

loved one gone, the deeper, tenderer mysteries of his environment and life. The period covers the ten years preceding his death, from his twenty-seventh to his thirty-seventh year of age; a period into which was crowded more personal hope and disappointment, joy and suffering, remorse for impulsive wrongdoing, heaven of purest domestic bliss, temptation and victory, agonized despair and triumph, than fall to the lot of most great men in their entire lives. There were first the disownment and desertion by Jean Armour; the betrothal to Highland Mary, with the sad parting and her tragic death; the publication of the now priceless though then humble Kilmarnock edition of his poems; the preparation for flight to Jamaica; the triumphant visit to Edinburgh; the generous caring for the mother and brothers; the glad reunion with his Jean, and the home-building at Ellisland over there by the songful Nith.

Then came the brief, bright days. The proceeds of settlement with Creech, his Edinburgh publisher, netted him the then munificent sum of about £500. Magnanimously generous always, much of this sum, the first and last material good fortune Burns ever knew, went to Jean's parents, and to assist his brother Gilbert Burns in averting disaster in the latter's farm-life efforts. His lucky meeting with the ingenious and kindly Patrick Miller of Dalswinton Hall had occurred. It had been settled that the poet, who hated the city with a royal hatred, should return to the plough. The nobility of the day never quite forgave this plebeian longing and love, the source of his grandest inspirations. The beautiful farm of Ellisland, five miles above Dumfries, was taken at a rental of £50 per year. Burns unaided began his farm labors the first Monday after Whitsunday, 1788. He toiled manfully until the autumn of that year, meantime singing many a lusty song to his absent wife, and built the lovely cottage which stands embowered in roses to this day.

And then was celebrated the simple but glorious home-coming, when, with rustic rites, and his bonnie Jean upon his arm, "preceded by a peasant-girl carrying the family Bible and a bowl of salt," he marched proudly into his little home-heaven beside the winding Nith. All evidences agree that in the brief period of a trifle over two years, between Whitsunday, 1788, and Martinmas, 1791, Burns and his good Jean experienced an Eden of labor and love, despite their final enforced departure. It was also the period of Burns best and greatest poetic accomplishment. But more children came to them. These must be supported. The crops failed, and inevitable ruin was approaching. It was then, when nowhere else on earth to turn, with no one on earth to defend him from the wretched influences of such environment, that to save his wife and children from actual want he was forced to accept the government position of exciseman at the beggarly pittance of £50 per year. The five remaining years of his life, after the poet, his Jean and their three children, Robert, Francis Wallace and William Nicol, removed to the humble lodgings, and then their cottage home, in Dumfries, checkered, sad, pathetic beyond comprehension, are known to all.

It is because you see along the witching valley's ways the Burns of reality

—manly, sturdy, weak as you or I in like plights, generous, magnanimous, pitiful, great, that you linger and still linger here. You can see him singing at his toil by day, or by the ingle-neuk with Jean and the bairns at night, or still, by the little south window, working away at the tiny deal table when the inspiration came. You see him guest of lairds or companion of cottagers, and beloved of all. There is not in all this fair domain a castle, a gentleman's seat, a cabin, or an old roadside inn, that existed in Burns' time, which does not preserve some relic of the poet, or some revered memory of his one time presence. The eyes of your consciousness may know, all through Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire, at this farmhouse of some unrecorded kindness; at the next of some pleasant incident; at another, of an odd adventure; now of perhaps a forgivable roystering; then, of some blessed help in time of need; again, of festivity of which he was the life, and again of prayer. Prayer from Burns? Yes, prayer with the living and at the couch of the dead, among those so lowly that somehow those "spiritual excisemen" who delighted to league the lost exciseman with "Auld Hornie" had no time for their "higher" parochial duties to minister there. You see him riding about the country on his two horses "Pegasus" and "Peg Nicholson," not as exciseman rapacious with the scourging instruments of law, but keen with friendly warnings instead; ever leaning to the side of mercy; saving, not ruining, the ignorant and lowly. You see him, as the better days come on with a curse in your heart on the curse which cursed his life, when the hand of poverty crushed him, and there was no helping one to save. You see him at Brow Well with the consciousness of death, still the most lovable of men, and alone with his Bible there. You see him carried back to the little cottage to die, and you hear then from the lips of loyal Jean the mighty disproof of all slanderous tongues in the one sentence, ever glorifying the husband and man, "He never spoke misbehadden word to me in a' his lafe!" And you know that tender husband and loyal wife rest together beside the songful Nith.

Two tiny streams, hardly more than brooks at some seasons of the year, and having their sources in respective lochs like little mountain tarns, are the real source of the Doon. These little lochs lie at the eastern and northern edges of Merrick Mountain. They have the curious appellation of Eagton Lane and Gallow, or Gala, Lane. They flow north and empty into a greater loch called Loch Doon, an expanse of water perhaps seven miles in length and nearly a mile in width. This in turn discharges its waters into the now real river Doon through most picturesque gorges and tunnels forming many beautiful, if not majestic, torrents, forces and cascades. Thence the course of the Doon is northwesterly to where it reaches the sea about two miles below the city of Ayr, and its entire length, inclusive of the expanse of Loch Doon, cannot be upwards of forty miles.

The scenery about Loch Doon is wild and picturesque. Its horizon is a lofty mountain fringe of heathery heights, broken here and there by rugged, rocky escarpments of purple and puce. From this loch, for a distance of about twenty miles, the Doon winds prettily enough

between the Ayrshire hills through valley reaches and past quaint old villages, but without that exquisite variety of bank and brae for which the pen of Burns has made it famous. At Patna, or still a little further, at Hollybush, begin its tortuous windings. From here to the sea there is an ever-varying succession of the most idyllic riverside pictures to be found in all Britain. These were distinctively the boyhood haunts of the poet. After Hollybush comes Dalrymple, perhaps the loveliest village in the loveliest vale in Scotland. It seems in an endless slumber in its nest-like vale, hushed by the murmurous lullabys of the Doon. A little beyond is ancient Casillis Castle, a noble old mansion on the left bank of the Doon, famous in song and story from the elopement of Lady Jane Hamilton, first wife of John, sixth earl of Casillis, "the grave and solemn earl," with the noted "Gipsy Laddie" chief, John Faa.

From Casillis Castle to the sea the distance is about twelve miles. Here there is not a straight reach of the Doon a fourth of a mile in length. It twists and turns, forming every conceivable fanciful contour of shore; is hid between verdure covered cliffs to leap again into sunny opening; breaks into broad shallows with lawn-like edges; then with a rush scampers to covert beneath overhanging trees whose branches, dipping to its surface, sob and sigh minor refrains to its own melodious music. Fair indeed is the Doon, as Burns knew it, as it now is, past the Old Bridge, past the New Bridge, past old Alloway Kirk, past the cottage where he was born, past a myriad thrilling witcheries of leaf and blade and bloom and bank and brae, to the very spot where it is hushed in the vast blue sea. To wander lovingly beside it is to feast anew, and marvelously close to the personality of him who made its melodies beloved strains to ear and heart in utmost lands.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

THE FAR NORTH

SWEDEN.

A "people's" kitchen is to be established in the city of Helsingborg.

Bishop von Scheele arrived at Visby the other day from his journey to America.

A. F. Johanson, a lumber dealer of Uybry, has disappeared mysteriously. Foul play is suspected.

The wholesale merchant, A. L. Pinens, of Gothenburg, died at the age of sixty-six years.

P. Holm, a miner of Norberg, has been elected a member of the lower house of the Swedish Riksdag.

A railroad will soon be built between Varberg and Smoland. The city of Varberg has granted 300,000 crowns for the purpose.

The buildings of the new match factory in Vestervik are now being completed, and it is expected that the manufacture of matches will begin next October.

Mrs. Ada Nelson, of Stockholm, committed suicide by drowning herself because one of her sons had become a criminal.

An American named Ide will probably be appointed chief justice of the Samoa