

than half a century ago ; and yet he belongs as entirely to an extinct state of things as the oldest fossils of the geologist. And there are many such in this volume, drawn with all the breadth, and in some instances all the picturesque effect, of the best days of the drama. But, though a thoroughly amusing volume, it is also something greatly better ; and there is, we doubt not, a time coming when the student of history will look to it, much rather than to works professedly historic, for the true portraiture of Edinburgh society during the periods in which it maintained its place most efficiently in the worlds of literature and of science. And yet, as may be seen from the sketch just given, all was not admirable in the ages in which our capital excited admiration most ; and we must just console ourselves by the reflection that, though we live in a more mediocre time, it is in the main a more quietly respectable one.—*July 12, 1856.*

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#### THE BURNS' FESTIVAL AND HERO WORSHIP.

“THE BURNS' FESTIVAL,” writes a respected correspondent in the west, in whose veins flows the blood of Gilbert Burns, “is already well-nigh forgotten in Ayr.” We are not at all sure that it ought to be forgotten so soon. Could we but look just a little below the surface of the event, with its chequered patchwork of the bizarre and the picturesque, and its, doubtless, much genuine enthusiasm, blent with at least an equal amount of overstrained and awkward simulation, we might possibly discover in it a lesson not unworthy of being remembered. Deep below the ridiculous gaud and glitter, we may find occult principles of our nature at work in this commemorative festival,—principles which have been active