

CHAPTER III.—*Tour Round the World.*

IN the spring of 1872 he again said good-bye to his native land, and started on the four years' tour round the world, the events of which are fully detailed in the narrative of his travels which follows this, written by his eldest son David, who is since dead. He was accompanied by his wife, his daughters Helen and Marjory, and his two sons David and James, Robert joining the party about a year later. Some of his letters to his father and others are all we need here add to the record of those years of travel. After staying in Melbourne for three months, and singing every night to enthusiastic audiences, he started "doing" the country with a coach, a "buggy," and three saddle horses, there being few railways in Australia in those days. The following letters written "on the road" will explain themselves:—

"Benalla, 21st March, '73.

"DEAR FATHER,—Here we are away in 'the bush' and no mistake—lose our way every day—wander about seeking tracks—driving over and through trees, holes dry, holes full of water, up hills, down hills—twisting ourselves through the bushes—losing each other for miles—crying and shouting, 'Where's Helen?' 'Where's Madge?' 'Has anybody seen David or James?'—Yells responsive through bush and ferns, a crackle and a crash, and lo! the lost one appears. We have had two or three smashes and two horses have tired out and gone to grass. Our agent is in Sydney, and for weeks our line of travel is marked, and come what may we must get through. Don't be afraid of us, we are careful and have a good driver. Houses [audiences] very good—all is sunshine in our professional path. Robert will be here in a month and then what a party of Kennedys sae far frae hame. I'm glad to hear you



are so well, I think ye'll be ane o' the lang-lived Kennedys. I pray you may hear us a' singing afore ye once more. God be with us a'.—Your affectionate son,

“DAVID KENNEDY.”

“Ipswich, 3rd September, 1873.

“MY DEAR FATHER AND SISTER KITTY,—We are behind hand with the letters from home, your letters will reach us in a day or two—too late for answer now. So Gamsis you are weel again, tak guid care o' yer sel' and have every comfort bawbees can buy. We are all going on each in our own sphere with as much smoothness as human machinery will allow. The distances here are very great, the mountains are high, the roads are bad ; our limbs are strong, so also our will, and we *do* overcome whatever difficulties are in our way. We find Scots people everywhere, and I am now fully aware of the importance of our mission here, and consequently exacting on myself and *all* the others for a high standard of performance.

My own performance I know is intensely in earnest and hits the public. Amid the very large expenses there's money making, and while we live well and are liberal in all things, there's not one penny spent that we regret. God is good to us and we *must* help those He throws in our way that need help.

“Your aff. Son and Brother,

“D. KENNEDY.”

“Murrurundi, New South Wales,
[Autumn] '73.

“DEAR FATHER,—Here we are once more in sight of a railway—what journeyings we have had—the bairns will have given you all the news. We are all in the very best health and doing our duty in a persevering way—there is progress every way ; we sing nearly every Sunday in the Presbyterian Kirks here, and do good by letting them hear psalm-singing done as it should be. The clergy everywhere give us their countenance. So you are in Perth and the Kirkton. I rejoice to see ye 'knappin' about, you have a large share in our success, and we are giving you more justice now that we are far frae ye than when near at hand. Just go on enjoying yourself, and have perfect confidence that we are combining strict economy with Christian liberality.”

Having spent the years 1872 and 1873 in travelling through Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, he left in December 1873 for New Zealand. He had been everywhere received with open arms and fêted in the larger towns. Out of his great success he gave everywhere with "Christian liberality" to the charitable institutions; and the Scots, feeling that he by his generosity did honour to them as Scotsmen, were not slow in doing honour to him. In Melbourne, a complimentary soiree was given to "Kennedy," and the young folks were presented with handsome souvenirs of their visit to the city. In Sydney and Brisbane a similar compliment was paid him, and all over the country he enjoyed the private kindness and hospitality of worthy and successful Scots.

The following letter written from Melbourne just before leaving for New Zealand is to his bairns and to their teacher Mr. Hay, with whom six of them were boarded during this tour :—

"Melbourne, 4th December, 1873.

"MY DEAR MR. HAY AND DEAR BAIRNS—So ye're begun to anither year's schulin—aha—Charlie, what a capitally composed and most capitally written journal of your journey to London!!! I am proud of it. And Kitty so correct and kindly, and Lizzie so pithy and practical, and Maggie and Johnnie and Cuthie Wow!! God bless ye a'. How feeling and memory bridge space. I see ye a' and kiss ye *now*. Ah! sweet the pain even of being divided when we know the Father in Heaven is caring for us—most, maybe, for the youngest.

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And then, speaking about kirks and preaching :—

"Nothing will make up for the want of heart. Neither grace nor gerse (grass) will grow without warmth. I really now place heaven-born zeal above mere talent—earnest men, though somewhat commonplace, do more than polished, clever, cold brains. 'Give me thine heart,' is the cry of God and man.

I have starved the last two months for all that man can do or rather has done. We have had coldness and commonplace—ouch, awful. Thank God we have the Word, so can never really starve.

“David has most certainly made a hit with his papers; he spares no pains, and has the benefit of abundant criticism; he really deserves praise, and he gets it.

“We have had a most laborious year—perhaps the most laborious we ever can have. We all enjoy *rest*—so sweet, so necessary.

“Goodby, master and pupils, friend and bairns,

“Yours most sincerely,

“D. KENNEDY.”

Arrived in Otago he wrote :—

“Dunedin, N.Z., 24th December, '73.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—Here we are at last in the Edinburgh of the south. Many, many Scots folk here, and more Scotsmen than in Edinburgh in proportion to population. Breezy, airy, hilly, busy—well-off—contented—plenty of kirks—no squalid, ragged people. It is not old enough to show rottenness. The misery is that rottenness will surely come. What is man? We will be here for one month, then off to other towns. This is the freshest, most hopeful place we have seen in all the world. . . .”

“Balclutha, Otago, N.Z., 3rd Feb., '74.

“DEAR FATHER,—Got your letter with advice no to send money to ——. Well, we'll see. The blessing of success is falling on us still, so we must weigh our duties with this in the balance. A man died a few weeks ago and left nearly three millions; was never known to do a generous action, and died amidst the indifference of men and the anger of God. . . . God keep us a' frae aye thinking about siller; it is a sin very easy to fall into, it is so respectable and so damning. It is the god of the Colonies. New Zealand is a splendid country. We meet no end of Perth folk. Every living soul is well off. Sang in the kirk on Sabbath. The clergy here are fairly paid, no more. Climate requires strong people, but a'body has the look of robust health. I hear you are in first-rate order. God be thanked. . . .”

* *Queenstown, New Zealand, 15th Feb, 1874.*

MY DEAR MR. HAY.—I said in my last hurried note that I would be obliged if you would take £10 from your fund for *kirk extension* or other religious purpose you have in hand. I would have said this sooner, but there are many and pressing demands here for help in matters ecclesiastical—every kirk has a debt—there is a religious mission in the New Hebrides—no end of hospitals, benevolent institutions—funds for accidents—for shipwrecks—so that we have given away a tenth of our earning, but still, my dear friend, you will confer a favour on me if you let me know any case you can recommend, and we will find a pound or twa for it . . . Now, ye bairns of the name of Kennedy, we think that, on the whole, ye are doin' rale weel . . . Kitty, we have the impression that you are a quiet, useful, unpretentious, patient lassie—that you will be, maybe *are*, a real blessing to all that are around ye. Is this impression correct? We have no doubt it is, bonnie, good, kindly Kittie. Lizzie, your mither's namesake, are ye like your mither in anything but the name? We picture a sharp, quick, keen, somewhat contentious, short-tempered, warm-hearted, capable scholar—practical, shrewd, given to brevity in letters (like your faither),—to the point. On the whole, if you do Mr. Hay's biddin', ye'll be a grand scholar and a tidy lass. Maggie, what will ye be? We can hardly say what like we think ye. In your picture you seem getting more intelligent. Be kind to Johnnie, you have charge o' him, ye ken; and above all things, do what Mr. Hay tells you, as the only way to learn quickly is to do everything at the time and in the way the master tells ye. Are ye to be a singer? John, once a babbling babe, now, aha! a sturdy scholar, able to spell 'long-nebbit' words, to write letters, to read the Bible, to play and no be noisy, make fun and no be troublesome. We'll maybe see America the-gither again. And lastly, bonnie Jessie—Mr. Hay's wife—hoo are ye?—able to mak' and sup parritch, kail, and tea? A' hoosewives can do that, ye ken. Hope your dolls are a' properly clad in the cauld weather. Keep your hair tidy, your face clean, and aye be freens wi' Mr. Hay.—Dinner sounds and sinells arrest my ears and nose, so I leave off where I began, with love to all.—Your loving father,

“DAVID KENNEDY.”

The next is to his father, the last he ever wrote to him:—



His Father's Death.

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“Queenstown, N.Z., 16th Feb., 1874.

“DEAR FATHER,—Here we are in the most beautiful scene imaginable—fine air, good hotel, every comfort, all in good health. . . . I met the son of an old London acquaintance, a curate on less than £100 a year. His father forced me to take a loan of £20 in '62. I paid him in '63. I lent his son, this poor curate, £20 for ever. . . . Crichton, my old skulemaster, is dead. I mourn his loss and thank his memory. Good-bye! good-bye! I am reading and most thoroughly enjoying Hanna's 'Life of Christ.'—Your affectionate son,

“D. KENNEDY.”

The answer to this letter was that his father was dead. It was a terrible shock to him. He had always had a boyish delight in striving to make his father proud of him, and the joy of success was doubled in sharing it with his coldly dignified father. His mother had died before he left his native town. In a letter to his sister he writes :—

“I shall never see my father in the flesh! it is awful. How I had bound round him a great band of joys, how I should let him see and hear the young folks, how the friends at the Hutt spoke of him, what the world was like and how man was thriving in the new world. I really thought he would have been spared till we got home. Be sure of my love and above all look on our Father in heaven as the God of Love. I sometimes forget this and am sad and very impatient.”

And again :—

“I wish I were hame—saw my father's empty chair—had a stone over his grave, and buried some of my sorrow.”

To a friend he wrote :—

“Auckland, New Zealand, 6th June, 1874.

“MY DEAR, . . .—Father dead, dead, dead, dead. I could write the word a hundred times and not feel its full import—never to see my father again, never—one of the bright hopes of my home-coming was to show my father some results of his labours—labours I now realize—the importance of

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these labours I did not till lately—reflection on all this is that we do not live close enough to each other—the nearest and dearest hardly ever trust themselves altogether—the heart always has more to say than tongue can tell, or at least *does* tell—a shadow deep and gloomy has pressed on me for a month. Father dead—Lizzie away, she is God's best gift to me—a father gone is a new sorrow to me, a void that can not be filled—a strange sense of increased responsibility—I feel as if I had more business in the world, more charge of it ; so *we* have our sacred spot in the Grange [cemetery]. Well, my dear frien, I have many things in common with you, would I were sure I had your godliness. I am sorely troubled with name and fame and bairns and bawbees. . . . Lizzie is the only real idol I have 'twixt me and heaven. I think I like her for her goodness—such a good idol I have.”

His wife had left him shortly before and was travelling to Scotland *via* America to see her little ones. After spending a few weeks with them she returned to Australia, sailing round the Cape, and rejoined the party after seven months absence, having gone round the world alone.

From Auckland he returned southwards, and at Wanganui on the West Coast, was most enthusiastically received at the opening concert. On the following morning, as he was strolling in the outskirts of the town, he met a grave-looking man, who addressed him in the Scots accent. “I was hearin' ye last nicht, Mr. Kennedy,” he said, “an' I was gey weel pleased” (Scotsmen are economical even of their words of praise) “but I wasna satisfied wi' that song ye sang, ‘The Land o' the Leal,’ for ye didna state the auld man's grounds of assurance that he wad meet his wife in Heaven!” Amazed at this theological criticism of one of the most beautiful songs in the language he returned to town and mentioned the incident to some friends, “Oh, that man's daft” said they, and he was relieved to hear it.

The New Zealand tour finished, he spent two pleasant



months in Tasmania, and from there the following letter is dated :—

“Launceston, Tasmania, 26th Jan. '75.

“MY DEAR MR. HAY,—Another year—nearly three since I saw ye a'. Oh, dear, I begin to feel *home sickness*, but our faces will be set for home about May, then every step will be Edinburgh-wards. ‘My heart is sair’—how words come out in their full meaning as experience grows upon us (what a dictionary experience is!) My news are all told by my young folks, who are becoming day by day more useful to me in everything. . . But I am losing all the youth of my bairns at home, I long for babies—for *wee* lassies and laddies. . . now Charlie, Kitty and Lizzie, put on a spurt in things musical. I will need all your help when we come home and perhaps wee Maggie too!!! and who knows in time “Weckus” and Jessie may help their auld faither—auld—it is coming fast, and I feel down in the mouth sometimes, as if I had any right to expect to escape the universal lot—age—decay—death—meanwhile let us rejoice in God’s goodness. What a scrawl, my pen took the bit between its teeth and ran away. . .

Travelling in Tasmania, as in the sister colonies, was done mainly by coach, and in driving across country between Hobart and Launceston, and following his usual custom of “crackin’ wi’ a’ body,” he fell in with some interesting characters. He easily gained the confidence of strangers, and either held them with his own conversation or got from them snatches of their life experience. At the railway stations in Scotland, where he was usually found fifteen or twenty minutes before train time, it was no uncommon thing to see him seated on a barrow entertaining a semicircle of delighted railway porters, their faces lit up with interest in his “crack” and their eyes all fixed on his.

And so in Tasmania, where garrulous old men with a story to tell were not few, he heard many a queer tale, such as the following, which is given in the words of our brother David, the family chronicler.

One night the hotel was so noisy that my father could not sleep, and this prompted him to rise at the early hour of five, long before the rest of us were awake, and to walk on ahead. We did not overtake him until we had travelled half-way, about fourteen miles, and found that he had rested and breakfasted at a wayside inn. He related that while going along he had heard the bark of a dog, and looking on one side saw the animal keeping watch over a man lying sleeping by the roadside, with his feet in a ditch. The fellow was blind, evidently a tramp, and somewhat ragged and rickety in appearance. The barking of his faithful companion woke him instantly.

“Eh—what—how—who’s that?” My father informed him who he was. “Ech, gosh! ye’re a Scotchman then!”

“Yes, and you’re Scotch too.”

“Michty! ye’re richt there,” exclaimed the blind man; “am frae K—— a’ the way—am no fifty-seven year auld, an’ lost my e’e-sicht six year syne in an accident at the making o’ the railway.”

“Where did you sleep last night?”

“Oh, I just lay doon on the stanes o’ a pavement—man it was cauld. The nicht afore, I was lying in the bush, an’ when I got up I forgot the place whaur I’d been sleepin’, so I lost ane o’ my boots—a big ane I had for my left fut.”

“Have you been long out in this country?”

“Lang! dae ye ken what I am? I’m a ten-yearer—Lord K—— lagged me, an’ I’ll just tell ye hoo that wiz—but we maun be gangin’. Man, I was a swank, soople chiel when I was young. A big family there was o’ us—twenty-wan used to sit doon at oor table thegither. Weel, I fell in wi’ a lass servin’ at Lord K——’s, but her faither wadna hae me, so I said I wad gang awa’, an’ I listed in the Lancers. Weel, a letter



cam' saying that if I was to see my faither livin' I wad hae to come hame at aince, for he was ta'en ill—so, after some trouble, I got back to Scotland again. My mither fell into my arms—an' how prood they a' were to see me in my blue uniform an' sword. My faither got better, an' I went to the castle, whaur Jess my sweetheart was, an' the folk there keepit me for days. It was arranged that we twa should get married, an' married we were. Lord K—— bocht me oot o' the sodgers an' made me his coachman, so I was as comfortable as I could wish."

Here the blind man became less loquacious.

"Ae day," said he, "when I was dustin' my maister's coat, a roll o' notes as big as my fist, look, fell oot o' ane o' the pockets. I took it up, an' I felt the edges o' the notes, sae crisp an' temptin'. Man, it was awfu' temptin'. I got on the fuddle then, an' Lord K—— gae me my dischairge, for he saw I was spendin' mair money than I could hae frae him. It was an awfu' jollification, for there was mair than four hunder pounds o't, ye ken."

He said this in a bragging, "deil-ma-care" kind of way. Then came the pitiable ending of his story.

"After a while the money was missed, an' I was put in the jail. I was tried, an' got ten years. Man, there's real decent justice in Scotland—in England it wad hae been for life. They shipped me ower the seas to Van Diemen's Land; an' I've spent mony happy days in this pairt o' the world. I was happy as lang as I was a ticket-o'-leave, but as soon as I was a free man my troubles began, an' I fell doon in the world. But I keep up my heart—my dog an' me gets ae meal a day, an' we're as jolly as ye can think. I'm aff noo to the shearin' at Launceston."

"How far is it to the half-way house?" asked my father.

"Twa mile," promptly replied the blind man; but on reach-

ing the place he gave a start and said, in a tone of injured self-respect, "Why, it was only ae mile ; I've lost coont durin' the fine crack we hae hane thegither."

At the inn, my father gave him a substantial meal, followed by a glass of Tasmanian ale, and saw the last of him as he trudged away up the road led by his faithful dog.

The Tasmanian tour finished, he went to South Australia ; and after giving farewell concerts in Melbourne and Sydney, he left in June, 1875, for California, taking an eastward way round the world. Arrived at San Francisco after a somewhat perilous voyage, he crossed the continent by way of Salt Lake City, Omaha, and Chicago, and entered Canada by Detroit. We quote again from our father's letters :—

"Galt, 9th December, 1885.

"MY DEAR . . .—Here is the most Scottish part of Canada. We had a big house last night. Had to sing big and feel pumped out a wee, but rest—a brisk walk among the snaw—a good dinner—some fun wi' the bairns here—a glance at the papers—half-an-hour's guid thinking—shave—gently walk to the hall at twenty minutes to eight—comb hair—get gloves neatly on—speer at Helen and Marjory if my tie is richt—blow my nose—say once! twice! thrice! as the clock strikes the hour, and step on the platform and blaze away for twa hours. Grand snaw-baws ; the laddies and *me*, think o' that, have grand bickers—they whiles knock off my hat! . . ."

Another—

"Woodbridge, 9th January, '76.

"MY DEAR . . .—1876!! Another year! the fourth since I saw ye!! I saw ye first at the close of '56, nearly twenty years ago. Your life has moved on with quiet effective smoothness. . . . My life, how varied, exacting, and dangerous! Thanks be to Him who guides all things, how successful in many ways! How much left personally to lament! The tension of mind and body has been enormous, and I feel myself deficient in that calm contemplative frame of mind in which only we can enjoy that supreme delight, communion with God. How elevating, ennobling to walk with God! How paltry appear our usual



pursuits, and the appalling danger is that if these paltry pursuits have control long enough, they shut out God from the heart, and kill the capacity called heavenly mindedness. A man may commit no visible sin, and yet be lost. The god of this world is most dangerous when most respectable. We go to church regularly, and do our outward duty, and, I believe, strive to do our spiritual duty. But, oh! we are so tired, deadened. I do believe that a Holy Sabbath can only be thoroughly enjoyed after a Saturday of comparative rest. We have sung in many churches during the last two months, but Monday morning found us weary. The people would not sing, just sat and listened, and so we had all the solitariness of public performance, breeding in us a feeling of display out of tune with worship. There is no doubt we did good in so far as many people got a new idea of style and harmony of psalm singing, and the clergymen expressed themselves deeply obliged. I would rest on the Saturday night, but our folks would rather sing than sit moping in a wee hotel with nobody to speak to—so on we go with the light ahead growing bigger and warmer every day that passes—the light of hope that we may all meet again. . . .”

After singing in nearly all the Canadian towns, and spending a memorable fortnight in Newfoundland, he sailed for home, in July, 1876, having been on tour for over four years. The home-coming had been long looked forward to, and for three months he gladly rested in Edinburgh. His holiday was spent in making plans for the future, and in studying his favourite subject, and he was fortunate enough to successfully unearth some mair auld sangs. The following letter to some London publishers, very intimate friends of his, is interesting, as expressing his feeling in regard to singing songs for a royalty or commission on the sales :—

“MY DEAR FREENS,—Here I sit in dust and ashes mourning my growing habit of procrastination. Oh! Oh! Oh! What is man he will not do what he *knows to be right*. Really my boys do all the writing, and I have fallen into an intolerable custom of letting them do everything. . . .

“I once, for I think two weeks, sang a song for a royalty,

and I vowed I would on no account do it again—my whole soul and body rose up in positive disgust. I don't think I would or could have sung 'Scots wha hae' for Burns in the flesh for sae muckle a copy—mind I don't say positively that it is wrong—but I canna do't. My dear freens, ye'll no be angry—but as sure's death I wad do as muckle for you as I would for any human being, but *cremate* me if I can somehow even write about it without a certain feeling of aversion. I would not sing even a psalm I did not like; I am sure it would not please Heaven to hear music and no heart in it. Therefore my joes, try and look at it from my point of view, I can not look at it from yours, as I never made (and don't believe I could) a sang or a tune a' my days.

"Now no nonsense about great this and great that as regards me—I am as I am—with many weak points, points no study and no effort will make strong, but with other points (made by my Maker) that even carelessness would scarce destroy. I feel I have power only (and no more) when my heart gaes wi' my subject, and to be paid for a certain song turns my heart from it, and the song does *not get justice*."

He remarks in the above letter that he never made a sang or a tune. But he mended many. The popular ballad of "Willie's gane to Melville Castle" owed its introduction to public favour to the joint efforts of Land and Kennedy, the former editing the music, the latter the words. He also wrote an extra verse to the old ballad, "Get up and bar the door O," the second verse of the following:—



Bye there cam twa gentlemen
At twal o' clock at nicht o',
An' they could neither see hoose nor ha'
Nor coal, nor candle licht o'.

They were hungry, cauld and weet,
For it was an awfu nicht o',
When yonder stood the open door
Their hearts lap at the sicht o'.

And M'Neil's clever song,



“Jenny dang the Weaver,” received the two following verses from his pen :—

The lads an' lasses roond about
At Jockey they were jeerin ;
Lauch on, says he, ye'll sune find out
I'll get her for the speerin.
He steppit up to Jenny's side
An' cockit up his beaver,
Sae fu' o' self conceit an' pride
He thocht she'd tak a weaver.

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As Jockey stood, maist like tae greet,
Auld Maggie cam' tae cheer him :
Gae kiss, an' clap, an' ca' her sweet,
Ye'll get her, never fear, man.
Na, na, quo Jock, I'm aff wi' love,
My mither I'll ne'er leave her,
My heart's a stane nae lass can move,
I'll dee a single weaver.

But his contribution to the song literature of Scotland was in interpretation, not addition. Of what the Scottish songs were to him he writes in the following letter to Mr. W. Henderson, of London, a mutual friend of himself and Templeton :—

“8 St. Andrew's Terrace, 11th Nov., '76.

“MY DEAR FREEN,—Rejoiced at Templeton's keeping me in mind. I devoutly hope we will be a' spared till June, when we will hae a crack. Scottish vocalists everywhere. It's no easy task to grasp and sing a' kinds o' Scots sangs. Few ever can hope to do it, but somebody will aye do it unto eternity. Man, they are the stuff to feed on. I feel my moral and spiritual nature strengthened by their study. Full of them I feel myself majestic. But the usual amateur, who sniffs music from afar, cannot hear the music at his side ; and his dramatic comprehension nil or limited, he thinks a man daft who is enthusiastic, or vulgar who faithfully realizes common life—the only life that is real, and therefore dramatic. Thank God for common life—love of man—of woman—of wife—of bairns—of light and air—for food and clothing—for freenly crack and joyous wedding.

—ay, for the gushing tears that meet the flowers on a father's grave. Conventionality has slain thousands of immortal souls. Tied up in rules, in the way anither man did it, the timid born artist in colour or sound lives in doubt and dies in despair. Dare! dare! dare!—wisely dare—be judiciously brave—follow the light of heaven given to all men—vividly to those who can live in every human heart, know its secrets, and make the song or sing the song that gladdens all mankind. Prodigious! What a 'spate' o' words! . . ."

In the winter of 1876 he sang in Scotland; in the spring of 1877 visited the north of Ireland; in the summer paid his second visit to the Orkney Islands; and in the autumn gave a season at the great St. James Hall, London.

Writing about the preparations for his London season, he says—

"We cannot hoist our flag on a sma' wa'. I like big halls, one seems to expand body and soul. We mean to have a long and deliberate sing in the great toon. I'll never be able to sing better, and the young folks are no to be sneezed at—indeed some folks prefer them to the auld man—the auld man is in for a good deal of adverse criticism, for he has definite ideas, and will develop them to the pleasure of many and the disgust of others. I am a wee Irvingish—I must do as I feel is right tho' I have no precedent for it. God surely does not make men as they make bricks—a' ae 'oo'—nae doubt 'but some with vision keener,' deeper, some with invention, others with imitation; some to say, 'This is the way,' others to follow. The press of Scotland is warm. Some have said 'over-realistic'—that's the point where R——will be down on me I know, and rightly perhaps—it is hard to get *all* out of a song and not get *too* much—I know it—"

The St. James' Hall was originally taken for twelve nights, but the success of the concerts was such that the season was extended to fifteen. When Ambrose Austin told Sims Reeves that Kennedy had taken the Hall for twelve nights on his own risk, Reeves remarked that "Kennedy was a very plucky



fellow," and only those who know the risks of London concert-giving know how true that was. But had he not dared, he had never done anything. He dared to throw up his business in Perth in 1857; he dared to give a long series of concerts in London unaided in 1862-1863; he dared to cut himself adrift and go out to America in 1866 with very little in his pocket and nothing in the bank; he dared to go out to Australia in 1872 and travel through country and over roads that the colonists themselves were afraid of; and as in great things so in small.

After the London season he made a tour of all the larger English towns, including Manchester, Liverpool, Hull, Birmingham, Nottingham, Leeds, Bradford, Newcastle, Sunderland, and many others in the middle and northern districts.

In 1878 he gave another long season in London, and after another tour through Scotland and the north of Ireland, he started in the spring of 1879 for a tour of South Africa. He was accompanied only by his son David and two daughters, Marjory and Lizzie. Robert and James had been sent to Italy to pursue vocal studies there.

The tale of the Cape Tour, one of the most interesting of our travelling experiences, is fully told by our brother David (who afterwards resided in Natal for some years). On our way to the Diamond Fields we had to pass through the Orange Free State, and so came much into contact with the Boers. It was delightful to watch our father conversing with them in the language of gesture and expression, lighting up the faces of the sober old Dutch women with his humour. The rule being to sing everywhere *en route*, concerts were given in the Free State, and the Dutch came in large numbers and enjoyed "Twa Hours at Hame" in spite of the foreign

language. (Even deaf and dumb institutions have shown their appreciation.) In Natal, as in the other colonies, he was warmly welcomed, and the Scotsmen there presented him with a heavy ring of African gold set with three large African diamonds.

Only ten days after his return from the Cape he started again, bound this time for India, and accompanied by his wife, two daughters, Helen and Lizzie, and his son David. Robert and James remained in Italy, and were there joined by Marjory.

The following letters were written *en route* :—

“Malta, 10th Oct, '79.

“DEAR HAME BAIRNS,—Mother and me hope ye're a' weel and back to the skule. Beautiful place, Malta—beautiful sea—fine weather—fine ship—in short, a' things fine. Mother wants her flooers watered, and the cat ta'en care o', an' the birdie. Ship's sloppy. Letter maun close.—Your afft papa and mamma.”

“Suez, 16th Oct, 1879.

“DEAR BAIRNS,—Through the Canal, a mighty work. Life on shipboard perfect in its way. I am so lazy that I do not even think much. I read all kinds of books—library kept by officers. Climate, oh how beautiful even to us fresh from the Cape—it seems paradise. When this country is governed by liberty as now by despotism, it will be a garden of the Lord. My curse on all forms of tyranny and our Government on the side of tyranny—but not for long—not for long. Heaven be on the Gladstone side. The people on board—returning Indians—are of course Tory with a vengeance. Colonists as a rule know as little of home politics as home people know of Colonial politics. Few people know or care for anything beyond a few yards of themselves. Cultivate a habit of starting all matters from fixed principles. . . .”

The heat in Calcutta in November proved very oppressive, and he suffered from it severely, being one night completely



prostrate with fever, and unable to sing. His letters from India are graphic, though brief:—

“Calcutta, 28th Nov., '79.

“DEAR BAIRNS AT HAME,— . . . Hech! a' thing's het here—it's no joke singing 'Scots! wha hae' in a shower of perspiration. The people here come out night after night till we ken them by headmark. Mosquitoes wheeling round my pow—20 bites on my hands, mair on my face—I kill one now and then with intense delight. Weather getting cool—the cauld is het. What a crowd of human beings are here struggling for life, and living on very little—claes are not a very heavy element in expense or quantity. Twa or three yards o' tup-penny-happenny cotton is a' the dress o' the men; we scarcely ever see a woman. We will have your letters here to-morrow. I long for them as water to a thirsty soul. . . .”

“Calcutta, 28th Nov., '79.

“DEAR MILAN BAIRNS,—Hale be your hearts,—strong your love for art—vast your capacity for receiving instruction—keen your digestion of knowledge, and above all or including all enjoy the passing hour, make it the happiest hour of your life. Hech! I hae ha'en a time o't—not one well moment since I landed—singing thro' fever, sore throat, indigestion, inflammation, and as mony ailments as ye choose to pin on. Mother also no up to the mark. Praise be blest we are now toddlin' about 'fell knappie.' The performance fully up to the mark, and the people place us far away up among Indian amusements. . . . Complete knowledge of the voice must be your primary aim—only I must admit an occasional sing is essential to the testing of educational progress. I hope you will all take the best teaching you can get. . . . It is near dinner time—the craws and kites are gathering round the vestibule, the noiseless Bengali glides about with dishes, etc.—the inner man sends word—'vacuum.' Good bye ye eager students—good health—clear consciences—educated and healthy throats—a' lubricated with father's love and mother's blessing.”

He was intensely interested in and anxious about the musical education of his sons and daughters. He encouraged

them when despondent, spared no expense on their tuition, and wrote them long letters of kindly counsel, from which we quote :—

“Whatever you acquire from teachers, don't lose what you have got from heaven.”

“Thicken your piano singing ; broaden without breaking your declamation.”

“Practice various ways of singing same passage.”

“Avoid monotony ; let your emotional nature colour your voice ; practice the passions vocally.”

“Do get a doze from Lamperti. Suck the marrow out of all the Italian maestros. Don't go in much for *C sharp*, Bob. While you exalt your glorious notes, make *the rough places plain*.”

“Wait patiently for fruit. Legato most of all essential to fluid Scots songs.”

“Keep your lives sunny.”

“I would hae sic a study amang auld Scots songs.”

“Except ye be as little children, ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven nor of Art.”

“Learn to use your voice. Sit at anybody's feet. Delight yourself in finding out your failings. Try, try, try again. I know the temptation to rush at the result without waiting on the means, for I did it myself, and that's the reason I want you to hasten slowly.”

“I did not know the value of Solfeggi, and did not know how to do it. I feel the want of it now when the voice will not do the will of the singer. Sow, sow, sow ! reap, reap, reap !”

“At critical moments of our lives we never do our best. I never did. As to who should be your master I cannot say. Learn all good music you can. Keep at the auld Scots songs : they'll come in for your good some day. Read music at sight day and night—master it, think on't, dream on't.”

The life in India was trying ; indeed, it undermined his constitution, and he never afterwards was in the full enjoyment of health and strength. Still he never gave in.

A few more letters will suffice for the Indian tour :—

“Jamalapore, 10th Dec., 1879.

“DEAR HAME BAIRNS,—What a grand letter frae Kate—‘cantie Kate,’ ‘cautious Kate,’ slightly ‘circuitous Kate’—happy Kate at hame amang dirty weather, but still at hame—Oh, hame, hoo I love ye! We’ll soon be hame, 4th or 5th o’ May, but mony a mile (11,000) before we see ye, and mony breekless loons will pass by without our noticing their want o’ claes. How soon anything gets common save love. Love o’ ye a’—love o’ music, hame and sangs never gets old or uninteresting. Losh! here’s a sermon—Gloag, I suppose keeps ye supplied wi’ that. . . . Twa o’clock struck—dinner at 3’30 or 4—snooze—shave—yawn—dress—lantern—walk to Institute—sing till 10’30—lantern—bed—up at 5—rail till 10’30—11, breakfast and so on. My certie! ony pernicketty body had better bide at hame. We seem like lumps o’ butter—tak’ ony shape we maun. . . . India seems to us just now in every respect a bladder, imposing, windy, by no means worth the fash politically.”

“Allahabad, 20th Dec.

“My health restored—heaven be praised!—up-country air delicious. . . .”

“Bombay, 10th Jan., ’80

“The winter past here—heat stronger every day. We sail from Calcutta on 2nd March. . . . I’m sitting, my coat off, the window open and the sweat gathering on my brow—the air is moist and heavy—at night I suffer greatly from heat, my voice is a’ richt now, a’ goes on smoothly. . . .”

“Lucknow, 21st Jany., ’80.

“. . . The [business management is fearfully tedious—harassing, hot weather, too—done mostly middle of the day. Nevertheless, India is the keystone of our information—now everything is compact. . . .”

“Agra, 26th Jany., ’80.

“I miss the warm love of my audiences in other lands—this (for the whites) is an arid land in all heart crops—pride, anger, all the hell crops grow well. . . .”

“Lahore, 3rd Feby., ’80.

“Just read sic a bunch o’ letters and never felt more pleased in all my life. Mother and me alone, and we sat and grat wi’

perfect joy. . . . Last night biggest house ever seen here—Governor, and so on—glorious sing. Our health will stand the hame-comin'. . . .”

He left India in March, as proposed, and on the return journey spent some months in Italy with his sons and daughters, attending their lessons, helping them with advice, and himself learning much that proved useful to him during the next six years. The following letter is from the shores of Lake Como, whither Lamperti had gone for the summer, followed of course by his circle of pupils:—

“Cernobbia, Lake of Como, Italy,
“Monday, 3rd May, 1880.

“DEAR WIFIE,—Like St. Paul I say unto you, behold, how large a letter I have written you with mine own hand. Here I am after rowing an hour and a half on the lake—a nice open window neither cauld nor het, and the hope of a quiet smoke when I have got this letter finished. Saturday nicht I left Milan by train at 5.45 p.m., got to Como-toon at 7.40—whustled—got Jamie outside—off we went wi’ my black bag—clean sark—black coat—swellish hat—I have not had them on yet. Jim took me into a wee boat in the dark, and row’d, row’d away into the lake and night—the boat was wee and coglie, and thinks I, will Lizzie ever see her mannie again. Jim said, ‘Steer for yon licht.’ ‘I see nae licht,’ says I. I glowered again. ‘Oh, yes.’ ‘Weel then, faither,’ quo Jim, ‘put the licht oot in my heid.’ So I did, but now and then I had the licht on his left lug and now and then on his right; and then, to continue the thrilling story, he says, ‘Mak’ for the licht on the left, that’s a man lookin’ for us;’ but we nearly (in the dark) bumped against the licht a man was using for spearing fish. At length and lang, after many perils and dangers on the bosom of a quiet lake, we ran or ‘snooved’ ashore, some wreckers on shore giving me an arm oot the bonnie wee boat. Then some het wine, some theological crack wi’ Jim, then off to bed at 10.30. Sabbath (don’t tell Gloag) we were eight and a half hours on the lake; there was naething to gang till but Popery kirks—dull—rain at the end o’ journey, but what cared we—grand mountains, magnificent mist-clouds, good grub, and fresh air. Good dinner at 7 p.m.—bed at 9



p.m.—first night in a ground room by mysel'—second night, a cozy wee bed in Jamie's room. Monday, up at seven—breakfast at 7.30—walk—lesson (I was there)—took stock—I will teach the system, and so will Jim, when we come home. I rowed in the boat an hour and a half mysel' alone—macaroni and chicken getting ready for dinner—sleep—walk to Como, three miles—coffee—papers—walk back—bed 9.30, and so on. . . . The folk in Milan a' richt. I'll be hame there (Milan) on Friday. . . . Love tae a'.—Your affectionate husband,

D. KENNEDY.

Advantage was taken of his presence in Milan to get up a concert for the purpose of defraying the expense of introducing a new organ into the English Church there. He gladly gave his services and sang several Scottish songs to a mixed audience of Italians and English-speaking residents. He specially pleased the Italian critics by his singing of "The Land o' the Leal," and they were charmed with his ease of manner and expressiveness of face and gesture.

When he returned to Scotland he took his son James with him, leaving Robert, Helen, and Marjory to continue their studies in Milan.

With James and John and two younger daughters, Kate and Lizzie, he toured in Scotland till the spring of 1881, when James returned to Signor Lamperti to resume his vocal studies, taking with him his sisters Kate and Lizzie. Lamperti was wintering in Nice and there they joined him, but had only been three weeks from home when the terrible news arrived that they had all three perished at the burning of the *Theatre des Italiens* at Nice. It was a terrible blow and he never recovered from it, although he took up his work again and went courageously on with it, having perhaps a still greater power for good now that he had the world's sympathy with him in his sorrow.

In the autumn of the same year he again visited America, accompanied by his sons, Robert and John, and three

daughters, Helen, Marjory, and Maggie. Crowded audiences welcomed him in Canada and the States, and he pushed up to the north-west as far as Winnipeg, then the point toward which the stream of emigration was pouring. In 1882 he returned home, and after a season in Scotland and England, he started in the spring of 1883 for his farewell tour of Australia and New Zealand. This proved the most successful tour he had ever undertaken, but it was carried through at the cost of great physical exhaustion and nervous strain. He sighed for rest, and could not take it. His spirit was restless—he wanted ever to be at his work, and the sympathy and society of the public were necessary to his existence. Within a month of the end of his tour he wrote from Hobart Town, Tasmania, as follows:—

“ 14th June, '84.

“DEAR A'BODY,—Only a word or two. How near the end of our tour in this splendid part of God's creation. I shall never see it again. Steekin' the door ahint me! Ah, well! our door No. 8 will open—the most important door next to the gate of heaven. All are well, as we heard from you. How our hearts rejoice at 'All well.' May ye a' continue so till we meet. *Rest! REST! REST!* Oh, how sweet is the sound. . . . Love to a' freens.—Your affectionate father,
“D. KENNEDY.

On the return journey from Australia he was eagerly looking forward to the meeting with his eldest son David, who had returned to Edinburgh from a three years residence in Natal. David was in delicate health, and his father proposed sending him to winter in the south of France; but a fortnight before the arrival of the Australian mail, he was sent off by the doctors to a warmer climate and chose to return to Natal. It was a terrible disappointment to both his father and himself. He got a government appointment in Pietermaritzburg, as



Death of his eldest Son.

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secretary to the Council of Education, and his health seemed to improve for a time, but he suffered a relapse and died about six months after his appointment. This was another great sorrow to his father, who was at the time touring in Scotland.

After his return from Australia in the autumn of 1884, he remained only eighteen months in the "old country," and in March, 1886, he gave his farewell concerts, prior to departure for America, in the St. James's Hall, London, to crowded audiences. During this season he brought out his youngest daughter Jessie, the last of his family of eleven, all of whom had at one time or another accompanied him on his concert tours.

Because of the great heat of the summer months in the States and Upper Canada, the American tour was commenced in the Canadian maritime provinces, and the intention was to go through Canada first and open the farewell tour of the States on Burns' Night, January, 1887, in the Steinway Hall, New York. The tour was to include a visit to British Columbia. But all these plans were suddenly frustrated. He had been growing weaker and weaker day by day. His public talk was growing more and more impressive, and we all felt a shadow coming over us. But every one said he was singing more beautifully than ever. How well I remember the last time he sang "The land o' the leal," it was so beautiful both in tone and expression, that it was with difficulty we went on with the remainder of the programme. The disease, Canadian cholera, came on gradually, but he would not cancel his engagements, although we begged him to do so for his own sake. He had always gone on through everything—only twice during the whole of his professional career had he been unfit for work. Once in India, when he was laid down with fever, and again in Elgin, in the north of Scotland, when he was confined to his room with a very severe cold.

On Tuesday, the fifth of October, we were to sing in Stratford, Ontario, and we travelled on from Sarnia in the afternoon. He lay down to rest, and did not wake till shortly before eight o'clock. We were all over at the Town Hall except one of our sisters, who remained to help him, and the audience was gathered, many of them having come long distances to hear Kennedy for the last time. At eight o'clock our sister came and said he was too ill to move. What should we do? We could not send the people away at the last hour. The mayor of the city, Mr. M'Gregor, kindly offered to take the chair, and we carried the programme through ourselves. We believed it would be only a temporary illness, and made arrangements for a long rest; but we had only a week of nursing. The windows were open all the time, for the Canadian autumn weather is lovely, and we looked out on the gorgeous autumn foliage of the maple trees.

There was nothing gloomy about his death, nothing bitter about his memory. It was the peaceful end of a beautiful life. His wife and daughters were all round him when he died, and sang to him two verses of his favourite hymn—

“ The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair sweet morn awakes.”

He was perfectly conscious and moved his lips in unison with theirs, for he was too weak to do more. He did not die a stranger in a strange land. There were men there who had known him in boyhood, and others who were friends of his manhood, and all proved most true friends to us in our trouble. We wish to thank publicly Mr. Thomas Ballantyne, M.P.P., Mr. Alex. Matheson, editor of the *Stratford Beacon*, and Mr.



David Campbell for the many and invaluable services they rendered to us.

His remains were embalmed, and twelve hours after his death the funeral car moved to the station followed by hundreds of the citizens. We came home, and there was another funeral procession from his own house to the Grange Cemetery, where he was laid just opposite to his own father and near to Dr. Guthrie. He was a man who had loved much and was much loved in return. Of friendship he wrote:—

“DEAR FREEN,—A’ the joys o’ life are bound up in true friendship. Heart to heart, soul to soul, is rare among all men, and if you don’t show *your* heart you’ll never see a heart—every man has an unexplored region in his being and in it he will, I believe, find very visible traces of the Deity. Real Freenship means equality in a’ thing or near about it. . . . The true sublime of human life is love of bairns and wife. . . . God, wife, bairns, freens, country, profession. How does that order please ye. . . . Ye drank my health at 6 p.m. did ye! (New Year’s Day). Ah weel—I was shaving at that time for singing at Leith. Thank ye—I thocht on ye as I scraped mysel’—may the Deil never hae a hand in oor washing.

“Yrs. very truly, D. KENNEDY.”

And again:—

“Sappiness is a great blessing—it is not too common. Juiciness—the glorious product of a warm heart oiling the hard intellect and exuding the sympathising tear or breaking out in the sunny smile, the hearty hand-shake—producing in short the highest result of human or divine chemistry—Love——.”

He was a genuine musical enthusiast outside the range of his country’s songs, had a great admiration for Händel, and a reverential feeling towards the music of the “Messiah.” He sang the tenor airs from oratorios to us occasionally, and we shall not soon forget his singing of the Messiah passion music,

and the famous actor recit and acts from 'Jephtha,' 'Deeper and Deeper Still' and 'Waiver Angels.' But the sun of his musical firmament was Richard Wagner. His enthusiasm for him knew no bounds. In all things he valued more the "Idea" than the form, however graceful the latter, and consequently ranged himself on the side of the partisans of the "music of the future." Writing on the subject, Mr. W. Henderson, of London, says:—

"In June of '53 your father was spending a holiday in London. German opera was on at the time at Drury Lane, and he was enjoying it as a rare feast. He heard 'Tristan and Isolde' (the first time it was played I believe in this country) 'Eurianthe,' 'Fidelio,' and the 'Meistersinger.' He was quite enthusiastic over Wagner. There was a 'bigness,' a wild grandeur about it, which quite moved him. He was delighted beyond expression. It pleased him also very much when we succeeded in getting Templeton up to stay with us for a night in order that we might all go together to hear 'The Meistersinger.' Mr. Templeton took it all in very quietly. Upon the whole, however, he and all of us much enjoyed the treat. Upon your father remarking to him 'This was the scene of your many triumphs,' 'Aye,' replied he, 'and of many many disappointments.' J. W. Davison, musical critic of *The Times*, and other veterans of the press, crowded round your father and Templeton during the intervals, and there was much of sparkling wit and humor. It was a night, I believe, to be long remembered by all of us there."

After Burns, his favourite author was Carlyle. He read all his works over and over again, and enjoyed them more at every fresh reading. His reading of the day tinged his conversation of the evening, and one could readily tell, for instance, when he had been reading Carlyle. During the last ten or twelve years of his professional life he made only a mental preparation for his evening's work, spending the afternoon in the seclusion of his own room. His running lecture or commentary

on the songs not being a prepared and written-out formula, we have some difficulty in giving faithful examples of his style; he left no notes, and we are dependant on memory alone. In his admiration for Burns and Carlyle he was undoubtedly influenced by their nationality, for he was as enthusiastic in his patriotism as in all else.

He felt keenly the growing fashion of talking of the affairs of the nation as the "English" policy. In introducing Burns' song, "Scots! wha hae wi' Wallace bled," (Bruce's address to the Scottish army on Bannockburn field) he said, "Scotland is not a part of England, Scotland is a *partner with* England in the country which ought to be called, but seldom is, "Great Britain." Part of the treaty of the Union was that the two countries should take down their rival signboards, "England" and "Scotland," and put up a large one covering both—"Great Britain." The bargain was made fair and square. John Bull couldna say to Sandy Campbell, "You must do this" or "You must do that." "Must" was buried at Bannockburn field. "If you want to be freends," says Sandy, "there's my hand, but if you want to fecht, come on!" That bargain has not been kept. Orators of all kinds, both great and small, talk of "England" when they mean Britain, and of the "English" army, and the "English" navy, etc., as if there were no 42nd Highlanders or Enniskillen Dragoons." Some people think this is a craze, and that the name England serves just as well as Britain, but to those who are proud of their nationality it is not so.

In politics he was a radical, a land-for-the-nation man, although he did not pin his faith to any particular leader. Of all politicians the man he most esteemed was John Bright. He had been the hero of his younger days. One day he met him on the station at Grantown on the Highland Railway.

The old gentleman was kindly helping my mother and sisters into the carriage in the absence of a porter when my father came up, "Pardon me, but you are John Bright, if I mistake not." "That is my name," he said, "whom have I the pleasure of addressing?" "I am David Kennedy, the Scottish singer. I have sung 'A man's a man for a' that' round the world." At this moment the train moved off. They cordially shook hands and parted.

From many similar testimonies to the respect and love which Scotsmen bore to our father in all parts of the world we select a few lines from a resolution moved by the St. Andrew Society of London, Ont., as they describe his work in a very few words:—

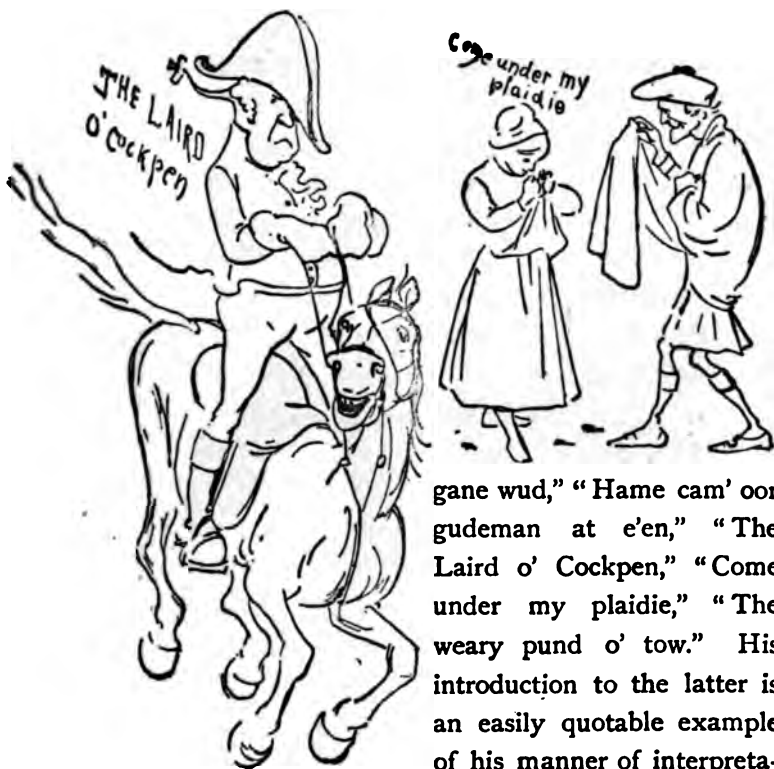
"We feel that by the death of Mr. Kennedy, Scotsmen throughout the world have lost a friend and educator; that Mr. Kennedy's high ideal in his professional career was not only to bring out the humor, pathos, and patriotism which so strongly characterize our national melodies, but his keen appreciation and earnest enforcement of the moral and religious elements in the songs which he loved to sing to his countrymen in all parts of the civilized world, have left an indelible impression for good on the minds of the present generation of Scotsmen wherever his voice has been heard."

It is not for us, his family, to write at length of his almost unbounded generosity, and his warm-hearted sympathy with suffering humanity. He felt too keenly, for his own happiness, the miseries of others.

We have not quoted press criticisms, as they are too numerous, but a few words from a well known critic (Mr. W. N. Watson, of Dundee) are worth repeating:—"His singing was artistic in the truest sense of the word, where vocal tone, melody, and manner were subservient to the one purpose of enforcing the

meaning of words as expressive of thought and feeling, and his speech was as his singing—incisive and eloquent.”

He did not merely sing his country's songs, he in many cases doubled the value of songs by his interpretation of them—they were distinctly “creations” in the sense that an actor or operatic singer “creates” a part. As for instance, “The wee wee German lairdie,” “Johnnie Cope,” “The women are a’



gane wud,” “Hame cam’ oor gudeman at e’en,” “The Laird o’ Cockpen,” “Come under my plaidie,” “The weary pund o’ tow.” His introduction to the latter is an easily quotable example of his manner of interpretation.

He perceives that it is the utterance of a hen-pecked husband, and gives a verbal picture of the race as follows:—

“There were and are and ever more shall be hen-pecked husbands in Scotland and everywhere else. This man had a wife who would not spin but she would drink, in a country

where spinning was a virtue and drinking a disgrace. A terrible life he lived till at length she died, and he followed her 'feet foremost ower the knowe' to yonder kirkyard with his eyes overflowing with tears and his heart with joy. He saw her weel trampit doon six feet aneath the grund, and went home to his own house, where for the first time he dared speak his mind, and what did he say? I'm weel oot o' this mess, afore I'd marry again I'd rather hang mysel'; but his joy was short-lived, for the horrible fear comes over him that death itself may not be able to hold this fearful woman in his clutches. So he leaves your sight moaning as of yore ower the 'Weary pund o' tow.' Hen-pecked husbands are commonly tall, thin, lanky men with yellowish, dryish, thinish, greyish, hair. Their eyes lack lustre, the colour of them blueish yellow, their voices are thin, dry, or douf, their complexions are sallow, their shoulders stoop, their knees approach, and their toes turn inwards—



The Weary pund o' tow.

' The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow ;
I think my wife will end her life
Afore she spins her tow.' "

"The women are a' gane wud" was another example of a man who was not master in his own house, a man who "trimmed" and was on neither side at the time of the Jacobite Rebellion. He paraphrased the old man's opinions as follows :—

"Women should never be allowed to meddle wi' politics. Women dae what their heart bids them, and what's the use o' your heart in politics, it's your head you maun use. It's no what's richt or

wrang ye maun dae in politics, it's what's expedient. If it's expedient to dae wrang, do't, if you're perfectly certain that it'll advance your ain personal interests."

It would be much more difficult to give an idea of his impersonation of Patie Birnie, the auld fiddler of Kinghorn, in "The auld man's mare's dead," or his rendering of "The Deil's awa wi' the Exciseman," or "Johnnie Cope," or "The wee wee German lairdie." In connection with this last named song, he used to tell how for years he tried to realize the white heat of a Highlander's wrath and the bitterness of his scorn, but without success, till one day, walking in the Zoological Gardens in Toronto, Ontario, he came against the cage of a wild cat. The beast glared at him and sprang at the bars and shook them. Instantly it struck him that *that* was a Hielandman singing "The wee wee German lairdie." He practised the effect there and then with his model before him, and sang the song to it, and his mimic rage so subdued the brute that after the first line it loosed its hold of the bars, after the second it slunk back, after the third it ceased grinning, and at the end of the fourth it went to the back of the cage, coiled its tail on the floor, sat down upon it and winked at him.

He was a most enthusiastic lover of the Highland songs, urging us to the study of them, which we cheerfully took up, singing them first to some of Professor Blackie's translations, and later attempting the whole song in Gaelic. He was never tired of listening to them. Indeed it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of his enjoyment of his own nightly work and of the singing of his "bairns." He had no grades of performance, he always strained every nerve to do his best for the sake of the songs he loved so well.

As indicating to some extent the particular place he held as an exponent of Scottish songs, we close with the following

extract from a letter of Mr. John Forbes-Robertson, of London, the well-known art critic, addressed to him in September, 1885. He writes :—

“ I knew personally and familiarly John Sinclair, John Templeton and John Wilson—a vocal triumvirate of whom Scotland might well be proud.

“ The first was known as ‘ the leddies’ bonnie Sinclair.’ His daughters, by the way, like your own, were mainly educated in Italy. One of them was married to Edwin Forrest, the American tragedian, who, if I remember rightly, told me he was born in Montrose. I have often heard Mrs. Forrest and her sister sing as a duet, ‘ Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon,’ with much tenderness and effect. They never sang in public. Sinclair was a frank, genial fellow, and among his Scottish songs were ‘ Hey the bonnie, ho the bonnie, hey the bonny breastknots,’ and one of his own composition ‘ Come, sit ye doon, my bonny bonny love.’ But Sinclair often sang English operatic songs such as ‘ Pray Goody, please to moderate the rancour of your tongue,’ and the like. He could hardly be said, therefore, to have been a special exponent of Scottish melody. Similar remarks are applicable to John Templeton. He also went in for English opera, and was specially good in English hunting songs. Among Scottish liltis his most popular were Imlah’s “ There lived a young lassie far doon in yon glen ” composed forty-five years ago by De Pinna of London, and ‘ Roy’s Wife,’ which, I must say, he sang splendidly. I have heard him try your glorious song of ‘ Rantin’, Rovin’ Robin,’ but his delivery of it, though very spirited, was quite conventional, and entirely lacked that rousing swing you give to the chorus. In both cases the men were as anxious to display the academic flexibility of their voices as to set forth the innate beauties of their country’s songs. Each had in his turn, like Wilson after them, been first tenor at the English Opera, and they could not forget the fact.

“ When I come to John Wilson, I name the only man who has any real claim to be considered your forerunner, or compared with you in any way. He was not without a certain rather stilted pawkiness, and had perhaps all your sweetness but none of your breadth and power. His singing of ‘ The flowers of the forest ’ was really exquisite ; but when he came to deal with the native humor of his country’s muse his sense of the proprieties always came in the way, and he allowed



manners and deportment, in a certain measure, to override the inspiration of nature. He never abandoned himself, as you do, to any of those homely influences or glorious bursts for whose display our songs afford so many striking opportunities. Further : you are a born actor, and possess a dramatic sympathy and intensity—a power of personation, in short—to which none of your predecessors could, in the same degree, lay claim. From long residence in England, they were all three more or less Anglicised, both socially and as artists, and were, when among Southrons, almost apologetic in introducing the Doric of their native land, whether in speech or song. You, on the contrary, have not only the courage of your country, but an exceeding great joy and pride in whatever is hers ; and your mither-tongue, as the wide world knows, is to you a sacred trust and possession.

“ In short, my half century’s experience, and my own lyrical instincts, entitle me to assert that, whether for simple narrative or description, for emotion, pathos, and power, you are by far the most perfect and dramatic exponent of Scottish song that Scotland has yet produced.”