

On page 154, Volume I, of the Gowdy Genealogy there is an interesting article concerning John Goudie of Galston, Scotland. The article in itself is interesting, but it is especially interesting to us to know that John Goudie made possible the publication of the first book of poems by Robert Burns.

We quote the following from the book:

But, for one incident of vast significance in literary history the world is indebted to this John Goudie, namely, the publication of the first and now almost priceless edition of the Poems of Burns, Kilmarnock, 1786. The circumstances are thus related:

"One day Goudie having occasion to be in the neighborhood of Mossgiel (Burns's farm), he called in passing; and in the course of his visit, Burns and he sallied out to the fields, sitting down behind a stock of corn--for it was the reaping season. The Poet read over one or two of his manuscript poems. Goudie was highly delighted with the pieces, expressing his astonishment that he did not think of printing them. Burns at once unbosomed his circumstances--he was on the eve of setting out for the West Indies, and Wilson of Kilmarnock would not run the hazard of publication. "Weel, Robin", said Goudie, 'I'll tell you what to do. Come you wa's down to Killie some day next week and tak' pot-luck wi' me. I hae twa or three guid-friends that'll be able to set the press agoing.' Burns was of course true to his appointment; and after dinner they were joined in a bowl or two of toddy by the friends whom his entertainer had purposely invited.\*\*\*In the course of the evening Burns read several of his pieces and so delighted were the company that they at once became security to Wilson for the printing of his work."

Thus was launched the famous Kilmarnock first edition, from which spring the author's immortal fame.