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THE
WIDOW OF BURNS:

HER

DEATH, CHARACTER, & FUNERAL.

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DEATH AND CHARACTER

OF

MRS BURNS.

At a late hour of the night of Wednesday, the 26th March, or rather as it was just about to close, the world and its concerns closed for ever on Mrs Jean Armour,—the venerable relict of the poet Burns. On the Saturday preceding she was seized with paralysis for the fourth time during the last few years; and although perfectly conscious of her situation, and the presence of friends, became deprived, before she could be removed to bed, of the faculty of speech, and, a day or two thereafter, of the sense of hearing. Still she lay wonderfully calm and composed, and in the opinion of her medical attendant, suffered from weakness rather than from pain. Frequently she gazed with the greatest earnestness on her grand-daughter, Sarah; and it was easy to read what was passing within, from the tears that filled her aged eyes, and trickled down her cheeks. To another individual she directed looks so eager and full of meaning as to impress him with the idea that she had some dying request to make, and deeply regretted that it was too late; for even if her salvation had depended on the exertion she was unfortunately incapacitated

from uttering a syllable, guiding a pen, or even making an intelligible sign. The mind, in her case, survived the body ; and this, perhaps, was the only painful circumstance attending her death-bed, — considering how admirable her conduct had been, her general health so sound, her span protracted beyond the common lot, her character for prudence and piety so well established, and her situation in life every way so comfortable. On the night of Tuesday, or morning of Wednesday, a fifth shock, unperceived by the attendants, deprived Mrs Burns of mental consciousness ; and from that time till the hour of her death her situation was exactly that of a breathing corpse. And thus passed away all that remained of “ bonny Jean,”—the relict of a man whose fame is as wide as the world itself, and the venerated heroine of many a lay which bid fair to live in the memories of the people of Scotland, and of thousands far removed from its shores, as long as the dialect in which they are written is spoken or understood.

The deceased was born at Mauchline in February, 1765, and had thus entered the seventieth year of her age. Her father was an industrious master mason, in good employment, who enjoyed the esteem of the gentry and others within the district, and reared the numerous family of eleven sons and daughters, four of whom alone survive,—viz., Robert, a respectable merchant in London ; James, who resides in the town of Paisley ; Mrs Lees & Mrs Brown. The alleged circumstances attending Mrs Burns’ union with the bard are well known, and may be dismissed with the remark, that we have good authority for saying that they have been incorrectly narrated by nearly every writer who has touched upon the subject. To the poet, Jean Armour bore a family of five sons and four daughters. The whole of the latter died in early life, and were interred in the cemetery of their maternal grandfather in Mauchline church-yard. Of the sons two died very young,—viz., Francis Wal-

lace and Maxwell Burns, the last of whom was a posthumous child, born the very day his father was buried. Of the said family of nine, three sons still survive,—Robert, the eldest, a retired officer of the Accomptant-General's Department, Stamp-Office, London, now in Dumfries; and William & James Glencairn Burns, Captains in the Hon. the East India Company's Service. Shortly after her husband's death Mrs Burns had a very remarkable dream, which she sometimes spoke of to her more intimate female friends as a circumstance not only most vividly imprinted on the memory, but more prominently placed before the eye of the mind, than anything that ever occurred to her during her waking moments. And it was to this effect,—that the poet, or rather his spirit, withdrew her curtains, and after gazing wistfully and solemnly, said “that he had been permitted to take a last look of his widow, and the child he had never before seen.” The bare mention of such a circumstance may to many appear abundantly idle; and we of course merely allude to it as an impression rootedly entwined with our departed friend's memory, who was by no means a superstitious woman.

We pass the funeral of Robert Burns as a matter that belongs to biographical history. It is certain he left his family poor, (and how could it be otherwise?) but it is not true, as Collector Findlater has most successfully shown, that they were in immediate want, or lacked any necessary comfort. The Relief Fund annuity of an Exciseman's widow is known to be small (now, we believe, about £12 per annum); but Providence, shortly after the husband and father's decease, raised to the family many valuable friends. Passing exigencies were supplied from this honourable source; and no lengthened period elapsed until the active and disinterested benevolence of Dr Currie, in conjunction with his excellent talents, placed at the feet of the family, to the great delight of

the people of Scotland, very nearly £2000 sterling, in name of profits arising from the Liverpool edition of the poet's works. The Poet died in 1796, and up to 1818, his widow's income exceeded not, if it equalled, sixty pounds per annum. But on this sum, small as it may appear, she contrived to maintain a decent appearance, was never known to be in debt, or wanting in charity—so unambitious were her ambition and views, and undeviating her prudence, economy, and frugality. At the period just mentioned, Captain James Glencairn Burns wrote, in breathless haste, from India, to say, that having obtained promotion, through the kindness of the Marquis of Hastings, he had been enabled to set apart £150 yearly for the uses of his mother, and, as an earnest of affection, transmitted a draft for £75. And it is due to this gentleman to say, that from first to last, including some assistance from his brother, and allowances for his infant daughter Sarah, he remitted his mother in all the handsome sum of £2,400 sterling.—Leave of absence, and some other circumstances, at length impaired the means, and changed the fortunes, of the individual alluded to; but Captain William Burns, later in life, very cheerfully took his brother's place, and discharged with equal promptitude, generosity, and affection, duties dear to the best and kindest feelings of our nature. In this way, for sixteen years at the least, Mrs Burns enjoyed an income of £200 per annum—a change of fortune which enabled her to add many comforts to her decent domicile, watch over the education of a favourite grandchild, and exercise, on a broader scale, the Christian duty of charity, which she did the more efficiently by acting in most cases as her own almoner.

It is generally known that Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop was the first efficient patroness of Robert Burns. Of the accuracy of this fact his writings furnish the most undoubted proofs; and

it would appear that her children inherited her feelings, and spread the same mantle of friendship over the poet's family. For a greater number of years than our memory can trace, Mrs Burns dined every Sunday, after attending divine service in St. Michael's Church, with the late Mrs Perochan, the eldest daughter of Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop; and was noticed and patronised in the most flattering manner by various living members of the same ancient family, who might feel offended did we dare to record all we happen to know of their exertions in a cause which Scotsmen, wherever situated, are prone to identify with the land of their birth.

The term of Mrs Burns' widowhood extended to thirty-eight years, in itself rather an unusual circumstance—and, in July 1796, when the bereavement occurred, she was but little beyond the age at which the majority of females marry. But she had too much respect for the memory of her husband, and regard for his children, to think of changing her name, although she might have done so more than once, with advantage; and was even careful to secure on lease, and repair and embellish, as soon as she could afford it, the decent though modest mansion in which he died. And here, for more than thirty years, she was visited by thousands on thousands of strangers, from the Peer down to itinerant sonnetteers—a class of persons to whom she never refused an audience, or dismissed unrewarded. Occasionally, during the summer months, she was a good deal annoyed; but she bore all in patience, and although naturally fond of quiet, seemed to consider her house as open to visitors, and its mistress, in some degree, the property of the public. But the attentions of strangers neither turned her head, nor were ever alluded to in the spirit of boasting; and had it not been for a female friend who accompanied her on one occasion to the King's Arms Inn, to meet, by invitation, the Marchioness of Hastings, no one would have

known that that excellent lady directed the present Marquis, who was then a boy, to present Mrs Burns with a glass of wine, and at the same time remarked, that, "he should consider himself very highly honoured, and cherish the recollection of meeting with the poet's widow, as long as he lived." Her's, in short, was one of those well-balanced minds that cling instinctively to propriety and a medium in all things; and such as knew the deceased, earliest and latest, were unconscious of any change in her demeanour and habits, excepting, perhaps, greater attention to dress, and more refinement of manner, insensibly acquired by frequent intercourse with families of the first respectability. In her tastes, she was frugal, simple, and pure; and delighted in music, pictures, and flowers. In spring and summer, it was impossible to pass her windows without being struck with the beauty of the floral treasures they contained; and if extravagant in any thing, it was in the article of roots and plants of the finest sorts. Fond of the society of young people, she mingled as long as able, in their innocent pleasures, and cheerfully filled for them the cup "which cheers but not inebriates." Although neither a sentimentalist nor a "blue stocking," she was a clever woman, possessed great shrewdness, discriminated character admirably, and frequently made very pithy remarks; and were this the proper place for such a detail, proofs of what is stated might easily be adduced.

When young she must have been a handsome, comely woman, if not indeed a beauty, when the poet saw her for the first time on a bleach-green at Mauchline, engaged, like Peggy and Jenny, at Habbie's Howe. Her limbs were cast in the finest mould; and up to middle life her jet-black eyes were clear and sparkling, her carriage easy, and her step light. The writer of the present sketch never saw Mrs Burns dance, nor heard her sing; but he has learnt from others that she moved with great grace on the floor, and chaunted her "wood-

notes wild" in a style but rarely equalled by unprofessional singers. Her voice was a brilliant treble, and in singing "Coollen," "I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen," and other songs, she rose without effort as high as B natural. In ballad poetry her taste was good, and range of reading rather extensive. Her memory, too, was strong, and she could quote when she chose at considerable length, and with great aptitude. Of these powers the bard was so well aware that he read to her almost every piece he composed, and was not ashamed to own that he had profited by her judgment. In fact, none save relations, neighbours, and friends, could form a proper estimate of the character of Mrs Burns. In the presence of strangers she was shy and silent, and required to be drawn out, or, as some would say, shewn off to advantage, by persons who possessed her confidence, and knew her intimately.

But we have, perhaps, said enough, considering the ephemeral character of a newspaper; and although our heart has been thrown into our words, the portrait given is so strictly true to nature, that we conclude by saying, in the spirit of a friendship, not of yesterday,—peace to the manes, and honor to the memory, of bonny Jean!

FUNERAL OF MRS BURNS—EXHUMATION OF THE POET'S SKULL.

The remains of Mrs Burns were interred in the family vault on Tuesday, the 1st April, with all the solemnity the occasion demanded, in presence of an immense crowd of spectators. Independently of the Bard's Mausoleum, St. Michael's church-yard is, perhaps, the most remarkable cemetery in Britain; amidst innumerable tombs thousands on thousands sleep be-

low; and on the day alluded to public interest or curiosity waxed so intensely that it became, if such an expression may be used, instinct with life as well as death. By many, a strong wish was expressed that the funeral should be made broadly public; others again objected to everything like parade, as unsuited to the quiet retiring character of the deceased; and amidst counsels and wishes so opposite and conflicting, the relatives and executors had a duty to discharge which was felt to be exceedingly onerous and perplexing. The Magistrates and Commissioners of Police politely offered to mark their respect for Mrs Burns' memory by attending her funeral in their public capacity—an offer so honourable that it was at once acknowledged and acceded to by the trustees. But something more was wanted, in the opinion of at least a portion of the public; and as the street in which the deceased resided is short, narrow, and situated so near to the church-yard, as to injure the appearance of any procession, it was anxiously asked that the coffin should be conveyed in a hearse to the Council Chamber stairs, and from thence carried shoulder-high along the line of the principal street. On reflection, however, it was deemed better that the living should go to the dead, than the dead to the living. The Magistrates agreed in the propriety of this, and issued cards to the whole of the Council appointing a meeting at half-past 11 on the morning of Tuesday, at which hour they assembled, and shortly after moved in a body to Burns'-street, amidst a throng of people (many of whom had voluntarily arrayed themselves in sables) such as has rarely been witnessed on the streets of Dumfries. Between two & three hundred funeral letters were issued in compliance with the usual custom; and in this way while the private feelings of friends were conciliated, the public were gratified in as far as was deemed consistent with the rules of decorum.

As many persons were received into the house as it could possibly contain, including various clergymen, citizen friends, and country gentlemen, among the latter of whom we observed Sir Thos. Wallace, a kind personal friend of the deceased; Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick; Mr Dunlop, Southwick; Mr Jas. M^r Alpine Leny of Dalswinton; Mr John Dunlop, Rosefield; Mr Macadam of Castledykes; Major Adair; Mr Hannah of Hannahfield; Major Davies; Mr John Staig; the Provost and Magistrates, &c., &c. Eloquent prayers were put up on the occasion by the Reverend Messrs Wightman, Fyffe, Dunlop, and Wallace; and after the usual forms had been observed, the coffin was placed on spokes, and borne by many to its final resting place. Throwing a stone to a chieftain's cairn was deemed an honour by our Celtic ancestors, and a similar feeling obviously prevailed in regard to the funereal obsequies of the poet's widow. Before one person had well touched a spoke he was succeeded by another, eager to share in the same mournful duty; and although the distance was extremely short, several hundred hands bore the body along by shifting as frequently as St. Michael's bell tolled. Though the crowd was very dense, forests of heads were thrown into lines as the procession moved forward; every window was filled with spectators; numerous visitors were observed from the country; and, altogether, the scene reminded many of the memorable day of the poet's funeral. So great was the anxiety to enter the Mausoleum that the pressure, in the first instance, occasioned a slight degree of confusion; but in a minute or two order was restored, and the body lowered slowly and solemnly into the family vault. The chief mourners then descended, took the stations assigned them, and after every thing had been adjusted, placed the coffin in a grave dug to the depth of four feet. Five relatives attended the interment, viz., Mr Robert Burns, eldest son of the poet, Mr Robert

Armour, the widow's brother, and the husbands of three nieces, the Messrs Irving and Mr M'Kinnel. But there were other chief mourners, and among those we observed Mr Dunlop, Southwick, Provost Murray, Dr John Symons, Mr Bogie, and Mr M'Diarmid. The grave was covered in a brief space; the chief mourners then withdrew; and after everything foreign had been removed from the vault, the executors gave the necessary directions for restoring the large stone which guards the entrance to the tomb of our great national poet. As this was a task of considerable labour, hours elapsed before it could be completed, and, in the interim, thousands had an opportunity of gratifying their curiosity by taking a parting look at the resting place of genius.

It is generally known that the remains of Burns were exhumed, privately, on the 19th September, 1815, and deposited with every regard to decency, in the arched vault attached to the Mausoleum, then newly erected in honour of his memory. The principal actors, on that occasion, were the late Convener Thomson, and Mr Milligan, builders, Mr Grierson, Secretary to the Monument Committee, and Mr Bogie, Terraughty. Originally, his ashes lay in the north corner of the church-yard; and as years elapsed before any general movement was made, his widow, with pious care, marked the spot by a modest monument, the expense of which she willingly defrayed out of her own slender means. In the first instance, attempts were made to enlarge the church-yard wall, and thus avert the necessity of a ceremony, in the highest degree revolting to the feelings of Mrs Burns; but the spot was so narrow, and interfered so closely with the property of others, that the idea was abandoned as utterly impracticable. On the day, therefore, already named, the committee chosen, proceeded to the spot before the sun had risen, and went to work so rapidly, that they had well nigh completed

their purpose previous to the assemblage of any crowd.— And it was fortunate their measures were so wisely taken ; for though the gates of St. Michael's were carefully locked, a few early risers, and accidental observers, communicated so speedily their suspicions to others, that before the entrance to the vault could be closed, an immense crowd besieged the church-yard walls, and on leave being refused, readily found the means of admitting themselves. Still the individuals alluded to discharged, with the greatest sternness, their duty as sentinels, by repressing all attempts at obtaining bones, or indeed anything connected with the respective coffins of the Bard and his two sons. As a report had been spread that the largest coffin was made of oak, hopes were entertained that it would be possible to remove it without injury, or public examination of any kind. But this hope proved fallacious ; on testing the coffin it was found to be composed of ordinary materials, and liable to yield to the slightest pressure ; and the lid partially removed, a spectacle was unfolded, which, considering the fame of the mighty dead, has rarely been witnessed by a single human being. There lay the remains of the great poet, to all appearance entire, retaining various traces of recent vitality, or to speak more correctly exhibiting the features of one who had newly sunk into the sleep of death. The forehead struck every one as beautifully arched, if not so high as might have been reasonably supposed, while the scalp was rather thickly covered with hair, and the teeth perfectly firm and white. Altogether the scene was so imposing that the commonest workmen stood uncovered, as the late Dr Gregory did at the exhumation of the remains of King Robert Bruce, and for some moments remained inactive, as if thrilling under the effects of some undefinable emotion, while gazing on all that remained of one " whose fame is as wide as the world itself." But the scene, however im-

posing, was brief; for the instant the workmen inserted a shell or wooden case beneath the original coffin, the head separated from the trunk, and the whole body, with the exception of the bones, crumbled into dust. Notwithstanding of the solemnity the occasion required, at least a few felt constrained to lift and examine the skull—probably under the inspiration of feelings akin to those of Hamlet when he leant and moralized over Yorrick's grave, and who, if aware of the passage, might have quoted appropriately enough the language of Byron:—

“ Look on its broken arch, its ruined hall—
 Its chambers desolate, and portals foul;
 Yes, this was once ambition's airy hall.
 The dome of thought, the palace of the soul!
 Behold through each lack-lustre eyeless hole,
 The gay recess of wisdom and of wit—
 Of passion's host that never brooked control—
 Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ
 People this lonely tower—this tenement refit.”

Every thing, as we have said, was conducted with the greatest propriety and care; and after the second grave-bed of the poet and his offspring had been carefully prepared, the original tomb-stone was placed above their ashes, and the vault closed for a period of nearly nineteen years—that is, from the 19th September, 1815, till the 28th March, 1834. The well-known Mr Matthews, a man of high and original genius, on one occasion paid a visit to Dumfries; and it fell to the lot of the writer to accompany him to the house of Mrs Burns, and St. Michael's church-yard. On entering the mausoleum the great comedian became obviously highly excited, and, after a little pause, enquired eagerly “ what has become of the original tombstone?” and on this question being answered, expressed the greatest regret that it had not been inserted as part of the pavement in front of the sculpture, as was done in the case of Shakspeare's

mausoleum at Stratford-upon-Avon. And here we cannot resist quoting a brief passage from the works of Mr Washington Irving:—"A few years since, as some labourers were digging to make an adjoining vault, the earth caved in, so as to leave a vacant space almost like an arch, through which one might have looked into Shakspeare's grave. No one, however, presumed to meddle with his bones, so awfully guarded by a malediction; and lest any of the idle or curious, or any collector of relics, should have been tempted to commit depredations, the old sexton kept watch over the spot for two days, until the vault was finished, and the aperture closed. He told me he had made bold to look in at the hole, but could see neither coffin nor bones—nothing but dust. *It was something, I thought, to have seen even the dust of Shakspeare.*"

The remains of Mrs Burns, as has already been stated, were interred on Tuesday, the 1st April. On the day preceding the vault was opened by Mr Crombie—a work of considerable difficulty and labour—and the keys of the mausoleum, which is guarded round and round with high iron-pillared doors, placed temporarily in the possession of Mr M'Diarmid. And here it may be best to confess the whole truth, and conceal nothing. Ever since we became acquainted with what occurred on the 19th September, 1815, we have regretted that so favourable an opportunity was missed of taking a cast from the poet's skull,—and the more so, when informed that a phrenologist had made an imaginary one from his works and history, and on this theory assigned to Burns all the qualities of a great statesman. In this regret we were joined by many, and not a few persons here and elsewhere, by word and by letter, prompted and urged the propriety of a measure we had previously determined to adopt, if possible. But one difficulty remained behind—soothing the repugnance, and conciliating the feelings, of those who alone had a right to decide—the

principal male relatives of the bard and his late relict. Mr Armour arrived from London by Monday's mail, and we confess it was six o'clock P. M. before we could find courage to introduce the subject. We did, however, name it at last, and, after much anxious conversation, obtained a reluctant and conditional consent. From this moment matters were put in train, and at seven a small party repaired, one by one, and by different routes, to St. Michael's church-yard. But the hour was found unsuitable, and the opportunity inapt, from the number of anxious eyes that were still abroad. At nine, however, the attempt was renewed with all the success which the most enthusiastic admirers of genius or science could desire. Again the party conferred privately, and proceeded stealthily, one after another, by the quietest paths, and after clambering over the church-yard walls met by appointment in front of the mausoleum. In this, it must be confessed, there was something degrading, which reminded us of the horrid trade of body-snatching; but the most profound secrecy was indispensable, and if there be any who feel inclined to impute blame, all we can say is—our motives were good, and totally alien to those of idle curiosity. Mr Blacklock offered his services at a favourable moment, and it was well we had a gentleman with us qualified to give a scientific account of the appearance, preservation, and peculiarities, of the skull. While one of our number kept watch above, the rest of the party descended into the vault by means of a ladder and a muffled lantern; and we shall not readily forget the mingled emotions that arose in the mind,—passing away and returning with the most thrilling influence,—as we stood solemnly on the poet's grave, and recalled the awful malediction of Shakspeare. The night was most serene, and the dim light of the lantern, and the loneliness of the vault, contrasted strikingly with the lambent light of the host of stars that sparkled brightly in the heavens

above. Mr Crombie's knowledge of localities rendered the process of disinterment comparatively easy, and Mr Bogie, who had seen the skull in 1815, proclaimed its identity the moment it appeared. But in the absence of such a witness its size and character were quite sufficient to avouch the fact, and, after it had been carefully cleaned, a cast was taken from it before the parties retired to rest. In the execution of this duty they received the most efficient assistance from Mr James Fraser, plasterer, whose skill and style of handling would do no discredit to a London artist. Just as the party were about to separate the clock chimed the hour of one; and although ten individuals were present at the last, including our chief magistrate, Mr Hamilton, and Rector M'Millan, the largest hat of the whole was found too narrow to receive the skull—a sufficient proof of its extraordinary size. Early on Tuesday morning a leaden box was made, and carefully lined with the softest materials, and on the same day we, as in duty bound, witnessed the reinterment of the sacred relic it contained, previous to the funeral of Mrs Burns. The pious wish expressed by Mr Matthews has at length been gratified, by removing the original tombstone from the vault, and placing it within the iron railing which protects the sculpture. In accomplishing this the said railing had to be slightly enlarged; and the stone now occupies a position where it can be seen by all without being trode upon, or injured by any. The inscriptions upon it are as follow, the closing one having been chiseled within the last few days:—

“In memory of Robert Burns, who died the 21st July, 1796, in the 37th year of his age; and Maxwell Burns, who died 25th April, 1799, aged two years and nine months. Also, of Francis Wallace Burns, who died 9th July, 1803, aged 14 years. Also, of Jean Armour, relict of the poet, born February, 1765, died 26th March, 1834.”

What follows is from the pen of Mr Blacklock :—

“On Monday night, 31st March, 1834, Mr John M'Diarmid, Mr Adam Rankine, Mr James Kerr, Mr James Bogie, Mr Andrew Crombie, and the subscriber, descended into the vault of the Mausoleum for the purpose of examining the remains of Burns, and, if possible, procuring a cast of his skull. Mr Crombie having witnessed the exhumation of the bard's remains in 1815, and seen them deposited in their present resting place, at once pointed out the exact spot where the head would be found, and a few spadefuls of loose sandy soil being removed, the skull was brought into view, and carefully lifted.

“The cranial bones were perfect in every respect, if we except a little erosion of their external table, and firmly held together by their sutures ; even the delicate bones of the orbits, with the trifling exception of the *os unguis* in the left, were sound and uninjured by death and the grave. The superior maxillary bones still retained the four most posterior teeth on each side, including the *dentes sapientiæ*, and all without spot or blemish ; the *incisores, cuspidati, &c.*, had, in all probability, recently dropt from the jaw, for the *alveoli* were but little decayed. The bones of the face and palate were also sound. Some small portions of black hair, with a very few gray hairs intermixed, were observed while detaching some extraneous matter from the occiput. Indeed nothing could exceed the high state of preservation in which we found the bones of the cranium, or offer a fairer opportunity of supplying what has so long been desiderated by phrenologists—a correct model of our immortal poet's head : and in order to accomplish this in the most accurate and satisfactory manner, every particle of sand, or other foreign body, was carefully washed off, and the plaster of Paris applied with all the tact and accuracy of an experienced artist. The cast is admirably taken, and cannot fail to prove highly interesting to phrenologists and others.

“Having completed our intention, the skull, securely enclosed in a leaden case, was again committed to the earth precisely where we found it.

“Dumfries, 1st April, 1834. ARCHD. BLACKLOCK.”

1834

INTERESTING SALE.

THE effects left by the late Mrs Burns, at the sale on the 10th and 11th April, realized a handsome sum of money, apart from the plate, books, and pictures, and retained relics of particular value, such as the desk upon which the poet wrote, and the shelved press that contained his small but well-selected library. During the first day's sale the attendance was large, and included persons of the highest consideration. The auctioneer commenced with small articles, and when he came to a broken copper coffee-pot there were so many bidders for even a delapidated relic, that the price paid exceeded twenty-fold the intrinsic value. A tea-kettle of the same metal succeeded, and reached the high point of £2 sterling; and a pair of brass candlesticks (the state ones at Ellisland) were bought on commission for Mr Forrest, clothier, London—price £2, 1s. Of the linens, a table-cloth, marked 1792, was knocked down at £5, 7s., which, speaking commercially, may be worth half-a-crown or five shillings. Many other articles commanded handsome prices, and the older and plainer the furniture the better it sold. Still not a few things went below their value, particularly such as were handsome and of modern construction. On the 11th, the attendance was much thinner, from the impression that few, if any, relics remained on hand; but this was a mistake, and as the day advanced the spirit of competition became very keen. The rusty iron top of a shower bath, which Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop sent to the poet when afflicted with rheumatism, was bought by a Carlisle gentleman for 28 shillings; and what is more extraordinary, a low wooden kitchen chair, on which the late Mrs Burns sat when nursing her children, was run up to £3, 7s. The crystal and china were much coveted, and brought, in most cases, splendid prices. Even an old fender reached a figure which would go far to buy half-a-dozen new ones, and everything towards the close attracted notice, down to grey-beards, bottles, and a half-worn pair of bellows. The poet's eight-day clock, made by a Mauchline artist of the name of Brown, which stood originally in the house at Mossgiel, and accompanied him in his removals to Ellisland and Dumfries, attracted great attention from the circumstance that it had frequently been wound up by his own hand, and, for more than half a century, had chimed or struck "the wee short hour syont the twal," and every other in the twenty-four. In a few seconds it was bid up to fifteen pounds or guineas, and was finally disposed of for £35. The purchaser had a hard battle to fight; but his spirit was good, and his purse obviously not a light one, and the story ran that he had instructed Mr Richardson to secure a preference at any sum under £60. The said clock is a most interesting relic, and however highly tempted, we trust the present spirited possessor will be long enabled to retain such a precious heir-loom directly or indirectly in the family.







































