his death came, just at Christmas time, and in the next September she followed him.

"Ay, but she was a bonnie lass," said Elspie, the tears rolling down her face.

"I dare say she (nodding his head toward the house) — I dare say she's shed many a salt tear over it, but naebody 'll ever know she repentit," quoth the grand-nephew.

"Ay, ay," said Elspie. "There's a wee bit closet in every hoos."

"'Twas in that room she died," pointing up to a small ivy-shaded window. "I closed her eyes wi' my hands. She's never spoken of. She was a bonnie lass."

The picture of this desolate old woman, sitting there alone in her house, helpless, blind, waiting for death to come and take her to meet that daughter whose young heart was broken by her cruel will, seemed to shadow the very sunshine on the greensward in the court. The broken arches and crumbling walls of the old stone abbey ruins seemed, in their ivy mantles, warmly, joyously venerable by contrast with the silent, ruined, stony old human heart still beating in the house they joined.

In spite of my protestations, the grand-nephew urged Elspie to show us the room. She evidently now longed to do it; but, casting a fearful glance over her shoulder, said:

"I daur na! I daur na! I could na open the door that she'd na hear't," and she seemed much relieved when I made haste to assure her that on no account would I go into the room without her mistress's permission. So we came away, leaving her gazing regretfully after us, with her hand shading her eyes from the sun.

Going back from Mauchline to Ayr, I took another road, farther to the south than the one leading through Tarbolton, and much more beautiful, with superb beech trees meeting overhead, and gentlemen's country seats, with great parks, on either hand.

On this road is Montgomerie Castle, walled in by grand woods, which Burns knew so well.

> "Ye banks and braes and streams around
> The castle o' Montgomery,
> Green be your woods and fair your flowers,
> Your waters never drumlie!
> There simmer first unfauld her robes,
> And there the langest tarry,
> For there I took the last fareweel
> O' my sweet Highland Mary."

Sitting in the sun, on a bench outside the gate-house, with his little granddaughter on his lap, was the white-haired gate-keeper. As the horses' heads turned toward the gate, he arose slowly, without a change of muscle, and set down the child, who accepted her altered situation also without a change of muscle in her sober little face.

"Is it allowed to go in?" asked the driver.

"Eh — ye'll not be calling at the hoos?" asked the old man, surprised.

"No, I'm a stranger; but I like to see all the fine places in your country," I replied.

"I've no orders," looking at the driver reflectively; "I've no orders — but — a decent pairson" — looking again scrutinizingly at me, — "I think there can be no hairm," and he opened the gate.

Grand trees, rolling tracts of velvety turf, an ugly huge house of weather-beaten stone, with white pillars in front; conservatories joining the wings to the center; no attempt at decorative landscape art; grass, trees, distances,— these were all; but there were miles of these. It was at least a mile's drive to the other entrance to the estate, where the old

stone gate-way house was in ruin. I fancy that it was better kept up in the days before an Earl of Eglinstoune sold it to a plain Mr. Patterson.

At another fine estate nearer Ayr, where an old woman was gate-keeper and also had "no orders" about admitting strangers, the magic word "America" threw open the gates with a sweep, and bent the old dame's knees in a courtesy which made her look three times as broad as she was long. This estate had been "always in the Oswald family, an' is likely always to be, please God," said the loyal creature, with another courtesy at the mention, unconsciously devout as that of the Catholic when he crosses himself. "An' it's a fine country ye've yersel' in America," she added, politely. The Oswald estate has acres of beautiful curving uplands, all green and smooth and open; a lack of woods near the house, but great banks of sunshine instead, make a beauty all their own; and the Ayr Water running through the grounds, and bridged gracefully here and there, is a possession to be coveted. From all points is a clear sight of sea, and headlands north and south,—Ayr harbor lying like a crescent, now silver, now gold, afloat between blue sky and green shore, and dusky gray roof-lines of the town.

The most precious thing in all the parish of Ayr is the cottage in which Burns was born. It is about two miles south from the center of the town, on the shore of "Bonnie Doon," and near Alloway Kirk. You cannot go thither from Ayr over any road except the one Tam o' Shanter took: it has been straightened a little since his day, but many a rod of it is the same that Maggie trod; and Alloway Kirk is as ghostly a place now, even at high noon, as can be found "frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's." There is nothing left of it but the walls and the gable, in which the ancient bell still hangs, intensifying the silence by its suggestion of echoes long dead.

The Burns cottage is now a sort of inn, kept by an Englishman whose fortunes would make a tale by themselves. He fought at Balaklava and in our civil war; and side by side on the walls of his dining-room hang, framed, his two commissions in the Pennsylvania Volunteers and the menu of the Balaklava Banquet, given in London to the brave fellows that came home alive after that fight. He does not love the Scotch people.

"I would not give the Americans for all the Scotch ever born," he says, and is disposed to speak with unjust satire of their apparent love of Burns, which he ascribes to a perception of his recognition by the rest of the world and a shamefaced desire not to seem to be behindhand in paying tribute to him.

"Oh, they let on to think much of him," he said. "It's money in their pockets."

The room in which Burns was born is still unaltered, except in having one more window let in. Originally, it had but one small square window of four panes. The bed is like the beds in all the old Scotch cottages, built into the wall, similar to those still seen in Norway. Stifling enough the air surely must have been in the cupboard bed in which the "waly boy" was born.

> "The gossip keekit in his loof;
> Quo' scho, 'Wha lives will see the proof,—
> This waly boy will be nae coof;
> I think we'll ca' him Robin.' "

Before he was many days old, or, as some traditions have it, on the very night he was born, a violent storm "tirled" away part of the roof of the poor little "clay biggin," and mother and babe were forced to seek shelter in a neighbor's cottage. Misfortune and Robin early joined company and never parted. The little bedroom is now the show-room of the inn, and is filled with tables piled with the well-known boxes, pincushions, baskets, paper-cutters, etc., made from sycamore wood grown on the banks of Doon and Ayr. These articles are all stamped with some pictures of scenery associated with Burns or with quotations from his verses. It is impossible to see all this money-making without thinking what a delicious, rollicking bit of verse Burns would write about it himself if he came back to-day. There are those who offer for sale articles said to be made out of the old timbers of the Mossgiel house; but the Balaklava Englishman scouts all that as the most barefaced imposture. "There wasn't an inch of that timber," he says,—and he was there when the house was taken down—"which wasn't worm-eaten and rotten; not enough to make a knife-handle of!"

One feels disposed to pass over in silence the "Burns Monument," which was built in 1820, at a cost of over three thousand pounds; "a circular temple supported by nine fluted Corinthian columns emblematic of the nine muses," say the guide-books. It stands in a garden overlooking the Doon, and is a painful sight. But in a room in the base of it are to be seen some relics at which no Burns lover can look unmoved: the Bibles he gave to Highland Mary, the ring with which he wedded Jean (taken off after her death), and two rings containing some of his hair.

It is but a few steps from this monument down to a spot on the "banks o' bonnie Doon," from which is a fine view of the "auld brig."

This shining, silent water, and the overhanging, silent trees, and the silent bell in the gable of Alloway Kirk, speak more eloquently of Burns than do all nine of the Corinthian muse-dedicated pillars in his monument.

So do the twa brigs of Ayr, which still stand at the foot of High street, silently recriminating each other as of old.

> "I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye'r nae sheep-shank
> When ye are streekit o'er frae bank to bank,"

sneers the Auld; and

> "Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,
> Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet,
> Your ruined, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
> Compare wi' bonny brigs o' modern time?"

retorts the New; and "the sprites that owre the brigs of Ayr preside" never interrupt the quarrel. Spite of all its boasting, however, the new bridge cracked badly two years ago, and had to be taken down and entirely rebuilt.

The dingy little inn where

> "Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the ills o' life victorious,"

is still called by his name, and still preserves, as its chief claims to distinction, the big wooden mug out of which Tam drank and the chair in which he so many market nights

> "gat planted unco richt."

The chair is of oak, well-nigh black as ebony, and furrowed thick with names cut upon it. The smart young landlady who now keeps the house commented severely on this desecration of it, and said that for some years the house had been "keepit" by a widow, who was "in no sense up to the beesiness," and "a' people did as they pleased in the hoos in her day." The mug has a metal rim and base, but spite of these it has needed to be clasped together again by three ribs of cane, riveted on. "Money couldn't buy it," the landlady said. It belongs to the house, is mentioned always in the terms of lease, and the house has changed hands but four times since Tam's day.

In a tiny stone cottage in the southern suburbs of Ayr live two nieces of Burns, daughters of his youngest sister Isabella. They are vivacious still, and eagerly alive to all that goes on in the world, though they must be well on in the seventies. The day I called they had "just received a newspaper from America," they said. "Perhaps I knew it. It was called 'The Democrat.'" As I was not able to identify it by that description, the younger sister made haste to fetch it. It proved to be a paper printed in Madison, Iowa. The old ladies were much interested in the approaching American election, had read all they could find about General Garfield, and were much impressed by the wise reticence of General Grant. "He must be a vary cautious man; disna say enough to please people," they said, with sagacious nods of approbation. They remembered Burns's wife very well, had visited her when she was living, a widow, at Dumfries, and told with glee a story which they said she herself used to narrate, with great relish, of a peddler lad who, often coming to the house with wares to sell in the kitchen, finally expressed to the servant his deep desire to see Mrs. Burns. She accordingly told him to wait, and her mistress would no doubt before long come into the room. Mrs. Burns came in, stood for some moments talking with the lad, bought some trifle of him, and went away. Still he sat waiting. At last the servant asked why he did not go. He replied that she had promised he should see Mrs. Burns.

"But ye have seen her. That was she," said the servant.

"Eh, eh?" said the lad. "Na! never tell me now that was 'bonnie Jean'!"

Burns's mother, too, their grandmother, they recollected well, and had often heard her tell of the time when the family lived at Lochlea, and Robert, spending his evenings at the Tarbolton merry-makings with the Bachelors' Club or the Masons, used to come home late in the night, and she used to sit up to let him in. These doings sorely displeased the father, and at last he said grimly, one night, that he would sit up to open the door for Robert. Trembling with fear, the mother went to bed and did not close her eyes, listening apprehensively for the angry meeting between father and son. She heard the door open, the old man's stern tone, Robert's gay reply, and in a twinkling more the two were sitting together over the fire, the father splitting his sides with half unwilling laughter at the boy's inimitable descriptions and mimicry of the scenes he had left. Nearly two hours they sat there in this way, the mother all the while cramming the bed-clothes into her mouth, lest her own laughter should remind her husband how poorly he was carrying out his threats. After that night "Rob" came home at what hour he pleased, and there was nothing more heard of his father's sitting up to reprove him.

They believed that Burns's intemperate habits had been greatly exaggerated. Their mother was a woman twenty-five years old and the mother of three children when he died, and she had never once seen him the "waur for liquor." "There were vary mony idle people i' the warld, an' a great deal o' talk," they said.

After his father's death, he assumed the position of the head of the house, and led in family prayers each morning, and everybody said, even the servants, that there were never such beautiful prayers heard. He was a generous soul. After he left home he never came back for a visit, however poor he might be, without bringing a present for every member of the family; always a pound of tea for his mother, "and tea was tea then," the old ladies added. To their mother he gave a copy of Thomson's "Seasons," which they still have. They have also some letters of his, two of which I read with great interest. They were to his brother and were full of good advice. In one he says:

"I intended to have given you a sheetful of counsels, but some business has prevented me. In a word, learn taciturnity. Let that be your motto. Though you had the wisdom of Newton or the wit of Swift, garrulousness would lower you in the eyes of your fellow-creatures."

In the other, after alluding to some village tragedy, in which great suffering had fallen on a woman, he says:

"Women have a kind of steady sufferance which qualifies them to endure much beyond the common run of men; but perhaps part of that fortitude is owing to their short-sightedness, as they are by no means famous for seeing remote consequences in their real importance."

The old ladies said that their mother had liked "Jean" on the whole, though "at first not so weel, on account of the connection being what it was." She was kindly, cheery, "never bonny"; but had a good figure, danced well and sang well, and worshiped her husband. She was "not intellectual"; "but there's some say a poet shouldn't have an intellectual wife," one of the ingenuous old spinsters remarked, interrogatively. "At any rate, she suited him, an' it was ill speering at her after all that was said and done," the younger niece added, with real feeling in her tone. Well might she say so. If there be a touching picture in all the long list of faithful and ill-used women, it is that of "bonnie Jean"—the unwedded mother of children, the forgiving wife of a husband who betrayed others as he had betrayed her—when she took into her arms and nursed and cared for her husband's child, born of an outcast woman, and bravely answered all curious questioners with, "It's a neebor's bairn I'm bringin' up." She wrought for herself a place and an esteem of which her honest and loving humility little dreamed.

There is always something sad in seeking out the spot where a great man has died. It is like living over the days of his death and burial. The more sympathetically we have felt the spell of the scenes in which he lived his life, the more vitalized and vitalizing that life was, the more are we chilled and depressed in the presence of places on which his wearied and suffering gaze rested last. As I drove through the dingy, confused, and ugly streets of Dumfries, my chief thought was, "How Burns must have hated this place!" Looking back on it now, I have a half regret that I ever saw it, that I can recall vividly the ghastly grave-yard of St. Michael's, with its twenty-six thousand grave-stones and monuments, crowded closer than they would be in a marble-yard, ranged in rows against the walls without any pretense of association with the dust they affect to commemorate. What a ballad Burns might have written about such a show! And what would it not have been given to him to say of the "Genius of Coila finding her favorite son at the plow, and casting her mantle over him," *i. e.*, the sculptured monument, or, as the sexton called it, "Máwsolem," under which he has had the misfortune to be buried. A great Malvern bath-woman, bringing a bathing-sheet to an unwilling patient, might have been the model for the thing. It is hideous beyond description, and in a refinement of ingenuity has been made uglier still by having the spaces between the pillars filled in with glass. The severe Scotch weather, it seems, was discoloring the marble. It is a pity that the zealous guardians of its beauty did not hold it precious enough to be boarded up altogether.

The house in which Burns spent the first eighteen months of his dreary life in Dumfries is now a common tenement-house at the lower end of a poor and narrow street. As I was reading the tablet let into the wall, bearing his name, a carpenter went by, carrying his box of tools slung on his shoulder.

"He only had three rooms there," said the man, "those three up there," pointing to the windows; "two rooms and a little kitchen at the back."

The house which is usually shown to strangers as his is now the home of the master of the industrial school, and is a comfortable little building joining the school. Here Burns lived for three years; and here, in a small chamber not more than twelve by fifteen feet in size, he died on the 21st of July, 1796, sadly harassed in his last moments by anxiety about money matters and about the approaching illness of his faithful Jean.

Opening from this room is a tiny closet lighted by one window.

"They say he used to make up his poetry in here," said the servant-girl; "but I dare say it is only a supposeetion; still, it 'ud be a quiet place."

"They say there was a great lot o' papers up here when he died," she added, throwing open the narrow door of a ladder-like stairway that led up into the garret, "writin's that had been sent to him from all over the world, but nobody knew what become of them. Now that he's so much thought aboot, I wonder his widow did not keep them. But, ye know, the poor thing was just comin' to be ill; that was the last thing he wrote when he knew he was dyin', for some one to come and stay with her; and I dare say she was in such a sewither she did not know about anything."

The old stone stairs were winding and narrow—painted now, and neatly carpeted, but worn into depressions here and there by the plodding of feet. Nothing in the house, above or below, spoke to me of Burns so much as did they. I stood silent and rapt on the landing, and saw him coming wearily up, that last time; after which he went no more out forever, till he was borne in the arms of men, and laid away in St. Michael's graveyard to rest.

That night, at my lonely dinner in the King's Arms, I had the Edinburgh papers. There were in them three editorials headed with quotations from Burns's poems, and an account of the sale in Edinburgh, that week, of an autograph letter of his for ninety-four pounds!

Does he think sadly, even in heaven, how differently he might have done by himself and by Earth, if Earth had done for him then a tithe of what it does now? Does he know it? Does he care? And does he listen when, in lands he never saw, great poets sing of him in words simple and melodious as his own?

"For now he haunts his native land
As an immortal youth: his hand
Guides every plow;
He sits beside each ingle-nook,
His voice is in each rushing brook,
Each rustling bough.

"His presence haunts this room to-night,
A form of mingled mist and light
From that far coast.
Welcome beneath this roof of mine!
Welcome! this vacant chair is thine,
Dear guest and ghost!" *

* Longfellow.

H. H.

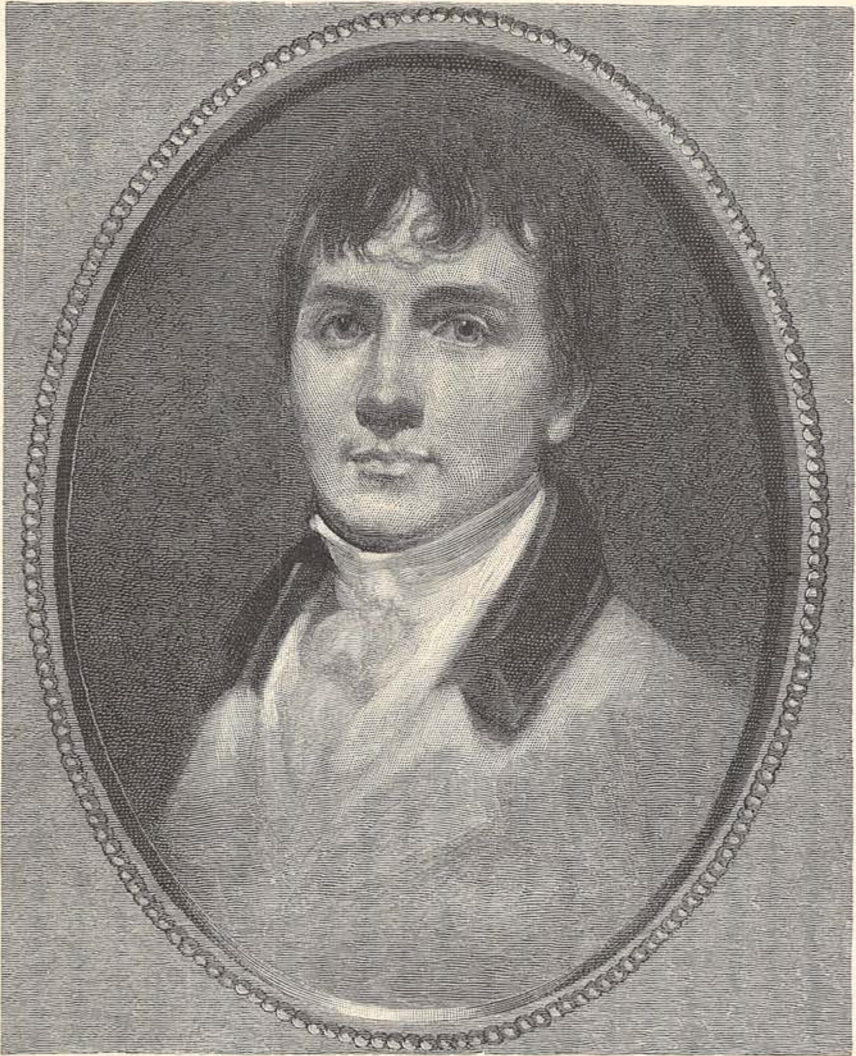
LOVE'S POWER.

If I were blind, and thou shouldst enter
E'er so softly in the room,
I should know it,
I should feel it,
Something subtle would reveal it,
And a glory round thee center
That would lighten up the gloom.
And my heart would surely guide me,
With Love's second-sight provide me,
One amid the crowd to find,
If I were blind!

If I were deaf, and thou hadst spoken
Ere thy presence I had known,
I should know it,
I should feel it,
Something subtle would reveal it,
And the seal at once be broken
By Love's liquid undertone.
Deaf to other, stranger voices,
And the world's discordant noises,—
Whisper, wheresoe'er thou art,
'Twill reach my heart!

If I were dead, and thou shouldst venture
Near the coffin where I lay,
I should know it,
I should feel it,
Something subtle would reveal it,
And no look of mildest censure
Rest upon that face of clay.
Shouldst thou kiss me, conscious flashes
Of Love's fire through Death's cold ashes
Would give back the cheek its red,
If I were dead!

Josephine Pollard.



Robert Burns