

SIR PATRICK J. DOLLAN. L. J. P. IMMORTAL MEMORY. (1944).

Sir Patrick J. Dollan former Lord Provost of the city of Glasgow, proposed "The Immortal Memory" at the anniversary dinner of the Burns Howff Club, which was held in the Globe Hotel, Dumfries, on Tuesday evening. Sir Patrick's address was most inspiring and eloquent, and was delivered in his characteristic vigorous style.

He described Burns as a great humanitarian whose philosophy embraced practically all the ideals which the people of the present day were striving to attain. Burns was a man who had done more than any other to bring all classes, and creeds, and nations together. In his poems were advocated such reforms as were included in the Beveridge Report, and as were discussed in international conferences for the establishment of peace and security in the world.

Sir Patrick Dollan, in submitting the toast of "The Immortal Memory", prefaced his address by saying that he received many invitations to speak that night, some from England, two from Ireland, and several from Scotland, and after considering all these he decided to accept the invitation to the Howff Club, because he had always wanted to propose the toast in Dumfries and particularly in the Globe Inn. The Globe Inn was not a place he detested or deprecated, but a place he was very fond of, and he wanted to come there on that night to see if it were possible to recapture for himself, and, he hoped, for those present, some of the original purpose which inspired the poet when he wrote many of the songs, many of the poems, and scores of the letters which still interested them and guided them in their daily activities? local, national and international. If he spoke along these lines, they would understand that he was doing so because he felt that the time had come for Scotland to make an even greater contribution to the social, industrial and security progress of the world, than she had done in the past, and when the war was giving them a chance of rearing a living memorial to Robert Burns, which would be a memorial worthy of his name, and in keeping with the greatness of the man, and the message he gave to the world. They would therefore excuse him if he did not refer to Burns as a great poet, as a remarkable lover, as a wonderful songster, and devoted himself to a consideration of the contribution which

Burns made to the thought of mankind, as a social prophet and international humanitarian. It was in that inn that Burns got many of his ideas, and from many of the people in Dumfries he derived the inspiration which enabled him to write three of his greatest songs, and which were written not for Scotsmen but for men of all races, Norwegians and Poles, from whatever country they came, because he believed in the fundamental goodness of mankind, and their capacity for goodwill and co—operation, provided these qualities were properly exploited and contributed towards mutual aid and social security instead

of for individual aggrandisement. It was necessary for the object he had in view to clear away some misconceptions.

There could be no greater folly on the part of Scotsmen or Scotswomen than to go about saying that Robert Burns was not appreciated in his own lifetime, because it was not true. There was no poet in the later part of the eighteenth century so well respected in Scotland, and who had a bigger public for his writings, than Robert Burns, and if in his later years he had some misfortunes, these were mainly the result of his own neglect of commercial wealth, and because he thought more in terms of other people than of himself. So he said that Scotland did appreciate Robert Burns. Scotland liked him? and if it had not been that he himself elected when he came to Dumfries—shire

to pursue the calling of a farmer and then of Exciseman, and give his writing free to his country, he might have amassed great riches, and would have died, not £5 in debt, but a very rich man. Therefore they could now say that his death in poverty—stricken circumstances was one of his own seeking, and should not be blamed upon the people of Scotland who were living at that time. He said that because he believed that no country could become a great nation, helping its own and other people, unless it had a proper understanding of its own social history, and it was good for them to know that in the latter part of the eighteenth century, there were farmers like Robert Burns, not an ignorant ploughman, not a man who had never received any education? but a man who was probably

one of the best educated men of his time. He had been well schooled, he had been well disciplined, by a very intelligent father. He had been helped by a considerate mother, and, in these circumstances, had acquired an education which it was even now difficult for

the majority of us to obtain. Without that education, it would have been impossible for Robert Burns to do the things he did, and leave his mark on the world so indelibly as he did leave it when he died. Therefore they said that Robert Burns was a well—educated man, educated in Scottish traditions and in Scottish principles, and they ought to be proud of a country that made it possible for such an education to be given to him as enabled him to meet on terms of equality, the elite of his time of whatever rank, and to talk as confidently as they did on the various subjects that might come up for discussion.

The international events which influenced Burns were the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. The American War of Independence undoubtedly helped Burns a great deal, and they should not forget that he had the common sense to appreciate the naturalness of the American War, and he was inclined, if he felt that grievances were not going to be remedied constitutionally, to think of other ways

of remedying them. He knew instinctively that if we had been treated as those in America were being treated, if we were being taxed without representation, and governed without representation, we too would have rebelled. Because of that, he sympathised to a large extent with the risings of 1715 and 1745: and it was only when he saw that those risings, however well intentioned, could not in the modern world then developing, succeed, that he turned his mind to constitutional methods of getting these things rectified. It did not do our American friends any harm in the present state of world affairs, when we were grateful to have America at our side, to tell them that there would not have been a War of Independence in America, if it had not been for Scottish and English and Irish settlers

in America. These were the men who started the rebellion and carried it on, and who said that if they were not going to get a square deal from the English Government and Parliament, they were going to set up their own form of government and govern their country according to their ideas. It was characteristic of the Scots not only that Burns should have expressed his sympathy with the War of Independence and acclaimed George

Washington on his first birthday as President, but that the St. Andrew Society in New York, when they met in the first month of the war to decide which side they would support - the voting was equal. The chairman did not give his deliberative vote, and adjourned the meeting until the war was over and American independence was recognised. Whenever it had been recognised, he called the adjourned meeting and it was unanimously decided to recognise the American independence. They could

therefore see that the wisdom that was expressed by Burns in verse and in sentiment in letters, was understood by Scots on the other side, and if Americans were fighting for freedom to-day, they were fighting for

it because British settlers first taught them the meaning of freedom. We had nothing to be ashamed of in telling them that, and had every reason to be proud of our part in making America the great democratic Republic it was at the present time.

The French Revolution was received by some governing classes in this country, much as the Russian Revolution was received towards the end of the last war. Revolutions could only take place in countries if the conditions were rotten. Such conditions must inevitably produce upheavals, and when they became in every way bad, a revolution became more or less inevitable. The people were denied representation. They were serfs. They were governed by an absolute dictatorship ruling in the guise of a monarchy, and therefore they were bound by the circumstances to do or die, and they had the revolution. The revolution was not meant to be a complete upheaval. It did not mean at that time economic equality. It did not mean license. It did not mean freedom to do

what they liked. All the phrase Liberty, Equality and Fraternity meant was liberty before the law, that all men should be treated alike before the law, and be given justice when they had recourse to the law. Robert Burns knew that when he saluted that revolution, that in Scotland, with a population of about 1,800,000¹ there were no more than 2,000 voters. The total number of voters in the city of Glasgow was 27, and these included the members

of the Town Council. In Ayrshire and Dumfries-shire, there were no more than 300 between the two counties, and in some parts of the country Members of Parliament were elected

by no more than a cabal of fifteen or twenty people. Burns knew that was not fair representation, and he felt that they could rejoice in the establishment of independence in America with constitutional democracy, and the same thing in France, and that we might be able to get inspiration from the movement of these countries to establish a similar democracy here. He wrote "Scots Wha Hae", not as a battle hymn celebrating the Battle

of Bannockburn, but as a call to men of goodwill in all classes, in all parts of the world, to lay their tyrants low, not merely the tyrants in Scotland - and there were a good many at that time - but tyrants in other lands as well.

"Scots Wha Hae," if Premier Stalin would allow him to say it, should be adopted as the new Internationale, now that he had abandoned the old Internationale. The song had been translated into thirty-seven European languages, and was known at least to some of the people in all these countries, and was capable of being understood by them as a call to every man to make the supreme sacrifice if need be, to defend, not only his rights as an individual, but his social and political rights as ? of his country.

"A man's a Man" was written in the same way for that purpose. "Scots Wha Hae" proclaimed in simple understandable language, the rights of every man. "A Man's a Man for a' That" did not mean that Robert Burns wanted to destroy everybody who had a title, because probably no man knew more members of the House of Lords than Burns, and he never worried if they were lords. So long as they were decent men he did not worry about titles. :That he was concerned about was the heart, the soul and mind of the man. When the French Revolution ended and Napoleon set himself up to become the master of Europe, and was going

to dominate every other country as well as his own, and Britain was included in the menace, Burns, who had been the friend of all mankind, said all these things had to be put on

one side, and he wrote "The Dumfries Volunteers," in which he proclaimed the need for all classes uniting to defend, not merely the rights of Scotland, but the rights of Britain. He hoped fervid Scottish Nationalists would keep that in mind. He showed that Scotland in Britain could be a bigger country than Scotland alone. It was now the time for them to amalgamate whole—heartedly with the English and the British people, wherever they might be. He pointed out that these rights should only be defended by British people, and wrote the familiar lines about the constitutional monarchy, in which he said that "When we sing God Save the King we don't forget the people." Although, like many of them, Burns was theoretically a Republican, he understood that if a constitutional monarchy would work, it was better to keep a thing that worked decently, than to strive for something which, however good theoretically it might be, might be proved

to be impracticable and dangerous when in operations

There had been in the last two years, more talk about planning for the future than there had ever been in his time. But planners were not new. Could they tell him any better social planner than Robert Burns? If they cared to study "Man was made to Mourn," they would find in it all the basic principles of everything that was contained in the Beveridge Report. One of the first things in the Beveridge Report was full employment for everybody. Robert Burns said he did not care for anybody, so long; as he was in a steady job and could work for himself. All these things were in the poem—provision for the aged, a guarantee of a decent home for every family, a living wage for every man, freedom against insecurity and want, and the recognition that if these principles were applicable in Scotland, they could be applicable in other lands as well.

Did Burns not himself say that his greatest ambition was to have the ability to make a book or a plan that would be helpful to Scotland, and there they met all his planning ideas? What was Burns' programme? The social programme of Burns in his later years, was not

what might be called a revolutionary programme. It was a programme of commonsense. He was not going to be as foolish as some people and claim that Burns was a Socialist.

Nor was he going to claim that he was a Liberal or a Tory, because he castigated both Liberals and Tories, as they in Dumfries well knew. Burns had no use for Whigs and Tories, and said so in very vigorous language, which was not even equalled by Sir Edward Carson

in his best days, or Mr. Lloyd George in what might be called his Billingsgate campaign of twenty-five years ago. It was incorrect to claim Burns as a member of any political party, but it was right to acclaim him as a great humanitarian, as a man who believed that it should be possible for men and women of goodwill to abolish poverty and insecurity and to utilise their own talents, and the resources of the world, for their own well-being and the well-being of other men as well. The letters written by Burns on his deathbed, revealed his anxiety for his wife and children being left uncared for. That was his main consideration, and if Scotland had known the circumstances at the time, something would have been done about maintenance being provided. When the Currie edition of his poems was published and realised £1,600, Mrs. Burns and the children were provided with a decent competence to enable her to live the life to which she was entitled. When we talked about reforms we forgot that great family poem, "The Cottar's

Saturday Night," a poem that has been translated into 39 languages. "The Cottar's Saturday Night" was a great picture of a working man and a mother, and all those people who talked about Burns's rather cavalier attitude towards women, forgot that in his serious moments he was always concerned about them. In "The Cottar's Saturday Night" it was the mother who was the presiding genius of the cottar's house. She was the person who directed all the family affairs, it was to her that all looked for guidance, and to whom ? was paid when friends ? On a recent occasion when he was a member of the Brains Trust, he suggested that the Nobel Prize for peace should be given to the Robert Burns Federation, because no man had proclaimed the principles of peace and the federation of the world better than Burns had done, and the £8,000 Nobel Prize should be given to the Burns Federation so that they could indulge in an educational campaign to make his principles better understood. Burns did the same in re, and to full employment, and that was the thing that was missing in the Beveridge Report. Beveridge wrote his report at Ely,; he would have been far better to have written it in Dumfries. They knew that nothing could be got without work, and they could look forward to a Britain and a world in which there would be full employment for every able-bodied man and woman, and that those who would not work for the benefit of their country would not be allowed to eat idle bread at the 'expense of other people. Burns also proclaimed provision for the aged in "Man was made to Mourn".

A country that did not respect the aged would never respect the young, just as a country that did not respect its great men of the past would never make great men in the present or the future.

Burns was one of the first men to advocate the federation of democratic powers. He suggested at one time along with Tom Payne that Great Britain, America, France and Holland should be combined to give democracy at sea, to protect the ships from piracy and to protect and assure freedom of trade, and to deal with anything that might arise. We were getting near that, and approaching the end of the war, we were asking if there was any chance of any of these basic ideas being realised in our time.

Then they came to Burns's big idea, the idea of world security for all, freedom from war after this war was finished. Lord Halifax had suggested that all the Dominions and Colonies and Great Britain should plan, with mutual trust, the maintenance of a British Commonwealth or Imperial system of defence, instead of one for Great Britain only. He thought that idea would commend itself to the common people of this country as well as those of Canada, where the message was first delivered. But security must be based on giving to every country something like equality of opportunity. if we were destroying dictatorships in Italy and Germany as quickly as we could, we must not allow dictatorship to come out of Russia or any other country. While he had always been opposed to interference with the internal affairs of Russia or any other country, he was equally opposed to Russia interfering with the internal affairs of any country that wanted to live at peace with Russia. He thought the one big mistake our Russian friends had made in this war, was in telling some of the small countries what their policy and form of government should be after the war. He hoped Britain would insist that all these countries, Holland, Norway, France, Belgium, Yugoslavia, were going to be helped to regain their national independence and have their full share and say in working out whatever international world policy might be necessary to prevent another war taking place.

Do not let us run away with the idea that when this war is over the world was going to be run by Russia, America and Britain, for themselves. He did not think we wanted

that, but he certainly did not want to be Americanised or Russianised or Communised. He wanted to live in his own way, and to give other people in other countries the same right as he claimed for himself. Was there a message in the philosophy of Robert Burns for the present day? He thought even more so than at the time Burns wrote these poems. They who were members of the Howff Club and who were associated with the town in which Burns developed his political wisdom and eloquence, had a big responsibility upon them. Why should they always be thinking of Geneva or Paris or The Hague as an international centre? What was wrong with Dumfries as an international center? Or Ayr or Mauchline? With each of those places was associated a man who was one of the first preachers of this doctrine of world security. If they were going to make their contribution to the realisation of these ideals in the world, it would be more than by holding anniversary meetings and singing his songs, and laying wreaths on the statues reared to his memory. They had to go forth now as apostles and disciples of the man, and say that this philosophy was one that was not meant for Scotland only, but it was for export for the Enjoyment and enrichment of other people's lives as well. If they did that they would be true to the memory of the man who had done more than any other to bring all classes and all creeds and all nations together in this time of sorrow, and had given them the opportunity to transform this hour of sorrow into an era of peace and security for all. Burns was not the property of Scotland. He belonged to the whole world. They would search his poetry in vain to find one word critical of any other people or of any other man's creed or belief. He claimed for himself freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom to write, freedom to speak, but he was prepared to give that freedom to other people. And if they went forth out of this war in that spirit as evangelists of Robert Burns, they would do more for Scotland and for the world than had been done in the hundred and forty seven years since he died.