

Rev FRASER I McDONALD IMMORTAL MEMORY (1972)

"It is not just words we are reading when we study the works of Burns; by his magic we are transported back to see what life was like when the Bard was alive." This was said by the Rev. Fraser I. MacDonald, of Tinwald and Kirkmichael parish church, when he proposed "The Immortal Memory" at the Dumfries Burns Howff Club anniversary dinner in the Globe Inn last Tuesday. He added that through Burns we had many pictures of Scots life of 200 years ago — "and even now he is doing a lot for the country."

Mr. MacDonald spoke of the many appealing attributes of the "rustic rhymmer whose place in the heart of posterity is assured forever." He said that Burns was one who sang of the simple things of Scottish life, and added; "If, socially, Burns was of the people, intellectually he was a giant of all time — an artist of the most tremendous intellect."

Mr. MacDonald likened Burns to St. Paul, in that when the latter went to Athens on his travels, he once accused the intellectuals of the city, of spending their time looking for something new in what he said. Mr. MacDonald said that this was true of Burns. Instead of trying to find something different, he would mention some of the things about the poet which appealed to him most.

The first thing to say about Burns was that he hated hypocrisy, especially pretended religion. Mr MacDonald went on to quote from "Holy Willie's Prayer" and pointed out that in this poem Burns shows how hypocrisy could grow and multiply like a cancer, until a man couldn't see how rotten he had become. He added that often people say that Burns was not a Christian. This is not true; he realised that as Jesus says: "The Kingdom of God is within you" and this comes through in many of his poems.

The second compelling attribute of Burns was "the bigness of his heart —he had room in his heart to include all manner of people and living things. To underline this Mr MacDonald quoted "To a Mouse" and "To a Mountain Daisy."

Another appealing aspect of Burns was that he realised a lesson the world still does not know — the story of the brotherhood of man. Burns never varies, and he recognises that the brotherhood of man can cure all ills. He realised that only by brotherhood, shall we ever attain peace.