

circumstances at all by way of apology. It has struck me, indeed, that the Tales are nearly all of a pensive or tragical cast, and that in congenial circumstances they might have had a more joyous and elastic tone, in keeping with a healthier condition of the nervous system. Yet their defects must undoubtedly belong to the mind of their author. I am far from being under the delusion that he was, or was ever destined to be, a Walter Scott or Charles Dickens. The faculties of plot and drama, which find their scope in the story and the novel, were among the weakest, instead of the strongest, of his powers. Yet I am deceived if the lovers and students of Hugh Miller's Works will not find in the "Tales and Sketches" some matter of special interest. In the first three there are, I think, glimpses into his own inner life, such as he, with most men of reserved and dignified character, would choose rather to personify in another than to make a parade of in their own person, when coming forward avowedly to write of themselves. And, then, if he could have held a conversation with Robert Burns, so that all the world might hear, I think there are few who would not have listened with some curiosity. In his "Recollections of Burns" we have his own side of such conversation; for it seems evident that it is himself that he has set to travelling and talking in the person of Mr. Lindsay.

But of Burns's share in the dialogue the reader is the best judge. Some may hold that he is too like Hugh Miller himself,—too philosophic in idea, and too pure in sentiment. In regard to this, we