

saw awaiting him, against all ever advanced on the opposite side :—

“ The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the social glow,
And safter flame ;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name.”

Despite the authority of high names, we are no admirers of hero-worship. We are not insensible to what we may term the natural claims of Burns on the admiration of his country, both as a writer and as a character of great bulk and power. It would be hypocrisy in us to say that we were. Were his writings to be annihilated to-morrow, we could restore from memory some of the best of them entire, and not a few of the more striking passages in many of the others. Nor are we unimpressed by the massiveness of his character as a man. We bear about with us an adequate idea of it, as developed in that deeply-mournful tragedy, his life. But we would not choose to go and worship at his festival. There was a hollowness about the ceremony, independently of the falseness of the principles on which its ritual was framed. Of the thousands who attended, how many, does the reader think, would have sympathized, had they seen the light some fifty years earlier, with the *man* Robert Burns? How many of them grappled in idea at his festival with other than a mere phantom of the imagination,—a large but intangible shade, obscure and indefinable as that conjured up by the uninformed Londoner of Cromwell or of Johnson? Rather more than fifty years ago, the sinking sun shone brightly, one fine afternoon, on the stately tenements of Dumfries, and threw its slant rule of light athwart the principal street of the town. The shadows of the houses on the western side were stretched half-way across the pavement; while on the side opposite, the red beam seemed as if sleeping on jutting irregular fronts