

GLASGOW FROM THE ARTISTS' POINT OF VIEW.

By R. J. MacLENNAN.

IT matters not how or when this came to be written. Enough that it is an impression of Glasgow by one of its early historians—

“ In the Nether Ward of Clydesdale and shire of Lanark stands deliciously on the banks of the River Clyde the city of Glasgow, which is generally believed to be, of its bigness, the most beautiful city of the world, and is acknowledged to be so by all foreigners that come thither.”

Obviously, the local historian who wrote that description had a positively joyous prejudice. In patriotism, as in hospitality, your Scot scorns half-measures. M'Ure was no exception. He wrote out of the fulness of his heart, and, be it marked, with due respect to his conscience. “ The most beautiful city of the world,” said he, and gaily passed on the responsibility for the statement by prefacing the declaration with the phrase, “ it is generally believed.” We in Glasgow thank him for those words. We may to-day find it difficult to accept them as a true and proper estimate, but we love to quote them, and if, in face of criticism, we



King William the Lion grants the Charter to the Authorities for the Institution of Glasgow Fair—*George Henry*



An incident in the Life of St. Mungo—*Alex. Roche*



Glasgow Fair in the Olden Times—*E. A. Walton*



Shipbuilding on the Clyde, Mural Painting—*John Lavery*

are prepared to modify them, we do so only in so far as a writer of later date showed us how when he wrote—

“ A city old, and somewhat plain of face,
Yet some there are who, with a lover's eye,
Are quick to mark an unexpected grace,
Where strangers would indifferent pass by.

May it be yours for a brief spell to share
Old Glasgow's smiles—to pierce her veil of grey
That screens her charms from hurried eyes—to bear
The best of her in memory away ! ”

Among those who have viewed the city “ with a lover's eye ” may be counted her own artists, and others who, if not native, have had qualities that all but won for them that high distinction ! There is quite a crowd of them. Regard them for a moment, and Sam Bough, R.S.A., the intimate friend of the late Sir Henry Irving and Mr. J. L. Toole, comes stepping out to greet you. The memories of Bough that still survive are as refreshing and breezy as one of his own water-colours, as mellow as his canvases of Cadzow Forest or Loch Achray.

Glasgow was his artistic foster-mother, his love for the city lasting and sincere. In his early youth he was a scene-painter, one of an interesting group who have travelled, *via* the painting-loft above the flies, to the galleries of fame. The late Thomas Sidney Cooper, R.A., was a scene-painter ; so were David Roberts, R.A., Clarkson Stansfield, R.A., and William Wells, among the moderns. One might name many others.

Sam Bough's water-colour drawings of Victoria

and Broomielaw Bridges, reproduced in these pages, belong to the Corporation of Glasgow. They were bequeathed to the citizens by the late Mr. A. G. Macdonald, and are now housed, with pictures of the Cathedral and the West End Park, among the civic art treasures. The aspect of the bridges pictured is changed to-day, yet in the essentials it is the same.

Nature's colours may have "sunk" a little, and the stream of traffic have become less picturesque, yet Bough would probably have found them as inspiring as in the old days. With the touch of his individuality he would have made them quite as interesting, and—you may note the soldiers—he certainly would have introduced the military, to whom his heart warmed.

One of his best-known pictures is that of "The First Scottish Review at Edinburgh"; and concerning another of his works—an army crossing the Solway—there is a story to tell.

"What are you to call that?" asked a friend.

"Spears and Pond," was the reply.

Earlier than Bough, Glasgow had John Knox, an artist more catholic in his tastes than his stern, austere namesake of the Reformation. Knox received his training from Alex. Nasymth, contemporary of Burns, and painter of the famous portraits of the poet, only three of which are known to be in existence. Knox, in turn, was art tutor to Horatio M'Culloch, R.S.A., and Sir Daniel Macnee, P.R.S.A. He found material within the city boundary for more than one striking canvas; and that of "Bishop Rae's Bridge in 1817" is not the

least important. Knox, in the intervals of work, toured the country with panoramas of loch and city scenery, Glasgow being first of these, followed by others of Loch Lomond, Edinburgh, and Dublin.

Jules Lessore, the famous French artist, came three times to paint Glasgow; but, with the exception of his "Broomielaw Bridge," now in a local collection, his paintings were for the most part without appeal to buyers. Yet their merit was outstanding.

Etchings of Glasgow have found ready appreciation, notably those by D. Y. Cameron, Muirhead Bone, Tom Maxwell, J. Hamilton Mackenzie, and Susan Crawford. Miniature water-colours by David Small and Crimean Simpson—there is a capital collection of these in the People's Palace, Glasgow Green—also aroused the interest of art-lovers and archæologists, but somehow, and unaccountably, larger paintings have too frequently proved to the artist that he must recompose his palette and set up his easel beyond the city. This experience is not peculiar to Glasgow.

Touching the water-colours of Crimean Simpson, this artist, the pioneer war correspondent, whose work for the *Illustrated London News* kept a generation familiar with the passing events of their day, was born in Glasgow, his earliest inspirations being found in the city streets and buildings, while his first exhibited picture was "Garscadden Gates," the picturesque entrance to Garscadden House, to the west of the Kelvin Dock.

Prior to leaving Glasgow for London in 1851, he sketched the old remains of the city; and these

sketches were incorporated in the now rare volume, "Stuart's Glasgow." Simpson, in his Autobiography, pays the tribute to the city of his birth that it "awakened in him the instinct" for art and archæology.

His work in after years in the Crimea; in India, after the Mutiny; and when on tour with King Edward (then Prince of Wales); his achievements in Afghanistan with the Boundary Commission; in Magdala with Napier; with the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War, and among the Communists in Paris, down to the Afghan Campaign, when he was wounded during a fight in the Khyber Pass—all these are fascinating study; and through his career as an artist-journalist his heart warmed to the homeland, and his admiration for the city was unqualified.

The art of Crimean Simpson, by the way, was in many instances unique. Lord Rosebery has in his collection the drawing of "The Battle of Sedan," painted on the back of a strip of wallpaper; while his drawings of the jewels worn by ladies of the harem in India are, quaintly enough, embalmed in the old files of a silversmiths' trade journal.

Other examples of his art are in the national collections of the British and South Kensington Museums, and in the private collections of His Majesty the King, the Duke of Newcastle, the Marquis of Bute, the Earl of Northbrook, &c. The artistic beauties of the city of Glasgow may claim in Simpson's case the power of propagating mustard seeds to the after-proportions the parable mentions.

Among Glasgow artists of later date who have

devoted themselves for a time to a survey of the city ere pruning their wings for flight to Chelsea are Sir John Lavery, R.A.; and George Henry, R.A., but of their achievements more anon.

Among others are R. M. G. Coventry, James Kay, William Kennedy, Harry Spence, Tom Hunt, Robert Eadie, and Patrick Downie.

There is still one picture of Glasgow that awaits the coming of an artist with the requisite power to treat a spacious *motif*, and it is within a stone-throw of the park painted by Henry. No one has pictured the city as seen from the summit of Gilmore-hill, where stands the University. Yet the view to be obtained from this eminence, dimmed though it may be on occasions by the smoke of myriad activities, is impressive in its grandeur.

To the Clyde James Kay and Patrick Downie have devoted themselves. A Clyde canvas by the former artist was purchased by the French Government for the Luxembourg Collection, while one by the latter was bought by the Glasgow Corporation. Tom Hunt and Eadie have specialised in city vistas, and Kennedy in his time actually invested our city with something of the sunny glory of the Moroccan coast he knew so well.

Among those who have at one time or another found inspiration in the Clyde scenes, albeit principally beyond the confines of the city, are numbered Gustave Doré, who visited the West of Scotland in 1874; Rosa Bonheur, who followed later; and James Maris, who came from Holland in 1886. The list of Scottish artists includes Sir George Reid, R.S.A.;

Sir Francis Powell, P.R.S.W.; David Murray, R.A.; Milne Donald, A. Fraser, J. Docharty, J. W. MacWhirter, R.A.; A. K. Brown, A.R.S.A., and—but the list is interminable.

Coventry's "Sauchiehall Street" (the Englishman's pronunciation test) gives a capital idea of one of Glasgow's main thoroughfares—the Regent Street of the West of Scotland. Then, again, particular interest attaches to Kennedy's "Glasgow Exhibition, 1901." Not only is the remembrance of the "cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces," quickened on surveying it, but in the foreground are shown types of the foreigners whose gay garb gave such a picturesque touch to the scene, while citizens prominently identified with the promoting of the successful enterprise are at once recognised. Mr. Kennedy had a *penchant* for "events" in Glasgow.

The list of occasional painters of Glasgow may be extended to include J. Adam Houston, R.S.A., whose view of the city and the Cathedral, as seen from the Necropolis, is well known.

Then there were Thomas Fairbairn, Horatio M'Culloch, and William Leighton Leitch, R.I., a Glasgow man who taught Queen Victoria the use of water-colours, and for over twenty years instructed the members of the Royal Family in painting. Then there was John Lawson, who devoted his attention to the outlook of toil and grime around the Forth and Clyde Canal, or to the sylvan beauties of Killermont, the home of the Glasgow Golf Club.

That the city of St. Mungo has furnished material for many pictures and has inspired the art of genera-

tions of painters—down to the time of the Glasgow School, in fact—indicates that the claim to beauty is well grounded. If anything were required to prove it, surely the best possible proof lies in the art history of its people, a history dealt with in another chapter in this brochure.

It was a happy thought that suggested the adornment of the Banqueting Hall of the Municipal Buildings with pictures of the city. The series includes a fresco by George Henry, "King William, the Lyon, granting the Charter to the Authorities for the Institution of Glasgow Fair."

Then there is the panel, "Glasgow Fair in the Olden Time," painted by E. A. Walton, flanked by others painted by Alexander Roche and John Lavery. The latter has treated a modern aspect of the city with virility and originality, while the former furnished a pleasing picture of an incident in which the patron saint of Glasgow played an important part. The incident is the basis of the city arms.

In Roche's and Walton's panels the figures were friends of the artists. But George Henry went further. The figures in his fresco are, many of them, well-known public men in the West of Scotland—the late Principal Storey of the University, Sir Samuel Chisholm, the late Sir John Shearer, the late Mr. Brogan (a popular member of the Glasgow Art Club), and many others may be picked out in the group. Concerning Mr. Henry's fresco, on the last occasion when Sir Henry Irving visited Glasgow, he called at the City Chambers, and, on entering the Banqueting Hall, stood for

some time looking at the fresco and voicing his admiration.

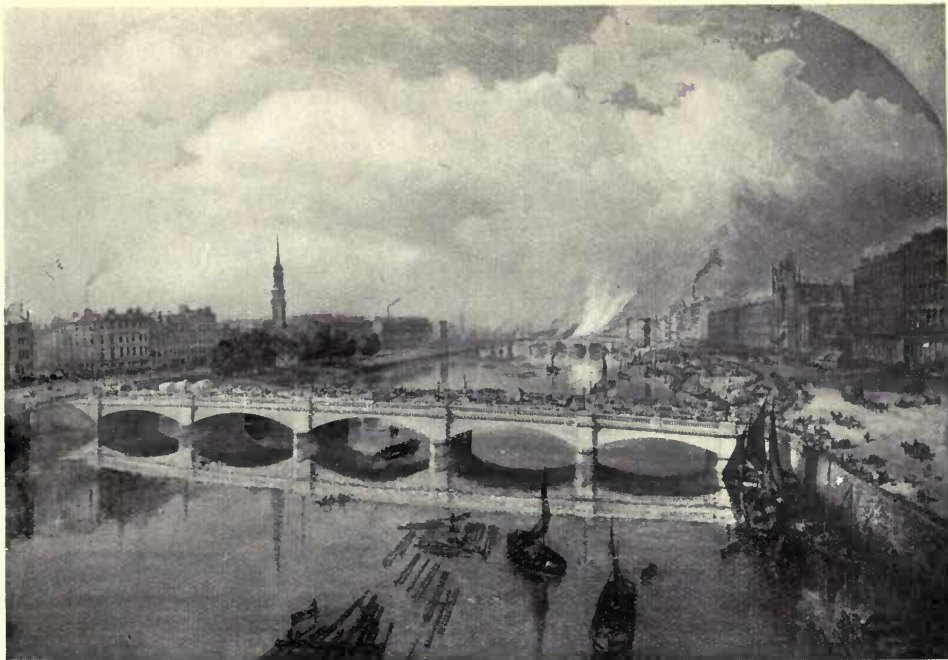
“ It was on that picture I modelled my grouping in ‘ Becket,’ ” he said. “ From the first time I saw it it remained with me. Is there a reproduction of it to be had? ”

The answer was in the affirmative; and the copy printed at the head of this article was presented to him at the King’s Theatre that evening.

Reference has been made to etchers who found in Glasgow the first thrill of the impetus that moved them forward towards the enviable position they hold to-day. Among them Muirhead Bone, in particular, stands prominent. Yet it was many years before he was honoured in his native town. That, however, is by the way. Glasgow is proud of her artists. In no less degree her artists are proud of Glasgow.



The Broomielaw Bridge—*Sam Bough*



Victoria Bridge—*Sam Bough*