

**BURNS CENTENARY 21ST JULY
1896: GREAT DEMONSTRATION
AT DUMFRIES. SPEECHES BY
LORD ROSEBERY AT DUMFRIES
AND GLASGOW**

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Burns Centenary 21st July 1896: Great Demonstration at Dumfries. Speeches by Lord Rosebery at Dumfries and Glasgow by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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BURNS CENTENARY

21ST JULY 1896

GREAT DEMONSTRATION AT DUMFRIES

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS)

SPEECHES BY LORD ROSEBERY AT DUMFRIES
AND GLASGOW

Reprinted from *Dumfries & Galloway Standard*

SECOND EDITION

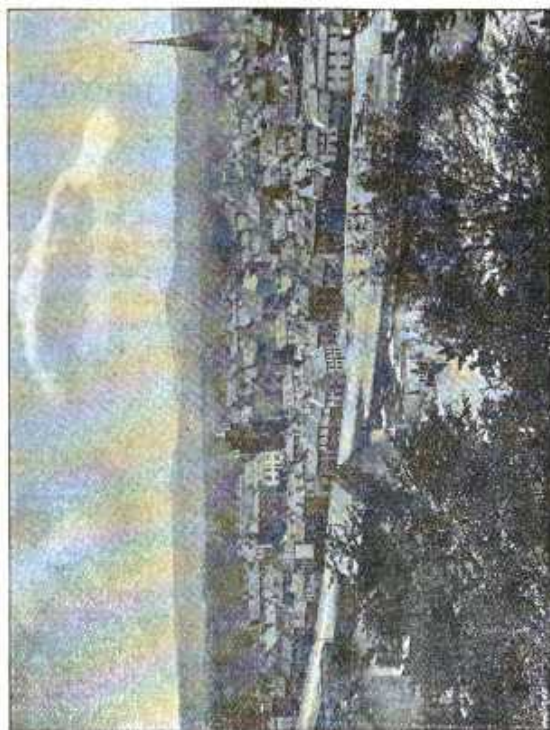


*"Jean, one hundred years hence they'll think mair o' me than
they do now"*

DUMFRIES :
PRINTED BY THOS. HUNTER & CO., STANDARDE OFFICE

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1596

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DUMFRIES, with Whitesands in the foreground, as seen from the other side of the river.

PREFATORY.



SPECIAL EDITION of the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, containing an elaborate account of the proceedings in this town on the 21st of July was published at five o'clock on the evening of that day; and of this and next day's issue combined over nineteen thousand copies were printed. The publication was completely exhausted within forty-eight hours; and numerous applications continuing to come in, the narrative is now reproduced in book form.

Errors incidental to unavoidable haste have been corrected where observed; and the record thus revised has been extended by the inclusion of the magnificent speech which Lord Rosebery delivered in Glasgow under the auspices of the Burns Exhibition Committee. Additional illustrations have also been introduced. Among these are a view of the impressive ceremony at the Mausoleum, and a very effective impression of Turnerelli's sculpture of the Muse of Poetry finding Burns at the plough. The former was photographed by Mr Moryson; the latter by Mr Mackenzie, Dumfries. To both gentlemen we have to express our indebtedness for permission to use the prints.

Numerous photographs of the procession have been secured by various artists, and are on sale at the bookshops. These we have not sought to embody; for excellent though most of them are, it is impossible to make a selection which would convey any adequate idea of the length and picturesqueness of the unique parade.

One remark is suggested by them. They reveal no dense crowding at any point of the route. The reason is, that the windows of shops and houses were packed with spectators, and the people in the streets kept position while the march went past. An immense number of strangers visited the town; and but for panic alarms which had been raised of the possibilities of accident from swaying multitudes in narrow thoroughfares—an ambulance corps was a part of the

advertised precautionary measures—the number would perhaps have been doubled or trebled. Even then there would have been space sufficient for the procession to pass in perfect order.

There was no accident attributable to the day's proceedings. We have the utmost satisfaction in accentuating this fact in the present publication, which forms their fullest chronicle. It will, we trust, be preserved as such in many a Scottish home. For those proceedings, which were more than national, will long possess a wide-spread interest. The fame that Burns predicted for himself a hundred years ago will be greater a hundred years hence; and the words of Lord Rosebery, who has witnessed and taken part in not a few splendid pageants in this and other lands, will then be recalled. "I can say now in cold blood," we quote from his Lordship's charming letter to Provost Glover, with reference to the Dumfries commemoration, "that I think it was by far the most interesting memorial ceremony that ever I witnessed."

T. WATSON.

DUMFRIES, August 6, 1896.

SECOND EDITION.

The first edition, consisting of 2000 copies, was sold out within ten days. There being numerous orders still unexecuted, a second edition of 1550 copies is now issued. A description of the reception of the Australian wreath on the 7th of August has been added in the form of an appendix, and the reports of Lord Rosebery's speeches have been compared with the authorised text. It is not the least remarkable of many evidences of the wide-spread interest in the Dumfries demonstration that the first edition of this account of it has been so quickly exhausted and a second called for. In the history of the local press there is absolutely no parallel to this experience.

T. W.

August 21, 1896.

CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF BURNS.

COMMEMORATION IN DUMFRIES.

From the Dumfries and Galloway Standard, July 22, 1896.

EDITORIAL.

THE Centenary of the death of Robert Burns has been fittingly commemorated in the town where he died and which holds his dust. Yesterday his countrymen did not come to bury the poet but to praise him. All that could be buried of Burns was committed to the earth a hundred years ago. From lands beyond the seas and from many parts of our own land beautiful wreaths were sent or brought to be placed upon his tomb. There never descended upon the grave of any man in such manner and from quarters so remote so many of those chaste symbols of affectionate regard. The tomb and the space around it are literally shrouded with wreaths. But these were not bedewed by tears though composed in love. The time is too distant from the poet's death to be consecrated to sorrow. Yesterday's pageant was that of a festival, not that of a funeral. The decorated town, with Venetian masts erected in the streets, and gay-coloured streamers, the parade of arts and industries, civic authority and fraternal association, in the picturesque and imposing procession, the equal of which has not been seen in our midst, was expressive of pride, not

of pain. Homage was done at the shrine of a hero, of a prophet, by a people conscious of his living influence, and thankful for it. "We are a sort of poetical Mohammedans, gathered in a sort of poetical Mecca," said Lord Rosebery in his speech to the great meeting in the Drill Hall—a speech which is one of the tenderest and truest and most beautiful of all the contributions ever made to the fuller study of that wonderful peasant regarding the splendour of whose poetic genius even the critics are agreed, and whose massive and magnetic personality is all that the critics have to criticise; "and yet we are assembled in our high enthusiasm under circumstances which are somewhat paradoxical, for with all the appearance of joy we celebrate not a festival but a tragedy."

In a sense the life of every man and every woman may be said to be a tragedy. But Burns's life towards and at its close was peculiarly tragic. With the utmost delicacy, with the deepest sympathy, Lord Rosebery told the story afresh, in language which will not bear revision. It might have been happier for Burns, he thinks, had he died earlier. But posterity "could not have spared the songs which belong to those years [in Dumfries]; and above all that supreme creed and comfort which he bequeathed to the world, 'A man's a man for a' that,' would have remained undelivered." We remember a Sheriff-Substitute of Dumfriesshire—not Sheriff Campion—say of this song that it had done more mischief than any other ever written. For what is best in Burns, not for what is worst, he is by reactionary minds most condemned. It was this class of mind which had no word of censure for his excesses of appetite, but was ready to deprive him of his means of livelihood because of his political opinions, his sympathy with the cause of the French Revolution. There is much in the writings of Burns that is objectionable; but the most of it would never have been published by himself. In spite of it he is beloved and his fame extends. "To-day," said Lord Rosebery, "is not merely the melancholy anniversary of death, but the rich and incomparable fulfilment of prophecy. For this is the

moment to which Burns looked forward when he said to his wife—'Dont be afraid. I'll be more respected a hundred years after I am dead than I am at present.' To-day the hundred years are completed, and we can judge of the prediction. On that point we must all be unanimous. Burns had honour in his life-time, but his fame has rolled like a snowball since his death, and it rolls on. There is indeed no parallel to it in the world. It sets the calculations of compound interest at defiance. He is not," continued the orator, throwing off the solemnity, the sadness with which his eloquence had clothed itself, and arousing by a stirring passage the patriotic enthusiasm of his audience—"He is not merely the watchword of a nation that carries and implants Burns worship all over the globe as birds carry seeds, but he has become the champion and the patron saint of democracy. He bears aloft the banner of the essential equality of men. His birthday is celebrated a hundred and thirty-seven years after its occurrence more universally than that of any other human being. He reigns over a greater dominion than any empire that the world has ever seen. Neither does the ardour of his devotees decrease. Ayr and Ellisland, Mauchline and Dumfries, are still shrines to countless pilgrims. Burns statues are a hardy annual. Burns clubs spring up like mushrooms after rain. The editions of Burns are as the sands of the sea. The production of Burns manuscripts was a lucrative branch of industry until it was checked by the untimely interference of the law. No canonised name in the calendar excites so blind and enthusiastic adoration. Whatever Burns may have contemplated in the boldest flight of his imagination, whatever dream he may have fondled in the wildest moments of his elation, must have fallen utterly short of the reality, as we know to-day."

Not the least valuable of the products of the Centenary demonstration are the estimates of the poet and his work elicited from outstanding literary persons at home and abroad. Our readers will not fail to be struck by the critical penetration displayed by these ; and to this quality