

accidents that have mixed with it ; and yet how strange a tone do they not too frequently succeed in imparting to the worship ! There was much of apology at the Burns' festival for the errors of the poet ; and it said at least something for the morals of the time, whatever it might for the taste of the speakers, that such should have been the case. In a remoter and more darkened age of the world, like those ages in which hero-worship rose into religion, the errors would have been remembered, but the apology would have been wanting. Burns would have been deified into an Apollo, and his love-passages with the nymphs Daphne, Leucothoe, and Coronis, and his drinking bouts with Admetus and Hyacinthus, would have been registered simply as incidents in his history,—incidents which in the course of time would have come to serve as precedents for his worshippers. We are afraid that, maugre regret and apology, there is too much of this as it is. His hapless errors, so fatal to himself, have been too often surveyed through the dazzling halo of his celebrity. The felt influence of his greatness has extended to his faults, as if they were part and parcel of that greatness. The atmosphere of the sun conceals the sun's spots from the unassisted eye of the observer ; but the atmosphere of glory that surrounds the memory of Burns has not had a similar effect. To many at least it has the effect of making his blemishes appear less as original flaws than as a species of beauty-spots, of a fashion to be imitated. How can we marvel that the old worshippers of the offspring of Saturn or of Latona should have imitated their gods in their crimes, if in these our days of light, with the model of a perfect religion before our eyes, hero-worship should be found to exert, as of old, a demoralizing tendency ! But it would not be easy to say where more emphatic or most honest warning could be found on this head than in the writings of Burns himself. We stake his own deeply-mournful prediction of the fate which he