

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL POET.

MAUCLINE PAYS ITS TRIBUTE TO BURNS.

A new Burns Memorial is to be inaugurated on Saturday by Mr. J. G. A. Baird, M.P., who, on behalf of the Glasgow Mauchline Society, opens the National Burns Memorial and Cottage Homes at Mauchline. It consists of a handsome tower, to which are attached a number of cottages for deserving persons stricken with misfortune, who will sit rent-free, and, when the present subscription of £3800 has been raised to £5000, receive a small annual allowance. The site is near Mossgiel, the poet's

Mauchline is the "parish" of which Burns was the "singer and satirist." The village where he spent his leisure—and the aforesaid £7 a-year—lies on a slope rising from the River Ayr, and is in itself an uninteresting enough country "town" of about a thousand inhabitants, but there is hardly a square yard of it that has not a Burns association. There is the churchyard in which the poet located "The Holy Fair," and where three of his children lie buried. The church shown in the



IN BALLOCHMYLE WOODS: THE LITTLE ARBOUR IS WHERE BURNS FIRST SAW THE LASS OF BALLOCHMYLE.

Ayrshire farm, which, as everybody ought to know, lies in the parish of Mauchline and about a mile from the village of that name. From the watch-tower, the tourist or pilgrim, who will have to pay for the spectacle a small sum for the benefit of the Homes, will be able to survey the whole of the country made sacred by the energisings of Burns in it during what is known as the Mossgiel period (1783-88) of his life—the farmhouse (reconstructed) where he wrote "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair," "The Jolly Beggars," &c.; the fields where he was inspired by the "Mouse" and the "wee, modest, crimson-tippet flow'r"; Galston muirs, the "plains and fells" of Coila, and Mauchline village, where he courted and married his Jean, and where he spent his annual stipend of £7 on those "splores" which foolish and often pained admirers believe him to have chronicled with inartistic precision.

picture is not the building in which "Apostle Auld" preached orthodoxy and Burns suffered minor penance; it dates some sixty-odd years back. But the immediate surroundings have changed very little since the end of last century. On the right in the same picture is seen the house, with old Mauchline Castle adjoining, of Burns's friend and patron, Gavin Hamilton, the lawyer, whose differences with his strait-laced minister about church-going and Sunday gardening had much to do with the acerbity of the poet's assaults on the orthodox clergy of the shire. In Hamilton's chambers in that house, according to one tradition, Burns was privately married to Jean Armour. If you do not accept this story, the churchyard as here presented still includes the site of the demolished hostelry in which (according to another tale), a yard or two from his own door, Hamilton acted as witness to Burns's marriage by the



THE CROSS, MAUCHLINE.



THE HOUSE WHERE THE JOLLY BEGGARS HELD THEIR "SPLORE."

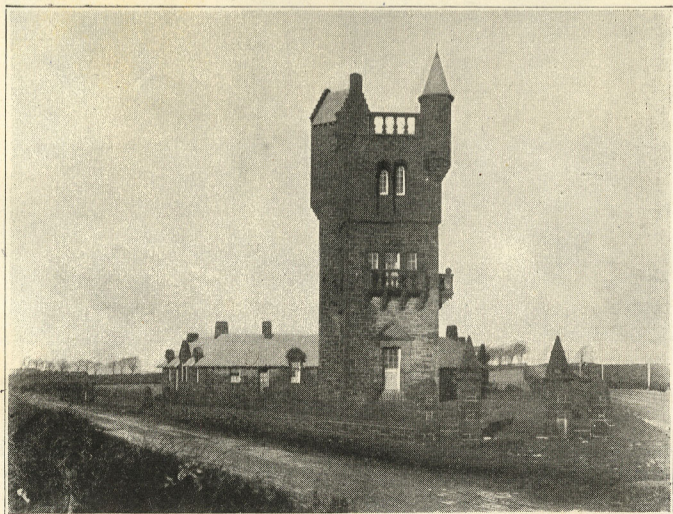
Laird of Gilmilnscroft, J.P. On the opposite side of the churchyard stands, probably unaltered in external appearance, "Poosie Nansie's," the beggars' lodging-house kept by George Gibson, his drunken excommunicated wife, and their scandalous daughter, "Racer Jess," where Burns, for artistic purposes, studied the ways of the "randie gangrel bodies" who inspired his greatest work, "The Jolly Beggars." Mr. John Taylor Gibb, the leading authority on Mauchline topography, believes that the room where the happy paupers "held the splore, to drink their orra duddies," still preserves much of its original form. Another photo embraces two shrines which no pilgrim to Burns-land can omit. On the right is "Nanse Tinnock's." From the upper window of the house in the left foreground Jean Armour regarded the world after she was banished from her father's house, and the poet had "reconciled her to her fate," what time he contemplated making her Mrs. Burns before the world. It was during the Mossiel period that Burns celebrated "guid auld Scotch drink." Though he did not drink heavily or persistently at any time, and, as we have seen, had not the wherewithal at this date, he must unquestionably have had common, vulgar "sprees" in Mauchline, and it is generally believed that most of these came off in the modest hostelry of the respectable widow woman, Nanse Tinnock, or Tannock. The house is scarcely altered by the widening of the windows on the ground floor. It was the resort of "yill-caup commentators" on Sundays between sermons. Did Burns frequent it? He said he did. He professed to have written within its walls. Yet the old lady declared that the author had never been but once or twice in her house. Nevertheless,



IN THE HOUSE ON THE LEFT BURNS TOOK UP HOUSE; THAT ON THE RIGHT IS OLD NANSE TINNOCK'S.

that house is a shrine, just as Mary Campbell, who once lived as nurse and his modern followers, be the "white rose" that bloomed among Burns's "passion-flowers," and the never-to-be-forgotten dear departed shade. The room which Burns took for his wife—it was the kitchen of a two-roomed flat—and where she gave birth to her second twins, retains its original form. So does the house where lived Mary Morrison (daughter of Adjutant Morrison), who is believed by some to have been the heroine of the immortal song "Mary Morison," though the song was originally assigned to an earlier period, before either the Adjutant or Burns came to Mauchline, and the probability is that it was inspired by Ellison Begbie, a true inamorata of the poet's. From the tower of the Mauchline Memorial the spectator will look down on the woods of Ballochmyle, where Burns met the lovely Wilhelmina Alexander. The farm of Mossiel passed into the hands of her father in 1786, during the currency of the Burns's lease, and, as the recently published "Burns-Dunlop Correspondence" shows, he thought as little of the poet as his daughter did—at first, at all events—of the compliment paid her in "The Lass o' Ballochmyle." For did not Burns's candid old patroness write to him that the "Nabob" had told her that "your brother was a much better farmer—one he would be really sorry to lose, and who had ten times the sense of you"?

The harbour depicted in the photo, no doubt, marks with all desirable accuracy the spot where Miss Alexander disturbed the poet at his musing on the river-bank, and so secured immortality.



NATIONAL BURNS MEMORIAL AND COTTAGE HOMES, MAUCHLINE.



MAUCHLINE CHURCH AND GAVIN HAMILTON'S HOUSE.