

warmer friend. There was an exuberance of love in his large heart that encircled in its flow relatives, friends, associates, his country, the world; and, in his kindlier moods, the sympathetic influence which he exerted over the hearts of others seemed magical. I laughed and cried this evening by turns. I was conscious of a wider and a warmer expansion of feeling than I had ever experienced before. My very imagination seemed invigorated, by breathing, as it were, in the same atmosphere with his. We parted early next morning; and when I again visited Dumfries, I went and wept over his grave. Forty years have now passed since his death; and in that time, many poets have arisen to achieve a rapid and brilliant celebrity; but they seem the meteors of a lower sky; the flash passes hastily from the expanse, and we see but one great light looking steadily upon us from above. It is Burns who is exclusively the poet of his country. Other writers inscribe their names on the plaster which covers for the time the outside structure of society; his is engraved, like that of the Egyptian architect, on the ever-during granite within. The fame of the others rises and falls with the uncertain undulations of the mode on which they have reared it; his remains fixed and permanent as the human nature on which it is based. Or, to borrow the figure Johnson employs in illustrating the unfluctuating celebrity of a scarcely greater poet, "The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place; the stream of time which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets passes by, without injury, the adamant of Shakspeare."