

**ROBERT BURNS AND
WALTER SCOTT:
TWO LIVES. [1858]**

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Robert Burns and Walter Scott: Two Lives. [1858] by James White

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JAMES WHITE

**ROBERT BURNS AND
WALTER SCOTT:
TWO LIVES. [1858]**



ROBERT BURNS

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ROBERT BURNS
AND
SIR WALTER SCOTT:

Two Vols.

BY
THE REV. JAMES WHITE,
AUTHOR OF "THE LANDMARKS OF ENGLISH HISTORY,"
ETC.

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ROBERT BURNS.

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1759-1796.

EVERYBODY knows the name of Robert Burns, but, as in the case of many others, the name is nearly all that is known. He is a poet; no one is ignorant of that. A Scottish poet; that also is universally known. But by what means his poetic faculty was called forth, at what exact period he lived, how he was received in his own time, how his reputation has been preserved till now, and what are the constituents of his powers,—very few of us could answer minutely, if examined on these points.

There are excellent lives of Burns; some too ponderous for easy reference, others devoting themselves exclusively to the incidents of his career, and referring the reader for examples of his genius to separate portions of his works. Without pretending to rival either the completeness of the larger biographies, or the critical skill of the smaller, it is the object of the present little sketch to give a narrative of the poet's life, with a different view of some portions of his career from that which obtained a few years ago,

interspersing it with such specimens of his genius as will enable the reader both to know the man, and judge for himself of his merits as an author. Those who are already masters of his poems will not be unwilling to read short selections from them again. Those to whom they are new, will assuredly be grateful for the opportunity of making their acquaintance.

Many years ago, in the good old days of fast coaches and dusty roads, I was fortunate enough to sit on the box, next the well-known and highly respected Mr. Fawlkner, the driver of the "Rocket" from Portsmouth to London. When we were fairly in a trot, he began the conversation by telling us that "he and about forty others had been celebrating Bobby's birthday the night before." I inquired who "Bobby" was; and he said, "Burns, sir; Robert Burns the poet." And all the way through Petersfield, and all the way to Guildford, and all the way to Hatchett's, in Piccadilly, Mr. Fawlkner and I spoke, quoted, criticised, and admired Robert Burns. Now this is real fame. Here was an English coachman (who, by the by, never travelled without an edition of his favourite poet in the pocket of the coach) engaged with forty tradesmen, shipowners, and other gentlemen, in the far south, in the busy port of Portsmouth, doing honour to the memory of the most tho-