

**A WINTER WITH ROBERT BURNS, BEING
ANNALS OF HIS PATRONS AND
ASSOCIATES IN EDINBURGH
DURING THE YEAR 1786-7, AND DETAILS
OF HIS INAUGURATION AS POET-
LAUREATE OF THE CAN: KIL**

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A Winter with Robert Burns, Being Annals of His Patrons and Associates in Edinburgh During the Year 1786-7, and Details of His Inauguration as Poet-Laureate of the Can: Kil by James Marshall

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JAMES MARSHALL

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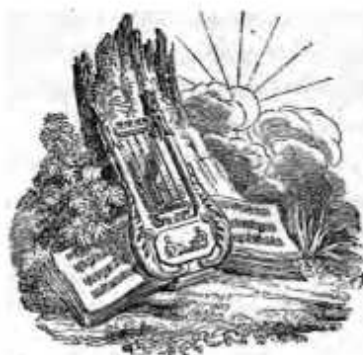
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TO THE
Right Worshipful Master
AND THE
Worthy Brethren of the Lodge
CONFRATE KILWINNING,
EDINBURGH.

R. W. M.

The minute of the meeting of your lodge of November 26, 1845, bears that "Br. J. M. stated that he attended for the purpose of re-introducing a member of the lodge, Br. Stewart Watson, R.I.A., who had been many years abroad in the prosecution of his studies and profession as an artist. After his return from Rome to London, he last year, in a letter, happened to ask the Mover for news of *Masonry* in Edinburgh.* He could

* This was in jocular allusion to the fact of what he termed a desertion of his post in time of calamity, by going abroad during the ravages of the cholera, while he held the office of Depute Master of the "Ancient Lodge of Edinburgh Mary's Chapel," of which his correspondent was Master.

not furnish news; but old associations prompted his suggesting, as a fitting subject for the exercise of the artist's improved talents, a painting of the *Inauguration of Robert Burns as Poet-Laureate* of this lodge. After giving some details in reference to the traditional information derived from old members, which had attracted his special notice to the subject, and it being one which would not trench on the mysteries of the Order, he moved that access be given to the records, and to the *interior* and *paraphernalia* of the lodge for the purpose mentioned.—Br. W. C. stated that he was initiated a year or two after the poet had left Edinburgh, yet he could vouch for the truth of what had been advanced in relation to the tradition of members a few years his seniors. He had himself spent three of the happiest days of his life in the company of Burns at Auchtertyre-House during the autumn of 1787. In coming to the lodge on this occasion, he had not the most distant idea that such a motion would be made, but was no less taken by surprise than delight in consequence of the proposition, and was glad of the opportunity of seconding such a motion. It was unanimously entertained, and laid on the table for disposal at next meeting; meanwhile Br.

M. was requested to furnish what details he could on the subject." The minute of next meeting, held on 3d December, bears that "consideration of Br. M.'s motion having been resumed, it was unanimously carried."

I have now the satisfaction of informing you that the painting is finished, and that it is proposed to publish an engraving of it, the number of copies to be thrown off being limited.

I found it advantageous to make additional inquiries, and to examine Masonic and other Records for the better illustration of the event; and I found that it would be necessary to supply some preliminary observations illustrative of the Bard's origin and eventful life; in reference to which he makes the gipsy sibyl foretell—

He'll ha'e misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';
He'll be a credit to us a';
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

The results of my investigation, in addition to annals of Burns' connexion with the Order, expanded into biographical descriptions of the characters represented in the Painting. Hopeful

that these may be found of some interest to the public they have been printed. A lithographed Key to the Picture is also here supplied.

I have now the honour of submitting the following pages in compliance with your request ;

And I am,

R. W. M.,

Yours Fraternaly,

J. M.

ROBERT BURNS.

I.—INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

Then farewell hopes o' laurel boughs,
To garland my poetic brows !
Henceforth I'll rove where buay ploughs
 Are whistling thrang,
And teach the lanely hights and howes
 My rustic sang.—*BURNS.*

Yet read the names that know not death,
 Few nobler ones than Burns are there ;
And few have worn a greener wreath
 Than that which binds his hair.—*HALLECK.*

It has been said by many that ROBERT BURNS was neglected by his country, and averred in reply that he was irreligious, revolutionary, and “terribly given to drink.” All this nonsense is now dispelled ; and the only matter of surprise is that his assailants, and those who in his behalf assailed his countrymen, were not at once confuted by reference to his own glorious writings, or by the evidence borne by such of his contemporaries as Professor Dugald Stewart. That erudite, excellent, and discriminating man, speaking of the poet's sojourn in Edinburgh, and what should have been done for him, said, “I always wished that his pursuits and habits should continue the same as in the former part of his life, with the addition of what I con-