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BURNS IN MASONIC COSTUME.

MESSRS J. W. WATT & COY., of 17 London Street, Edinburgh, are in a fair way of constituting themselves the leading Burns portraiture firm in Scotland. Last year we called attention to their excellent etching of Stewart Watson's painting of the Inauguration of Burns as Poet Laureate of Cannongate Kilwinning Lodge, in which the Poet is one of the principal figures. The excellence of this figure as a portrait of the Bard was concealed by its small dimensions and the crowd of celebrities in which it formed a mere unit. The idea therefore struck the publishers to isolate and enlarge the figure so as to bring its merits into greater prominence. The working-out of the idea has been most successful, and the result is a portrait of the Bard which recalls the Walker & Cousin's engraving more vividly than any likeness which has been issued since the date of that most meritorious plate. Some years ago Messrs Watt & Coy. published an etching of the Poet by the late George Aikman, an original work of exceptional merit, which followed more closely the lines of the original Nasmyth, upon which the engraving of Walker & Cousins was an acknowledged improvement. Watson apparently preferred the latter when introducing Burns into his famous picture of his Inauguration as Poet Laureate. Being in full dress as Depute Master, the new portrait is bound to appeal to the "brethren of the mystic tie" everywhere as a most appropriate adornment for the walls of their lodge; and the ordinary Burns Club cannot procure a better or more imposing portrait at a moderate outlay. It is the first reproduction of the kind ever published, and comes as a relief from the hackneyed presentments of the Bard everywhere presented to the eye. It has all the merits of the Walker & Cousins at less than a tenth of the cost, and is, moreover, a full-length with original pose. We cordially recommend it to all desirous of possessing a new and perfectly reliable portrait of Burns.

THE LAND OF BURNS: MAUCHLINE—TOWN AND DISTRICT. Written and published by John Taylor Gibb, Mauchline.

MR GIBB has been long known as an authority on the topography of Mauchline as well as the Burnsiana of the district down to its minutest detail. On more than one occasion he has contributed most interesting and instructive articles on his favourite theme to the columns of the *Chronicle*, and the cordial reception accorded to these have, we

venture to guess, prompted him to extend and preserve them in the beautiful *brochure* issued from the Glasgow press in the spring of the present year. That he had a good subject to begin with goes without saying, and that he has made the best of it is not saying more in the way of praise than Mr Gibb's performance deserves. The book is essentially a *vade mecum* of all that is interesting in the town and neighbourhood. With an archæological preface he introduces the reader to the Town, the Churchyard, the Tower, and Mossgiel, with all their stirring memories, making everything plain by letterpress and a profusion of half-tone blocks which greatly enhance the value of the book. These number close on seventy, and, being executed in the highest style of the photogravure art, leave nothing to be desired in the way of an illustrated guide-book, which enables the visitor to dispense with all other aid in investigating the Burnsiana of this far-famed centre of attraction. Mr Gibb goes farther afield than the town and its environment. He takes the traveller to Barskimming, Ballochmyle, Montgomery Castle, Willie's Mill, Lochlea, Catrine, and Ochiltree, discoursing pleasantly by the way, and leaving out nothing in the landscape which has the slightest tale to tell connected with the Bard or his Ayrshire friends. Mr Gibb has done his work thoroughly. Once and for all, the topography of Mauchline has been set forth in type and illustration in a style that betokens finality. Even as an album of high-class photographs, the volume is worth the modest shilling asked for it. Every Burns lover should be in possession of a copy.

