

And he snatched up the brothers nine, snatched up and them did swallow.

When Yanni heard their dismal fate, then grieved was he right sorely ;
His spear into his hand he took, and his good sword he girded,
And to Varlámi's hill he ran, and quickly he ascended.

"Come out Stoicheió ! Come, Monster, out ! and let us eat each other."

"O welcome my good supper now, and welcome my good breakfast !"

Then Yanni on the monster ran, with sword in hand uplifted ;
Nine strokes he dealt upon the heads, the nine heads of his body,
And aimed another at his paunch, and set free all his children ;
And bore them home at eventide, all living, to their mother.'

—(Vol. I., p. 62).

Resemblances to the Talmud are found in the stories of 'the Puzzled Hermit,' and 'the Stingy Woman,' and also in the division of the fowl in 'Crows' Language.'

We have left no room for more than a passing allusion to the dancing-songs, the humorous pieces and the wealth of historical tales and ballads contained in these volumes. In conclusion we can only say that, while there must be many opinions as to the views which Mr. Stuart-Glennie has advanced in what he evidently considers the most important portion of his work, there can be only one opinion as to the service which he and his coadjutor have rendered to students of folk-lore in thus opening up to them the traditional literature of Modern Greece.

W. METCALFE.

ART. V.—NEW LIGHT ON BURNS.

1. *The Life and Works of Robert Burns.* Edited by ROBERT CHAMBERS. Revised by WILLIAM WALLACE. 4 Vols. Edinburgh. 1896.
2. *The Poetry of Robert Burns.* Edited by WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY and THOMAS F. HENDERSON. 4 Vols. Edinburgh. 1896.

TO the centenary of the death of Robert Burns we owe some notable additions to Burns literature. When the descriptive illustrated catalogue of the Exhibition held in Glasgow

last summer is completed, there will be available to the student, as a direct product of the centenary, a hitherto undreamt of corpus of Burnsiana, in the best acceptation of the term. To the querulous query of the uninterested or half-interested man—‘What possible new light can be thrown on the poet, whose life and work have for a hundred years been subjected to scrutiny of unparalleled closeness?’ no answer should be required but the contents of the volumes before us. There we learn, from innumerable revisions, corrections, and fresh facts, how little of really valid labour has hitherto been spent on Burns, how neglected has been the study of his origins, and how necessary it was to put on record the best-informed estimate formed by the present generation of the life and works of Burns, and of his place in literature. Though the myth which envisages Scotland’s greatest son as a drunken gauger, uncultured, and a singer by accident, has almost disappeared from this country, gross ignorance of the truth about both his conduct and his education still remains to be sapped, as is shown by the example of the Poet-Laureate, mourning—and not to be comforted—over the blindness of Scotsmen to their hero’s faults. Inquisitiveness and the craving for novelty are ever creating new myths. Mr. Wallace has demolished a few of these concerning the poet himself, Jean Armour, and Mary Campbell. If Messrs. Henley and Henderson have evolved one of their own in the statement that Burns ‘was the satirist and singer of a parish,’ it is positively harmless in its unverisimilitude, and is not noted here in disparagement of the valuable services the editors of *The Centenary Burns* have rendered to the cause of historical truth, especially in regard to what the poet actually wrote. What new light, then, has been thrown recently on Burns? Briefly stated, this: Mr. William Wallace, editor of the new *Chambers*, besides accumulating a vast amount of notes and fresh information about the life, the poems, and the letters, has at a stroke justified the world’s refusal to dis sever the life from the works of Burns by the essay in which he exhibits the poet’s conscious moral reconstruction of his career, vindicates his conduct, not merely from the artistic but also from the ethical standpoint,

and holds him up to admiration as poet, prophet, and man, as one whose management of the business of his life, rightly regarded, is no less morally helpful to those who can understand it than his poetry has been, and is auxiliary to the progress of the human race, in manners as well as in thought. The editors of *The Centenary Burns* have set before themselves the production of a perfect text and a sufficient bibliographical history, and the investigation of the 'origins' of the poet, mainly in respect of the form of his writings, and their work as a whole redounds to the credit of their literary instinct, scholarship, and industry. In their account and collation of the available MSS. they have accomplished a task which has long awaited a competent doer, and their text will stand till—the day when all the Burns MSS. in the world are collected in one room, and submitted to the judgment of an ideal jury of experts.

For the two reasons that *The Centenary Burns* is not yet complete—only three vols. out of four having been issued—and that what is new in it cannot be properly qualified, save summarily in the space at disposal, this article must be confined mainly to an account of the new *Chambers*. Mr. Wallace's revision of the work of Robert Chambers amounts to a complete reconstruction of the whole book, save only the original plan and structure, and even that has been modified in parts. He has utilised the whole mass of Burns literature that has come into existence since Chambers's day, as well as materials and suggestions for further enquiry left by his predecessor, and has pursued many original lines of investigation bearing on the poet's character and doings, and the personalities of his friends and subjects. The value of his several contributions to knowledge will be differently assessed by different classes of people. Mr. Quiller Couch, for instance, objects to being told the local tradition of the origin of 'Mary Morrison,' while very many not unlettered persons will welcome all the details that have been gathered about the actual Mary Morrison, who is buried in Mauchliue churchyard, none the less heartily that Mr. Wallace successfully assails the myth that this 'adjutant's daughter' was the heroine of that purest

gem of song. Most students—all Scotch ones—will hold Mr. Wallace's multiplicity of detail justified—(1), by the theory of criticism which disdains no help to the understanding of the circumstances in which literature arose; and (2), by his theory of the ethical work of the biography of Burns, presented 'warts and all.'

Students of life and letters, however, will turn with greatest interest to the effort the new editor of *Chambers* has made to 'place' Burns, the man and poet, in relation to humanity and his own environment in the one regard, and in the other to his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors among the 'makers.' The ancestry of the poet is traced with a perspicacity and completeness never before attempted in Burns biography. Mr. Wallace does not put the Celtic derivation of the Burnesses altogether out of court, but he demolishes the legend of Walter Campbell of Burn-house, as 'Thrummy Cap' told it, by proving its anachronisms, and simply characterises the whole Celtic tradition as 'an attempt to account for the origin of a name in a certain district—the Mearns—a century after its first recorded occurrence there.' It is exceedingly improbable that the editor has left anything to be discovered about the Jacobitism of the poet's ancestors, of which he was not a little sentimentally vain. The genealogy on the male side is revised and corrected, the evidence for and against the famous attribution of Jacobitism to the 'forefathers,' which Gilbert, playing as it were at cross purposes, so lamely disputed, is clearly stated. For the first time, also, detailed proof is offered of the correctness of Burns's belief that he came of Covenanting stock on his mother's side; the family-tree of the Brouns in Ayrshire—springing from the Bruce's day—is exhibited with the same fidelity as that of the Burnesses of the Mearns.

Save for a number of new facts about the poet's residence in Irvine, the revised *Chambers* adds little to our knowledge of the first, comparatively pure and sober, twenty-five years of the life. When we come, however, to the Mossgiel period, the epoch of the 'Epistle to John Goldie,' 'The Twa Herds,'

etc., Mr. Wallace presents us with a lucid general statement—at once full and concise—of Burns's theological position:—

'A man of Burns's temperament, born in the middle of that [the 18th] century, was almost bound to combine rationalism in theology with a genuine religious sentiment. It is unnecessary to search very particularly in his actual theological environment for the origins of his religion. He had the same bias in reasoning—towards materialism, empiricism, "common sense,"—as most of the leading intellects of the age.'

Again, after briefly summarising the controversy between Old and New Lights, and showing that it was William Burnes himself who brought his son under the spell of the New Lights, and placing proper stress upon the effect which transference from the pastoral care of 'D'rymple mild' to that of 'Daddy' Auld must have wrought on the ardent spirit of the young poet, he proceeds:—

'It would be a mistake to try to trace any very close connection between the thought of Burns, so far as it was dogmatic, and the doctrines held by the New Light ministers who took the young farmer by the hand, and eulogised the satires which he wrote for their side. The doctrines preached by Auld, Russell and their kind disgusted him; but his polemic against them was purely negative and destructive. . . . The consciousness of the living presence of God in nature was always stronger in him than any theory of redemption. An intellectual sceptic, he was not really interested in theological dogma, though moral and emotional causes preserved in him certain relics of more or less inter-dependent doctrines.'

These sentences exhibit the results of a careful and conscientious study of Burns's theological environment. In text and appendix we have a précis of the principal religious documents that are known to have influenced the poet—'Goudie's Bible,' William Burnes's 'Manual;' the most important writings of Dr. Dalrymple and Dr. McGill of Ayr; and a full and interesting account of the petty and protracted quarrel between Gavin Hamilton and the kirk-session of Mauchline.

Equally searching is the light which is here thrown upon Burns's relations to Jean Armour and the mystery of Mary Campbell, neither of which topics can by a right reader of the man and poet be allowed to be classed under the category of 'Chatter about Harriet.' Mr. Wallace is forced to admit that

the date of Burns's attachment to Highland Mary, and several of the circumstances connected with it 'are still, to a great extent, enveloped in mystery;' also that 'her story, as here given, is based on, and pieced from, various traditions, and cannot be regarded as a portion of the absolutely authentic history of Burns.' In what respect then, does he leave the matter different from the state in which he found it? Well, it is something that in an authoritative biography it should be plainly stated that the identification of the Mary of Burns's poesy with Mary Campbell, who was born at Auchamore, Dunoon, and is buried at Greenock, rests solely on tradition. And it is more that the sequence of the events in this mysterious mess of love-entanglements should be as clearly stated as it is here. It was in the spring of 1786 that the poet gave Jean Armour the acknowledgment of their union, which old Armour straightway caused to be mutilated, and which Mr. Wallace, following Dr. Edgar, doubts if a court would have recognised as constituting an irregular marriage. In March Jean took refuge in Paisley. Burns, disgusted with her conduct, and intent on matrimony, turned to Mary, nurse in Gavin Hamilton's family; their intimacy 'ripened into love;' and in May they parted, she to go home to the Highlands for a short time, to arrange for her marriage. He had made up his mind to emigrate in order to make a living for Jean; he now persevered in his project for the purpose of providing for his wife-to-be, Mary Campbell. Yet, as Mr. Wallace, founding on documentary proof, coldly puts it, 'within a very few weeks after his parting from her, we find him, in a letter to a friend, speaking of Jean as still holding sway over his affections.' Short indeed was the blossoming time of Burns's 'white rose,' that 'grew up and bloomed in the midst of his passion-flowers.' However, we must pass from dates and their sequelæ, to note that Mr. Wallace will not allow that the Paisley incident in Jean Armour's life offered the slightest foundation for R. L. Stevenson's slander of her as a 'facile and empty-headed girl;' and that by a beautiful catena of reasoning from facts which he has himself to a large extent unearthed, he demolishes the 'strong presumption,' which Mr. George A. Aitken,

editor of the third *Aldine*, fathered, that Mary Campbell, instead of being a 'white rose' was a very tarnished flower indeed, worthy the rude attentions of Adam Armour and his rough mates; and further disposes effectively of the secondary, but equally ugly 'Highland Mary' myth founded on Joseph Train's MS. notes of what John Richmond told 'a Mr. Grierson.' It is not the least of Mr. Wallace's services to the Burns cult that, while vindicating the 'dear, departed shade,' he does justice to the character of the poet's faithful, magnanimous and honourable helpmeet, who was 'always his warmest defender,' and made his married life happy and morally remunerative.

Turn we now to the Edinburgh episode. Stevenson, with that local patriotism which he could never shake off, spoke of the 'Edinburgh magnates' who patronised Burns. Carlyle took a truer measure of the literary society of the Scottish capital at the end of the eighteenth century. The editor of the new *Chambers* has rightly restated the relation between Burns and his patrons thus:—

'The period was, however, the evening of the first heyday of Edinburgh letters. A few years before, Burns would perhaps have found an even warmer welcome and a more just appreciation; he would certainly have met at least one man intellectually his peer in the Select Society and the Poker Club. But David Hume had, in 1786, been dead half a score of years; Lord Kames was gone, and the majority of their more or less brilliant contemporaries were long past their prime. Adam Smith was too ill to see Burns. William Robertson had only seven years to live; Tytler and Lord Hailes even less. It was, in short, the interregnum between Hume and Scott. Burns himself was the man of the age. It strikes us of this day as almost ludicrous that he should have been patronised by men of the undoubted though second-rate capacity of Dugald Stewart, Hugh Blair, and Henry Mackenzie.'

Again, summing up the testimony as to Burns's conduct in Edinburgh, Mr. Wallace says:—

'He saw from the first that his reputation, so far as society in Edinburgh was concerned, must be evanescent, and he acted accordingly. His second Common-place Book proves that he measured himself deliberately against the men he met. He perceived his own superiority to them in natural force; he did not repine at their better fortune. It is morally certain that had Burns visited Edinburgh in the days of the literary supre-

macy of Scott and Jeffrey, a vigorous and successful effort would have been made to secure for him a position which would have permitted free exercise for his extraordinary faculty. . . . Burns, however, asked nothing from his Edinburgh friends; when they helped him to a farm and a position in the Excise, believing, as they apparently did, that they were thereby gratifying his own wishes, he made no complaint, but cheerfully prepared himself for the necessarily uncongenial career which alone appeared open to him.

'Burns was but twenty-seven years of age when he came to Edinburgh from Ayrshire. Of few men of warm temperament and exceptionally endowed by nature with those strong passions which are the sources at once of selfishness and unselfishness, can it be said with truth that "the battle between the flesh and the spirit" which ends in the ruin or the consolidation of character had been fought out so early in life. His sociable temperament, his eager willingness to observe all sorts and conditions of men, inevitably led him into "scenes of life," the survey of which meant the enlargement of experience, but not—at least immediately—the enrichment of motive. But it is as certain that he never lost command of himself, amidst the Crochallan festivities, as that he acquitted himself with modesty and manliness at the tables of professors and senators of the College of Justice.'

Mr. Wallace's revision of the Edinburgh episode is thorough and broad. He has pursued every incident of it—the *Clarinda liaison*, the Masonic bardship, the tours, the flirtations, the relations with Creech, etc.—with the pertinacity of a sleuth-hound. It is impossible to go into details here, but students of Burns will be grateful for many misconceptions removed, many mysteries as to dates cleared up, and generally for the numerous vivid touches he has introduced into Chambers's generally accurate picture of the poet as he lived and moved at this period.

Equally valuable is the reconstruction of the Ellisland epoch. There is no stick or stone left of the house that Burns built on the farm which he described as 'the very riddlings of creation.' As the Rev. Richard Simpson, minister of Dunscore, who is *the* authority on the history and topography of the district, testifies, those who protest against the rebuilding of the present farm-house as desecration of the roof-tree of Burns, are more than eighty years too late, and even the famous window with its inscription is of more than doubtful authenticity. Mr. Wallace presents us with a picturesque description of Ellis-

land, and—what is of even greater interest—he brings the tenant of 1788-1791 into at least geographical touch with others whose memories are rooted in Dunscore. Thus—

‘Its glens are steeped in the story of the War of Independence—of Wallace, of Bruce, and of Bruce’s friend and “mak siccar” lieutenant, Kilpatrick, to whose family Ellisland once belonged. The hillsides of Dunscore recall the more recent memories of the Covenanters. The tower of Lag, the prototype of Redgauntlet Castle, and the home of Sir Robert Grierson, “the persecutor,” whose name was more feared and hated in Galloway than that of John Graham himself, still stands in one of the glens. . . . Travelling up the valley, we come to Thornhill, with Tynron Doon, recalling the memories of the Ettrick Shepherd, Drumlanrig Castle, etc.

‘The extreme eastern point of Dunscore parish is Ellisland; the extreme western point is Craigenputtock, looking out on the moors of Galloway, where Carlyle wrote *Sartor Resartus* and his essay on Burns. It was on the slopes of Craigenputtock Hill that Carlyle, conversing with Emerson, put the Iliad of “this mysterious mankind” into a nutshell—“Christ died on the tree; that built Dunscore kirk yonder; that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence.”’

On this epoch of the poet’s existence, as on all the others, a vast amount of editorial labour has been spent. On point of research, pure and simple, there is nothing more valuable in any of the four portly volumes than the results displayed of a fresh investigation into Burns’s connection with the ‘London newsmen.’ Peter Stuart, the pioneer of Metropolitan journalism, tried to secure the poet as a paid contributor to his newly-established *Star* in 1788. Burns refused enrolment, but sent contributions, including the Ode on Mrs. Oswald, the ‘Ode to the Departed Regency-Bill,’ and probably also the (prose) ‘Address of the Scottish Distillers to the Right Honble. William Pitt.’ He called the *Star* ‘a blasphemous party newspaper.’ He helped to justify the description by a satire he sent to it on the ‘solemn farce of pageant mummary,’ the public thanksgiving for the recovery of the king. This production, unearthed now from the files of the *Star*, is dated, Kilmarnock, April 30th, and takes the form of a psalm, said to have been composed for and sung on the occasion.

Burns’s note to Stuart, of April, 1789: ‘Your polite exculpation of me in your paper was enough,’ has not hitherto been

understood. It referred to an episode in his connection with the *Star*, which is expiscated in the new *Chambers* for the first time. In March, 1789, Stuart, in the pleasant polemical manner of the day, struck a blow at that eminent Pittite, the Duchess of Gordon, by publishing a set of coarsish verses about her, which, 'a correspondent assured him,' were from the pen of Burns, describing Her Grace's performance at an Edinburgh ball. Burns hastened to repudiate the whole thing. The *Gazetteer* had copied from the *Star* a still more disrespectful stanza to the Duchess. Burns denied the authorship, with heat, in both journals, and it was doubtless for the 'exculpation' from 'The two most damning crimes of which, as a man and as a poet, I could have been guilty—ingratitude and stupidity,' that he thanked Stuart in April. Henley and Henderson in *The Centenary Burns*, having evidently not pursued their researches far enough, accept the Duchess pasquade as genuine, although internal evidence is convincing against its authenticity. The most interesting discovery, however, which Mr. Wallace chronicles in connection with the affair is this note, which the editor of the *Gazetteer* appends to Burns's letter:—

'Mr. Burns will do right in directing his petulance to the proper delinquent, the Printer of the *Star*, from which Paper the stanza was literally copied into *The Gazetteer*. We can assure him, however, for his comfort, that the Duchess of Gordon acquits him both of the ingratitude and the dullness. She has, with much difficulty, discovered that the *jeu d'esprit* was written by the Right Honourable the Treasurer of the Navy, on her Grace's dancing at a ball given by the Earl of Findlater; this has been found out by the industry and penetration of Lord Fife. The lines are certainly not so dull as Mr. Burns insinuates, and we fear he is jealous of the poetical talents of his rival, Mr. Dundas.'

Burns, as everybody knows, hated the Dundases because Robert, the Solicitor-General, slighted his poem on the death of the Lord President. We have not here absolute proof that the skit on the gay Gordon was written by Henry Dundas, 'the great dispenser of patronage,' or that, even if it were, he had anything to do with the attribution of the lines to the 'ploughing poet,' but one cannot help suspecting that in this piece of literary horseplay there is a clue—if only it could be

followed up—to the neglect which Burns suffered at the hands of Dundas and his compeers.

We must, however, take leave of the particulars which the editor of the new *Chambers* has added to Burnsiana, merely noting the illumination he throws on the origin of 'Scots wha hae,' as thus: 'Under cover of a fourteenth century battle-song he (Burns) was really liberating his soul against the Tory tyranny that was opposing liberty at home and abroad, and, moreover, striking at the comfort of his own fireside;' the wealth of biographical, bibliographical, and linguistic information he has collected about 'Tam o' Shanter,' 'Auld Glen,' 'A man's a man for a' that,' etc., and the tracing of such allusions as 'the daring path Spinoza trod.' And at least a word of commendation is due to the editor's scathing analysis of the Globe Inn and other malignant legends; to the great mass of valuable notes he has collected, including the identification of every individual, contemporary or historical, mentioned in the poems; and to the vast improvement he has made in the glossary. The indexes are exceptionally complete, indeed unique in their reach and peculiarity.

As has been said, the work of Messrs. Henley and Henderson is still incomplete. At present we can only indicate, by means of one or two details, the quality of it. The text of *The Centenary Burns* is as excellent as the typography in which it is displayed is beautiful; it has been compiled after collation of as many MSS. as research and industry could command, and of the various 'authors' editions;' and, to the great profit and pleasure of scholars, the source of every reading adopted is plainly stated in the notes, along with the various readings rejected by the editors—rejected, we may add, in every case that we have tested, with correct taste and nice appreciation of language. There is little that is new in the Notes as to facts or persons. Their special worth lies in the precision and fulness with which they trace the history of the poems in manuscript and print, and in the originality of the results they body forth of investigation into the 'origins' of the poetical forms used by Burns. One could wish that the editors had put otherwise the motive of these annotations,

whose purpose, they say, is 'to emphasize the theory that Burns, for all his exhibition of some modern tendencies, was not the founder of a dynasty, but the heir to a flourishing tradition, and the last of an ancient line; that he is demonstrably the outcome of an environment, and not in any but the narrowest sense the unnatural birth of Poesy and Time, which he is sometimes held to be. However, an editor must be allowed his theory, and Messrs. Henley and Henderson's bold and uncompromising assertion of theirs is welcome as an antidote to the theory of the 'Common Burnsite' who, in more or less mythical form, is their *bête noir*. Only, their prefatory statement that their notes are meant to emphasise their theory offers a needless, and, it must be said, a risky challenge to criticism. Three volumes of *The Centenary Burns* are now before the world, and presumably the editors have brought forward the bulk of their proofs. These are extensive, scholarly, the fruit of learned and critical research. They stand by themselves without the support of any preconceived theory whatever. Do they demonstrate Messrs. Henley and Henderson's proposition or propositions? Unquestionably they do—up to a certain point. They prove—what was not disputed—that 'Burns was the heir to a flourishing tradition, and the last of an ancient line,' that he 'derives from a numerous ancestry;' but they do not prove that he was 'not the founder of a dynasty,' and, rightly interpreted, they do not minimise his 'modern tendencies.' They prove that Burns borrowed not only form but matter from his Scotch predecessors, that he wrote in their manner, on subjects similar to theirs, but not that he looked at the world as any one of them did. In short, while emphasising the debt Burns owed to his 'forebears,' they also unwillingly emphasise the gulf that separates him from the best as well as the last of them—which gulf is made not only by genius (for Dunbar had genius too), but by modernity.

No poet, not even Shakespeare, has been so minutely, lovingly studied as Burns. No editor has ever approached the text in so truly critical a spirit or treated it in so scholarly and classical a fashion as Messrs. Henley and Henderson. It is

impossible to convey in a brief notice an adequate impression either of the bulk or of the quality of their work. Take for example their treatment of 'The Kirk's Alarm.' Their note embraces a summary of the M'Gill persecution, which is a model of conciseness and completeness, and an account of the production of the poem, to which they contribute a quotation from the unpublished Dunlop MSS. at Lochryan: 'I have just sketched the following ballad, and as usual send the first rough draft to you.' Their 'study of the origin' is as follows: 'This copy (Mrs. Dunlop's) was originally entitled "The Kirk's Lament," a Ballad: Tune, "Push about the Brisk Bowl;" but in the MS. *Lament* is deleted for *Alarm*. Probably, therefore, the idea of the burlesque was suggested by a certain broadside, "The Church of Scotland's Lamentation concerning the setting up of Plays and Comedies, March 1715," the work of an anonymous writer, of which there is a copy in the Roxburghe Collection.' Then they describe the various MSS. and versions, including the broadside published in 1789 with the title 'The Ayrshire Garland,' an Excellent New Song: Tune, 'The Vicar and Moses,' of which Mr. Craibe Angus is the proud possessor of the only copy known to exist. Burns's tunes do not, it seems, fit the verses. The stave of 'The Kirk's Alarm' was used in Pitcairne's 'Roundell on Sir Robert Sibbald,' 1686, and by Congreve, and was popular in England throughout the eighteenth century. But 'as a matter of fact "The Kirk's Alarm" was modelled directly on a political squib which appeared in *The Glasgow Mercury*, December 23-30, 1788, and was current at least six months before Burns wrote his first draft.' This is admirable work. It is the kind of critical editing that the student has long desired, and it is free from all suspicion of a straining of the facts to suit the editors' theory. But too high praise cannot be accorded to Messrs. Henley and Henderson's studies of origins throughout. Thus the six-line stave in *rime couée*, built on two rhymes, of the 'Address to the Deil,' is traced from the work of the first-known troubadour, William IX., Count of Poitiers and Duke of Guienne (1071-1127), through Hilary, a Paris monk of the twelfth century, through an anonymous English love-song of the

thirteenth century, through the *York Plays* and the *Towneley Mysteries* of the fifteenth century, down to its first use by a Scotsman, Sir David Lyndesay. So by Ferguson's time it had 'become the common inheritance of all such Scotsmen as could rhyme.' Again, the metrical structure of 'The Holy Fair' is traced back to the thirteenth century romance of *Sir Tristrem*, and 'docked of the bob-wheel, that never-failing device of the mediæval craftsman, the *Sir Tristrem* stave is identical with one which, imitated from a monkish-Latin original, was popular all through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and long afterwards.' Burns himself avowedly derived the metre of the 'Epistle to Davie' from Montgomerie. Messrs. Henley and Henderson ascribe to Montgomerie, with the utmost probability, the invention of this peculiar quatorzain; they trace its history to Ramsay's revival of it in 'The Vision,' and elsewhere, and claim it as exclusively Scottish, both in derivation and in use. In like manner they trace back 'The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie' to Hamilton of Gilbertfield's (1665?-1757) 'Last Dying Words of Bonny Heck.'

To revert to the famous theory, what do Messrs. Henley and Henderson make of 'Tam o' Shanter' and 'The Jolly Beggars?' Do these works of genius help to prove or disprove that Burns was the last expression of the old Scots world and the outcome of an environment *plus* Scots forebears, rather than a pioneer in poetry, a prophet with a distinct point of view from his predecessors? Well, the *Centenary* edition does not attempt to derive 'Tam o' Shanter' at all. Of 'The Jolly Beggars' it says frankly:—'The Burns of this "puissant and splendid production," as Matthew Arnold calls it—this irresistible presentation of humanity caught in the act, and summarised for ever in the terms of art—comes into line with divers poets of repute, from our own Dekker and John Fletcher to the singer of *les Gueux* (1813) and *Le Vieux Vagabond* (1830), and approves himself their master in the matter of such qualities as humour, vision, lyrical potency, descriptive style, and the faculty of swift, dramatic presentation, to a purpose that may not be gainsaid.' Does

not that give away the whole case? The poet of 'The Jolly Beggars' was neither the satirist and singer of a parish, nor the product of a local or traditionary environment, ever so many forebears aiding. He imitated, copied, and stole much; that is proved to the hilt, and never more conclusively or completely than here. But when an attempt is made to place him in the hierarchy of literature, his imitative work must be assigned its proper, recognised value, and that which he invented (in the widest sense of the term, including form and point of view) must be taken as the decisive evidence of distinction. But the note on 'The Jolly Beggars' is in itself a monument of knowledge of the literature of mendicancy and knavery, and will be precious to all time.

It is in the third volume, recently published, that Messrs. Henley and Henderson are most successful, as they were bound to be, in proving Burns to be the last expression of the old Scots world, although their theory unquestionably leads them to exaggerate a little his debt to his 'nameless forebears,' and to minimise, by ever so little, the broad distinction between him and the writers of the songs which he 'passed through the mint of his mind.' It is not easy to see how they can prove—and they do not attempt it—that the master-qualities of 'fresh and taking simplicity, of vigour and directness, and happy and humorous ease,' came to Burns from his nameless forebears, along with 'much of the thought, the romance, and the sentiment, for which we read and love him.' But theory apart, students are deeply indebted for the study in the origins of Burns's songs which is here presented to them. The editors have utilised a vast mass of material which previous editors have but skimmed—broadsides, chap-books, rare song-books, the great collections of David Herd, including the British Museum MSS., even 'The Merry Muses,' an invaluable guide, rightly used. The Lochryan MSS., embracing unpublished letters of Burns to Mrs. Dunlop, have furnished them with a number of interesting facts, such as the poet's explicit statement that 'Sweet Afton' was written for Johnson's *Musical Museum* as a 'compliment' to the 'small river Afton that flows into the Nith, near New Cumnock, which has

some charming wild romantic scenery on its banks.' Their treatment of Burns's inheritance from the clandestine literature of Scotland, and of England too, is excellent. The poet's relations with Johnson and Thomson are carefully and accurately set forth, and sufficient proof is furnished from his correspondence in the Hastie MSS., and from certain MS. material in the possession of Mr. George Gray, Rutherglen, that he was virtually editor of the *Museum* from 1787 till his health began to fail. The Thomson songs are justly placed on a lower level than those which he passed through the mint to Johnson, though one may fairly demur to the sweeping criticism that 'they are *often* vapid in sentiment and artificial in effect.'

A good example of the editing of a song is the note on 'M'Pherson's Farewell.' The Herd set is traced to an old broadside—'The Last Words of James Macpherson, Murderer,' with the corollary—'That it is excellent drama that has bred the ridiculous tradition—devoutly accepted by certain editors—that the hero wrote it.' And Peter Buchan's copy is declared to be a clumsy vamp from Burns and the original. Take, again, the note on 'Up in the Morning Early.' D'Urfey's authorship of the original ballad is not assailed, though doubt is cast upon it by the existence of a set in a *Collection of Old Ballads* (London, 1723,) described as 'said to have been written in the time of James.' Hogg and Motherwell's 'well known song' is said to be a vamp from Burns, and Burns's chorus at least is clearly traced to its immediate source in a hitherto unknown set in the Herd MS. We have remarked the discovery which settles the ancient controversy about 'Afton Water.' But these are mere tastings of an inimitable and invaluable body of contributions to the critical appreciation of Burns's song-witing. 'Under his hand,' say Messrs. Henley and Henderson, 'a patch-work of catch-words became a living song. He would take you two fragments of different epochs, select the best from each, and treat the matter of his choice in such a style that it is hard to know where its components end and begin; so that nothing is certain about his result except that it is a work of art. Or he would capture a wandering old refrain, adjust it to his own conditions, and so renew its

lyrical interest and significance that it seems to live its true life for the first time on his lips.' Their own work supplies, for the first time, sufficient detailed evidence of the truth of that scarcely original thesis. There are errors of taste in the *Centenary Burns*, but these and some slips in accuracy apart, it stands forth as the classical edition of the Poetry of Robert Burns.

JAMES DAVIDSON.

ART. VI.—FARTHEST NORTH.

FRIDTJOF NANSEN'S *Farthest North*. Maps and Illustrations.
Two volumes. Westminster. 1897.

DR. NANSEN has performed a very remarkable feat. He has not accomplished all he intended or hoped to do, still what he has succeeded in doing is quite sufficient to entitle him to a very distinguished and foremost place among that gallant band who have contributed so much towards the solution of the mystery of the Arctic seas. He has also written a very remarkable book. It is a brilliant record of skill, courage and perseverance amid enormous difficulties as well as of a success without a parallel. Life and adventures in the Polar seas have never been described with a more brilliant pen. Here and there the scenes and incidents recorded are similar, but Dr. Nansen is a master in the art of writing as well as in the art of exploration, and from the beginning to the end of his long and detailed narrative he carries the sympathies of his readers along with him, and keeps their attention and interest always on the alert.

A student of Arctic exploration Dr. Nansen early came to the conclusion that the methods and routes which had previously been adopted for penetrating to the North Pole, were wrong. His own plan was suggested to him by an article, contributed as far back as the year 1884, by Professor Mohn, to the Norwegian *Morgenblad*, in which, arguing from the find-